



## Satisfactory Academic Progress

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Students who receive Federal Title IV Financial Assistance are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) towards their degree for each year in which they are enrolled and are also required to be in good standing (i.e. pay tuition on time and meet other University requirements).

This policy applies to eligible US and eligible non-US citizens receiving Title IV aid, specifically the Federal Direct and PLUS loans.

Satisfactory academic progress is evaluated at the end of each semester. The review is based on *qualitative* (grade point average) and *quantitative measures* (credits completed vs registered credit). Failure to maintain satisfactory progress may result in the cancellation of financial aid awards or repayment of the funds already received.

The following information is relevant to the Dutch University system and is applicable to the evaluation of satisfactory academic progress.<sup>1</sup>

### Dutch Grading system

The Dutch grading system is generally based on a mark between 1 (minimum) and 10 (maximum) as can be seen in the conversion table below. A grade of 6.0 or more stands for 'pass', a grade of less than 6.0 for 'fail'.

USA	Dutch grade
A +	8.5 - 10.0
A	7.5 - 8.0
B +	7.0
B	6.5
C	6
D	5.5
F	1 - 5

### European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Utrecht University operates the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for awarding credits. European Credits (EC) are awarded for most of the courses.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/education-in-the-netherlands/#higher-education>

## Basic Standard for SAP

Undergraduate and graduate students must meet the following minimum requirements for satisfactory academic progress:

- 1) A cumulative grade point average of 6 or above. In determining the cumulative grade point average, both EC attempted and EC earned are taken into consideration.
- 2) A minimum completion rate of at least 22,5 EC after each semester. In total the student must complete 45 EC out of the 60 EC per academic year.

The first time a student fails to achieve the minimum cumulative grade point average requirement in a particular semester will result in he/she being placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next semester. Furthermore, all students must complete at least 22,5 EC in a semester in order to ensure that they are not placed on Financial Aid Warning. Students will still receive financial aid for the duration of the warning period. Students are able to receive more than one financial aid warning in their academic careers, however not consecutively.

The student will become ineligible for financial aid and therefore cease to receive financial aid if he/she:

1. Fails to meet the grade point average requirement at the conclusion of the financial aid warning period
2. Fails to complete 45 EC at the conclusion of two consecutive semesters

Students are able to appeal their ineligibility for financial aid in extenuating circumstances. If the student successfully appeals their ineligibility they may be placed on financial aid probation. Further details of the appeal process and financial aid probation is provided in a section which follows below.

In addition to the above, graduate students will cease to be eligible for financial aid if he/she fails to complete 60 EC over a period of three consecutive semesters. This ruling is applicable even if the student has not received financial aid for the academic year.

Undergraduate students will be assessed at the conclusion of 1,5 years (90 EC attempted) to ensure their grade point average requirement is 6.0 or above. The student will no longer be eligible for financial aid if this criterion is not met.

### Maximum Time Frame

Undergraduates are required to adhere to a maximum time frame in which they can complete their program. The student must complete the study program within 150% of the published time for that program as measured in EC (European Credits). A student pursuing a bachelor degree that is 180 credits long would need to complete the degree within 270 attempted credits. If a student can no longer achieve the required EC in the allocated timeframe, their financial aid will cease.

### Pace

Additionally, the student is required to adhere to a certain pace requirement to ensure the number of EC required to achieve the degree can be achieved within the specified time period. Due to the 150% maximum time specified, there is a pace requirement that the student complete 66.6% of all attempted ECs. The pace of the student is calculated by dividing the number of cumulative EC completed by the cumulative EC attempted. This calculation includes all credits attempted and credits transferred to Utrecht University. If a student is no longer completing the study program at the required pace they are no longer eligible for financial aid.

### Example

*For a Bachelor course a student is completing a program in which 180 EC are required. The student has attempted 240 EC however has only completed 157.5 EC. As the student has not met the minimum pace requirement ( $240 \text{ EC} \times 66.6\% = 160 \text{ EC}$ ), he/she will no longer be eligible for financial aid. The pace requirement takes into account credits transferred to Utrecht University (UU) (completed) as well as those attempted whilst studying at Utrecht University.*

## Financial Aid Warning and Probation

If a student fails to meet any of the quantitative or the qualitative standards of the satisfactory academic progress policy (SAP) for the first time, he/she will be placed on a financial aid warning for one semester. Students will continue to receive financial aid during the warning period.

Once a student is placed on a financial aid warning status, the Financial Aid Officer will get in contact with the student to set up an appointment with the study advisor. Together they will set up a study scheme to work on improving the study success of the student

If a student fails to maintain SAP after the financial aid warning period, financial aid assistance will be suspended. The student will be notified of his/her ineligibility for financial aid and will be placed on the so called denied status.

### Appealing Ineligibility for Financial Aid (Denied Status)

A student can submit a written request to the Director of Student Services within 30 days after the notification of financial aid ineligibility appealing this decision. The student can only be reinstated after being placed on denied status in case of extenuating circumstances. The Director will consider this request within the regulations set by the US federal law.

The extenuating circumstances are:

- death of a relative
- illness of the student
- illness of a close relative
- other special circumstances

In the case the student wishes to appeal the decision of financial aid ineligibility, they should contact [scholarship@gdesk.uu.nl](mailto:scholarship@gdesk.uu.nl) for further information on the procedure.

If the request is granted, the student is placed on probation status for the semester. Note that the 150% time frame is set by US federal law and cannot be extended under any circumstances.

### Probation status with an academic plan

A student placed on probation will be required to adhere to an academic plan, drawn up in collaboration with the student's study advisor. The student's progress and their adherence to the study plan as well as the satisfactory academic progress policy will be reviewed at the completion of the semester in which they were placed on probation. If the student is no longer meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards at this point, they will no longer be eligible for further financial aid.

Students must submit another appeal in case they need to change their academic plan, explaining what has happened to make the necessary change and how they will be able to make academic progress.

### Appeal form

Students who are placed on a denied status will receive an appeal form from the Financial Aid Officer. This document must be used for the appeal.