

# LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

## TITLE IV FEDERAL STUDENT ASSISTANCE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

### OVERVIEW

All students receiving Title IV financial assistance must maintain *satisfactory academic progress* as defined below. Exceptions are subject to determination of eligibility by the Director of Financial Aid (invoking *Professional Judgment*).

Title IV financial aid programs include the following:

- Federal College Work-Study Program (FWS)
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Stafford Loan - Subsidized & Non-subsidized
- Federal Graduate PLUS loan

Maintaining *satisfactory academic progress*, for purposes of Title IV assistance, is defined in terms of guidelines set by the faculty and through the Graduate and Research Committee. These standards are monitored by the Office of Financial Aid. Failure to meet the scholastic requirements, and/or maintain satisfactory progress, will result in the loss of funding from all Title IV programs.

These SAP codes are currently in use:

- 1 Award aid, academic progress is OK
- 2 Award aid, advise academic counseling
- 3 Award aid only on conditions
- 4 Deny aid, academic progress is unacceptable
- 5 Director Over ride

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS POLICY

The following sections define the University's academic standards as they relate to eligibility for financial aid.

### A. Good Standing

1. To be in good standing, each student must meet standards for qualitative progress, as measured in terms of the number of courses assigned a grade lower than a B. Evaluation of reasonable academic progress for Title IV assistance will be conducted annually, at the end of the Spring semester.

### B. Satisfactory Progress

1. Satisfactory progress is defined by the University faculty.

### C. Probation (Financial Aid)

1. Any student placed on academic probation will be placed on financial aid probation for the corresponding period.
2. Any student, who after two semesters on financial aid probation has not regained good standing, will be ineligible for Title IV assistance until such time as he or she regains good standing and/or is making satisfactory progress (i.e., has advanced in classification).
3. Any student who is dropped for poor scholarship, and is therefore not enrolled, will be ineligible for Title IV assistance.
4. Any student dropped for poor scholarship, who is subsequently readmitted on academic probation, will be considered ineligible for Title IV assistance until he or she regains good standing (making satisfactory progress) unless an exception is granted based upon the *professional judgment* of the Director of the Office of Financial Aid.

### D. Standards for University-funded Financial Aid

1. Standards governing University-funded financial aid may exceed those for Title IV funds. As it pertains to *satisfactory progress*, the expectation is that each recipient must register for a number of courses no greater than as stipulated in *R&P 3.21.4*.
2. Standards for University-funded loans are set by the Office of Financial Aid with the concurrence of the Committee on Undergraduate Financial Aid. All other institutionally-funded financial aid is governed by the granting department or the appropriate office as designated by the Provost.

## **TIME FRAME FOR DEGREE COMPLETION**

The following description is taken from the Graduate *Handbook* and *R&P*:

All post-baccalaureate work submitted in a program for a Ph.D. must be completed within a 10 year period. Candidates entering the doctoral program with a Master=s degree must complete the work in a seven year period.

Candidates for a Master=s degree have six years in which to complete their program.

The April 29, 1994 federal regulations specify that the maximum time frame may not exceed 150 percent of the published length of the program for full-time students. This maximum time frame can be measured in academic years, academic terms, clock hours or credit hours.@ [The Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook, 2-16]

Because of the variety of degree hour requirements within the University, this test will be applied against the specific requirement for each student in question within the context of credit hours.

Satisfactory progress, on a term-by-term basis, will be governed by *R&P* definition, with exceptions to be considered by the Office of Financial Aid on the basis of documentation of the following:

Death or disability of a parent

Divorce or separation of student or parent

Loss of employment of parent or spouse that has imposed financial hardship

Illness (physical or mental) that has interrupted study

Learning disabilities that can be documented as affecting academic performance

Such other episodes that, in the professional judgment of the Office of Financial Aid, constitutes reasonable grounds for waiving the *satisfactory progress* requirement

Extension of eligibility, for University-funded financial aid, will be determined by the Committee on Undergraduate Financial Aid based on documentation of extenuating and mitigating circumstances.

**GRADUATE STUDENTS:  
TREATMENT OF AUDITS, INCOMPLETES. AND OTHER GRADES**

**Audits**

Course *audits* are not reviewed or counted for academic progress purposes since no grades are given and no credits received toward all Masters and Ed.S degrees. However, the Audit status may be used to accumulate 72 hours assigned to a Ph.D..

**Definition of grades [3.27.1]**

Course grades are defined as in section 3.8.1 except that no grade lower than C- may be counted toward a graduate degree; and pass-fail registration is not allowed for graduate students; and grades are not reported for dissertation registration. No student, who receives more than four grades below B- in courses numbered 200 or higher, is allowed to continue registration as a graduate student.

**Incomplete (N Grade) [3.27.2]**

The N grade is defined as in section 3.8.2 except that parenthetical grades are not required for thesis or research courses; and graduate students have a calendar year to remove course incomplete grades unless an earlier deadline is specified by the instructor. Graduate student incomplete course grades, which are not removed, remain as N grades on the student=s record. Thesis or research project N grades may remain beyond one year until the work is completed.

**Absent From the Final Examination (X and XN Grades) [3.27.3]**

1. The X grade is defined as in section 3.8.2 except that parenthetical grades are not required for thesis or research courses; and that to be eligible for a make-up examination, a graduate student must file a petition; and the petition must be approved by the Graduate and Research Committee. The instructor schedules and administers the make-up.
2. The XN grade is defined as in 3.8.3, except that parenthetical grades are not required for thesis or research courses; and graduate students have a calendar year to complete course work following an XN grade unless an earlier completion deadline is specified by the instructor. The X portion of the grade is removed as described in section 3.8.3. XN grades, which are not removed, remain on the record of graduate students. All petitions for exceptions are sent to the graduate committee.

**Course withdrawals [3.27.4]**

1. A withdrawal from a course, within the first ten days of classes, is not recorded on the student=s record.
2. A student, who wishes to withdraw from a course after the tenth day, but not within the ninth week of instruction, receives a grade of W.

### **Repeats of Passed Courses Where Subsequent Grade is a Failure**

**Repeats of courses passed with a D-, D or D+, where the new grade is a Failure, will have a negative effect on the Grade Point Average, but will retain any accumulated credit toward his/her degree.**

### **Non-Credit Courses**

**Non-credit courses are not considered in either the qualitative or quantitative assessment of *satisfactory academic progress*.**

## **APPEALS**

**Any students not making *satisfactory academic progress* at the end of an academic year, and who would otherwise be ineligible for Title IV assistance, may appeal to the Office of Financial Aid. Appeals will be evaluated on the basis of the student=s academic performance and any extenuating circumstances that may have hampered that performance. If the appeal is approved, the student may be granted financial aid probation for either a semester or a summer session. Normally, a student will be granted financial aid probation as a result of an appeal only once during their undergraduate program.**

### **Additional Information**

**Questions concerning this *Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy*, as it relates to Title IV assistance programs, may be directed to:**

**Office of Financial Aid  
Barnett House  
218 W. Packer Avenue  
Lehigh University  
Bethlehem, PA 18015  
(610) 758-3181 voice  
(610) 758-6211 fax**