**Royal Holloway, University of London**

**Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy**

The College’s academic regulations for students on undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes can be found at: [Attendance and academic regulations - Royal Holloway Student Intranet](https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/attendance-and-academic-regulations.aspx)

This policy outlines a number of specific requirements that apply to students receiving US federal loans. In accordance with federal regulations, the College is required to make sure that all students in receipt of US federal loans (Stafford and PLUS) maintain satisfactory academic progress towards completion of their chosen academic programme in order to remain eligible to receive federal loans. In addition, students need to be studying at the equivalent of at least part time (half time) course load. Failure to satisfy these requirements can result in the loss of eligibility to receive further funding.

**Payment Periods**

The payment periods for undergraduate and postgraduate students will be divided into two separate disbursements each academic year. The International Student Support Office (ISSO) will check SAP at the end of each payment period. If the student is making appropriate academic progress, the disbursements will be made.

**Principles for measuring Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

The evaluation process will consider a student’s performance on both qualitative and quantitative criteria. The student must meet the minimum standards for both components to remain eligible to receive federal aid.

**Qualitative Requirements (Grades)**

1. The student must achieve the minimum standard required by their Supervisor/Tutor/School or Department and have academic standing that is consistent with graduation requirements that are at least equivalent to being sufficient to obtain a pass in their exams and satisfactory progress as determined for research students by their supervisor.
2. These requirements are cumulative.

**Quantitative Requirements (Pace)**

1. The student must progress through their course at a pace that will ensure that they graduate within the maximum timeframe.

2. The maximum timeframe for completion is 150% of the published length of the course as measured in credit hours.

3. The College takes each year of full-time undergraduate study to equal 120 UK credits and 180 UK credits for postgraduate study in accordance with the Higher Education Credit Framework for England.

4. The student must achieve 67% to maintain their eligibility to receive federal aid. This pace of progression is calculated by dividing the number of completed credits by the number of attempted credits in order to meet SAP maximum completion timeframes.

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| Degree and Course Length | Credits for Completion | Maximum Timeframe | Pace |
| Undergraduate 3 years | 360 | 540 Credits (4.5 years) | 67% |
| Undergraduate 4 years | 480 | 720 Credits (6 years) | 67% |
| Taught Masters 12 months | 180 | 270 Credits (1.5 years) | 67% |
| Research/PhD 12 months | 180 | 270 Credits (1.5 years) | 67% |

Students must be studying at least half-time in order to be eligible for federal loans.

**Progression Guidelines for undergraduate students and postgraduate taught students**

* International students at the College in receipt of a Tier 4 visas are subject to regular monitoring of their attendance in accordance with the UK Government’s immigration rules.
* The College’s U.S. federal loans SAP policy applies the same rules for students enrolled on the same programme but not receiving U.S. federal loans, however, students who receive U.S. federal loans are subject to additional checks on their progress prior to their second disbursement during the academic year.
* They should progress towards completion as specified in the College’s academic regulations to remain eligible for federal loan funding.
* Methods of assessment will be determined in order to measure the specific learning outcomes of each course and will be communicated to students in the course specifications.
* Achievement of each course outcome depends on whether attendance requirements and assessment requirements have been met as stated in the course specification

**Progression guidelines for** **postgraduate research students**

* Postgraduate research students should complete their programme of study within the timeframe specified in the College’s academic regulations to remain eligible for federal loan funding.
* The College will not award federal loans to PhD students beyond four years of full time study or six years of part time study.
* They should progress towards completion as specified in the College’s academic regulations.
* Unless a student interrupts or takes an approved Leave of Absence (see Link: Leave of Absence Policy), a student’s academic progress will be formally reviewed at least once every twelve months at a progress review with their supervisor, unless the student has interrupted their studies and is consequently unavailable to attend a review within 12 months, in which case a review will take place not more than two months after the student has formally resumed their studies.

**Checking a student’s academic progress (all students)**

ISSO will check a student’s academic progress at the end of each payment period. Academic progress is checked using our student record system and where necessary through direct contact with the student’s School and/or Department. ISSO also receive weekly updates on Student Movements from Student Administration. For continuing students, we will determine the successful completion of previous academic period by checking that the student record has been rolled forward to the next academic year*.*

Students who make an application for federal aid after the first payment period will have their academic progress checked on our student record system and where necessary through direct contact with the student’s Schools and/or Department prior to their loan being underwritten.

**Procedures when a student is not progressing satisfactorily**

If we determine that a student has failed to progress satisfactorily at the required standard, we will notify the student that we are placing them on Financial Aid Warning. This warning will last from one payment period (i.e. until the next disbursement) and we will disburse the disbursement to the student during this time.

If the student regains satisfactory academic progress by the end of the subsequent payment period, we will disburse the next disbursement and the student will be removed from the Financial Aid Warning status.

If the student fails to regain satisfactory academic progress by the end of the subsequent payment period, they will be notified that they are no longer be eligible for further disbursement of financial aid. At that point, the student can only regain their eligibility if they submit an appeal that proves successful.

**Appeals**

A student who fails to meet SAP standards can submit an appeal of this determination to ISSO [link to us loans email address] within 14 days of being notified that their aid has been suspended. In their appeal, the student must:

* Include the grounds for the appeal. This should be the extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control that affected their progress (e.g. ill health, injury, bereavement or other special circumstances).
* State what has changed in their situation that will allow them to meet satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation date.
* Any other relevant information.

ISSO will call an Appeal Panel with appropriate College staff to consider the appeal on its merits. The Appeal Panel may require extra evidence, documentation and contributions from the student’s Supervisor/Tutors/School and/or Department.

The US Loans team will notify the student in writing of the Appeal Panel’s decision. This decision is final.

* If the appeal is unsuccessful, the student will no longer eligible for federal financial aid with immediate effect.
* If the appeal is successful, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for one payment period and given specific requirements to meet e.g. resitting and passing failed exams, submitting coursework or dissertations, making up lost module time etc. Eligibility for Financial Aid will be reinstated.
* At the end of the probationary period (usually one payment period), SAP will be re-evaluated according to the SAP policy and any conditions set in the appeal decision. If these requirements are met, the student will become eligible for financial aid. If these requirements are not met, the student will again become ineligible for financial aid. The student will need to fund their studies with their own money and try to meet SAP at a later time to become eligible again.

**Impact of Transfers, Withdrawals, Interruption, Incompletes and Repetitions on Satisfactory Academic Progress**

* Transfer of credits and module changes for the same grade level will count towards the 150% timeframe. We will only consider the credits that count towards the award being sought for the purposes of SAP.
* Students considering interrupting or withdrawing from their programme are encouraged to speak to their School and/or Department and to Student Administration, as well as the US Loans team to discuss loans eligibility and repayment options. If a student withdraws from the College at any point during their course, it will affect their SAP. It will mean that the student fails SAP and is ineligible to receive federal loans on the quantitative measure.
* There is no ‘incomplete’ status at the College.
* A students that is resitting examinations or assessments not in attendance is not eligible to receive federal loans until they pass the relevant credits and meet SAP requirements.
* Grades points from reassessment will be capped at the minimum pass mark.

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