

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

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<i>Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.</i>			

1. Introduction

- 1.1. US Federal Loan regulations require that students receiving Title IV Federal Student Aid Funds maintain satisfactory academic progress towards their degree requirements to be eligible to continue receiving federal aid. This policy applies to all eligible students, regardless of their mode of study, e.g., full-time, part-time, undergraduate, and postgraduate students.
- 1.2. In order to comply with US Government regulations, at the end of each payment period, students receiving Title IV Federal Student Aid Funds will be reviewed in order to confirm that satisfactory academic progression is being maintained. Loan funds for the following payment period will not be disbursed until we are able to confirm that a student is progressing satisfactorily towards the completion of their academic programme.
- 1.3. There are two measures SOAS monitors, one relating to the timeframe for completion, and the other relating to grades achieved. These requirements are more stringent than the progression measures required by SOAS's Academic Regulations, due to the US Federal Loan regulations. Both measures are considered cumulatively when assessing satisfactory academic progress. The determination of whether or not a student has made satisfactory academic progress is not complete until both the quantitative measure and qualitative measure have been reviewed (see below for details).

2. Quantitative (Timeframe) Measure

- 2.1. All undergraduate students must complete their programme in no more than 150% of the normal time taken to complete the programme. For example:
 - An undergraduate student pursuing a 3-year degree programme must be on track to complete the programme within a maximum of 4.5 years. As many SOAS modules are year-long, this means that normally a student cannot extend their studies by more than one year.
 - An undergraduate following a 4-year degree programme must be on track to complete the programme within 6 years.
- 2.2. The following quantitative measures apply to postgraduate students:
 - A postgraduate student pursuing a 1-year Masters programme must be on track to complete the programme within a maximum of 2 years.
 - For postgraduate research students, the maximum period of study is 4 years.
- 2.3. In terms of the pace of completion, undergraduate students must successfully complete at least 90 credits in each academic year, in line with SOAS's academic regulations, to progress to the next year. This equals a pace of 75% (90 credits out of 120 credits).
- 2.4. Undergraduate students who complete 60 out of 120 credits may retain their enrolment status but will not be permitted to progress to the next year until they have completed the remaining 60 credits in the subsequent year. Undergraduate students in receipt of Federal Student Aid Funds, however, may only repeat one year of study as they will otherwise not be able to complete within the maximum timeframe.
- 2.5. Postgraduate research student progression will be considered each academic year in line with the Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations by an annual progression review.
- 2.6. Postgraduate taught student progression will be considered each payment period. At this point, student progression is measured against the academic requirements for the taught elements of a student's programme of study.
- 2.7. Repeat study for postgraduate students is not normally permitted.
- 2.8. If a student falls below this threshold and is required to take a year out to reassess, they will not be eligible for funding.

- 2.9. The table below provides an overview of different types of programmes, their length and maximum timeframe as per this policy. These are examples only; the list is not exhaustive. Students should refer to their published programme specifications for detailed on the published length of their course.

Degree	Published Course Length	Credits for Completion	Maximum timeframe
Bachelor's degree with Honours	3 years	360	540 credits 4.5 years
Taught Master's degree	1 year	180	270 credits 2 years
PhD programme	3 years	180	270 credits 4 years

- 2.10. The following stipulations also apply:

- Repeat study will count towards the quantitative measure. Grades achieved during repeat study are capped at the minimum passing grade.
- Credit hours completed at another institution and accepted by SOAS towards the student's programme of study as per our Admissions Policy count as both attempted and completed hours. Details on the recognition of prior learning and how they affect students' credit profile and final award can be found in the General and Admissions Regulations.
- Modules in which the student remained past the module change deadline but did not subsequently complete will be considered when determining satisfactory academic progress. The modules will be considered 'incomplete' and will count towards their assessment attempts.
- Students must make satisfactory academic progress in line with SOAS's regulations. Where applicable, this includes completing remedial coursework in the required timeframe. Students who do not meet this requirement may be withdrawn from their programme of study by SOAS.
- SOAS will monitor students in receipt of Title IV funding and their academic progress in relation to the maximum timeframe and the maximum period of registration. Students who are deemed to be unable to complete within the maximum timeframe will be withdrawn by SOAS.

3. Qualitative (Grade) Measure

3.1. All students must meet the following minimum requirements:

- An undergraduate student must maintain a grade average of at least 40%, in line with graduation requirements.
- A taught postgraduate student must maintain a grade average of at least 50%, in line with graduation requirements.
- A research postgraduate student requires a satisfactory progression report from their supervisory team.

3.2. Where applicable, remedial coursework is considered in the qualitative measure when assessing satisfactory academic progress and monitored in line with SOAS's regulations. Non-credit bearing modules, including remedial coursework (where applicable), form part of a student's programme structure and are treated like credit-bearing modules when determining a student's enrolment status.

4. Programmes of Study of More Than Two Years

4.1. Any student enrolled in a programme of study of more than two years in length must meet the annual progression requirements for their programme of study as outlined in the SOAS regulations and relevant programme specifications. Students are required to meet annual progression requirements to meet the overall graduation requirements.

5. Impact of Failed or Incomplete Modules

5.1. Modules that have been failed or where the student has failed to submit will count towards both the timeframe and the grade measure. The modules will be considered 'incomplete' and will count towards their assessment attempts. Modules that are incomplete due to approved mitigating circumstances will count towards the timeframe measure, but not the grade measure.

6. Failure to Achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress

6.1. Students whose academic progress is evaluated each payment period and who do not meet the minimum SAP requirements will be advised by the Fees and Funding team, and will be subject to a financial aid warning for the next payment period. Students who are subject to a financial aid warning are eligible to receive Title IV Federal Student Aid Funds for one payment period. However, at that end of that period, if the student still does not meet the minimum SAP requirements, they will cease to be eligible for Title IV funding and payment will be stopped.

6.2. Students whose academic progress is monitored annually are not eligible for a financial aid warning and will have their financial aid suspended if they are found to not have made satisfactory academic progress.

7. Appeal

- 7.1. A student who has failed to achieve the minimum SAP requirements may appeal the loss of financial aid eligibility within 14 days of being notified that they have not achieved SAP. Appeals may be submitted only on the basis of emergencies or serious mitigating circumstances (e.g. serious health concerns, family emergencies, etc.). In their appeal, students must outline how their circumstances have changed in a way that will enable them to make SAP by the end of the next evaluation period. Students would normally be expected to provide supporting documentation with their appeal. Appeals must be submitted via email to the Fees and Funding Team (funding@soas.ac.uk).
- 7.2. If the appeal is upheld, they will have Probation status for the next payment period. If they have not attained the SAP requirements by the end of that period, then funding will be ceased.
- 7.3. If the appeal is not upheld, the student will lose financial aid eligibility and all payments will stop.
- 7.4. Where it is determined that a student will not be able to make SAP within one payment period, they may be placed on Probation with an academic plan. This academic plan will be reviewed at the end of each payment period to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan.
- 7.5. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they meet the minimum SAP requirement in the next payment period or successfully follow an academic plan designed to ensure they will be able to meet SAP by a specific point in time.
- 7.6. If the requirements of the academic plan are not met, funding will be ceased.
- 7.7. If the appeal is not upheld, funding will be ceased and SOAS will inform the student of their decision in writing. If the student is eligible to continue with their studies in line with SOAS's regulations but ineligible for Title IV funding, they may continue with their studies but will need to use their own money to fund their studies. Details on regaining eligibility can be found below.
- 7.8. If the appeal is not upheld and the student is not eligible to continue with their studies in line with the University's regulations, they will be withdrawn from their programme of study.
- 7.9. Appeal decisions made by SOAS are final.

8. Reinstatement

- 8.1. After a period of being ineligible, a student may regain eligibility to receive Title IV Federal Student Aid Funds once they have demonstrated a return to Satisfactory Academic Progression, provided they can complete the degree programme within the maximum timeframe.