

Villanova University
Office of Financial Assistance
Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Graduate Students

The purpose of this policy is to provide graduate students with information on Villanova University's Satisfactory Academic Progress Standard for Federal Title IV Sources of Aid (Federal Direct Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan). This document describes the qualitative and quantitative standards that make up this policy, how standards are measured, and how financial aid is reinstated if eligibility is lost during enrollment.

Process Overview

The Office of Financial Assistance is required in accordance with Federal Title IV regulations to monitor satisfactory academic progress for students who receive federal financial assistance. In order to continue to receive financial aid while enrolled at Villanova University, graduate students must maintain the minimum standards as defined below. The satisfactory academic progress standards for financial aid that are listed below are either the same or stricter than the individual Colleges' academic policy for students enrolled in the same academic program who are not receiving financial assistance.

Students must make both quantitative and qualitative progress towards their educational goals each academic year to receive federal financial assistance. Villanova University's academic year consists of two regular semesters (fall and spring) and the summer sessions.

Qualitative Standard

Graduate and Doctoral Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 calculated at the end of the academic year in order to be considered a student making satisfactory academic progress for financial aid consideration. Only credits earned at Villanova University will affect the cumulative GPA calculation. The grade point average from transfer coursework at a previous college or university will not affect a student's Villanova University grade point average.

Quantitative Standard

Students must pass the minimum number of credit hours during the academic year that is associated with their enrollment status for that academic year. For example, if a student is enrolled full-time in the College of Engineering, the student would be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits for the academic year, and must complete a minimum of 12 credit hours. If a student is enrolled half-time in the Villanova School of Business, which is a minimum of 3 credit hours per semester, then the student must complete at least 6 credit hours for the academic year. The following chart defines how the quantitative standard applies to students by their college and enrollment status:

For Graduate Students	College of Arts and Sciences	College of Engineering	College of Nursing	Villanova School of Business
Minimum Full-Time Credits Attempted Annually	12 or more	12 or more	12 or more	12 or more
Minimum Half-time Credits Attempted Annually	6 to 11	6 to 11	6 to 11	6 to 11
Minimum Less-than Half-time Credits Attempted Annually	1 to 5	1 to 5	1 to 5	1 to 5
Credits Required for SAP	College of Arts and Sciences	College of Engineering	College of Nursing	Villanova School of Business
Minimum Credits Required if Full-time for SAP	12	12	12	12
Minimum Credits Required if Half-time for SAP	6	6	6	6
Minimum Credits Required if Less-than Half-time for SAP	All attempted hours must be complete	All attempted hours must be complete	All attempted hours must be complete	All attempted hours must be complete

Credits are considered successfully completed when a grade of A, B, C, or D is earned. **Failures (“F” and “NF”), INCOMPLETES (“I”), WITHDRAWALS (“W,” “WX,” “Y”), MISSING GRADES (“N” or NG”), Grade of Audit (“AU”), Grades of “In Progress” (“IP”)** are not successfully completed credits.**

*****“In Progress” Exception for students pursuing Doctoral of Philosophy in College of Arts and Sciences**

Per the Department chair and Dean of Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences: the “IP” or “In Progress” grade given for Dissertation or Dissertation Research is an indication that the graduate student who receives this grade is making satisfactory progress towards completing his/her doctoral dissertation. (Fr. James McCartney 8/8/2011).

Repeated Coursework

As defined by the U.S. Department of Education, Villanova University will include and fund any repeated coursework previously taken by the student in his or her enrollment status one time. Villanova University will only allow a student to retake previously passed coursework one time and count the coursework in

the student's enrollment status (e.g., the student is retaking the coursework in an attempt to meet an academic standard such as a better grade) for financial aid consideration.

A student may not receive Federal funds to retake previously passed coursework if the student is required to retake the course due to the student failing other coursework. For example, if the student is enrolled in four classes in the fall semester and fails one of those courses, the Dean may require the student to repeat the previously passed three courses along with the course that the student failed. If the student retakes the four courses in the spring, only the course that the student failed may be counted toward the student's enrollment status.

If a graduate/doctoral student is repeating the same course for thesis or dissertation continuation, this can be counted towards academic progress. There are no other exceptions.

Pace (Maximum Timeframe)

Within the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy, Villanova University is required to establish a maximum time frame in which graduate and doctoral students must complete their program of study in order to remain eligible for financial aid funds. The maximum time frame for graduate/doctoral degree completion at Villanova is as follows:

	College of Arts and Sciences	College of Engineering	College of Nursing	Villanova School of Business
Graduate Students (either M.S or M.A)	6 years	7 years	5 years	5 years if full-time, 10 years if part-time
Doctoral students	10 years	8 years	8 years	N/A

Once a student reaches the maximum amount of credits attempted as specified by the program(s) for graduation, the student will be ineligible to receive further Federal Title IV aid. Students in this category may submit appeals in accordance with the Appeals section of this policy.

Measuring Academic Progress

Academic Records are reviewed by the Office of Financial Assistance at the end of each academic year in May after spring grades are entered. Measurement begins with the Fall semester and ends with the last summer session. Students who were enrolled during the Fall and/or Spring semesters and who failed to meet the qualitative and/or quantitative requirements for academic progress can attempt to complete additional credits and raise their cumulative GPA during the summer sessions at Villanova University. Upon completion of additional credits, a new determination of academic progress will be made.

All financial assistance applicants are subject to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards regardless of whether or not they received financial assistance previously.

When the Minimum Standard of Academic Progress is Not Achieved

A student who does not make satisfactory academic progress will be placed on financial assistance suspension until the requirements are met. During this suspension, a student is denied Federal aid. The student will be notified in writing of the financial assistance suspension.

Appeals

If a student has failed to achieve satisfactory academic progress, the student can appeal the decision to the Office of Financial Assistance. The appeal must be submitted in writing along with an academic plan using the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy form found on the Office of Financial Assistance website and specify the extenuating circumstances which prevented the student from achieving academic progress. The following types of mitigating circumstances may be considered when a student appeals: injury or extended illness of the student, death in the family, or a change in educational objectives. Mitigating circumstances do not include the withdrawal from classes to avoid failing grades, pursuing a second major or a second degree. The student must explain what has changed that will allow him/her to make satisfactory academic progress by the end of the semester. A copy of the student's academic plan developed in conjunction with the student's faculty advisor, academic dean or his/her representative also must be submitted. The Office of Financial Assistance may request additional documentation and/or require a personal interview with the student.

Students must appeal within two weeks of receiving a notice from the Office of Financial Assistance of the financial aid suspension. Appeals will not be accepted after the two week period has passed and the student will be responsible for all charges on their student account. The student will receive a reply from the Office of Financial Assistance within two weeks of receipt of their appeal. A graduate or doctoral student can receive a SAP appeal waiver once.

A student who is denied assistance based on qualitative or quantitative standards will be considered for assistance when standards have been achieved.

Academic Plan

The academic plan is a written document developed by the student and his/her college that ensures that the student is able to meet the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards by a specific point in time. It could include qualitative and quantitative requirements necessary to achieve that plan. The academic plan could take the student to completion of their program rather than meeting the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress standard at a specific point in time as determined by an appropriate academic official.

Financial Aid Probation

Villanova University will assign this status to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress and who has successfully appealed and had eligibility for aid reinstated. If the Office of Financial Assistance determines that the Academic Progress Standards can be waived for one semester, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation. As part of the student's Financial Aid Probation, the office requires a student, along with their academic advisor, to develop and submit an academic plan that includes a strategy of improving progress and reaching the student's educational goals. A student placed on Financial Aid Probation may receive Federal and Villanova University funds for one semester. The student will be required to meet the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at the end of the semester or meet the terms and conditions of their academic plan as well as the plan established by the academic advisor.

At the end of the probationary semester, the Office of Financial Assistance will determine if academic progress requirements have been met or if the student continues on the path of the designated academic

plan. If requirements have been met, the probationary status will be removed. If academic requirements have not been met, and the student has deviated from the academic plan, the student may not receive Federal funds for the following semester.

A student may only be granted one semester of Financial Aid Probation during their academic career.

Reinstatement of Financial Aid

Once financial assistance has been discontinued, it will be reinstated provided:

- The student has successfully achieved the required number of credits and cumulative grade point average; and,
- The student has requested reinstatement in writing.

Reinstatement is not automatic. The student is responsible for making certain that the grades and credits completed have been properly posted with the Office of the Registrar prior to requesting reinstatement of financial assistance. Students are encouraged to file all financial assistance application forms by Villanova University's established deadline so that once reinstatement has been achieved, he or she can be considered for assistance as quickly as possible.

Students Returning After a Year or More

If a student previously left the university after failing to make satisfactory academic progress and returns to the university, the student is required to appeal his/her status. The student must submit an academic plan. If the appeal is granted, the student is placed on financial aid probation for one semester. The student's academic status will be reviewed after the semester to determine if the student successfully made satisfactory academic progress.