

Boston College's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Federal Financial Aid—Graduate Students

Updated August 28, 2023

Federal regulations (Sections 668.16(e), 668.32(f) and 668.34) require that schools monitor the academic progress of each applicant for federal financial assistance and that the school certify that the applicant is making [satisfactory academic progress](#) toward earning his/her degree. This determination of progress must be made at least once a year and before the financial aid office disburses any federal aid funds for the subsequent semester. At Boston College, students are reviewed annually, at the end of each spring semester, for compliance with the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements.

Students who are aware of learning or other disabilities should immediately contact the [Disability Services Office](#) so that appropriate accommodations can be made. A student with a documented disability and functional limitations is still held to the same academic expectations as other students. If the student is registered with the Disability Services Office and receiving appropriate accommodations, the student should be able to maintain satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility purposes.

Pursuant to Federal regulations, the following constitutes Boston College's Financial Aid policy on satisfactory academic progress for graduate students.

Maximum credits/courses to earn degree: The maximum time frame cannot exceed 150% of the published length of the program measured in credits/courses attempted.

Graduate programs credit/course requirements vary depending on their degree and school and will be determined by their Dean.

- **Withdrawals:** grades of W are counted as courses attempted and count toward the maximum timeframe.
- **Incompletes:** grades of I are counted as courses attempted and count toward the maximum timeframe.
- **Audited Courses:** students do not earn any academic credits for audited courses. They do not count in the calculation of “attempted credits.” Students can find additional information in each school's catalog.

- **Pass/Fail Courses:** these credits do count within the total of attempted and earned credits.
- **Transfer Credits** accepted for the student’s academic program or degree are counted when measuring the maximum time frame to complete the degree or program. While credits may be accepted towards a Boston College degree, grades do not transfer. Check with your school’s Dean’s Office for additional information concerning how transfer credits are evaluated.
- **Academic Re-Admission:** Boston College must count all prior credits attempted for determining the eligibility for federal aid programs of students readmitted.
- **Change in Majors:** Students who change their majors will be expected to complete all degree requirements before the maximum attempted credits allowed.
- **Retaking a Course:** Repeated courses are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned hours. A student is allowed to repeat a course only twice.
- **Summer Courses:** These courses count as attempted and earned hours.

Quantitative Standards Definition

The quantitative standard measures the amount of academic work completed by a student on a cumulative basis towards the completion of a program of study within a specified timeframe. This standard expects a student to earn a certain percentage of the credits they attempt within a given year. The formula used to determine your credit attainment is earned credits divided by total scheduled (registered) credits. Students are considered to be making satisfactory progress when their credit attainment is equal to or greater than the percentages below:

Total Scheduled Credits	Minimum Earned Credits
Less than 25 credits	50% of scheduled credits
25–50 credits	55% of scheduled credits
51–75 credits	60% of scheduled credits
76–100 credits	65% of scheduled credits

Scheduled credits are those credits for which students were still officially registered at the conclusion of each semester’s Add/Drop period.

Qualitative Standards: Grade Point Averages

The qualitative standard evaluates the quality of a student's academic work. This is most commonly measured by evaluating a student's grade point average (GPA). Graduate students are expected to maintain a minimum GPA as specified below:

College/School	Minimum GPA Required
Carroll School of Management (CSOM)	2.67
Connell School of Nursing (CSON)	3.0
Lynch School of Education and Human Development (LSEHD)	3.0
Graduate School of the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences (MCAS)	3.0
School of Theology and Ministry (STM)	3.0
School of Social Work (SSW)	3.0
Law School	2.0
Woods College of Advancing Studies (WCAS)	3.0

Grade Changes

If grade changes occur after the annual SAP review, for most students, grade changes will be factored into the student's SAP calculations at the time of the next formal evaluation. However, Students who are receiving aid on an appeal (conditional) basis must resolve all incomplete grades BEFORE the Office of Student Services can make a final determination that they meet the satisfactory academic progress guidelines. Students must report any grade changes that impact their aid eligibility directly to the Office of Student Services. Grade changes must be submitted to the Office of Student Services by October 15 for fall semester aid applicants and by March 15 for spring semester aid applicants.

Consult with your Dean's Office for additional policies concerning grade changes and appeals.

Procedure

Federal regulations require that these standards apply to all students, even to first-time aid applicants who have previously enrolled at Boston College, or to those who have not been formally placed on probation.

Loss of Eligibility Due to Lack of Satisfactory Progress

A student who has lost eligibility to participate in federal student aid programs for reasons of academic progress can regain that eligibility only by enrolling at Boston College at his/her own expense and demonstrating that he/she is capable of completing a semester without any failures, incompletes, or withdrawals and showing the ability to complete his/her degree requirements in a more regular fashion. **The mere passage of time will not ordinarily restore eligibility to a student who has lost eligibility for failure to make satisfactory progress.**

Students who have been academically excluded from the University but who are subsequently given permission to re-enroll are not automatically eligible to continue to participate in federal, state, or institutional aid programs.

Admissions decisions are totally separate from funding decisions.

Right to Appeal

Students have the right to appeal any decision of ineligibility to continue to receive financial assistance. Students will typically be notified if they are not meeting the required SAP standards over the summer (mid/late June). Appeals should be filed as soon as possible after status notification is provided. The appeal may not be based upon your need for the assistance or your lack of knowledge that your assistance was in jeopardy. An appeal would normally be based upon some unusual situation or condition that prevented you from passing more of your courses, or that necessitated that you withdraw from classes. Examples of possible situations include documented serious illness, severe injury, or death of a family member.

Appeal Requirements

To appeal, students will need to provide

1. A written statement detailing:
 1. The circumstances surrounding their case and explain why they were not able to maintain SAP.
 2. An explanation of how these circumstances have changed and why they will be able to regain SAP going forward.
2. An academic plan
Students should also meet with the Dean (or appropriate academic representative) and obtain an academic plan. This plan must be

specific as to when and how the student will achieve the requisite SAP standards (GPA, progression, timeframe).

Students should upload these required documents into the [Document Upload portal](#) and notify their [financial aid counselor](#). These materials will be reviewed by an SAP appeal committee and a decision will be made. All decisions of the SAP appeal committee are final.

Approved Appeals

Students whose appeals are granted will receive aid on a conditional basis for one semester. The conditions will be outlined in the letter sent to the student granting the appeal. The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will review the student's record at the end of the semester to determine his/her status for the following semester.

Regaining Eligibility

Students may regain eligibility for financial aid during the academic year if they reach the minimum standards of satisfactory progress. Students may continue to attend courses at Boston College without the assistance of federal funding.

Additional Appeals

Students who fail to meet the terms of their original appeal are not allowed to submit a secondary appeal based on being “close” to the terms outlined in the original appeal. Students are eligible to submit a subsequent SAP appeal if they have experienced a new circumstance while on their probationary term of aid. This new appeal will be evaluated using the same process described above. All decisions reached will be final and will not impact decisions made by academic areas where the student may also be appealing for readmission etc. BC does not have a limit on the number of times a student can appeal their financial aid SAP status.

Retroactive Appeals

BC does not accept appeals for any academic term after that academic period has ended.

If you would like a paper copy of this notice, please contact the Office of Student Services at studentservices@bc.edu.