



## Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the term used to indicate a student's successful completion of coursework leading to the awarding of a degree. The Federal Aid Administrator must monitor the progress of each student towards the completion of a degree in order to meet federal and state guidelines governing the administration of student financial assistance. Students that fall behind in coursework or fail to achieve minimum standards for grade point average and completion of classes may lose eligibility to receive all types of US Federal Aid administered by Mary Immaculate College.

### SAP Monitoring

There are two components involved in monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress, quantitative and qualitative. Students should note that failure to comply with any component may result in a loss of aid eligibility. The two components are as follows:

#### 1. Minimum QCA

The Qualitative Component requires that students maintain a QCA of 2.0 or above without any 'F' grades or an academic standing consistent with the college's requirements for graduation.

#### 2. Completion Rate

The quantitative component requires that students meet the required pace of progression by completing a minimum of 2/3 (67%) of cumulative credits attempted. Pace of progression ensures that students complete their degrees within a maximum timeframe. For example, if a student attempts 30 ECTS in a semester, to qualify for SAP, 20 earned credits are needed. Students may not receive financial aid beyond 150% of the normal timeframe for the programme e.g. 6 years for a 4-year degree and 3 years for a 2-year degree.

SAP is monitored at the end of each semester to confirm eligibility to receive funding for the following semester. Students who fail to maintain SAP will be placed on a Federal Aid Warning Status. Such students will receive funding during the following semester but they must meet the required academic standards at the end of the semester while on FA Warning Status. Otherwise their eligibility for Direct Loan funding will be suspended. Once suspended, they have to appeal and their appeal has to be approved before they can be placed on FA Probation Status and funded for the next semester. Therefore, a student who fails to maintain SAP during two consecutive semesters will be deemed ineligible for funding for the following loan period.

Students who do not meet the SAP requirements are notified via their official Mary Immaculate College email.

Student performance is formally reviewed at Examination Boards each semester. Students with deficient grades are allowed to progress to the next semester but are required to clear all deficient grades at the end of the academic year in order to progress to the next year of the programme.

A student must meet all requirements of SAP policy in order to remain eligible to receive funding for the following academic year. .

### Assessment

Assessment can take a variety of forms and can occur at various stages throughout the semester. The faculty member responsible for teaching the module is required to inform students at the first scheduled lecture hour what the arrangements are regarding assessments in the module (or sequence of modules, if 'M' graded), i.e. what are the objectives of the module, what are the criteria on which assessment is to be based and the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument associated with the module. The faculty member must also indicate the repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module.

The timing of assessments in a module, including any end-of-semester examination, is at the discretion of the faculty member(s) responsible for the module. The faculty member(s) is/are required to announce the general timing of all assessments at the first meeting of the class. Students that miss an end-of-semester examination must contact the Student Services Office and Federal Aid administrator for advice, as a matter of urgency.

### Grades

Grade	Standard	Affects QCA
A1	First Honours	Yes
A2	First Honours	Yes
B1	Honours 2.1	Yes
B2	Honours 2.1	Yes
B3	Honours 2.2	Yes
C1	Honours 2.2	Yes
C2	Third Honours	Yes
C3	Third Honours	Yes
D1	Compensating Fail (this grade does not apply to Teaching Practice)	Yes
D2	Compensating Fail (this grade does not apply to Teaching Practice)	Yes
F	Fail	Yes
NG	Fail	Yes
P	Pass in a module taken on a pass/fail basis	No
N	Failure in a module taken on a pass/fail basis	No

G	Audit: verifies attendance only	No
I	Certified illness/immediate family bereavement (uncapped repeat)	No
M	Awarded in the case of projects spanning multiple semesters or sequences of definitely linked modules	No

***‘NG’ Grades - Non-Submission of Assessment Material***

‘NG’ grades are awarded only in cases where a student has submitted no assessment material for a module and no certification has been received to support the request of an ‘I’ grade. All ‘NG’ grades shall be automatically converted to ‘F’ grades by the Student Services Office after the scheduled Student Status Committee Meeting following their award.

***‘I’ Grades***

Grade ‘I’ shall be awarded only in cases where the student has not completed all of the requirements for a module and has submitted certifiable evidence of medical and/or psychological illness or immediate family crisis where the presence of the student is indispensable.

Students must submit satisfactory evidence to support the request for an ‘I’ grade and such certification is valid only when it comes via the Student Medical Centre, Counselling or Chaplaincy services.

All requests for ‘I’ Grades are considered by the College’s ‘I’ Grade Committee which normally meets each semester, 7 days after the last day of exams. If approved by the ‘I’ Grade Committee, the Student Services Office will insert the ‘I’ Grade on the student’s record.

***Students shall clear all ‘I’ grades no later than the annual repeat examination period following the award of the ‘I’ grade.*** It is the responsibility of any student who receives an ‘I’ grade to contact the faculty member(s) responsible for the module immediately following the publication of the grade, to determine how the outstanding requirements are to be completed. The faculty member(s) responsible for the module shall determine how best the student can satisfy the outstanding requirements. If a faculty member is unavailable, the student should contact the relevant head of department for a decision.

Clearance grades (including ‘I’ grades) will only be processed following the annual repeat examinations. However, in the case of prospective graduating students, clearance of ‘I’ grades awarded from the autumn semester ONLY may be processed before the Summer Exam Board or after the annual repeat examinations.

Students who receive a second ‘I’ grade for the same module(s) in the annual repeat examinations (up to a maximum of 2 modules in any one semester) will be permitted to clear the module(s) on a link-in\* basis during the following academic year on an uncapped basis. Students who receive an ‘I’ grade for the first time in a module during the annual repeat examinations will retain their original grade. *‘I’ grades are only relevant for the academic year*

*and semester in which they are awarded and do not carry forward to the next academic year, therefore do not affect the minimum GPA and completion rate stipulated in this policy.*

Under exceptional circumstances, and with the express permission of the Vice-President Academic Affairs, a student may be allowed to defer a formal examination until the next repeat opportunity.

**‘G’ Grades** ‘G’ is an audit grade, which verifies attendance only at a module, and does not affect QCA.

Only modules that are additional to course requirements may be taken on an audit basis.

### **‘M’ Grades**

An M grade is awarded for projects that span multiple semesters or for modules that are clearly linked. The final year project (FYP), which is completed throughout fourth year, is assessed with an M grade. An M grade is, in effect, a holding grade in the sense that it is awarded on the basis that other requirements must be met before it is converted into a quality grade.

### **SAP Probation**

Students that fail to meet academic standards will receive a warning and will be placed on probation during the following semester. Students on probation will be permitted to receive financial aid, but must meet the required academic standards during that semester in order to avoid ineligibility for funding.

Students will be notified of probation or suspension by letter and/or email.

### **SAP Appeals:**

A student who loses eligibility for financial aid may appeal the decision by providing information that demonstrates their failure to maintain SAP was due to extenuating circumstances. Appeals must indicate how the issues experienced have been resolved permitting a return to successful academic progress. If an appeal is granted, a student may be placed on financial aid probation and asked to follow an academic plan that will lead to meeting minimum SAP requirements. If a student does not meet the terms of probation, eligibility for financial aid will cease and all remaining aid will be cancelled. Students should note that subsequent appeals of the same nature are not permitted. Once a student loses eligibility, the only way to regain eligibility for financial aid is to meet SAP requirements.

SAP appeals do not relate to appeals against exam results or test scores and the outcome of a SAP appeal has no bearing on results achieved or grades awarded. SAP decisions are based on official exam results and test scores only.

A student may appeal a decision to suspend eligibility for financial aid if they can demonstrate that failure to maintain SAP was due to extenuating circumstances, such as the following:

- Serious illness or injury
- Death of a family member
- Divorce or family difficulties
- Financial difficulties
- Interpersonal problems

Appeals must be submitted in writing, together with supporting documentation, within ten days of the notification of suspension. An SAP Appeals Committee will consider each case and its decision is final.

Where eligibility for financial aid is suspended, the period of suspension will be included in determining the programme completion rate, which stipulates students may not receive financial aid beyond 150% of degree programme requirements.

#### \* Link-in Repeat

If a student fails modules in the annual repeat examinations (i.e. the student has 'deficient' modules) they are required to take the deficient modules again the following academic year. This involves attending lectures, tutorials, etc. for these deficient modules and taking exams for these modules at the end of that semester. Modules repeated in this way are uncapped. However, if a student has to repeat these modules again during the annual repeat examinations, they will once again be capped at grade C3. For example, if a student failed two modules in the autumn semester and again in the annual repeat examinations in August, they are required to clear these modules on a 'link-in repeat' basis the following academic year. These are the only modules students can take while linking in, i.e. students cannot progress to the next year's modules. In effect, the programme of study will be extended by one year, which is included in the requirement to complete programmes at 150% of degree requirements. There is a fee payable per module repeated on a link-in basis.