



Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

It is a student's responsibility to read and understand the information contained within this policy.

Overview

The University of Birmingham is certified to administer US Federal student aid.

US Federal regulations (34CFR 668.16, 668.32, 668.34, 446.42) require that all students, who are in receipt of US Federal Student Aid (FSA), be fully enrolled on an eligible education course, and be judged to be maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Failure to maintain SAP can result in the loss of eligibility to receive further funding. It is the responsibility of the institution (University of Birmingham) to monitor SAP and, where necessary, to suspend or withhold eligibility to receive Federal Funding.

SAP checking process

Payment Period	New Students	Continuing Students
1 – Semester 1	Registration check only	Progression and registration check
2 – Semester 2	Quantitative and Qualitative checks conducted at the end of payment period 1 for those on 1 year programmes only.*	Quantitative and Qualitative checks conducted at the end of payment period 1

* All students on courses longer than 1 year will have their SAP checked at the end of the academic year, prior to them commencing their next academic year.

Please note, that for Postgraduate Students that commence a new programme during the main academic year, registration checks will apply to any initial disbursement due.

1. Satisfactory Academic Progress Criteria

The University of Birmingham has robust academic regulations that set out the parameters of satisfactory academic progress, this will be checked at the end of each term. Full details can be found in [University of Birmingham regulations, Section 7 – Assessment, Progression and Award](#)

2. Progression

In order to progress to the next year of study and remain in good standing for Financial Aid purposes, a student must complete the following:

Undergraduate Programmes

A Registered Student is expected to meet the minimum credit requirements and standard as indicated in section 7.3.1 of the [University of Birmingham regulations, Section 7 – Assessment, Progression and Award](#). If a student achieves the required standard they will be placed in good standing for financial aid. If the marks do not meet the required standard the student will be given a



Financial Aid Warning (see section 5). If the student fails at the next attempt and does not proceed on their course of study then Financial Aid will be suspended.

If the student continues on their course without Financial Aid and then meets the minimum standard and credit requirements, they can become eligible for Financial Aid, provided they have not exceeded 150% of the published length of the education programme as measured in credits, this is sufficient for disbursements to be released.

Postgraduate Programmes

A Registered Student must achieve the learning outcomes set out in the programme specifications, subject to any additional requirements specified therein approved by the Senate. Enquiries will be made with the academic department where necessary by the Funding, Graduation & Awards team.

3. Quantitative SAP Requirements (Pace)

Students on programmes at all levels are expected to be in attendance on at least a half-time basis and may not take more than 150% of the published length of the education programme as measured in credits. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative completion rate of 67% as calculated by the number of completed credits by the number of attempted credits, this is in order to meet SAP maximum timeframes. This time scale includes any previous periods of study for at other institutions for the same programme. Examples of pace can be seen below:

Published programme length	Programme length in credits	Maximum timeframe for completion	Pace
Undergraduate 3 year programme	360	540 credits (4 years, 6 months)	67%
Undergraduate 4 year programme	480	720 credits (6 years)	67%
Postgraduate 1 year taught programmes	180	270 credits (1 year 6 months)	67%
Postgraduate research degree 3 years + writing up period*	Not applicable	6 years	67% (time)

*Please note that postgraduate research degrees have an additional year added to the published programme length to allow for the writing up period.

For the avoidance of doubt, students must be studying at least half-time in order to be eligible for federal loans at a foreign school.

If a student has attended part of the programme below full time, then this calculation is based on the amount of credits accepted as part of the students programme transfer to the University. For example, if the University is accepting 30 credits out of 60 credits, the pace would be 30/30, 100% pace. When all credits from a previous programme are unrelated and not accepted, these credits will not be included within pace.

A student enrolled for a payment period must attempt to undertake all credit modules within that payment period. In the event that a student fails to complete a module (incomplete or by failing the assessment), this will be reflected in their progression and thus negatively affect their academic grade. This will impact on their pace requirements. Students may be permitted to re-sit modules (as



per arrangements for their programme of study), this would normally be by resitting an assessment during the current academic year. If a student is required to resit the year of study in part or full, this will contribute towards the 150% maximum timeframe (pace).

If a student is considering withdrawal from a programme, it is recommended they contact the Funding, Graduation & Awards team by email (USloans@contacts.bham.ac.uk) and also review the University's Return of Title IV Funds policy to understand the implications of this on their loan eligibility. It is also recommended a student contact the Taught Student Administration team to understand the withdrawal process, they will also be able to advise if any completed credits are eligible for a lower exit award. Please note that withdrawals will also count towards pace, for example if a student attempted 30 credits and then withdraws from the programme of study, they would have completed 0/30 and be a 0% pace.

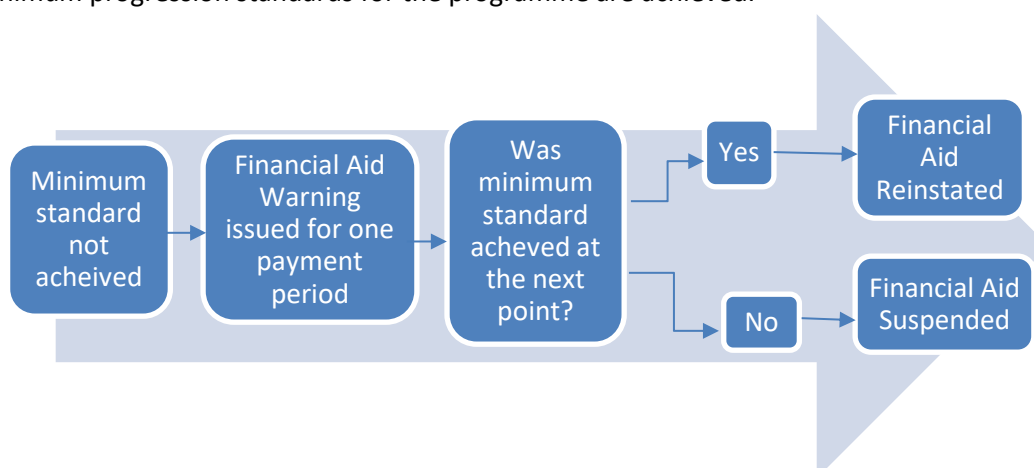
Students are required to meet any relevant contact points each term which will be checked and verified by the Funding, Graduation & Awards team.

4. Qualitative SAP Requirements

In order to determine in year progression for the purposes of releasing disbursements, qualitative SAP checks will be carried out with the student's department of study. Examples of the grading scale used can be seen below:

Programme Level	Pass mark
Undergraduate programmes	40% minimum (Class III)
Postgraduate taught programmes	Weighted mean mark of at least 50 in the taught and dissertation components

Funding, Graduation & Awards will contact the department directly to ascertain if the minimum grades are being achieved as per the standards outlined in section 2 of this policy. If the department reports concerns, a Financial Aid Warning will be administered for the following payment period. If minimum standards are not achieved at the end of the payment period in which the student is subject to a Financial Aid Warning, Financial Aid will be suspended until a time that minimum progression standards for the programme are achieved.





5. Financial Aid Warning

Students that fail to make Satisfactory Academic Progress will firstly be issued with a 'Financial Aid Warning'. This warning will last for 1 payment period (ie until the next disbursement), during which time a student can still receive Financial Aid. If the student then meets the SAP parameters after the warning period, their Financial Aid will continue as normal. Students that fail to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress by the next disbursement will no longer be eligible for Aid, unless they are successful in an appeal (see below).

6. Appeals Procedure

Students who do not meet SAP after their warning status will then be ineligible but have the right to appeal within 14 calendar days of notification, submitted the Funding, Graduation & Awards team. The Student must put this appeal in writing, including the circumstances for their appeal with accompanying evidence if appropriate. Circumstances that may warrant an appeal are, but not limited to emergency conditions such as extended illness of the student or a family member, death of a relative, or catastrophic events. Students are asked to include in their letter why, after the point of appeal, they would be able to meet the requirements of their course and the University SAP policy going forward.

Appeals should be addressed to Jessica Bates, Funding Graduation & Awards Officer and Primary Destination Point Administrator for Financial Aid at the University of Birmingham by email to USLoans@contacts.bham.ac.uk or in writing to:

Funding, Graduation & Awards,
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

The decision of the appeal will be communicated within 14 working days in writing of a complete appeal being received. All decisions made are final and no further appeal on the same grounds will be permissible.

Please note that no further disbursements will be made unless the Financial Aid appeal is successful.

7. Financial Aid Probation

If an appeal is deemed successful, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for one further payment period where SAP will be measured once again.

A student who has had their Financial Aid suspended is suspended for Aid purposes only and can continue to self-fund their study at the University. Students can regain eligibility for Financial Aid once again once they meet the aforementioned SAP requirements.



8. Further Advice

Students who are considering withdrawing from their programme are encouraged to contact the US Loans team by email to USLoans@contacts.bham.ac.uk to seek advice on how this will affect their loan eligibility.