Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Graduate Students

Federal Regulations require all schools who participate in Federal financial aid programs (for graduate students this includes Direct Loans, Perkins Loan, Graduate PLUS, and Work-Study) to measure a student's progress toward meeting graduation requirements or Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

These SAP requirements only impact eligibility for Federal financial aid programs. They do not impact any Rensselaer aid such as fellowships, research assistantships, or teaching assistantships. In addition these rules do not apply to an international student who is not a US citizen and/or is not an eligible non-citizen (does not possess a valid Alien Registration Card).

The following Glossary of Terms, Federal SAP requirements, and Frequently Asked Questions will assist you in understanding the terminology, requirements, and process surrounding Federal SAP.

Glossary of Terms:

Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): An institution must have a qualitative measurement as well as a quantitative measurement to ascertain if a student is making progress toward his/her degree program. Depending on the student's program of study, these measurements may occur by semester or annually. In addition, a student may need to demonstrate other successful benchmarks demonstrating that he/she is making progress toward degree requirements.

Examples of qualitative measurements are: Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), having less than two "F" grades in his/her academic history as a graduate student attending RPI, and/or having a satisfactory Research grade.

Examples of quantitative measurements are: having an approved Plan of Study, meeting Pace toward your degree by completing the appropriate percentage of attempted coursework, a satisfactory dissertation, assignment to a dissertation committee, a successful defense of thesis, and/or having successfully completed a candidacy exam.

Those students not making Federal SAP are notified of their status. A student may review his status using his RPI Student Information System (SIS) access. To do so using SIS, go to http://sis.rpi.edu; log in using your User ID and PIN. *Then click on the Financial Aid Menu tab -> Select Aid Year ->Academic Progress tab.* Your most recent academic progress status will be displayed

To determine the requirements necessary for you to be making Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) based on your program of study, review the charts beginning on page 2. If you are unsure of the degree your program of study follows, please contact the Office of Graduate Education at 518.276.6488

Appeal of loss of Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress: A student who has been notified that s/he is not making SAP may request *Financial Aid Probation* by completing the Graduate Federal Financial Aid Probation Request Form. The request must articulate the reason(s) why the student was unable to meet the SAP requirements, provide complete documentation as appropriate (i.e. medical reasons must have appropriate medical documentation to support the claim).

Incomplete requests will automatically result in a denial. All requests are reviewed by the Office of Financial Aid Federal SAP Committee. Any request that is denied means that the student cannot receive federal aid until such time as s/he attains SAP.

***Federal Financial Aid Probation*:** An individual who is not meeting SAP may request consideration for this status. This status is granted to a student upon successfully outlining the reasons not being able to attain SAP requirements and who demonstrates that SAP will be met within a prescribed timeframe. If the request is approved, an individual in this status may continue to receive Federal financial aid even though not meeting SAP. The number of times that a student may be on Federal Financial Aid Probation as well as the number of consecutive semesters on probation varies depending on the program of study. Refer to Page 4 for additional information.

The loss of Federal financial aid eligibility does not necessarily impact a student's academic standing at Rensselaer. It also does not apply to any Rensselaer financial aid programs such as assistantships, stipends, or tuition waivers. Co-terminal students are considered undergraduate students and thus are assessed for Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress by undergraduate requirements.

FEDERAL SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENT CHARTS

Please note that for all the charts: There is no rounding. For example, if an individual's Pace was 82.5% it would not be rounded up to 83. If a CGPA was 2.9 it would not be rounded up to a 3.0.

Professional Master's Degree (Federal SAP reviewed at the end of each semester)

Criteria	Lally Master of Science	Lally Master of Bus. Admin	Master of Fine Arts	Master of Engineering	Master of Architecture (112 credit program)	Master of Architecture (30 credit program)	Master of Information Technology
Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
2 'F' grades in academic history as graduate student at RPI?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Pace (cumulative completed credits divided by cumulative attempted credits) >=	83%	89%	91%	83%	95%	83%	83%
Plan of study completed by end of second semester of study?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Other Master's Degree Programs (Federal SAP reviewed at the end of each semester)

Criteria	Master's w/Thesis	Master's w/out Thesis
Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average CGPA	3.0	3.0
2 'F' grades in academic history as graduate student at RPI?	No	No
Research Grade (if exists) for semester being assessed = S?	Yes	N/A
Pace (cumulative completed credits divided by cumulative attempted credits) >=	83%	83%
Approved Plan of Study completed by end of second semester of study?	Yes	Yes

Doctoral Degree (Federal SAP – reviewed annually at the end of each Spring semester)

The requirements Federal SAP for all doctoral program are the same except for the maximum timeframe for completion of degree requirements. Post-Baccalaureate candidates have seven years to complete the program, while Post-Master's degree candidates have five years.

←Applicable to Post-Master's → ← Post-
←& Post-Baccalaureate → ← Baccalaureate
←programs → ← only →

End of year of study:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average CGPA	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
2 'F' grades in academic history as RPI graduate student?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
If exists, all research grade(s) for academic year being assessed = S?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Approved Plan of study completed by end of 1st year?	Yes						
Candidacy Exam completed by end of 4th year?				Yes			
Annual Doctoral Student Review?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Doctoral students may also find the following websites useful:

Academic Information and Regulations Preparation Guide for Dissertations & Thesis

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROBATION CHARTS

A student's program of study determines the maximum number of times Federal Financial Aid Probation may be granted and the maximum number of consecutive semesters each Federal Financial Aid Probation is allowed. Please review the following chart:

	Maximum # of Federal Financial Aid Probation	Maximum # of Semesters Allowed on Each Federal Financial Aid Probation
< 36 Credit Hour Professional/Research MS Programs	1	1
> 36 Credit Hour Professional MS Programs	2	2
Doctoral Programs	1	2

For consideration of *Financial Aid Probation* a student MUST have an academic plan provided by the appropriate individual within his/her school that will outline what the student needs to accomplish academically in order to regain SAP. The student is reviewed on a semester by semester basis. If the student is not meeting the requirements of the plan the student will lose federal aid eligibility. In such instances, the student may appeal again ONLY if the student is provided an additional Financial Aid Probation based within the context of the maximum number of *Financial Aid Probations* allowed as noted above.

Given the unique nature of Doctoral programs, an exception only to the "*Maximum # of Semesters Allowed on Each Federal Financial Aid Probation"* may be provided in extraordinary circumstances upon joint approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Director of Financial Aid. No exceptions are granted to the *"Maximum # of Federal Financial Aid Probation"* category for MS or Doctoral Programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

We have developed some common questions in anticipation of the new guidelines. We will add/update questions that we believe are useful to students in general. We know the new process might be confusing. Please feel free to contact us at 518.276.6813 or email to finaid@rpi.edu with any questions you may have.

How do you determine if I am making Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

Remember, there are a minimum of four points that have to be reviewed: Pace (Pursuit of Program known as POP), Cumulative GPA (CGPA), less than two 'F' grades in your graduate academic record while attending RPI, and an approved Plan of Study. Depending on your major, there may be additional criteria. You can lose federal aid eligibility if you do not meet the standard for any of these four points as well as the additional requirements for your major. Refer to the charts in the Glossary of Terms under Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress for additional information on your particular program of study.

Step 1 – Pace

Professional/Research MS Programs

A. If you are pursuing a Professional or Research Master's degree, we assess your pace, or Pursuit of Program (POP) we take the number of credits that are normally required to earn your degree divided by the maximum allowable attempted credits may have while pursing your degree.

B. Next, we take the total number of completed credits you have earned divided by the total credits you have attempted. This gives us the percentage of attempted coursework you must complete each time you are evaluated. If the result is less than the required percentage, you will be considered not to be making POP and potentially lose your federal aid eligibility. This rule applies to a student who is in the co-terminal program too.

   Credits attempted are defined as all classes taken by a student for which a grade is received (i.e. A, B, C, F, S, U, W, I, IP). It also includes accepted transfer credits. Credits completed are defined as all classes taken by a student for which a passing grade is received (i.e. A, B, C, D, S, and P) as well as any accepted transfer credits. For a complete list of grade classifications visit the Registrar website.

   For example, Clive Calculator, Mathematics major, is seeking his MS in a 30 credit hour program, has attempted 24 credits and completed 20 credits. He is making Pace because he has completed 83% of his attempted credits, the minimum required Pace in his program of study.

   Ida Know is an Electronic Arts major pursing her Professional MFA in a 60 credit hour program who has attempted 48 credits and completed 42 credits. She is not making Pace because she has only completed 87.5% of her attempted credits. Her Pace measurement requires that she complete 91% of her attempted credits.

   Doctoral Programs

   In Doctoral programs, measurement of Pace is evaluated by annual examination of your Doctoral Student Yearly Review, the successful completion of your Plan of Study, Candidacy Exam, and Defense (presentation of your thesis) all within the prescribed timeframes.

Step 2 – Cumulative GPA (CGPA)

Your CGPA must be at least a 3.0. Your CGPA is reviewed at the end of each semester or annually (at the end of each Spring semester), depending on your program of study. In addition, you cannot have more than one "F" grade in your graduate academic record at Rensselaer.

A. Some additional items for you to know:

   1. Please bear in mind that it does not matter if you attend full time or part time, you still must meet the CGPA.

   2. While transfer credits are always counted in both attempted and completed credits, grades from transfer credits are not included in your CGPA.

   3. Repeat coursework can influence your Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress. Repeated coursework is always counted as attempted hours regardless how many times you take the course. However, only a passing grade is counted in the CGPA. You should also be aware that the most recent grade of a repeated course is considered for your CGPA.

      Repeated coursework can also influence your eligibility for federal aid within a particular semester without regard to SAP. Federal regulation stipulates that you may receive federal aid for a repeated course unlimited times in order to gain a passing grade. However, if you have already passed the course and are repeated it for any reason, then federal aid can only pay for one repeat of the course. Thus, if you were re-taking a course that you have already repeated previously with a passing grade, that course cannot be considered when determining your cost of attendance or enrollment status, which could impact on the amount of federal aid you receive.

   4. Incomplete grades are not calculated in your completed credits and are assumed to be failing grades when determining your CGPA and GPA. To restore your eligibility for Federal financial aid programs based on incomplete grades, you must receive a letter grade PRIOR to the start of your next semester of attendance.

If I don't meet at least one of the standards required, what can I do?

First, you should consider applying for Federal Financial Aid Probation is in your best interest. If you aren't planning on receiving federal loans (Direct Loan, Direct Graduate PLUS Loan, or Perkins Loan) for the next semester you attend, then you should NOT request Federal Financial Aid Probation.

Complete the Graduate Federal Financial Aid Probation Request Form. Remember, your request must include:

1. The reason(s) why you were unable to meet the SAP requirements, provide complete documentation as appropriate (i.e. medical reasons must have appropriate medical documentation to support the claim),

2. What you will do in order to regain Federal SAP. You MUST include an academic plan developed with the designated individual within your school that will outline what you need to accomplish each semester you are requesting Financial Aid Probation in order to regain SAP. **For information about the designated individual in your school to assist you in your academic plan, contact your Graduate Program Director.**

Incomplete requests for Financial Aid Probation will automatically result in a denial of the request, so make sure you have completed the form and attached all supporting documentation. All requests are reviewed by the Office of Financial Aid SAP Committee. If your request is denied it means you cannot receive federal aid until such time as you attain SAP. Decisions are final and will not be reconsidered.

If I request Federal Financial Aid Probation, and my request is approved what happens?

If your request is approved, you will be placed on *Financial Aid Probation*. *Financial Aid Probation* may only last for a maximum of one or two semesters, depending on your program of study. The plan MUST outline what you will need to accomplish each subsequent semester to the point that you will regain SAP. Remember, the academic plan may differ from what you may need to accomplish in order to meet the academic requirements of the school. Federal financial aid eligibility can differ from the academic standard. If your academic plan approved requires that you meet certain objectives that will allow you to regain federal SAP, it will be necessary for you to be evaluated at the end of each semester to ensure you are meeting the goals outlined for you. If you are not, then you will be removed from *Financial Aid Probation* and no longer considered eligible for federal aid until you regain federal SAP.

Also, remember if you are on *Financial Aid Probation* your federal SAP eligibility is reviewed at the end of every term you attend even if you are not receiving federal aid, including summer sessions.

If you are placed on *Financial Aid Probation*, and you regain federal SAP because you meet the standard SAP requirements, your *Financial Aid Probation* status will cease and you will be considered making SAP.

Example for a student whose program of study provides for more than one Financial Aid Probation.

Start of Semester:	**Initial SAP Status**	**Outcome**	**Final SAP Status**
Fall 2012	Not Eligible	Appeals, approved for *Financial Aid Probation* for two consecutive semesters	1st *Financial Aid Probation for Fall 2012. Eligible to receive Federal aid.*
Spring 2013	1st *Financial Aid Probation*	Academic Plan is reviewed; meeting plan.	1st *Financial Aid Probation* (continued) for Spring 2013. *Eligible to receive Federal aid.*
Fall 2013	Making SAP	Since making SAP, no action required.	Making SAP for Fall 2013. *Eligible to receive Federal aid.*
Spring 2014	Not Eligible	Appeals, placed on *Financial Aid Probation* for one semester	2nd *Financial Aid Probation for Spring 2014. Eligible to receive Federal aid.*
Fall 2014	Not Eligible	Because student has been granted 2 *Financial Aid Probation*s may not receive federal aid until making SAP. Cannot appeal.	Not eligible to receive Federal aid for Fall 2014 and beyond until attaining SAP.

I’m in the co-terminal program. Will I be assessed as a graduate student for SAP purposes?

Co-terminal students are considered undergraduate students for financial aid purposes and thus SAP is assessed based on undergraduate rules for SAP, not graduate rules.

Where can I go to get questions answered?

The Office of Financial Aid will answer any questions you might have about how SAP for you is determined, your SAP status, or the process for requesting *Financial Aid Probation.* You can reach us by phone at 518.276.6813 or email us at finaid@rpi.edu.

For assistance on anything related to the development of your academic plan contact your Graduate Program Director in your academic unit.

Questions regarding your official grades, credits attempted/earned, or academic record should be directed to the Registrar at 518.276.6231 or email at registrar@rpi.edu.