

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

Updated September 14, 2021

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 with no appeal possible.

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

- *As expressed in years (examples):* Students in programs that are normally expected to complete a degree by the end of 2 years of full-time study, will forfeit their eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs after 3 years of full time enrollment ($2 \times 150\% = 3$).
- **Withdrawals:** Grades of W are counted as courses attempted and count toward the maximum time frame.
- **Incompletes:** Grades of I are counted as courses attempted and count toward the maximum time frame.
- **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.

Quantitative Standards Definition:

Students have a limited amount of time to complete their degree requirements.

For a student to be considered as progressing normally, the student’s ratio of earned credits to scheduled credits (or pace towards degree completion) must be no less than as shown on the following table:

When total scheduled credits are:	Earned Credits must be at least:
Less than 25 credits	50% of scheduled credits
25 through 50 credits	55% of scheduled credits
51 through 75 credits	60% of scheduled credits
76 through 100 credits	65% of schedule 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:

A graduate student must have at least a 2.0 cumulative G.P.A. to be considered making satisfactory progress for continued participation in federal aid programs.

Students who do not meet this test will be ineligible to participate in federal financial aid programs until this deficiency is corrected.

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.

Procedures:

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.

Financial Aid Probation: If the student has not reached the maximum number of scheduled hours and it is determined that the student has fallen below the completion ratio standards for satisfactory progress, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and notified that his/her continued eligibility for federal financial aid assistance is in jeopardy. Students who fail to maintain the required minimum GPA will also be placed on financial aid probation. Students will normally be allowed only one probationary semester during their academic program.

Students on financial aid probation will receive a separate letter that will outline the academic requirements the student must meet in order to receive aid for the following semester. If the student on financial aid probation meets the terms of the probation, he/she will be permitted to continue to participate in the federal student aid programs for a subsequent semester. Students who have been placed on probation shall be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress for the purposes of receiving financial aid as long as the student continues to meet the academic requirements outlined in their probationary letter.

The Office of Student Services will review the records of students who are on financial aid probation at the end of each semester.

If the student does not meet the terms of the probation, the student will forfeit eligibility for all federal financial aid programs.

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. Appeals must be filed within 30 days of notification that aid eligibility has been lost **OR** 30 days after a semester begins (whichever comes first). An Appeal must be made in writing to the [Director of Financial Aid](#). 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.

If you do not have grounds for an appeal, or if your appeal is denied, you may still be able to regain your eligibility for future semesters. This is done by enrolling at Boston College at your own expense—without financial assistance—and negotiating a plan with the Office of Student Services, in advance, for the conditions under which eligibility may be restored.

Appeal Approval Conditions: Appeals can only be approved if the Financial Aid Appeals Committee determines:

- that the student will be able to meet the university's satisfactory academic progress after the next payment period; or
- that the student has agreed to follow an academic plan that, if followed, will ensure that the student can meet the University's satisfactory academic progress guidelines by a specific point in time.

If an appeal is granted: 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. Students who fail to meet the conditions outlined in their individualized academic plans during their conditional semester will not be allowed to submit a subsequent appeal.

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