



Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Eligibility Policy (including Repeat Coursework & Academic Engagement)

(Last updated February 2019)

Note: This is the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy for **Financial Aid Eligibility** for the University of Connecticut School of Law. The requirements herein may not fully reflect the progress requirements required by academic regulations.

In this document, "SAP" shall thereafter refer to the SAP standards for Federal Financial Aid eligibility, including Federal loans and Work-Study. Some alternative or private loan lenders may also have SAP standards.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is a standard used to measure students' successful completion of coursework toward a degree. The University of Connecticut School of Law is required to establish a reasonable policy to determine whether students receiving federal aid are making SAP in their educational programs.

Federal Aid Regulation [34 CFR 668.34](#) states that SAP standards for financial aid eligibility...

- May differ from other academic standards, but Financial Aid SAP standards must be at least as stringent as the academic standards and policies of any school or program
- Must apply consistently to all students within a particular program
- Must include cumulative data for SAP calculations
- Must include a [qualitative component](#) (minimum GPA)
- Must include a [quantitative/pace component](#) (number of credits completed/attempted)
- Must include a [maximum timeframe](#) based on the length of the program

Consequences of Not Meeting SAP Standards/ Regaining Eligibility:

Students who are found to be in violation of the parameters set forth by the SAP policy are ineligible to receive most forms of federal, state, and institutional financial aid subsequent to that determination. UConn Law Merit scholarships are not impacted by the SAP policy. Students remain responsible for any charges owed, per University billing and refund policies.

Federal aid which has previously disbursed will not be rescinded if the student is found to not meet SAP qualitative, quantitative, and maximum timeframe standards after the disbursement of those funds. Students who fail to demonstrate that they have sufficiently engaged in coursework throughout a period may have federal aid cancelled retroactively (see [Academic Engagement](#) policy).

Students may file [appeals](#) by set deadlines given extraordinary circumstances or may request re-evaluation for aid eligibility once they meet SAP standards in subsequent evaluation periods, or after grade modifications. However, reinstatement of financial aid is dependent on its availability at the time of review. Some forms of aid may not be available to students who regain eligibility later in the academic year.

Students and Coursework Subject to SAP:

The parameters set forth by the SAP policy at the UConn School of Law apply to JD and LLM Law students who are financial aid recipients at the time of SAP assessment. All coursework relevant to students' degree programs will be included in SAP evaluations, including those taken in the Winter and Summer sessions. (Note rules for [transfer courses](#) specified in later this policy.)

Note:

- The Doctor of the Science of Law (SJD) program does not meet the requirement for Title IV aid eligibility. Therefore, SJD students are not subject to this SAP policy.
- Undergraduate-level students taking Law classes are subject to the SAP policy for undergraduate students, not the UConn School of Law SAP policy.
- Dual degree students must meet SAP standards for the coursework respective to both programs in order to qualify for financial aid. For example, there are different GPA standards for students in the School of Business that JD/ MBA candidates must fulfill in order to qualify for financial aid, so dual degree candidates must meet the higher standard.

Frequency of SAP Evaluation, Communications, and Warnings

For JD Programs, the UConn School of Law Student Finance Office officially evaluates SAP on an annual basis following the posting of the spring semester grades. During the midpoint of the academic year (after the fall semester), JD students who at risk of not meeting [GPA](#) and [pace](#) standards in the annual evaluation are sent a communication via University email informing them that their future financial aid eligibility may be in jeopardy if their progress does not improve by the end of the spring term. Students are encouraged to seek guidance in assuring future compliance. Issuance of this mid-year communication does not result in any cancellation of financial aid awards.

For LLM Programs one year or less in length, SAP evaluation occurs after each payment period (semester) once grades have posted. LLM students failing to meet [GPA](#) and [pace](#) standards will be designated a "Financial Aid Warning" status - a warning period equaling a single payment period during which time their Title IV aid eligibility is retained. Students are sent official University email warning communications detailing shortcomings with regard to the published SAP parameters, and are encouraged to seek guidance in assuring future compliance.

Students on [Financial Aid Probation/ Financial Aid Eligibility Plan \(FAEP\)](#) status after successful [appeals](#) will have compliance reviewed each payment period they are enrolled (fall, spring, summer) once grades have posted for the term.

Note: There are no warnings for students approaching [maximum timeframe](#) standards.

Students who are deemed ineligible upon an evaluation are designated with either a status of “Not Meet” (GPA or pace issues) or “Max Final” (exceeds maximum timeframe). Students are notified via University email from the Student Finance Office about the loss of additional Title IV aid eligibility and the [appeal](#) process.

University of Connecticut School of Law SAP Standards:

Financial Aid SAP Standards mirror that of the UConn School of Law academic policies:

Qualitative/ Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)

Juris Doctor (J.D.) Students	Master of Laws (LL.M.) Students
2.300	2.300

Courses in-progress with no official final grades are excluded from GPA calculation. Grades with a notation of Pass, Incomplete, or Withdrawal have no bearing on the calculation of the cumulative GPA. Credit hours transferred into the UConn School of Law programs and successfully articulated towards the completion of a Law or LLM educational program are also not considered in GPA calculation.

Quantitative / “Pace”

All JD and LLM students must earn a minimum of 75% of their cumulative attempted credit hours. The completion rate is equal to the number of completed credit hours divided by the number of attempted credits.

- Completed credit hours will include all credit hours for which a student has earned a final letter grade of A-D, and P.
- Credit-hours that are transferred (grade of T) into the UConn School of Law and successfully articulated towards the completion of a Law or LLM educational program (including part of a Dual Degree) will be counted as both earned and attempted hours. (This includes approved Study Abroad program credits.)
- Attempted credit hours are calculated as all enrolled credits at the conclusion of the add/drop period for the fall, spring, and summer terms.
- Audited courses are not counted as attempted nor completed.
- Courses that have unearned grades will be counted as attempted but not earned. These include Failure (F), Incomplete (I), No Grade Awarded (N), and Withdrawal (W).
- Courses dropped after the official fixed enrollment date after the add-drop deadline for each term will count as attempted, not earned, credits.

In addition, per the UConn School of Law Academic Regulations, the following per-year credit pace requirements are stipulated for JD students to ensure at least 75% pace is maintained:

JD Student Status:	Minimum Credit Completion:
1L Full-time Students	25 earned credit hours during first year of study (usually fall-spring-summer)
Upper-level Full-time Students	20 earned credit hours per year
All Part-time Students	16 earned credit hours per year

Maximum Timeframes:

Juris Doctor (J.D.) Degree Students	Master of Laws (LL.M.) Students
<p>All students: No more than 129 attempted credits</p> <p>Full-time students: Complete all coursework for the degree (including at least 86 credits) within five years</p> <p>Part-time students: Six years</p>	<p>All students: No more than 36 attempted credits</p> <p>International students: Complete program (including at least 24 credits) within 3 consecutive required semesters.</p> <p>U.S. students: Five years</p>

Attempted credits for maximum timeframe include transfer credits.

Once these timeframes have elapsed, even if the minimum GPA is maintained, students are no longer eligible to receive most forms of financial aid, though [appeals](#) may be accepted. Note: ABA rules designate JD completion within seven years/ 84 months.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals for Law Students

Students not meeting the UConn School of Law SAP policy may petition for reconsideration of their eligibility for federal financial aid via the SAP Appeal process. Circumstances under which an appeal may be considered include:

- Student illness and/or injury
- Death or illness in the student’s immediate family
- Other significant personal difficulties involving extreme hardship

Additional special circumstances may be considered at the discretion of the Student Finance Office and the UConn School of Law SAP Appeals Committee. The decision of the SAP Appeals Committee is final. Students may submit multiple appeals if circumstances change.

The UConn Law SAP Appeals Committee shall comprise of four or more staff members, including the academic Dean and the Director of Financial Aid of the School of Law.

In order to be considered, SAP appeals must be submitted by the deadline stated in the communication notifying students of their ineligible SAP status, generally 5 business days. Late appeals may not be reviewed. Aid may only be reinstated for current/future terms, and only if it is still available.

All SAP Appeals for [GPA](#) and [pace](#) issues must contain the following:

- A completed Financial Aid SAP Appeal form
- A written statement detailing the nature of the hardship and how that specifically contributed towards the student's inability to meet the pace and/or minimum GPA standards
- A Plan for Academic Success including:
 - How circumstances pursuant to the hardship have changed, thus enabling the student meet the parameters set forth by the SAP policy during subsequent payment periods
 - Specific tasks, steps, and strategies to be completed by the student to achieve success
 - Resources to be utilized to help ensure success, including on-campus services, external programs, or other professional assistance.
- Supporting documentation as specified in the Financial Aid SAP Appeal form

SAP Appeals for [maximum timeframe](#) issues will be made on a case by case basis for students who demonstrate that their noncompliance is due to extreme circumstances. These must also include a summary of circumstances and Plan for Academic Success specifying the plan of study and enrollment necessary to complete the program.

If a student's appeal is denied, the student remains responsible for any charges owed, per University billing and refund policies.

Financial Aid Probation/ FAEP Status

A student for whom a SAP Appeal is approved is granted a period of Financial Aid Probation during which he or she will be placed upon a Financial Aid Eligibility Plan (FAEP). For GPA and pace issues, the purpose of the FAEP is to ensure that a student is able to restore financial aid eligibility prior to exceeding their educational program's [maximum timeframe](#).

Depending on the nature of the SAP issue, the FAEP may include:

- Minimum GPA requirements (may be per-term or a cumulative standard)
- Minimum pace requirements (completed credits or completed/attempted credits)
- Adjusted Maximum timeframe

Students will receive details of their FAEP in the letter/email from the Student Finance Office informing them that their appeal was approved. Students must adhere to the parameters of the FAEP in order to maintain financial aid eligibility.

Students placed in Financial Aid Probation/ FAEP may receive all forms of financial aid for which SAP compliance is required. Students who meet the criteria set forth by the Probation/ FAEP status will remain so during subsequent payment periods until:

- Parameters set forth by the SAP policy are met (resulting in “Meets” status)
- Limits of the Maximum Timeframe are exceeded (resulting in “Max Level” status)
- Parameters of both the FAEP and SAP policy are not met (details below)

Students in Financial Aid Probation/ FAEP status will be re-evaluated at the end of each payment period, including any enrolled summer term, to ensure compliance with the terms of the FAEP. Students failing to meet the FAEP criteria (and who also fail to meet the parameters set forth by the SAP policy) will immediately be designated as “Not Meets” and are ineligible to receive financial aid for which SAP compliance is required. Students remain responsible for any charges owed, per University billing and refund policies.

When information relative to their SAP status (i.e. official grades from a prior payment period) is not available for a full SAP evaluation, students assigned Financial Aid Probation/ FAEP status may be subject to delayed disbursement of financial aid.

Repeating Coursework

UConn School of Law policy does not allow students to retake a previously-passed class in order to improve a grade. Students may only repeat a previously-passed class as an audit. Audit classes are not counted as enrolled credits to determine financial aid eligibility.

For certain research and special topics classes and exception is made to allow for repeats as the actual coursework changes even though the course number remains the same. Students taking these special classes may repeat and have the credits count toward enrollment status for aid eligibility. These repeated classes will count in [pace](#) calculations as attempted credits and earned credits (if passed).

Classes never passed (e.g., grades of “F,” “N,” “W”) may be retaken as many times as necessary to receive a passing grade with credits counting toward enrollment status for aid eligibility. Caution: Students repeating multiple classes to earn credit may have subsequent negative impacts to [pace](#) standards within the SAP policy.

Academic Engagement

Students are awarded aid with the understanding that they will complete the payment period (fall, spring, or summer) for which the aid was given. Students who do not formally withdraw from the University, but who do not complete all the scheduled days in a payment period (semester) may be considered “unofficial withdrawals” ([34 CFR 668.22](#)). When students do not pass at least one course in a period of registration, questions arise as to whether the student has indeed unofficially withdrawn due to lack of academic engagement throughout the term.

The UConn Law Student Finance Office will review grades every payment period to ensure that all students receiving federal student aid have completed at least one course with a passing grade. Students enrolled throughout the term who do not pass at least one course for which they were registered will be required to provide dated proof of academic engagement in at least one course. Students will be informed via University email of this requirement and the deadline to supply documentation.

Options to maintain previously-disbursed aid are articulated in the Verification of Academic Engagement form and include:

- Documentation of late passing grade
- Dated copy of exam or paper
- Dated confirmation of online participation
- Documentation of study abroad program
- Faculty verification of engagement either throughout the term or up to a confirmed last day of participation

If students have not demonstrated engagement for over 60% of the payment period (semester), previously-disbursed federal aid may need to be returned. The percentage of federal aid (loans) that a student may retain will be determined based on the latest possible date upon which the student is able to document engagement in an academically-related activity. Students who fail to respond to documentation requests will be assumed to have completed only 50% of the fall, spring, or summer period.

Per Federal regulations ([34 CFR 668.22](#)), when students are considered unofficially withdrawn, a Return of Title IV Funds calculation must be completed within 30 days of the end of the term. Students who do not complete over 60% of a term must have aid returned to the Department of Education as required within 45 calendar days of the end of the term. This may result in a fee bill balance. Students remain responsible for any charges owed, per University billing and refund policies.