**SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY – POSTGRADUATE**

**Principles**

Students must maintain SAP to retain their continued eligibility for US financial aid. The University will check at the end of each loan payment period (semester) that students are meeting the minimum grade requirements to progress with their degree and that their pace of progression is such that they are expected to graduate within the maximum timeframe allowed under Title IV regulations. This policy is implemented in addition to the University’s standard terms and conditions, academic regulations and all current immigration requirements.

**Notifications**

The University will inform students in writing if it is determined at any point that they are not meeting the required SAP standards and that their eligibility for loans is at risk.

**Academic requirements for award of degree**

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| **University minimum masters graduation requirements** |
| To be awarded an MA students must pass ALL taught modules and the dissertation - a total of 180 credits. For further details, please see the academic regulations section of the student zone webpages. |

**Satisfactory academic progress for continued financial aid eligibility**

Students who fail to pass all taught modules in their first semester with a minimum mark of 50% will be placed on financial warning. No appeal by the student is necessary to acquire financial warning status.

**Financial warning**

If a student is placed on financial warning, he or she will retain eligibility to receive loans for one further payment period only. If a student is placed on financial warning after the publication of the first semester’s grades, he or she remains eligible to receive the second semester’s disbursement. The student’s performance in the second semester will be subject to continuing academic progress review and the third and final semester’s disbursement will be held until the academic course leader confirms that the student has regained SAP.

**Regaining eligibility for financial aid after being placed on financial warning**

The academic course leader will be required to confirm that the student’s performance is consistent in terms of his or her ability to complete the programme of study and graduate by providing an interim academic report/end of payment period assessment. Once sufficient documented evidence is received that eligibility has been regained, or can be regained, then the third and final loans disbursement can be made. Note that this *may* require the official release of spring semester module grades in mid-July, potentially delaying the usual early June disbursement by approximately six weeks.

**Appeals**

If it is determined that a student has not regained SAP and loans eligibility following a period of financial warning, the student may appeal this decision. He or she will be required to explain in writing why they did not meet SAP, which circumstances have now changed and why they believe they will be able to meet SAP from then on. A decision on whether or not to allow the appeal will be made by the academic course leader and the financial aid office.

**Probation status**

If an appeal is allowed, the student will be allowed to continue to receive loans for one more semester on probation status. During the probation semester, the student will be expected to regularly meet their academic course leader to ensure that he or she is on track to regain SAP. At the end of the payment period, the student’s progress will be reviewed and a decision made as to whether probation status can be lifted. A decision will be reached based on formal assessment results or, where the latter are not available, on the academic course leader and colleagues’ judgement based on class participation and coursework.

**Reassessment opportunities**

If a student attempts and fails any taught module, he or she will have a right to a reassessment (re-sit) in the component(s) failed. Re-sits will normally take place during the summer re-sit period (July) following the academic year in which the module was taken.

If a student does not pass a module at the second attempt then he or she will need to retake the module and all relevant components again. Re-sits and retake periods are not eligible for further financial aid.

Non-EU nationals are subject to British immigration regulations, which stipulate that all international students must be enrolled on a full-time course of study, or possess appropriate UKVI permission to retake modules. Consequently any resulting part-time study status may compromise a student’s Tier 4 student visa status.

**Responsibility for tuition fees**

If a student loses financial aid eligibility and a disbursement is withheld, the student is still responsible for the payment of any outstanding tuition fee amount on his or her account and payment is required in order to be enrolled. If financial aid eligibility is subsequently regained, any subsequent disbursement owing will be released as scheduled.

**Course duration and the maximum time to complete a course**

Students must complete their programme within a study time frame of no longer than 150% of the published length of the course. Periods of interruption of study (authorised leave of absence) are not included.

**Mitigating circumstances**

The University has procedures for cases in which unforeseen circumstances prevent a student from submitting an item of assessed work or from attending an examination. For full details on mitigating circumstances, please see the relevant section of the University’s rules and regulations in the student zone webpages. If a student applies for mitigating circumstances, his or her financial aid eligibility will be reinstated if the mitigating circumstances appeal is accepted and it is determined that the student can either maintain or regain SAP.

**Academic appeals**

The University also has procedures through which students can appeal academic decisions as they relate to failure and academic performance. Please note that only cases of failure relate to satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility. In cases where an appeal is in process, eligibility will be reinstated if an appeal is upheld and resolved before the start of the next academic year. Information about appeals can be found in the relevant section of the University’s rules and regulations in the student zone webpages.