

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Purpose

To establish rules and regulations governing Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for medical students at the University of Houston College of Medicine. The following policy reviews standards for the University of Houston and delineates the criteria for SAP at the University of Houston College of Medicine, and applies to all matriculated students, whether or not they are recipients of financial aid.

University of Houston Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid Overview

Federal regulations require schools to monitor the academic progress of financial aid recipients and certify the student is making SAP toward degrees within the college attending. Policies for students receiving financial aid must be the same as, or stricter, than the institution's standards for a student enrolled in the same educational program who is not receiving assistance under the Title IV/Title VII programs.

Students enrolled in degree programs at the University of Houston are expected to make SAP toward the completion of their degree requirements within the timeframes established for each UH college and each UH degree. The colleges/programs of the University of Houston set their own academic standards governing SAP, including Academic Probation, Academic Suspension, and Dismissal for failure to obtain such standards. These standards are to be in accordance with the standards set by the accrediting agencies for each college/program. The following policies apply to all students at the University of Houston College of Medicine, regardless of receipt of federal financial aid. For complete Federal Regulation guidance, please refer to §34 CFR 668.34.

University of Houston College of Medicine

University of Houston College of Medicine Student Promotions and Advancement Committee (SPAC) Guidelines:

- MD program completion time: 10 semesters of full-time enrollment (4 academic years)
- Unless otherwise advised by the College of Medicine, MD students must:
 - o Maintain full-time enrollment;
 - o Maintain grades compatible with advancement;
 - o Complete 100% of the cumulative yearly hours attempted to progress to the next level of the program.

Qualitative Standard

Each student enrolled in the MD program at UH College of Medicine is required to successfully complete all of the required courses, clerkships, and examinations (including USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK and CS) in order to complete and graduate with the MD degree. UH College of Medicine does not measure academic progress by means

of a cumulative grade point average, but with grades of Pass (P) or Fail (F) in the pre-clerkship phase, and grades of Honors (H), Pass (P), or Fail (F) in the clerkship and advanced clerkship phases.

All courses in the pre-clerkship phase must be completed with a grade of Pass (P) in order to progress to the clerkship phase. All clerkships must be completed with a grade of Honors (H) or Pass (P) to progress to the advanced clerkship phase. During the advanced clerkship phase, students must complete all courses with a grade of Honors (H) or Pass (P), as well as satisfactorily complete USMLE Step 1 and USMLE Step 2 CK and CS, to meet graduation requirements.

Quantitative Standard (Pace)

To maintain eligibility for federal financial aid, students at the University of Houston College of Medicine must complete at least 67% of the credit hours attempted. This percentage is calculated by dividing cumulative hours completed by the student by cumulative hours attempted. Students failing to meet the standard at the time of evaluation will not be eligible to receive financial aid. See *Review and Notification* for more information.

Maximum Time Frame

The standard time frame for completion of required coursework for the MD degree at the University of Houston College of Medicine is 10 semesters of full-time enrollment (achievable in four (4) academic years). Due to personal difficulties or scholarly enrichment activities, a student may require additional time to complete the MD degree. In such situations, an academic plan will be established for the student departing from the standard and that may require the repetition of all or part of a year of study. Requests for exceptions are subject to review by the Student Promotion and Advancement Committee (SPAC). The maximum time permitted to complete the MD degree is six (6) years.

Leave of Absence

A student may be granted a personal or medical Leave of Absence (LOA) for a variety of reasons. During a leave of absence, the student will not be eligible for financial aid. The period of leave for which the student has been approved will be included in the maximum time frame in which an individual student will be expected to complete the program. Students at UH College of Medicine are limited to no more than 18 months of LOA.

If a student requests a Leave of Absence during the Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship phase of the MD program, Student Affairs will meet to review student progress, impact on financial aid, and necessary steps for re-entry. The decision will be communicated to the student in writing, and retained in the student's file.

Review and Notification of Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Student progress will be reviewed by the College of Medicine Student Promotion and Advancement Committee, in accordance with the Office of the University Registrar and Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, at the end of each semester. If a student does not meet the criteria to progress to the next phase, the College of Medicine will notify the student, in writing, about their failure to maintain SAP.

The notification will indicate an explanation of the shortcoming(s), possible methods available to correct the shortcoming(s), any consequences that have resulted or may result, and if they are able to continue the program. Students who fail to meet one or more standard are ineligible to receive financial aid (including federal financial aid, institutional scholarships, and tuition/fee waivers or exemptions), beginning with the term immediately following failure of SAP (Financial Aid Suspension). Students may appear before the board during the decision process.

If a student is able to continue, the student will receive a letter from Scholarships and Financial Aid to complete Exit Counseling and submit a Letter of Appeal to reinstate financial aid. The student will outline the reasons they failed to maintain SAP and actions to remedy the situation. See *Appeal Procedures* for more information.

If a student is not able to continue, the College of Medicine will forward a copy of the communique to the Registrar and Scholarships and Financial Aid. Offices will then take appropriate actions on the student file with regard to withdrawal, cancelation of financial aid, etc.

Appeal Procedures

Students who become ineligible to receive financial aid for failure to meet the standards outlined above and who have been notified of their ineligibility have the right to make a written appeal to have financial aid reinstated. It is recommended that an appeal from students be submitted to the Student Promotion and Advancement Committee within 30 days of notification. The appeal may not be based on the student's need for financial aid, rather an extraordinary situation or condition which prevented successful completion of SAP requirements. Students will be provided with an appeal form when notified of failure to meet SAP.

The appeal must include:

1. Completed University of Houston College of Medicine Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form for the current academic year.
2. Signed letter of explanation detailing what factor(s) led to the student not meeting SAP requirements, steps the student has taken to resolve, and how SAP requirements will be met.

During the time a student is ineligible to receive financial aid, the student may apply for private or alternative loans that do not have a Satisfactory Academic Progress requirement. A student may not regain eligibility for financial aid by not attending or taking a Leave of Absence.

Submitting an appeal is not a guarantee to have financial aid reinstated. Students must submit a successful appeal or meet all of the aforementioned standards by the end of a suspension period without the benefit of financial aid.

Implementation

The Offices of the University Registrar, Scholarships and Financial Aid, and the Student Promotion and Advancement Committee have the collective responsibility for monitoring and enforcing SAP. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will notify any student, in writing, whose financial aid has been impacted.