

## Satisfactory Academic Progress for Federal Aid Recipients

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All U.S. students in receipt of U.S. Federal Aid whilst studying at Imperial College London are required to make satisfactory progress on their course of study and to abide by all Regulations.

These regulations can be found on our Regulations webpage at [www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations).

The U.S. Department of Education requires Imperial College London to check the student's progress at intervals, and to ensure that they are meeting requirements. Therefore, U.S. students' Tutors/Supervisors will be emailed to confirm Satisfactory Academic Progress at the end of each term, before the second and third disbursements. Students who submit a loan request during the first term are not required to have their Satisfactory Academic Progress checked until the second disbursement.

U.S. Federal regulations require:

- All students must progress at a pace which ensures they will graduate within the maximum timeframe – that is 150% of the published length of that programme as measured in ECTS Credits and
- Student borrowers to maintain satisfactory academic requirements to date at a GPA of 2.0, grade "C" or above.

### Qualitative (Grade-Based) Measurement

In the UK system, this equates to a minimum of at least 45%, which is above the pass mark for undergraduate students. Therefore, students should be aware that U.S. Federal Aid Title IV Satisfactory Academic Progress criteria is stricter than Imperial's minimum pass criteria.

[Degree classifications for undergraduate study](#) are as follows:

- First-Class Honours (First or 1st) (70% and above)
- Upper Second-Class Honours (2:1, 2.i) (60-70%)
- Lower Second-Class Honours (2:2, 2.ii) (50-60%)
- Third-Class Honours (Third or 3rd) (40-50%)

The pass mark for taught masters students to progress to their masters dissertations is 50%. The progress of research students is monitored both at Department / Faculty level. These standards are the same as those set for students enrolled on the same programs and not in receipt of the US federal loans.

Continuing students must complete the academic year with a GPA of 2.0/grade C or its equivalent to continue to receive U.S Loans.

You must inform our office of any change to the study details (for example academic progress, programme, mode of study, temporary withdrawal, permanent withdrawal) as soon as possible in order to assess the impact on Satisfactory Academic Progress.

### **Quantitative (Time-Based or Pace) Measurement**

In order to receive continued loan funding, students must meet the minimum requirements for both academic progress and course duration.

Students must complete their course at a pace which ensures that they will graduate within the maximum timeframe. Taught Programmes are measured by attendance on the course and exam performance over the academic year.

For Research PhD programmes the university requires that a student's progress during PhD registration must be formally monitored at key stages after the date of initial registration: Early Stage Assessment (ESA) by 12 months (full time) and 24 months (part time); Late Stage Review (LSR) by 24 months (full time) and 48 months (part time); and a Progress Review by 36 months (full time) and 72 months (part time).

Some departments require PhD students to submit an Initial Research Plan within three months (full time) and six months (part time) from initial registration. Where this is a requirement, the department is responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of this.

The maximum timeframe for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses is 150% of the published length of the program as measured in ECTS credits.

<b>Standard published program length</b>	<b>Maximum timeframe for completion</b>
3 year undergraduate degree	4.5 years
4 year undergraduate degree	6 years
12 month postgraduate degree	18 months
3 year postgraduate degree	4.5 years
4 year postgraduate degree	6 years

All periods of enrolment contribute when assessing progress, even periods when the student did not receive federal loan funds. The table below provides examples of a change in enrolment and its effect on SAP measurement.

<b>Change in enrolment</b>	<b>Count towards maximum timeframe</b>	<b>Count towards Grade Base (Qualitative)</b>
Interruption of study	No	No
Change in program	No	No
Withdrawal	No	No
Repeat study or re-assessment due to academic failure	Yes	Yes
Transfer into Imperial College London	Yes	Yes

Students must be studying at least half-time in order to remain eligible for the federal loans.

## **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)**

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system for higher education widely used throughout the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the achievement of defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. The ECTS value of our degrees is displayed on our course pages for each course.

Credits accumulated are transferable to another programme offered by the same institution or by another institution.

The typical credit ranges are as follows:

- 180–240 units for the first cycle (Bachelor’s) and
- 90–120 units for the second (Master’s) cycles; for the latter, a minimum of 60 must be at second cycle level.
- None for the third cycle (Doctoral).

Successful completion of an academic year of three terms accumulates 60 ECTS credits.

Bachelor’s degrees have an ECTS value of at least 180 credits.

All of our integrated masters courses are recognised, where appropriate, for professional accreditation in the UK. Some of our integrated masters degrees incorporate assessed work outside the academic terms and therefore attract 270 (or more) ECTS credits.

In cases where integrated masters degrees attract 240 ECTS credits, some, but not all, students will optionally be able to undertake additional study or project work in the summer vacations to raise their ECTS count to 270.

The ECTS does not currently apply to undergraduate medicine.

Where courses are allocated ECTS credits, students are eligible for loans as long as they maintain attendance and progression on their course at a minimum pace of 67% of cumulative coursework attempted to ensure they will complete within 150% of the published length of the programme.

<b>Standard published program length</b>	<b>Pace Completion Rate</b>
3 year undergraduate degree	180 credits x 150% = 270 attempted credits (maximum timeframe) 180 / 270 = 67% pace completion
4 year undergraduate degree	240 credits x 150% = 360 attempted credits (maximum timeframe) 360 / 240 = 67% pace completion

<b>Standard published program length</b>	<b>Pace Completion Rate</b>
12 month postgraduate degree	90 credits x 150% = 135 attempted credits (maximum timeframe) 90 / 135 = 67% pace completion
3 year postgraduate degree	270 credits x 150% = 405 attempted credits (maximum timeframe) 270 / 405 = 67% pace completion
4 year postgraduate degree	360 credits x 150% = 540 attempted credits (maximum timeframe) 360 / 540 = 67% pace completion

For a PhD programme, this includes time for writing up a thesis and viva examination. So, a 4-year PhD should be completed in 6 years. This timescale includes any previous period of study at other institutions for the same programme.

### **Process of obtaining Satisfactory Academic Progress reports**

U.S. federal loan recipients are required to provide the Student Financial Support team the name and contact details (including email address) of their supervisor/tutor within the first two weeks of the start of the academic year.

The Student Financial Support team will contact all supervisors/tutors to confirm the recipient's satisfactory academic progress. Without this progress confirmation we are unable to process any of your Direct Loan disbursements.

Students who do not achieve the required GPA or equivalent grade; or who are not successfully completing the course at the required pace are no longer eligible to receive the US loans. Students will be notified of this by email and placed on Financial Aid Warning.

### **Financial Aid Warning**

Where the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirement has not been met at the end of each payment period, the student will be placed on 'Financial Aid Warning' for the period of the next academic term and will continue to be eligible to receive funding for that period only. Students on Financial Aid Warning will then need to take action to improve their grade and bring it in line with the requirements.

The Student Financial Support team will communicate the Financial Aid Warning by email and inform students that they need to improve their grades and bring them in line with the SAP requirements.

If satisfactory progress has not been achieved at the end of the Financial Aid Warning period, the student's loans will be terminated. We do not have the right to waive the satisfactory academic progress requirement for any student.

Students who have had their eligibility suspended for failing to maintain the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress or who have an appeal denied may regain Title IV eligibility by bringing themselves

into compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components. Students that have exceeded the 150% time limit on their programme based on ECTS credits cannot be reinstated.

It is possible for students to receive more than one warning period during an academic year. However, students cannot be placed on a Financial Aid Warning period consecutively.

## Appeals & Financial Probation

Students can appeal the decision on a Financial Warning. Where students can demonstrate academic failure due to exceptional circumstances such as an injury/illness of the student or the death of a relative can be demonstrated, an appeal may be submitted to the Student Financial Support team.

Appeals should be made to the Scholarships Manager, Joanne Palmer by email to [j.palmer@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:j.palmer@imperial.ac.uk), **within 14 days** of notification of financial aid warning or suspension together with the supporting evidence.

Student appeals must state the reasons of the failure to make Satisfactory Academic Progress and state how a change in circumstances will allow the student to make Satisfactory Academic Progress in the future.

## Probation

Students who have an appeal approved will be placed on probation and their academic progress will be monitored the following term. During this time, they can continue to receive Title IV funds for this one payment period only. If the conditions are met after probation the student may continue to receive Title IV funding. Students who fail to make SAP, or do not meet the established conditions at the end of the probation period lose their aid eligibility.

## Re-establishing Eligibility

Students who have had their eligibility suspended for failing to maintain the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress or who have an appeal denied may regain Title IV eligibility by bringing themselves into compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components. Students that have exceeded the 150% time limit on their programme based on ECTS credits cannot be reinstated.

Please contact the [Student Financial Support](#) team if further information is required on this policy.

## Document Control

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