



Inter American University of Puerto Rico
Office of the President

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy Graduate Programs

NORMATIVE DOCUMENT A-0621-068

***NOTE:** This normative document is available in Spanish and English. In the event of a conflict as to its interpretation, the Spanish version shall prevail.*

Introduction

The fundamental mission of Inter American University of Puerto Rico is to develop the talent of its students. The University is committed to making all reasonable efforts to enable students to complete the program of study in which they are enrolled and, thereby, obtain the corresponding academic degree. Cognizant of this responsibility, the University has incorporated the practice of periodically evaluating students' academic progress throughout their years of study. This allows the University to take the necessary measures to achieve greater student retention and enable students to reach their educational goals.

I. Legal basis

This normative document is established by virtue of the authority conferred upon the President of the University by the Board of Trustees in the Statutes of the University and is in accordance with established institutional policies and rules and with current federal and state laws.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish the evaluation criteria for determining students' satisfactory academic progress. It is in conformity with eligibility requirements for participation in federal, state, and institutional financial aid. It also establishes the measures the University will take when students do not achieve satisfactory academic progress, so as to enable them to complete the requirements of their programs of study.

III. Scope

The provisions of this document apply to all of the University's academic units that offer programs of study at the graduate level, excluding the School of Optometry and the School of Law.

IV. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms and phrases have the meanings indicated below:

- 4.1 Academic plan - document prepared between an academic advisor and the student, the content of which the latter commits to comply with in order to make satisfactory academic progress within a specific period of time.
- 4.2 Academic probation - status assigned to students who fail to achieve satisfactory academic progress.
- 4.3 Academic suspension – status assigned to students who do not achieve satisfactory academic progress after failing to overcome an academic probation.
- 4.4 Academic terms - teaching periods offered within an academic year. Academic terms may be semesters, trimesters, quarters, intensive sessions, and summer sessions.
- 4.5 Academic year - study period with a minimum duration of thirty (30) weeks in which full-time graduate students may complete at least 12 credits in two semesters, 18 in three trimesters or 24 in four quarters. It includes the period beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following year.
- 4.6 Appeal - process by which students with the status of Financial Aid Suspension and First Academic Probation, or Academic Suspension, petitions for reconsideration of said statuses and the reinstatement of their eligibility to receive financial aid.
- 4.7 Appeals Committee - team appointed by the chancellor, composed of the dean of academic affairs, or the person he designates; the director or coordinator of the graduate program, or the person he designates; a professional advisor; and the director of Financial Aid, or the person he designates. This committee will consider students' appeals for reinstatement of financial aid and appeals of first academic probations and academic suspensions.
- 4.8 Award year – the period beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following year.
- 4.9 Credits attempted - credits for courses in which students enroll and obtain the following grades and notations A, B, C, F, P, NP, AD, W, UW, WM, R, and T.
- 4.10 Credits completed - credits for courses in which students receive grades of A, B, C, F, P, and NP and credits transferred (T) from other institutions.

- 4.11 Credits earned - credits for courses in which students obtain grades of A, B, C, and P or credits transferred (T) from other institutions.
- 4.12 Financial aid probation - status assigned to a student who successfully appeals a financial aid suspension.
- 4.13 Financial aid suspension- status assigned to students who, at the moment of the satisfactory academic progress review, do not comply with the qualitative or quantitative components described in Section VI of this document and, thus, lose financial aid eligibility.
- 4.14 General grade point average (GPA) - measure of a student's achievement, calculated by dividing the total number of honor points (points for grades A, B, C, or F multiplied by the course credits) by the number of total credits accumulated through the courses.
- 4.15 Graduate level – category of programs of study and courses corresponding to masters and doctoral degree programs and post-baccalaureate and post-master's professional certificate programs.
- 4.16 Maximum time frame – maximum period allowed for students to complete a program of study. Students will maintain financial aid eligibility as long as they do not exceed this period; nonetheless, they have the right to request an extension of this period and appeal for reinstatement of their eligibility to receive financial aid.
- 4.17 Minor specialization – a group of courses associated with a program of study that a student may declare during his university studies along with his major specialization.
- 4.18 Natural year - period of time ending 365 days after any date.
- 4.19 Pace of completion - ratio between earned credits and attempted credits in the program of study the student is pursuing.
- 4.20 Program grade point average-- measure of a student's achievement in his program of study. It is determined using the grades the student obtains in the specialization courses of his declared program of study.
- 4.21 Program of study - set of courses, organized by categories, that lead to a university degree or technical certificate and which provides knowledge and skills for working in a profession or field.
- 4.22 Payment period - the academic term in which a student is enrolled. For financial aid purposes, the payment period is equivalent to the academic term.

V. General dispositions

- 5.1 This document establishes the criteria for determining students' academic progress. It also establishes the eligibility requirements for receiving financial aid.
- 5.2 Students enrolled in a program of study that has higher academic requirements than those established in this document must meet the program's requirements in order to remain in the program.
- 5.3 The University will annually review students' satisfactory academic progress at the end of the academic terms that constitute the financial aid award year, which includes the period beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following year. The review will include all the academic terms in which the student was enrolled.
- 5.4 The academic progress of students on academic probation and on financial aid probation will be reviewed at the end of each academic term.
- 5.5 The maximum time frame will be reviewed at the end of every academic term. All credits attempted at the Institution and all transfer credits will be included.
- 5.6 Students who do not complete their program of study within the maximum time frame as established in the applicable federal regulations and, therefore, do not make satisfactory academic progress, will not be able to continue studying with financial aid. When students exceed the maximum time frame described in this document, they must submit an appeal and academic plan to the dean of academic affairs, or the person he designates, who in turn will refer it to the Appeals Committee for review to decide whether the student may continue studying.
- 5.7 Students must declare the specialization or program of study of their choice and may change it after consulting with an academic advisor. When a student changes his program of study, attempted credits from the previous program of study will not be considered when calculating his program grade point average and pace of completion required to make satisfactory academic progress, except for the credits that are part of the requirements of the new program of study.
- 5.8 The courses of a program of study may be paid for with financial aid as long as the student remains in his original program or after making a duly authorized and registered change of program.
- 5.9 All students may opt for a minor specialization that is within their graduate program. For a minor specialization that is not within their graduate program of study, students must meet the requirements established in the current Graduate Catalog.

- 5.10 If students opt for a minor specialization, the courses may be paid with financial aid, as specified in the applicable regulations. These courses may be paid with financial aid until the student completes the mayor program's requirements or completes the maximum time frame, whichever occurs first.
- 5.11 All repeated courses are considered attempted credits for the purpose of determining the maximum time frame measured in credit hours and pace of completion. In the case of repeated courses, only the highest grade will be included when calculating students' grade point average.
- 5.12 The Institution accepts transfer credits from other institutions of higher education, up to a maximum of 33% of the graduate program of study, and will only consider courses which are equivalent to courses in the program of study in which the student received grades of A or B. Only courses completed within the past 10 years will be considered for transfer. All transfer credits will be taken into account when calculating the maximum period of eligibility. Students accumulate study time for transfer credits at the rate of one year of study per 16 transfer credits.
- 5.13 Transfer credits (T) are considered part of students' academic record for establishing the percentage of earned credits of the program of study's requirements and for determining the maximum time frame for receiving financial aid. Only transfer credits applicable to the program of study, including elective credits, will be validated. If the student has already earned the elective courses required by his program, no additional credits will be validated.
- 5.14 The evaluation to determine students' academic progress will not consider the courses in which the student has received notations of I (incomplete), DP (dissertation in progress), TP (thesis in progress), and PP (project in progress), until the notations have been removed.
- 5.15 The University will notify students, by letter or email, of their academic status and how it affects their eligibility to receive financial aid.
- 5.16 After graduation, the academic transcript will not reflect a student's probationary and suspension periods.
- 5.17 Students may not be granted financial aid probation for the same circumstances on more than one occasion.

VI. Requirements for Making Satisfactory Academic Progress

The requirements to make satisfactory academic progress are divided into two components: qualitative and quantitative.

6.1 Qualitative Component

6.1.1 The general grade point average (GPA) that post-baccalaureate professional certificate and master's degree students must maintain is:

- a. at least a 2.50 general GPA in the first year of study, and
- b. at least a 3.00 general GPA in the ensuing years until they complete their program of study.

6.1.2 Students who are pursuing a post-master's professional certificate or a doctoral degree must maintain at least a 3.00 general GPA while pursuing their program of study.

6.2 Quantitative Component

6.2.1 Pace of completion requirements: ratio between earned credits and attempted credits

- a. Students pursuing post-baccalaureate professional certificates or master's degrees must successfully complete 50% of the credits attempted in their first year of study and 66.67% in the remaining years.
- b. Students pursuing post-master's professional certificates or doctoral programs must successfully complete 66.67% of the credits attempted in each of their years of study.
- c. Results should be rounded to the hundredths. For example: 66.6666666 should be rounded to 66.67%.
- d. Compliance with the pace of progression ensures that students will complete the degree requirements within the maximum time frame.

6.2.2 Maximum time frame requirements

- a. Students pursuing post-baccalaureate professional certificates will have a maximum of two natural years to complete the program.
- b. Students pursuing master's degrees will have a maximum of seven natural years to complete the degree requirements, counting from the date on which they begin their first graduate course. In the case of readmission, the current *Expiration Norm for Master's Level and Professional Certificate Courses* in the Graduate Catalog, will apply.

- c. Students pursuing post-master's professional certificates will have a maximum of two natural years to complete the program.
 - d. Doctoral students will have a maximum of eight natural years to complete the requirements of the program, counting from the date on which they begin their first doctoral course. In the case of readmissions, the current *Expiration Norm for Doctoral Program Courses* in the Graduate Catalog, will apply.
- 6.3 Post-baccalaureate and graduate students accumulate time of study for transfer credits. The time accumulates at the rate of one year of studies per every sixteen (16) transfer credits. If students do not complete their program of study within the established maximum time frame, they may be evaluated to determine whether they may continue studying. The students must submit an appeal, along with an academic plan, to the dean of academic affairs, who will refer the petitions to the Appeals Committee, whose members will determine whether the students will be allowed to continue their studies and whether they will be eligible for financial aid.

VII. First Academic Probation and Financial Aid Suspension

- 7.1 Students who do not meet the qualitative or quantitative components will not make satisfactory academic progress and will, therefore, lose their eligibility to receive financial aid.
- 7.2 Students will be placed on a first academic probation for one academic year, during which time they will be able to enroll, but are not eligible for financial aid. However, they may submit an appeal for reinstatement of their eligibility to receive financial aid. If the appeal is approved, they will also be placed on financial aid probation.
- 7.3 The academic load of students on academic probation and financial aid probation will be limited to nine credits per semester, six per trimester or three per quarter. The dean of academic affairs will evaluate any exceptions to this provision, taking into consideration the merits of each case.

VIII. Appeal Process to Reinstate Financial Aid Eligibility

- 8.1 Students who wish to appeal a financial aid suspension must submit an appeal to the dean of academic affairs, or the person he designates, after receiving the notification of financial aid suspension for failing to make satisfactory academic progress. Students must submit an appeal as soon as they receive the notification of the financial aid suspension. Financial aid will only be authorized once the appeal has been approved. For this reason it is recommended that students submit the appeal before or at the beginning of the academic term in which they expect to enroll.

- 8.2 Students must base their appeal on the causes or circumstances beyond their control that did not allow them to make satisfactory academic progress, and they must explain what has changed at that point in time that will allow them to maintain academic progress moving forward. Acceptable causes or circumstances upon which to base the appeal include:
- a. suffering a documented medical condition
 - b. death of an immediate family member
 - c. military deployment
 - d. other major circumstances beyond the student's control
- 8.3 The appeal must be accompanied by an academic plan, developed between the student and an academic advisor. It must describe how the student plans to make satisfactory academic progress within a specific time frame, usually an academic year or less, although in exceptional cases it may be for a longer period of time. A student's academic plan must give priority to:
- a. repeating and successfully completing courses he has failed (F), abandoned (UW), or not received the grade required by his program of study.
 - b. successfully completing no less than 66.67% of attempted credits
 - c. obtaining a grade point average that will allow him to reach the required graduation GPA of 3.00, or the graduation GPA required by his program of study.
- 8.4 The dean of academic affairs will refer the student's petition to the Appeals Committee which will review all students' appeals.
- 8.5 When evaluating a student's appeal and academic plan, the Appeals Committee will evaluate whether it is viable for the student to make the required academic progress within the time frame specified in the academic plan.
- 8.6 If the Committee concludes that a student will be able to make satisfactory academic progress, it will approve the appeal and grant him financial aid probation for as long as he complies with the Academic plan.

IX. Evaluation of Students on Academic Probation and Financial Aid Probation

- 9.1 A student on first academic probation and financial aid probation will be evaluated at the end of each term in which he enrolls and at the end of the academic year. If at the end of any of the terms under the first academic probation and financial aid probation, the student makes satisfactory academic progress, he will be considered in compliance with the satisfactory academic progress policy and financial aid will be reinstated. With regard to the academic probation and the academic plan, both will be considered finalized and in compliance with the process.

- 9.2 If a student does not make satisfactory academic progress by the endpoint established in the academic plan for the first academic probation and financial aid probation, he will be academically suspended for the first time and his financial aid will be suspended. The first academic suspension will be for a period of six months. The dean of academic affairs will notify the student of this decision by letter or e-mail, a copy of which will be included in his academic file.
- 9.3 A student may appeal the first academic suspension, as well as the financial aid suspension. He must submit an appeal and an academic plan to the dean of academic affairs, who will, in turn, refer the student's petition to the Appeals Committee. The appeal must be based on a different cause. It cannot be based on the same cause as the first appeal.
- 9.4 If the Committee considers that it is viable for the student to make satisfactory academic progress by the time frame specified in the academic plan, it will approve the appeal and grant him a second academic probation. The Committee will also decide whether to grant him a financial aid probation.
- 9.5 A student who does not appeal the academic suspension may resume studying at the University at the end of the six month academic suspension, at which time he may be placed on a second academic probation for one academic year. The student may appeal the financial aid suspension to petition for the reinstatement of his financial aid eligibility.
- 9.6 A student on a second academic probation and financial aid probation will be evaluated at the end of all terms in which he enrolls and at the end of the academic year. If at the end of one of the terms under the second academic probation and financial aid probation, the student makes satisfactory academic progress, he will be considered in compliance with this policy, and will, therefore, regain eligibility to receive financial aid. With regard to the academic probation and the academic plan, both will be considered finalized and in compliance with the process.
- 9.7 If, at the conclusion of all the academic terms of the second academic probation and financial aid probation, a student does not manage to make satisfactory academic progress, he will be suspended academically for the second time and his financial aid will be suspended. The dean of academic affairs will notify the student of this determination by letter or e-mail, a copy of which will be included in the student's academic file. The second academic suspension will be for a period of one year and the student may not appeal this determination.
- 9.8 After this period, the student may apply for admission to a different academic program. He will be admitted under a third academic probation for a period of one year and may appeal the financial aid suspension. If the

student does not make satisfactory academic progress under the third academic probation, he will be suspended for a third time and may not appeal this decision.

X. Responsibilities

10.1 Student

- 10.1.1 must participate in the development of an academic plan when he do not make satisfactory academic progress.
- 10.1.2 is responsible for submitting an appeal if he wants to appeal the financial aid suspension or academic suspension, as applicable, to the dean of academic affairs, or the person he designates, within the time frame established in this document.

10.2 Chancellor

- 10.2.1 will appoint the Appeals Committee to evaluate the various appeals submitted by students.
- 10.2.2 will establish the procedures for implementing this document, taking into consideration the particularities of the academic unit,

10.3 Dean of Academic Affairs

- 10.3.1 will receive the students' appeals and refer them to the Appeals Committee.
- 10.3.2 will notify the students, by letter or email, of the Appeals Committee's decision and send a copy to the student's file.
- 10.3.3 will evaluate, with the Appeals Committee, the cases of students that have not completed their program of study within the maximum time frame established in the applicable federal regulations, to determine whether they may continue their studies.
- 10.3.4 may designate a person to represent him in the responsibilities described herein.

10.4 Appeals Committee

- 10.4.1 will evaluate the appeals referred by the dean of academic affairs and will inform the chancellor of the decisions made in each case.

10.5 The Information Technology and Telecommunications Center of the Central Office

10.5.1 will develop the necessary programming to evaluate the students' academic progress, as specified in this document.

10.5.2 will apply said programming at the request of the Vice Presidency of Academic and Student Affairs.

10.5.3 will produce the necessary reports and make them available to each academic unit's authorized users.

XI. Severability

If any part or section of this policy is declared null & void by a competent authority, such decision will not affect the remaining ones.

XII. Repeal or amendments

This policy repeals any other policies that are in conflict with the provisions expressed herein. This document may be amended or repealed by the President of the University.

XIII. Effective Date

This policy will go into effect on July 1, 2021.

XIV. Approval

NOTE: Normative Document A-0621-068: *Norma de Progreso Académico Satisfactorio para los Programas del Nivel Graduado* was signed by President Manuel J. Fernós on June 8, 2021.

May 6, 2021
PAS