

Bryn Mawr College
Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

I. Purpose

This policy defines satisfactory academic progress for all Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) matriculating students.

II. Accountability

The Dean of the GSSWSR is responsible for implementing this policy.

III. Policy

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is defined here as the successful completion of degree requirements, according to a) established completion rates, b) standards for academic performance, and c) time limits. Sound academic principles require that students be required to maintain standards of satisfactory academic progress. In addition, federal regulations require the GSSWSR to establish SAP standards. The following standards apply to all matriculating students, regardless of whether they are financial aid recipients. Students who fail to maintain SAP must be informed of their academic status by the Dean (or a designated representative) and may be placed on financial aid probation, suspended, or dismissed, in accordance with GSSWSR policies. SAP will be reviewed at the end of each grading period.

A. *Completion Rate*

At the end of each grading period the Assistant Dean for Administration will evaluate all students' academic progress by comparing the number of attempted courses with the courses successfully completed to date. At the end of each grading period, a student must have successfully completed a minimum of 67% of all of the courses they have attempted to date.

The program completion rate standards listed below differ between the Master of Social Service (MSS), Master of Law and Social Policy (MLSP), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs, due to the different requirements for each of those programs.

1. MSS Program

A student in the MSS program must successfully complete a *minimum of three (3) courses* at the end of each academic year; however, a student may need to complete more than the minimum number in some years in order to meet other benchmarks. In addition, students must take certain courses in sequence. By the end of the Spring semester of the student's second academic year in the program, students must have completed all 10 foundation (100 level)

courses (including 2 semesters of field placement), inclusive of transfer credits or successful waiver exams. No more than two foundation courses may be taken in the summer between the first and second year. MSS students who do not have Advanced Standing must complete all degree requirements (18 units) within a maximum of 4 years.

Advanced Standing students may receive up to 8 transfer credits. They must begin the MSS program in the Summer of their first academic year, and complete 2 courses during that first Summer session. They must enroll in 200-level practice courses and field placement in their first year. They must complete the program degree requirements no later than September of that year.

2. MLSP degree

The MLSP degree requires 7 units plus a special project. At least two courses must be complete in each grading period. (Note that 2012-13 is the last year that students will be admitted to this program.)

3. PhD program

A student in the PhD program must successfully complete a minimum of three (3) courses at the end of each academic year in order to be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress. PhD students must complete a total of 12 courses within the first 4 years in the program. Preliminary exams must be passed within 18 months after the completion of coursework. The dissertation proposal must be accepted within one year after completion of preliminary exams. The dissertation must be successfully defended within 4 years after the proposal is accepted. All degree requirements must be completed within 8 years. Thus, students can take the maximum amount of time for some requirements, but cannot take the maximum time for all requirements. If a student fails to finish any given part of the program in the maximum amount of time allowed, that student will be removed from the Ph.D. program.

4. All programs

Courses will be considered as attempted or completed as follows:

Attempted and completed: Courses with a grade of S (Satisfactory) or 3.0 or greater.

Attempted but not completed: Courses with a grade of U (Unsatisfactory), Inc (Permanent Incomplete), W (Withdrawal), or less than 3.0.

Not attempted and not completed: Courses with a grade of Aud (audit).

Students who do not complete degree requirements at the appropriate rate (as described above) lose their SAP status and are placed on financial aid probationary status (described below).

B. Academic Performance

At the end of each grading period the Assistant Dean for Administration will evaluate whether each student has achieved a passing grade in each course attempted. Passing grades are the equivalent of a “B” or higher (that is 3.0 or greater, or a grade of Satisfactory (S)).

MSS students who attempt but do not complete a required course shall meet with the GSSWSR Committee to Evaluate the Performance of MSS Students. Except in extenuating circumstances such as family or medical emergencies, a student who attempts but does not complete a course will lose SAP status and be placed on financial aid probation (as described below). The Dean determines what constitutes extenuating circumstances. The student must successfully repeat the course without GSSWSR scholarship funds in order to re-establish SAP status.

A student who attempts but does not complete two required courses may be dismissed from the MSS program.

A student who receives Unsatisfactory grades in 2 courses or Marginal Satisfactory grades in 3 courses will be dismissed from PhD program.

C. Maximum Time Frame

Maximum time frame is defined as the maximum number of years after first enrollment that a student may complete GSSWSR courses in the pursuit of a degree. After each grading period the Assistant Dean will evaluate whether each student can complete the program without exceeding the maximum time frame. A student must complete all requirements for their specific degree program within the maximum time frame specified below, not including time for approved leave of absence.

<u>Degree Program</u>	<u>Standard Length</u>	<u>Maximum Length</u>
MSS	2 years	4 years
MSS advanced standing	1 year	2 years
MSS/MLSP dual degree	2	5 years
MSS/MLSP advanced standing	1	4 years
MLSP (only)	1	2 years
PhD	8	8

D. Notification of Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Following the evaluations required by Sections A, B, and C of this policy, the Dean's Office will transmit written notification to all students who have not met the standards for SAP, with copies to the Bryn Mawr College (BMC) Office of Financial Aid. The notification will indicate the nature of the deficiency, any methods that may be available for correcting the deficiency, and any consequences that may have resulted or may result, such as probation, suspension, or dismissal. A student may reestablish SAP by demonstrating achievement of the completion rate and minimum GPA required by Sections A and B of this policy within the maximum time frame required in Section C of this policy.

E. Financial Aid Probation

Students who are not progressing satisfactorily may be placed on financial aid probation. While on financial aid probation the student is eligible for financial aid. The student must complete the following year successfully as well as successfully complete all requirements established by this policy. This will allow the student to return to good SAP standing. After one year, students who remain out of compliance with the SAP policy lose eligibility financial aid.

A student who has lost eligibility for financial aid cannot regain eligibility by paying for enrolled courses or by sitting out for a term. The student must successfully complete requirements specified by this policy.

F. Appeal of Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Designation

Students who wish to dispute a determination of unsatisfactory academic progress and financial aid eligibility have the right to appeal such decisions. The first appeal for Masters students is to the Committee to Evaluate the Educational Performance of Masters Students. The first appeal for doctoral students is to the Doctoral Financial Aid Subcommittee. If a student's failure to make satisfactory progress is due to extenuating circumstances, the student may request that the Dean approve an exception to the requirements of the SAP policy.

The second appeal is to the Dean of the GSSWSR. The results of an appeal to the Dean are final. The student must submit a request to appeal in writing.

G. Dismissal or Withdrawl

Students who are dismissed or withdrawn from the GSSWSR are not making satisfactory academic progress and are not eligible to receive financial aid.

H. Documentation

Documentation of decisions concerning the status of SAP, probation, dismissal, appeal, or re-establishment of SAP shall be transmitted to the affected student and maintained in the student's academic file in the Dean's Office of the GSSWSR.

I. Dissemination

This policy will be published in the same manner as other academic policies of the GSSWSR, including online publication and inclusion in all new editions of the Student Handbook and the PhD Program Operating Procedures. The GSSWSR will disseminate this policy to all students when they enroll in any degree program.

Approved by a vote of the GSSWSR faculty on 12/20/2011