

Satisfactory Academic Progress Regulations
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Education requires institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress for students receiving Federal aid. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) means the student is proceeding in a positive manner toward fulfilling degree requirements. SAP includes two standards; qualitative and quantitative. Students must meet both standards to continue receiving financial aid. **This policy applies only to eligible US and eligible non-US citizens receiving Title IV aid, specifically the Federal Direct Stafford and Direct PLUS loans.**

Qualitative

In order to maintain eligibility for financial aid with the qualitative standard, a student must maintain the academic standing necessary to remain at the University of Victoria. Student Awards and Financial Aid will conduct a review at the end of each academic year to determine the students successful progress toward obtaining a degree by comparing cumulative grade average to hours earned. A student must maintain an overall minimum 5.0 out of 9.0 grade point average to remain enrolled in the program or to continue receiving aid except for certain courses specified in the catalogue where the requirement is higher.

Students may be put on probation by their department at the end of any term of study if they have not made sufficient academic progress to warrant continuance of study. Students who fail to maintain sufficient academic progress will be dismissed from the program. A student must maintain a 5.0 overall grade average regardless of their eligibility for or participation in the Title IV program. Termination of students will follow policies and procedures adopted by the department and reported to the 2nd Degree Committee. Dismissal by an academic department may be appealed to the Head of the Department and if that appeal is unsuccessful, the student may then appeal to the Head of the 2nd Degree Committee. The dismissal decision by the 2nd Degree Committee is final and may not be appealed by the student. Students who are re-admitted to the program may be issued a one-time waiver to continue receiving financial aid. The details are specified below.

Quantitative

Graduate students must be enrolled for a minimum of 3 units of registered coursework during either the fall and/or spring semesters to be considered full time. Half-time enrollment for graduate students 1.5 units of registered course work during either the fall and/or spring semester. In order to meet the quantitative standard, students must complete and pass a minimum of 67% of courses attempted each academic year. The maximum allowable time to be eligible for financial aid for a full-time masters degree student is five academic years and for a full-time doctoral degree student seven

academic years regardless of whether the students receives Federal Student Aid (loans) during any enrollment period.

For students on US Government Student Loans: Students must complete their educational program within a time frame no longer than 150% of the published length of the educational program (for example, a graduate student in a 5 year degree has 7.5 years to successfully complete the degree requirements).

Federal regulations require that the University tracks the academic progress of student loan recipients from the first date of enrolment at the University of Victoria, whether or not student loans were received at that time. Credits transferred from all other credit sources will be considered in the evaluation of the completion rate standards.

Master and Doctorate degree requirements are listed below.

The University of Victoria evaluates Satisfactory Academic Progress at the end of the spring term. Withdrawals and incompletes are not included in the overall grade average. Students must complete all required courses by the end of the degree. Students who achieve a passing grade may not repeat a course. Students who fail a required course must repeat the course and obtain a passing grade before completion of their degree. When a student repeats a course and achieves a passing grade, the original grade will not be counted in the grade average. There are no noncredit remedial courses. Scheduled awards for the next academic year for students who are not making Satisfactory Academic Progress will be canceled.

Financial aid will be disbursed on the first day of each term. Students who withdraw after that will have their eligibility to retain part of their financial aid calculated on the percentage of the term attended. Students who attend more than 60% of the term may retain all of their aid. See the section on Return to Title IV (R2T4) below.

Program Requirements - Master's Degrees

Minimum Degree Requirements

The minimum requirement for a master's degree is 15 units of work, and satisfactory completion of the prescribed program.

Course Work, Research and Thesis

Considerable variation is permitted in the balance between research and the course work required for the master's degree, although most programs include a thesis based on research (see Master's Degree Without Thesis, below).

Minimum Graduate Component of Master's Degree

A master's candidate must complete a minimum of 12 units of graduate credit out of the total units required for the degree. Individual departments may require a higher number of units at the graduate level. Courses numbered at the 100 and 200 level may be included in the program as prerequisites but will be indicated on the student's record as FNC (For No Credit on a graduate program); as well, courses indicated on the record as FNC will not be included in sessional or cumulative grade point average calculations. Any senior undergraduate courses (courses numbered 300-499) included in a graduate program must be pertinent to the program and must be in addition to the minimum 12 units of graduate credits required in all master's degree programs. The Dean's permission is required if a student wishes to take only undergraduate courses in a given term.

Master's Theses

When research is completed, and before the thesis is written, the student should download a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines from the following website of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This publication specifies academic and technical requirements to ensure acceptability of the document to the University and the National Library.

A master's thesis is an original lengthy essay which demonstrates a student's understanding of, and capacity to, employ research methods appropriate to their discipline(s). It should normally include a general overview of relevant literature in the field of study, be well organized and academically written. The work may be based on body of original data produced by the student or it may be an original research exercise conducted using scholarly literature or data produced and made available by others.

In general, a master's candidate must demonstrate a command of the subject of the thesis. A thesis demonstrates that appropriate research methods have been used and appropriate methods of critical analysis supplied. It provides evidence of some new contribution to the field of existing knowledge or a new perspective on existing knowledge.

Master's Degrees Without Theses

All regulations pertaining to such programs are contained in the document *Regulations for a Master's Degree Without Thesis* which may be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Not all Departments offer the option of a master's degree without thesis.

1. A program form must be completed as for all other graduate degrees.
2. A supervisory committee must be formed as described under "Graduate Studies Committees, Advisers, and Supervisors" below.
3. Unless approved by Senate there must be evidence of independent research work which may be in the form of a project, extended paper(s), work report, etc. The credit value for this work may range from 1.5 to 6.0 units.

4. There shall be a formal evaluation of the degree. The department may require a written comprehensive examination in place of, or in addition to, an oral examination. If an oral examination is conducted, it shall be done so in accordance with the regulations under "Examining Committees", page 29, and "Results of Oral Examinations (Master's Without Thesis)", page 29.

Regulations pertaining to written comprehensive examinations are contained in the document *Regulations for a Master's Degree Without Thesis*.

Program Requirements - Doctoral Degrees

Minimum Degree Requirements

The minimum requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is 30 units of work beyond the master's level or 45 units beyond the bachelor's level, and satisfactory completion of the prescribed program.

The doctoral program requires that a broad knowledge of the field or fields of study be demonstrated through the candidacy examination. The major portion of the doctoral program will be devoted to a research project culminating in a dissertation which satisfies the requirements and standards of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Doctoral Candidacy Examinations

Within two years of registration as a provisional doctoral student and at least six months before the final oral examination, a student must pass a candidacy examination. The purpose of the candidacy examination is to test the student's understanding of material considered essential to completion of a PhD and/or the student's competence to do research that will culminate in the PhD dissertation. The candidacy examination may be written, or oral, or both at the discretion of the department.

Individual departments or supervisory committees may also require other examinations in addition to the candidacy examination. Such examinations may include those to test competence in languages other than English, in statistics, in computing, or in other basic research skills.

The candidacy examination is a requirement of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and cannot be waived by any department. However, the precise form, content, and administration of such examinations are determined by individual departments.

While there may be wide variety in the content of candidacy examinations, all such examinations must be consistent within each department. Factors that must be consistent are the manner in which the examinations are constructed, conducted and evaluated. Departments are responsible for ensuring this consistency.

Departments are responsible for providing the student with a written statement of procedures, requirements and regulations pertaining to all such examinations. This

information must be made available to doctoral students as soon as they enter the program. A copy of these procedures must be on file with the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

When a student has successfully completed the candidacy examination(s), the Departmental Graduate Adviser is responsible for sending a memorandum of confirmation to the Graduate Admissions and Records Office. The memorandum must be signed by the student's supervisor and the Chair of the department.

Doctoral dissertations

When research is completed, and before the dissertation is written, the student should download a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines from the website of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This publication specifies academic and technical requirements to ensure acceptability of the document to the University and the National Library.

The doctoral dissertation must embody original work and constitute a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field of study. It should contain evidence of broad knowledge of the relevant literature, and should demonstrate a critical understanding of the works of scholars closely related to the subject of the dissertation. Material embodied in the dissertation should, in the opinion of scholars in the field, merit publication.

The general form and style of dissertations may differ from department to department, but all dissertations shall be presented in a form which constitutes an integrated submission. The dissertation may include materials already published by the candidate, whether alone or in conjunction with others. Previously published materials must be fully integrated into the dissertation while at the same time distinguishing the student's own work from the work of other researchers. At the final oral examination, the doctoral candidate is responsible for the entire content of the dissertation. This includes those portions of co-authored papers which comprise part of the dissertation.

Transfer Students

Transfer students' transcripts will be evaluated by the Program Director. Those courses which are applicable to the degree requirement will be accepted and will be used to measure the quantitative SAP requirement. Only those grades earned at the University of Victoria will be used to compute the qualitative requirement.

Change of Program or Degree

Students who decide to change their degree or program objective will be evaluated similarly to Transfer Students with the exception that the grades previously earned at the University of Victoria will be used to measure the qualitative requirements.

Concurrent Degrees

Although it is unlikely to occur, students may pursue two graduate degrees concurrently. They are charged the tuition for each program and the Cost of Attendance for one degree will be adjusted to reflect the two tuition charges. Students must meet the Satisfactory Progress requirements for both programs to retain eligibility. The two sets of courses will be viewed as one program. Loans will be processed to the maximum yearly eligibility for graduate students.

Additional Degrees

Students who have completed a graduate degree program and wish to pursue another degree must apply for admission to that program as would any other applicant and meet the admission requirements for the new program. Federal loan eligibility will be limited to the aggregate program maximums under Federal Regulations.

Appeals and Waivers of SAP

Dismissal by an academic department may be appealed to the Head of the 2nd Degree Committee after all other avenues of appeal have been exhausted. The dismissal decision by the 2nd Degree Committee is final and may not be appealed by the student.

Students who are readmitted to their program may apply in writing to the Director, Student Awards and Financial Aid for one-time waiver to continue receiving financial aid. The student should specify the exceptional circumstances that lead to the poor academic performance and state the reasons why those circumstances will not affect future academic progress. Each case will be individually reviewed and the Director will use his or her professional judgment to determine if the original situation has been resolved to the point where the student can reasonably be expected to succeed and issue a one time waiver of SAP for the next term. If the student still does not make satisfactory progress, then he or she will be ineligible for future aid. The decision of the Director may differ from that of the 2nd Degree Committee in that a student may be readmitted to the program but may not be eligible for financial aid.

Treatment of WDR, INC, UNK, DEF, AUDIT, Cumulative GPA Below 2.0 and Repeated (Duplicate/Mutually Exclusive) Course Work

1. Repeated course withdrawals may be considered as unsatisfactory academic progression and could result in a student being placed in a Student Loan Probation Status.
2. Incomplete (INC) grades, no grades reported (UNK) and situations where students have been granted a special exam (DEF) are considered a non-completion of attempted course work until the grade is replaced with a permanent grade and academic progress can be re-evaluated.
3. An audit course is not considered attempted course work. It is not included in the completion rate determinations.

4. Grades below 1.0 (failed courses E/F/N) are treated as attempted credits that were not earned, and are included in minimum completion rate determinations.
5. For a course that is repeated, every attempt will be included in the completion rate determinations. If a student has successfully passed the course in a previous study period, they may be asked to provide written documentation which outlines the reasons for the repeated attempt.

Students receiving US Student Loans who fail to meet the basic standards for satisfactory performance and/or are required to withdraw from the University will not be eligible for further US loan funding until they have cleared their probationary status.