

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR FINANCIAL AID**

Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is used to define successful completion of coursework to maintain eligibility for student financial aid. Federal regulations require the College to establish, publish and apply standards to monitor your progress towards completion of your certificate or degree program. A student's progress is reviewed at the end of each Semester. Your academic performance must meet the SAP standards below:

### **Quantitative Academic Progress**

- Students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 67% of the cumulative number of credit hours attempted each term.
- Transfer credits on the student's record are included as attempted/completed hours when computing the student's completion rate. Remedial credits are also included in the calculation of the cumulative completion rate.
- Course and/or program withdrawals during the drop/add period will not be counted in the calculation of academic progress.
- Grades of F, W, WA and I are not considered as satisfactory completion and will count against the student in calculating the completion percentage..

### **Qualitative Academic Progress**

In order to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements for Federal Aid, Veteran Benefits, and Institutional Scholarships a student must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) as outlined below:

1. Graduate Degree students enrolled in the Master of Ministry, Master of Arts in Biblical Studies and Master of Divinity must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for all credits attempted. Graduate Degree students enrolled in the Master of Theology must maintain a 3.0 for all credits attempted.
2. Certificate students and Undergraduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for all credits completed.

If a coursework extension is approved, an Incomplete will be given for 30 days and will not be considered in the GPA. If the Incomplete is changed to Failing, it will be calculated into the GPA.

Withdrawal during the first five weeks of an 8-week course or first nine weeks of a 15-week course will be marked as WP and will not be calculated into the GPA. Withdrawal after five weeks of an 8-week course or nine weeks of a 15-week course will be marked as WF and will be calculated into the GPA.

If a course is repeated resulting in an improved grade, it will replace the previous grade and be calculated in the GPA.

GRADE	NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT	GRADE POINT Value
A+	99-100	4.0
A	96-98	4.0
A-	94-95	3.7
B+	91-93	3.3
B	88-90	3.0
B-	86-87	2.7
C+	83-85	2.3
C	80-82	2.0
C-*	78-79	1.7
D+	75-77	1.3
D- **	70-71	0.7
F	0-69	0.0
AUD	Audit	n/a
WP	Withdrawal during the first nine weeks of a 16-week course or first five weeks of an 8-week course	n/a
WF	Withdrawal after the first nine weeks of a 16-week course or first five weeks of an 8-week course	0.0
I	Incomplete	n/a
IP	Class in Progress	n/a

NOTES: \* C- (1.7) is the lowest passing grade at the graduate level. \*\* D- (0.7) is the lowest passing grade at the undergraduate level

A student failing to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) will be notified in writing and placed on financial aid “warning” during the next term of enrollment. While in this “warning” status, the student is eligible to continue to receive private, institutional and federal aid. If SAP is achieved by the end of the “warning” term, the student will be removed from “warning” status. If SAP is not achieved by the end of the “warning” term, the student will notified in writing and placed on financial aid “suspension” during the next term of enrollment. While in a “suspension” status, the student is not eligible to receive private, institutional and federal aid. Students placed on “suspension” are eligible to submit a written appeal with

supportive documentation for consideration of aid reinstatement. Situations that may be considered for an appeal relate to the student or their immediate family members only. These situations must be extenuating emergency situations such as the death of immediate family member or extreme medical emergencies. The written appeal must include reason for lack of SAP and what steps the student has taken to correct the situation satisfactorily.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on financial aid “probation” for one term of enrollment only, or will be placed on an academic plan in order to achieve SAP by a certain date or semester. If placed on an academic plan the student must make SAP each semester of the plan or will be placed on an immediate Financial Aid Suspension without the option of another appeal. The student will be required to sign an Academic Plan contract developed by Student Financial Services in conjunction with Student Success and Advising, and personalized to assist the student in achieving SAP and maintaining Pace or Completion Ratio. The Pace policy specifies the pace at which a student must progress through a program to ensure the student completes a program within the maximum time frame. During the term the student is under the Academic Plan contract, the student will remain on “probation” status and eligible for aid. Upon successful completion of the Academic Plan contract resulting in SAP, the student will be removed from “probation” and will continue to be aid eligible. If SAP is not achieved during “probation” term of enrollment, the student is then placed on financial aid “suspension” and will be ineligible to receive aid until the term following the term the student achieves SAP.

Students failing to maintain SAP should consult with the Student Financial Services and Student Success and Advising Offices to meet with an advisor, who can assist with financial aid and academic planning.

### **Retaking Course Work**

New federal regulations limit students’ eligibility of federal aid with regards to repeated courses. Students may not receive federal aid (Pell Grant and Stafford Loans) for courses that were previously taken and passed beyond the first retake. In addition, that course will not count towards your actual enrollment. Note: Repeat courses still count toward your attempted hours for financial aid purposes.

Example: Student A takes a course and receives a grade of ‘D’. Student A needs a ‘C’ in this course to count for the requirements of the degree. Student A takes the course again receives aid and earns another ‘D’. Student needs to retake the course again, but is no longer eligible for federal aid for that class. Additionally Student A cannot use that course toward enrollment for financial aid purposes. If student A is taking 12 credits, the repeated 3 credit course is no longer eligible. Student A’s actual enrollment for financial aid purposes must be listed as 9 credits.

### **Pell Grant:**

- Maximum award remains at \$5550 for full time enrollment for an academic year
- Duration of eligibility is reduced to the equivalent of 12 full time semesters instead of 18 full time semesters. The reduction affects all students beginning with 2012-13 award year. (No students are grandfathered)

### **Provisions Affecting all Financial Aid Programs: Ability to Benefit Changes**

Ability to benefit options for establishing general student eligibility for Title IV funds are

eliminated for students who first enroll in a program of study on or after July 1, 2012. A student will need to have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent or have been home schooled, to meet the eligibility criteria.

### **Qualifying Income for Automatic Zero EFC**

- Automatic zero EFC income thresholds reduced to \$23,000 from the current \$30,000
- Auto zero calculation applies only to EFC calculation for dependent students (based on parent income) and independent students with dependents other than a spouse (based on the combined income of the student and spouse).

### **Provisions Affecting Direct Loans Only:**

- Interest subsidies during the six month grace period are eliminated for new Stafford Loans made on or after July 1, 2012. The repayment period still begins six months after the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time, but interest accrues during those six months will be payable by the student rather than subsidized by the federal government.
- Interest rate on Direct Subsidized Loans will increase from 3.4% to 6.8% for disbursements made on or after 07/01/12.

### **Maximum Time Frame**

For Undergraduate students from the initial semester of acceptance into Grace students have 150% of the length of their program to complete their program. The length of times depends on the program. All student aid recipients are sent a warning when they are within 24 hours of reaching the maximum number of hours allowed to complete their respective degree programs, or one term from reaching the maximum number of terms allowed. When students reach or exceed the maximum number of hours or terms allowed, they become immediately ineligible for financial assistance.

### **Graduate Program Completion Limits**

Grace recognizes that the majority of its students are adult learners with very busy schedules. We encourage students to take courses and complete programs at a reasonable, but constant pace in light of family, work, and ministry responsibilities. Maintaining a constant and continuous pace toward the completion of any program will create better success as the student grows spiritually, becomes more solidly grounded in the Scriptures, and becomes more and more effective in ministry. With this in mind, the following limits are in place to program completion.

From the initial semester of acceptance into Grace:

- All work leading to a Certificate or MM degree must be completed within three years.
- All work leading to a MABS degree must be completed within six years.
- All work leading to the M.Div. degree must be completed within eight years.
- All work leading to a Th.M. degree must be completed within ten years.

Periods when students have petitioned and received a 'Leave of Absence' will not count toward the limit. Extension of any of these limits requires a recommendation from the student's academic advisor and approval from the Vice President of Academic Affairs, in consultation with Student Services, as appropriate.

### **Transfer of Credit**

Grace School of Theology makes all attempts to be just, equitable, and apply the guidelines for

transfer equally. The school generally accepts transfer credit from institutions of higher education that have accredited or pre-accredited status through an accrediting agency that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education, or its equivalent, such as qualified foreign institutions of higher education. The accredited status of the institution is important when considering the transfer of credit, but it is not the sole determining factor. Transfer from unaccredited institutions is typically very difficult unless Grace has already verified comparability. The Office of Student Services has a list of such schools that have been verified. Students should be aware that there are limits to the number of transfer credits. In general, up to 30% of any given graduate program and 75% of any undergraduate program can be transferrable. For the maximum allowable transfer credit for each program, please refer to the appropriate academic program description. Work and/or ministry experience cannot count toward credit.

Students may apply for an evaluation of their credits after they have applied for admission through the Student Services Department. However, prospective students may confer with the VP of Academic Affairs and/or the VP of Student Services about the likelihood of transferring credit, prior to admission. Students are responsible for ensuring that official transcripts of their credit are sent directly from the institution to the Registrar. Unofficial transcripts will not be evaluated.

Students should be aware that reasons for the refusal of transfer credit are course-to-course incompatibility, the institution's accredited status, course description and requirements, final grade, etc. No credit will be awarded until official transcripts have been received and evaluated

Transfer of credit will be determined based on an evaluation of the course description and/or course syllabus and its comparability and equivalency with coursework and/or the purpose of the program at Grace. Coursework must be validated through an official transcript and must be for work of "B" grade (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher for graduate credit and a "C" grade (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher for undergraduate credit.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted. Questions regarding the transfer of credit should be addressed to the Academic Affairs Office. Students may appeal the evaluation of transfer of credit. Please see the section in this Catalog entitled, Academic Appeal Process.

### **Transfer of General Education (GENED) Credit**

Both the AABS and the BABS are Degree Completion Programs (DCP) meaning that Grace expects students to complete their GENED requirements at another higher educational institution and the complete their non-GENED degree requirements at Grace. The AABS requires that students complete 18 credits and the BABS requires that students complete 36 credits of GENED.

The general education core includes a minimum of three semester hours in each of the following: humanities/fine arts, behavioral/social sciences, communications, and natural sciences/math.