



Graduate Theological Union

Master of Arts Program Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

The Higher Education Act of 1965 requires that institutions of higher education establish a reasonable Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy to determine whether an otherwise eligible student is making SAP in their educational program. The SAP policy must include a qualitative and a quantitative measure of the completion of work within a maximum timeframe. Students must meet both measures to maintain their eligibility during all periods of enrollment. The SAP policy must apply to all students in the program including those who are not receiving financial aid. Initial and continuing eligibility for all sources of student funding or support, such as grant-in-aid, other GTU-sponsored merit and/or need-based awards, scholarships, or fellowships and federal aid such as federal work-study and direct loans, require GTU verification of satisfactory academic progress.

Qualitative Measure: Students must maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or above. If the student's GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be notified that it must be brought back up by the end of the following semester. If the overall GPA has not been raised to a 3.0 by the end of the next semester, the student will not be eligible for any additional financial aid.

Quantitative Measure: Students must make acceptable progress toward completion of the degree within the maximum time periods (excluding leaves of absence) outlined below:

MA	6 semesters (Full-time) 9 semesters (Part-time)
MDiv to MA ¹	3 semesters (Full-time) 4 semesters (Part-time)

Students must complete their degree within 150% of the published length of the program. The normative timeframe is 3 years. The maximum timeframe to complete an MA is 4.5 years. In order to make academic progress, MA students must successfully complete least 67% of all attempted credits in any given term. The successful completion of a course is to obtain a B- or greater. Unsuccessful completion occurs when a student earns a C+ or below. Full-time students are expected to enroll in at least 12 units each term or a total of 24 units in one academic year. Part-time students are expected to enroll in at least 6 units per term or a total of 12 units in an academic year. Appropriate pace for a full-time student to complete the MA degree is at least 8 units a term (16.5% of the total unit requirement a term) or a total of 16 units in one academic year (33% of the total units in one academic year). Appropriate pace for a part-time student to complete the MA degree is at least 6 units a term (12.5% of the total unit requirement in one term) or a total of 12 units in an academic year (25% of the total unit requirement in one academic year). For full-time students who have completed an MDiv program at a member or affiliate school, 24 eligible units will be transferred into the program, leaving a required 24 units to be completed at the GTU. For full-time students who have completed an MDiv program at a member school, 24 eligible units will be transferred into the program, leaving a required 24 units to be completed at the GTU. Appropriate pace for the MA portion of a full-time student who has completed an MDiv at a member school or affiliate is 8 units a term (34% of the total unit requirement) or a total of 16 units in an academic year (68% of the total unit requirement in an academic year). Similar students with a member school or affiliate MDiv and completing the MA with part-time status will have to complete 6 units a term (25% of their total unit requirement in one term) or 12 units in one academic year (50% of their total unit requirement in one academic year). A student must complete 100% of the units required to obtain the MA.

Incompletes (I), Failures (F), and Withdrawals (W): An Incomplete (I) grade must be made up within three weeks of the end of the current semester. Faculty must turn in the grade three weeks after the submission of the student's work. If no grade is turned in by the end of the sixth week after the semester ends, the "I" will automatically change to a grade of "F" and will not count toward graduation requirements. Only academic courses of three units or more with a B- or above are counted toward the degree. Courses with a C+ or below cannot be counted towards the MA. Students can choose to retake the course or take another course that fulfills the same requirement.

Transfer Credits: Students are eligible to transfer units into the MA program, ranging from 18-36 units, depending on the transfer. These units count toward the overall unit requirement and the student's pace in the program.

¹ The MDiv to MA program is a joint program where 24 of the applicable units from the MDiv are transferred into the MA program upon completion of the MDiv. The GTU portion of MA program for these students is 24 units or 2 semesters of full time work.

Financial Aid Warning: SAP evaluations will be completed at the end of each term and cannot take place until final grades have been posted. Students who have not met the qualitative and/or quantitative requirements will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one semester. During the semester a student is on Financial Aid Warning, they remain eligible for financial aid, but the student must meet with the GTU Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs to discuss an academic plan for meeting SAP by the end of that semester. If the student has not met the requirements of SAP by the end of that semester, they will be suspended from receiving financial aid in the subsequent term.

Financial Aid Probation: Students suspended from receiving financial aid may regain eligibility by submitting an appeal to be placed on financial aid probation for the subsequent semester to the GTU Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs. Probation is not given automatically and is for one semester only. Students who fail to make SAP at the end of the probationary semester are suspended from receiving financial aid and may not appeal the decision.

Appeal Process: Appeals for SAP will be considered only under special circumstances such as injury or illness, the death of a relative or other extenuating circumstances. Students requesting an appeal must submit a letter to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs to be reviewed by the GTU Academic Dean. The letter should explain the mitigating circumstances influencing progress, why they did not meet SAP, what has changed in their situation that would allow them to meet SAP at the end of the next semester and if applicable, an academic plan that outlines how the student will meet the requirements in the upcoming semester. The GTU Academic Dean, in consultation with Member School Deans, may decide to restore eligibility, noting the reasons for doing so in the student's financial aid file.

Reestablishing Financial Aid Eligibility: Students suspended from receiving financial aid can reestablish eligibility by successfully appealing a SAP decision and making SAP by the end of the semester or if an appeal is not allowed, the student must meet SAP requirements by the end of the next review.