

Rocky Vista University  
Office of Student Financial Services  
Physician Assistant (PA) Program

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards  
for Financial Aid Eligibility

Federal regulations require that Rocky Vista University (RVU) establish, publish and apply standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) which students enrolled in the PA program must meet. This document represents the satisfactory academic progress policy standards adopted by RVU for financial aid eligibility. This policy applies to all PA students including those applying for or currently receiving Federal, State, or institutional financial assistance.

Academic progress requires both quantitative and qualitative measurement. Academic records will be reviewed at the end of each term to determine if the student is making satisfactory progress towards his or her degree.

**Time Frame for Completion (Quantitative Measures of Academic Progress):**

Maximum Timeframe: Students must complete their degree within a maximum number of attempted credits not to exceed 150% of the published program length. If at any point in time it is determined that a student cannot complete their program of study within 150% of the program length, the student will become ineligible for aid and will need to submit an appeal.

Pace of Progression: Students must complete at least 100% of their total attempted credit hours. To calculate the pace at which a student is progressing, divide the total number of hours the student has successfully completed by the total number he or she has attempted.

**Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measures of Academic Progress):**

The PA program is based on a pass/fail system. No letter grades are given. Grades of Pass/Fail/Pass with Honors are not included in a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation. Grades of Pass/Fail/Pass with Honors will be factored into the quantitative measurement. For purposes of measuring satisfactory academic progress for financial aid, and financial aid purposes only, a grade of Pass or Pass with Honors is considered the equivalent of receiving a grade of "C" or better in that class. To meet the qualitative measurement requirement, a grade of Pass/Pass with Honors must be earned in all courses. A grade of Fail will count toward hours attempted but not earned for maximum timeframe and pace of progression.

Leaves of Absence:

Periods of approved Leaves of Absence will not count toward the maximum time frame. A student may not receive financial assistance during a Leave of Absence.

Repeated Coursework:

Once passed a course may not be repeated unless recommended by the Program Director and/or Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC). The original grade received in a course will not count toward the student's qualitative assessment but will be included in the quantitative assessment. Students who repeat coursework must still complete their degree within the maximum timeframe.

Withdrawal/Incomplete/In Progress:

Courses in which a student earned a grade of Incomplete (IN), Work In Progress (WIP), or Withdrawal (W), or the equivalent, will count toward hours attempted but not earned for maximum timeframe and pace of progression but will not be included in the qualitative measure.

Grade Changes:

Once an official grade is received for an Incomplete (IN) or Work In Progress (WIP) course, the student should notify SFS so SAP status can be reevaluated.

Noncredit Remedial Courses:

RVU does not offer noncredit remedial courses.

Transfer Students:

The PA program does not accept transfer credits from other programs.

Change in Program or Pursuit of a Second Degree:

If a student changes program of study or chooses to pursue a second degree, credits and grades that do not count toward the new program will not be included in the SAP determination.

Summer Terms:

Academic records will be reviewed at the end of each term, including summer if student is enrolled, to determine if the student is making satisfactory progress towards his or her degree.

Financial Aid Warning:

Rocky Vista University will use the standardized definition of Financial Aid Warning which is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as follows:

*Financial Aid Warning* is a “status a school assigns to a student who is failing to make satisfactory academic progress. The school reinstates eligibility for aid for one payment period and may do so without a student appeal.”

Financial Aid Probation:

Rocky Vista University will use the standardized definition of Financial Aid Probation which is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as follows:

*Financial Aid Probation* is a “status a school assigns to a student who is failing to make satisfactory academic progress and who successfully appeals. Eligibility for aid may be reinstated for one payment period.”

Note that the University may have a different definition of “academic probation.” Refer to the Student Handbook and Catalog for more information on academic probation.

**Procedure:**

The Office of Student Financial Services will review the academic progress of each financial aid recipient at the end of each term, prior to the disbursement of financial aid for the subsequent term. A student's entire academic record will be reviewed, which will include any periods of enrollment that the student did not receive financial aid assistance.

Any student who fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by this policy will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one term. During that term, the student will continue to be eligible for aid. At the end of a term during which a student is on Financial Aid Warning, if the student still fails to meet any of the requirements, the student will become ineligible for aid and may submit an appeal to the Office of Student Financial Services. The Office of Student Financial Services will send a written notice to students who have not made satisfactory academic progress.

## **Reestablishing Eligibility:**

Appeals: A student may submit a written appeal documenting mitigating circumstances (e.g., serious illness of student or family member, death of a relative), within seven (7) calendar days of the determination of his/her unsatisfactory academic progress.

Appeals should be sent to the Office of Student Financial Services and will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the appeal. The student will receive written notification of the committee's decision within seven (7) calendar days. Decisions of the Financial Aid Appeals Committee may be appealed to the Rocky Vista University President.

Appeals should be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Services and must include:

1. A written statement documenting the reasons for failure to meet the standards of academic progress for financial aid eligibility.
2. A written statement explaining what has changed in the student's situation that would allow the student to bring his/her academic progress up to the satisfactory standards.
3. Documentation supporting his/her appeal.
4. A written academic plan from the program director or his/her designee. The academic plan must ensure that the student is able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time.

If the appeal is granted, and it is determined that the student should be able to meet SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, they may be placed on financial aid probation without an academic plan. A student's progress must be reviewed at the end of their probationary period. If the student is meeting the SAP requirements, they will go back into good standing. If the student does not meet the SAP requirements, they will again become ineligible for financial aid with the opportunity to re-appeal.

If the appeal is granted, and it is determined that the student will require more than one payment period to meet SAP standards, they may be placed on probation with an academic plan in place. A student's progress will be reviewed at the end of each payment period as is required of a student on probation status. If the student is meeting the requirements of their academic plan, the student is eligible to receive financial aid funds as long as student continues to meet those requirements. Students must appeal to change their plan. Students must appeal to change their plan. If the student does not meet the requirements of their academic plan, they will again become ineligible for financial aid with the opportunity to re-appeal.

Without Approved Appeal: Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress, who do not submit an appeal or have their appeal request denied, may regain eligibility only by taking action that brings them into compliance with RVU's satisfactory progress standards.

Any exceptions to this policy will be made on an individual basis and in compliance with federal, state and local regulations governing financial aid.