

# Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine Office of Student Financial Services

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards for Financial Aid Eligibility (Effective July 1, 2020)

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

The academic requirements for the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree include the satisfactory completion of the curriculum designated by the University. 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: The normal timeframe for completion of required coursework for the D.O. degree is four academic years. Students are expected to make progress towards their degree during each term and must complete their degree within six years of matriculation. If at any point in time it is determined that a student cannot complete their program of study within six years, the student will become ineligible for aid and will need to submit an appeal.

The progress of each student is monitored and reviewed by the Student Progress Committee (SPC). Due to academic or personal issues, a student may require more than four years to complete his or her degree. In such situations, the SPC may establish an individual academic plan for the student or may require the student to repeat a year. The SPC will monitor the progress of each student to determine if the student is making sufficient progress to meet the time limits as specified.

Pace of Progression: Students must complete at least 67% 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):**

Grades for all courses are reported as Honors/Pass/Fail, based on a final course score that is typically on a zero to 100 scale. Other courses may be graded as Pass/Fail and are not included in a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation. A student is required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 70 or above in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress for financial aid. For purposes of measuring satisfactory academic progress for financial aid, and financial aid purposes only, a grade of Pass is considered the equivalent of receiving a 70% or better in that class.

### Leaves of Absence:

Periods of approved Leaves of Absence will not count toward the six-year 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 SPC. The original grade received in a course will not count toward the student's GPA but will be included in the quantitative assessment. Students who repeat coursework must still complete their degree within six years of matriculation.

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:

Students who are accepted for transfer from other medical schools will be evaluated with respect to levels of academic progress attained, and the remaining years required to complete their degree at RVUCOM will be determined. The Dean or his designee will make that determination and will notify the Office of Student Financial Services of the length of time the student will need to complete his or her degree. Transfer credits will count as both attempted and completed hours and will count toward the maximum timeframe.

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:

The DO program does not offer summer terms, therefore, it will not be included in the SAP assessment.

COMLEX Exams:

Students are required to pass COMLEX Level 1, COMLEX Level 2-CE, and COMLEX Level 2-PE to graduate from the COM curriculum. Those who do not pass the COMLEX Level 1 and/or COMLEX Level 2 PE and/or CE Exams may appear before the SPC who will make a recommendation addressing their academic progress to the Vice Dean. If allowed to continue in their clinical rotations pending successfully passing their COMLEX exam, the student will be considered to be maintaining satisfactory academic progress for financial aid.

Students who do not pass the COMLEX Level 1 and/or COMLEX Level 2 PE and/or CE Exams and are placed on a Leave of Absence are not eligible to receive financial aid during their leave but may regain eligibility if allowed to return to their clinical rotations by the Associate Dean for Clinical Education.

Effective with the Class of 2024, students are required to sit for and pass the USMLE Step 1 exam.

See the "Academic Policies" section of the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* for more detailed information on COMLEX exam policy.

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 COM 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 or letter from the SPC and/or the Dean. 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. 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 RVUCOM'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.

*Revised 5/21/20*