

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

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards
for Financial Aid Eligibility
(Effective July 1, 2023)

Federal regulations require that Rocky Vista University Montana College of Osteopathic Medicine (RVU-MCOM) 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 RVU-MCOM for financial aid eligibility. This policy applies to all RVU-MCOM students including those applying for or currently receiving Federal, State, or any other 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 their 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 150% of the published program length (six years). 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 reviewed by the Student Performance Committee (SPC). Due to academic or personal issues, a student may require more than four years to complete their degree. In such situations, the Office of Student Affairs may establish an individual academic plan for the student or may require the student to repeat a year. The University 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 they have 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. A student is required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 70 or above in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress for financial aid. At the end of the 2nd academic year, the student must have a GPA of at least 70% in order to meet SAP. 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:

For Title IV purposes only, 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:

A passed course may not be repeated unless approved by the Dean. If a course has been repeated, 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), In Progress (IP), 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), Work In Progress (WIP), or In Progress (IP) course, the student should notify the Office of Student Financial Services so the SAP status can be reevaluated.

Noncredit Remedial Courses:

RVU does not offer non-credit 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 RVU-MCOM will be determined. The Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs or their 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 their 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 their 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 and COMLEX Level 2-CE to graduate from the RVU-MCOM Doctor of Osteopathic program. Those who do not pass the COMLEX Level 1 and/or COMLEX Level 2-CE exams may appear before the SPC who will make a recommendation addressing their academic progress to the Dean. If allowed to continue in their clinical clerkships pending successfully passing of a 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-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 Assistant/Associate Dean for Clinical Education.

See the "Academic Policies" section of the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* for more detailed information on COMLEX and USMLE 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 full academic progress of each financial aid recipient at the end of each term, prior to the disbursement of financial aid for the subsequent term. The student’s entire academic record will be reviewed, which will also include any periods of enrollment that the student did not receive financial aid assistance. SAP review is not complete until all qualitative and quantitative measures have been reviewed.

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 for financial aid.

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 their unsatisfactory academic progress.

Appeals should be sent to the Office of Student Financial Services and will be reviewed by the RVU 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 Provost.

Appeals submitted to the Office of Student Financial Services 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 their academic progress up to satisfactory standards.
3. Documentation supporting their appeal.
4. A written academic plan or letter from the SPC and/or the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
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. The 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. The 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 the 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.

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-MCOM'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.