



Writtle
University
College

Writtle University College

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for US Department of
Education Loan Recipients

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1. Overview

Federal Aid students enrolled at Writtle University College (“WUC”) are required to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements. Under U.S. federal law, the University College is required to ensure that all federal aid students maintain a minimum level of academic progress.

The academic progress of students will be checked prior to the disbursement of Federal Aid at the start of the next academic term to determine eligibility for continued aid.

The requirement to make satisfactory academic progress is consistent with the formal academic regulations which apply to all students at WUC. Undergraduate and postgraduate academic regulations and rules of assessment can be accessed here: <http://writtle.ac.uk/HE-Regulations-&-Policies>

Student progression and achievement is also addressed through a number of other WUC policies and procedures, including:

- Higher Education Attendance Policy
- Tutorial Policy
- Withdrawals, Intermissions and Resumption of Study Policy
- Policy on Monitoring Student Performance: Student Progress Meetings

The requirement to make satisfactory academic progress applies to all students regardless of degree course, level of study or mode of attendance.

Where a student does not make satisfactory academic progress, according to standard WUC requirements, the University College will apply a Financial Aid Warning. If satisfactory academic progress has not been achieved at the end of the warning period [which is the term - payment period – following the unsatisfactory assessment], the student’s federal aid will be terminated

2. Registration

All new students are deemed to be meeting satisfactory academic progress requirements for their initial disbursement (payable on registration) by their being accepted by WUC and meeting WUC entry criteria.

3. Progression requirements

To be eligible to continue to receive federal aid, an undergraduate student must pass each year of study with a minimum grade of 40%. A postgraduate student must pass each year of study with a minimum of 50%. In general, students must

pass each module by meeting these threshold standards and must pass a minimum number of modules (volume of credit) to progress to the next level of study and to achieve the overall award. In general, students may only attempt each assessment up to three times.

The University College's progression rules satisfy US federal aid requirements for qualitative review at the end of a student's second academic year. Second year students must pass the year with a minimum grade of 40% to progress to the third year of study, which is consistent with a grade point average (GPA) of at least a "C".

Threshold standards and assessment requirements for each award are described in detail in the University College's Rules of Assessment.

The required pace of progress such as requires students to complete all completed and attempted modules within the maximum timeframe. This is typically 67%.

4. Maximum time frame

Each university course has an expected length of time during which a student will complete all the requirements at the acceptable standard to be awarded the degree. Where a student has failed to meet the required standard they may be required to repeat that element of the course or undertake further study. The university maximum timeframe is presented in Table 1:

Table 1

Note to USDE – whilst you want 2 right hand columns to be in credits, the credits must be completed within the timeframe as so we wish to retain the calendar length but have added the credits

4. Maximum time frame, continued

Writtle University College AWARDS FRAMEWORK

QUALIFICATION	LEVEL	MINIMUM OVERALL CREDITS TO BE STUDIED	RANGE OF CREDITS REQUIRED	NORMAL LENGTH OF PROGRAMME You are expected to complete within this timeframe	MAXIMUM PERIOD OF STUDY PERMITTED This maximum period is permitted only after allowing
Four-Year Integrated Masters Degree	7	480 credits	360 at UG level and 120 at level 7 (with limited condonement of 30 failed credits only available at level 7)	4 years f/t 480 credits	6 years f/t As measured in credit hours
Three-Year Honours Degree (Final year is Stage Three)	6	360 credits	A minimum of 330 credits including a minimum of 90 credits at level 6. A maximum of 120 credits at level 4 are included.	360 credits over 3 years f/t	5 years f/t As measured in credit hours
Foundation Degree (Final year is Stage Two)			Not eligible for Federal Student Aid		
Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE - Stage Two)*			Not eligible for Federal Student Aid		
Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE - Stage One)*			Not eligible for Federal Student Aid		
Certificate of Continuing Education (Cert CE - Stage One)			Not eligible for Federal Student Aid		

4. Maximum time frame, continued

However, Title IV funding – Federal Loans – will not fund beyond 150% of the expected course length. This means that, for example, on an Honours degree due to last 3 years full time, although the university may allow repeats or extensions but not beyond 5 years, Title IV funding – Federal Loans – will cease at the 4.5 year date as measured in credit hours and the student will have to find alternative means of funding any study continued beyond that point.

Reasons for extension of the expected course length may be;

- a. Fail, which means that the student has not gained enough credit to be allowed to progress to the next Stage of the course
- b. Repetition, which means the repeat of a Stage of study whether full-time, or part-time before progression to the next Stage is allowed.
- c. Withdrawal which means the cessation of study with immediate effect from the date shown on the Withdraw Form. A student who has formally withdrawn from his/her course, or has been withdrawn by the University College in accordance with the procedures outlined is not eligible to attend teaching sessions. Should a progress decision, following any appeal made, be that the University College decides the student must withdraw from the course, then that decision is final and the student will not be allowed to resume the course in the future.
- d. Leave of Absence, which means a student interrupts their study, typically for one year, resuming their study at the point they interrupted. Under Federal Loan regulations this is, if the absence is more than 180 days, it is a withdrawal which still allows the student to resume the course in the following year and the time out does not count in the 150% course length. Should the University College recommend such an absence (and resume) as part of the Academic Progress (e.g. a student is repeating a module that cannot be completed until the following year), there are no federal loans to cover the period of absence, but the loan entitlement resumes as the course resumes.

4. Maximum time frame, continued

Procedures regarding Leave of Absence (course intermission), withdrawal and resumption of study, including the effect on academic progression, can be found in the University College's academic regulations and rules of assessment but in broad terms,

1. repetition only affects loan entitlement
 - i. if the remedial progress required is not met within the assessment at the end of the first remedial payment period whereby loan entitlement ceases until normal progress is resumed
 - ii. or if the maximum timeframe for the programme exceeds 150% whereby the US Dept Ed rules apply for 150% and is better explained on their website
2. withdrawal and resumption - if the absence is more than 180 days, is a withdrawal which still allows the student to resume the course in the following year and the time out does not count in the 150% course length. Should the University College recommend such an absence (and resume) as part of the Academic Progress (e.g. a student is repeating a module that cannot be completed until the following year), there are no federal loans to cover the period of absence, but the loan entitlement resumes as the course resumes.

Other requirements relating to academic progress and maximum periods of registration are addressed through the University College's various student policies and procedures.

Section relating to attendance deleted.

5. Effect of Unsatisfactory Academic Progress on Title IV Loans

If academic progress is not satisfactory, then the student will be under a “financial aid warning” that their loan funding may cease. Once any remedial action, such as completion or repetition, brings the academic progress back to Satisfactory, that is an average of “C” continuous grade then the “warning” ceases. If the student appeals and the appeal is successful, then the student is on financial aid probation – that is, the student will be given specific remedial action to be undertaken within a fixed period and to a minimum standard in order to return to a “C” average. If the terms of the probation are not met to the required standard within the required period, then, regardless of any academic decision to extend the time or amend the condition, then Title IV funding (loans) will cease until the “C” average is met, after which funding (loans) will resume. Note that any and all remedial time still counts towards the 150% time limit after which Title IV loans will cease.

In the event of an interruption in studies (Leave of Absence/withdrawal) then the time out does not count as part of the 150% of course length.

6. Financial Aid Warning

To receive continued federal aid loan funding, students must meet the minimum requirements for both academic progress and course duration. Where the satisfactory academic progress requirement has not been met, the student will be advised in writing by the Course Scheme Manager. The student will be placed on “financial aid warning” for the period of the next available academic term and will continue to be eligible to receive funding for that period.

If satisfactory academic progress has not been achieved at the end of the “funding warning” period, the student’s aid will be terminated. The University College does not have the right to waive the satisfactory academic progress requirement for any student; however, an appeal may be submitted if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

Neither taking a break in studies, nor self-funding for a semester, affects a student’s academic progress status, so neither is sufficient to reestablish federal aid eligibility.

7. Appeals

Students who have received written advice that their financial aid has been terminated may appeal (within 10 days of receiving written notification) where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. These may include:

- death or extended illness of an immediate family member (parent, spouse, sibling, dependent child);
- extended illness or personal injury of the student;
- other exceptional circumstances as determined by the University College's Extenuating Circumstances Policy (HE).

Students will be required to indicate why they believe financial aid should not be terminated and provide reasons for failing to meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements. Students will also be required to supply documentary evidence in support of their appeal, which may include:

- copy of death certificate;
- medical certificate from a registered doctor or psychiatrist;
- statement from tutor or other senior Programme Area official;
- bank statements or financial accounts;
- other relevant evidence specific to the appeal.

All appeals should be submitted in writing along with supporting documentation to the HE Quality Officer and copied to the Student Finance Manager.

Disbursement of loan funding will not be made while an appeal is being processed.

8. Appeal Decision

The decision of the appeal will be communicated to the student in writing within 14 days of submission, if all necessary supporting evidence (as determined by the SAP Appeals Panel) is complete.

The decision of the SAP Appeals Panel is final, although students have recourse to the University College's student complaints procedure in the normal way.

Where a student successfully appeals their satisfactory academic progress, the student is placed on financial aid probation and only regains eligibility for one payment period, or longer if they have an academic plan.

The student will regain full eligibility after the period of enrolment in which they were determined to be meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirement.