

Fall 2013

TO: Department Chairs, Graduate and Academic Coordinators
FROM: William Andrefsky, Dean of the Graduate School
RE: Recommendations for Graduate Student Financial Aid and Academic Progress

The Financial Aid Office continues to implement the new federal financial aid requirements regarding SAP—Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)—in the zzzsis system. The SAP requirements, which involve **the total number of credits accumulated and the grading of those credits**, are noted below:

Total Number of Credits for the Master’s Degree

Graduate School policy states the following for Master’s degrees: “Most full-time students enrolled in master’s degree programs at WSU require 2-3 years for completion of their program.” Since some master’s programs require 3 years, the Financial Aid Office has set the SAP credit limit at **72 credits** for a master’s degree. Once master’s degree students exceed 72 credits, if they are receiving financial aid they will receive a notice that they are not making adequate academic progress, and they will have to appeal to have their financial aid continue. If your program requirements exceed 72 credits, please contact Chio Flores, Director of Financial Aid, or Vicky Wall, Assistant Director of Compliance, who will assess whether the additional credits can be accommodated.

Total Number of Credits for the Doctoral Degree

Graduate School policy states the following for Doctoral degrees: “Most full-time students enrolled in doctoral degree programs at WSU require 4-6 years for completion of their program.” The Financial Aid Office has set the reasonable timeframe at **180 credits**, which should cover most of our doctoral students. Once doctoral students exceed 180 credits, if they are receiving financial aid they will receive a notice that they are not making adequate academic progress, and they will have to appeal to have their financial aid continue.

Typical Full-time Load for Graduate Students

Please note that the **normal full-time load for a graduate student, including those on assistantships, is 10-12 credits**; the Graduate School does not require a student to enroll in 18 credits to maintain an assistantship. Programs should ensure that students enroll for the appropriate amount of credits based on program requirements.

“X” Grade

For financial aid purposes, the “X” grade, along with the “I” (incomplete) and “W” (withdrawn) grades, indicates that the student is **not** making satisfactory academic progress toward their degree. As such, the Graduate School recommends that the X grade is **not** used for students who are making satisfactory academic progress in their research credits. Graduate School policy states that faculty may use the X grade in ***extenuating circumstances*** to indicate continuing progress toward completion of program requirements. The “X” grade should be changed to an “S” grade when the faculty determines that the student has successfully met the requirements or to a “U” grade in the event that the student has not met the requirements within the required timeframe. ***It is important to note that use of the “X” grade indicates that no credit is earned and will negatively impact the graduate student’s eligibility for financial aid.***

Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes will need to appeal in order to continue receiving financial aid. If you have any questions regarding SAP, please contact Chio Flores, Financial Aid, at cflores@wsu.edu or Vicky Wall at vwall@wsu.edu .