



Weill Cornell Medicine

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Policy Overview

This Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy applies to Weill Cornell students who receive federal financial aid.

Programs included in this policy:

- MD (Medical Doctor)
- PA (Physician Assistant)
- EMBA/MS (Johnson/Weill)
- MS Population Health Sciences (PHS)
- MS Computational Biology
- MS Clinical Epidemiology
- MS Genetic Counseling
- MS Biomedical Imaging

Policy for Weill Cornell Financial Aid Recipients

Federal regulations (General Provision 34 CFR 668.34) require that Cornell University review the academic progress of students who apply for and receive financial assistance.

SAP is comprised of three areas as required by federal regulations:

1. Quantitative Standard (Pace): Students must successfully complete a minimum percentage of the credit hours attempted
2. Qualitative Standard: A student must demonstrate they maintain academic standards set forth by their program
3. Maximum Timeframe: A student must complete their degree within 150% of the published program length.

Evaluation Frequency

Financial aid SAP evaluations will be completed by the Weill Cornell Financial Aid Office at the following checkpoints:

- PHS program: At the end of every term
- All other programs: Annually at the end of Spring term

This review will determine academic eligibility for the upcoming summer, fall, and/or spring terms. Every student who applies for financial aid must maintain SAP, regardless of whether they are a first-time applicant or have received financial aid in the past. Any financial assistance offered for the next payment period is subject to cancellation if the minimum standards of SAP have not been met.

Maximum Timeframe for Degree Completion

Federal regulations specify that a student must complete their degree within 150 percent of the published length of the program to be eligible for federal aid funding. The maximum time frame at Weill Cornell Medicine is measured in credit hours. For example, the PHS program requires 36 credit hours to graduate, the maximum time frame for degree completion is 54 attempted credits (150% of 36 credit hours).

Whether or not a student receives financial aid, the credit hours considered in the maximum time frame for degree calculation are all attempted credits. Attempted credits include:

- Earned credits – Passed (A through D-), Satisfactory (S), Pass (P), High Pass (HP), Honors (H)
- Repeated courses – both attempts
- Withdrawal
- Failures – Failed (F), Unsatisfactory (U)
- Incomplete (I), Marginal (M)
- All accepted transfer credits (including consortium agreements and study abroad courses) toward the degree program

Federal regulations do not allow for the exclusion of courses in which a student has remained past the drop period and earned a grade of 'W' from its calculation of the maximum time frame.

Program	Program Length (credits)	Maximum Time Frame
MD (Medical Doctor)	154	231
PA (Physician Assistant)	102.5	154
EMBA/MS (Johnson/Weill)	60	90
MS Population Health Sciences (PHS)	36	54
MS Computational Biology	64	96
MS Clinical Epidemiology	30	45
MS Genetic Counseling	70	105
MS Biomedical Imaging	61	92

Required Completion Rate (Pace)

Federal regulations require students to progress through their program at a pace that ensures graduation within the maximum timeframe. Pace is measured cumulatively and is calculated using standard rounding rules. The pace calculation is determined by dividing cumulative earned credits by cumulative attempted credits:

$$\text{Pace} = \text{Cumulative Earned Credits} \div \text{Cumulative Attempted Credits}$$

To meet the pace requirement and remain on track to graduate within the maximum timeframe, students must successfully earn at least 67% of all attempted credits.

Earned credit hours include:

- Passed (A through D-), Satisfactory (S), Pass (P), High Pass (HP), Honors (H)
- Transferred credits – provided they meet degree requirements

Qualitative Standards

Federal regulations require students to meet the minimum academic standards established by their academic program. Qualitative standards for each program are as follows:

Program	Qualitative Standard
MD (Medical Doctor)	Must pass all required coursework
PA (Physician Assistant)	Must pass all required coursework
EMBA/MS (Johnson/Weill)	Maintain 3.0 GPA
MS Population Health Sciences (PHS)	Maintain 3.0 GPA
MS Computational Biology	Cannot earn Failure or more than 2 C- in a term
MS Clinical Epidemiology	Must pass all required coursework
MS Genetic Counseling	Must pass all required coursework
MS Biomedical Imaging	Must earn C- or higher in each course

Treatment of Multiple Degrees and Special Situations

Major Changes: All attempted coursework is included in the SAP calculation, regardless of a student changing majors. Coursework is only excluded if a student changes academic degree program.

Academic Amnesty/Expulsion: Title IV regulations do not allow for academic amnesty or expulsion of grades. All courses applicable to a student's major are included when evaluating SAP.

Audited Coursework: Excluded from SAP evaluations and not eligible for federal aid.

SAP Status and Loss of Eligibility

Students failing to meet SAP standards will lose their financial aid eligibility and will be notified via their WCM email.

PHS students are reviewed for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) each term.

A student who fails to meet SAP requirements will be placed on SAP Warning for the subsequent term. If the student does not meet SAP standards by the end of the warning term, the student will be placed on SAP Suspension and will no longer be eligible to receive federal financial aid for the following payment period.

All other students are evaluated for SAP annually at the end of the Spring term.

Students who fail to meet SAP standards will be placed on SAP Suspension and are not eligible to receive federal financial aid.

Status	Federal Aid Eligible?	What Happens Next?
Meets SAP	Yes	Student remains eligible for federal financial aid.
SAP Warning (PHS students only)	Yes	Student has one additional term to regain compliance with SAP standards.
SAP Suspension	No	Student loses eligibility for federal financial aid and may submit a SAP appeal if extenuating circumstances exist.
SAP Probation (Approved Appeal)	Yes	Student may continue receiving aid while meeting the conditions of the approved appeal and/or academic plan.

Students suspended from receiving financial aid can reestablish eligibility by successfully completing the required number of credit hours and by attaining the overall qualitative standard required by the next SAP review checkpoint, which varies by program, see “Evaluation Frequency” above. Neither paying for one’s classes nor sitting out a semester is sufficient to reestablish financial aid eligibility for a student who has failed to meet SAP. If special or unusual circumstances contributed to a student’s lack of satisfactory academic progress, the student may appeal the denial of financial aid.

Appeal Process

The letter of suspension from the WCM Financial Aid Office will describe the appeal process and a link to the [SAP Appeal Form](#) will be provided. This form provides students an opportunity to appeal for reinstatement of federal financial aid eligibility. This form should only be completed by students who have experienced extenuating circumstances that prevented them from meeting SAP requirements.

Valid reasons for a SAP appeal include death of a relative, an injury or illness or other extenuating circumstances. **Lack of awareness of withdrawal policies or requirements for financial aid satisfactory academic progress are not acceptable reasons to appeal.**

The appeal must explain why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed in the situation that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation. The WCM Financial Aid Office may request additional documentation at any point while evaluating an appeal. Documentation examples include, but are not limited to a letter from a doctor, medical care provider, or objective third party (e.g. a minister, social worker, counselor, facilitator, or other professional) that supports the student's situation.

The appeal must be submitted to the WCM Financial Aid Office for evaluation within 30 days of notification of SAP failure. The WCM Financial Aid Office will respond to the appeal in writing within two weeks of receiving the complete appeal.

If the appeal is approved, the student's financial aid will be reinstated for one semester. By the end of that semester, the student must have successfully completed the required number of credit hours and attained the overall qualitative program standards. Students who fail to make SAP by the end of that semester will have their future financial aid eligibility suspended.

Students who will not meet SAP criteria by the end of the next payment period must submit an academic plan with their appeal. This plan must demonstrate how the student will return to meeting the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards by a specific point in time.

Students whose SAP appeals are approved will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and may continue to receive federal financial aid subject to any conditions outlined in the approval decision.

If an appeal is denied, students will be notified via their WCM email.

Appendix A: Master List - Program Details

Program	Program Length (Credits)	Maximum Timeframe (Credits)	Qualitative Standard	Pace to Completion	Evaluation Frequency
MD (Medical Doctor)	154	231	Must pass all required coursework	67%	Annual
PA (Physician Assistant)	102.5	154	Must pass all required coursework	67%	Annual
EMBA/MS (Johnson/Weill)	60	90	Maintain 3.0 GPA	67%	Annual
MS Population Health Sciences (PHS)	36	54	Maintain 3.0 GPA	67%	Each Term
MS Computational Biology	64	96	Cannot earn Failure or more than 2 C- in a term	67%	Annual
MS Clinical Epidemiology	64	96	Must pass all required coursework	67%	Annual
MS Genetic Counseling	70	105	Must pass all required coursework	67%	Annual
MS Biomedical Imaging	61	92	Must earn C- or higher in each course	67%	Annual