

## 2.16.2 Satisfactory Academic Progress

*Source: Student and Community Life Handbook 2018-19*

To be eligible to receive financial aid a student must maintain satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory academic progress is defined for financial aid purposes both by the seminary and by federal requirement. Two components are included in this definition, a qualitative one and a quantitative one.

**Qualitative component.** Because the seminary is a graduate school, a higher level of academic work is required than might be required at the college level. Students are expected to maintain at least a minimum grade level for a degree program, (Credit or C- or 2.0 for all master level programs; B or 3.0 for S.T.M) or higher in each semester. However, some courses are only offered on a **Credit/No-Credit basis**, (which varies by degree program; S.T.M. course are only for letter grade), and such results do not readily translate into a grade-point system. Seminary students' academic work is expected to be at the "Credit" level. **A student not taking letter grades may receive only one "No-Credit" grade while at seminary and still meet requirements for satisfactory academic progress.** The student then will receive a warning letter stating that the course for which a "No-Credit" was received must be repeated and taken for a letter grade.

**Quantitative component** (Varies according to degree and program type) For the revised curriculum starting in Fall Semester 2013, the following applies:

**M.Div.** – The normal time for completion of the residential program is full-time for four years – two years at seminary (28 credits per year, which includes two January interims), a summer CPE unit (6 credits), a one-year off-campus internship (27 credits), and a final year at seminary (26 credits, which includes a third January interim).

The normal completion time for the prescribed Legacy Distributed Learning program is full time at five years, divided as follows: three years of academic coursework by online courses and short intensives (19, 19 or 21, and 22 or 24 credits per year, depending on summer options chosen, including January interims), a one-year off-campus internship (27 credits), and a final year at seminary (minimum of 26 credits, including a third January interim).

**M.A.** – The normal time for completion of the residential program is two years – first year (28 credits), and second year (28 credits), with both years including a January interim. The normal completion time for the prescribed Distributed Learning program is full time at three years, all taken as online courses and short intensives, completing 19, 20, and 19 credits per year respectively (which includes January interims

**M.A. in Diaconal Ministry-** The normal time for completion of the residential program is full-time for two years of coursework plus time for fieldwork– two years at seminary (30 and 31 credits respectively), and two summers (18 credits total for field work). The normal completion time for the prescribed Distributed Learning program is full time for three academic years of online and short intensive courses (21, 20, and 21 credits/year respectively, including January interims), plus time taken each summer to complete fieldwork (18 credits spread over two or three summers).

The minimal rate of normal progress for degree students in both residential and distributed learning programs, at rates that qualify a student for financial aid (i.e., full-time status), is 9

credits or more per fall and spring semester, plus a January interim (3 credits) in each year applicable (up to the maximum needed for that degree program). For Distributed Learning students, their fall semester is extended to include January (thus, September through January), and their spring semester is extended to include the summer (February through June in the case of years when intensives are taken and February through August in the year CPE is taken); this is in order to provide enough credits to qualify at full-time status. Distributed Learning students need to be aware that a subsequent withdrawal from either their January or their June intensives courses (or CPE) will most likely drop them to below fulltime status for either their fall or spring semester, and therefore make them no longer eligible for financial aid in that respective term.

If a student needs to deviate substantially from the normal number of credits per year, the student may request an additional semester or year in order to complete requirements for graduation. Upon approval of such a request by the academic dean, the extended plan will qualify as meeting the requirement for satisfactory academic progress.

## Repeated Courses

Grades for required courses that are repeated because of previous failure will only have the most recent grade and credits applied toward a GPA calculation (for determining academic standing) and toward the minimum credits needed for a degree. Courses for which a student passed the course or requirement (i.e., received a Credit or C- or better grade) cannot normally be repeated. All instances of the course will still be recorded on the transcript.

If a student fails to complete a degree requirement (i.e., grade of No-Credit or D+ or less), the student will normally be expected to repeat the specific course that meets the requirement. In some cases, the faculty or academic dean may designate a substitution. For distributional requirements (i.e., requirements for which several different courses may meet the requirement; e.g., pastoral care, final-year theology and Bible capstones), the student is normally asked to complete a different eligible course offering for the same requirement.

When a student fails to maintain academic progress either qualitatively or quantitatively, the student is placed on academic probation for the next semester. If the student does not regain satisfactory academic progress during the next semester, the student may be subject to dismissal from seminary for academic reasons. A student who falls below the expected level of academic performance should contact his or her academic advisor to determine what steps he/she can take to regain satisfactory progress.

Students on an extended plan (additional semester or five-year plan) who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress will be considered by the faculty on a case-by-case basis.