

2.17.2 Satisfactory Academic Progress

Source: 2023-2024 Student and Community Life Handbook

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;), 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. Upon receiving the first "No-Credit" grade, the student then will receive a warning letter stating that the course requirement for which a "No-Credit" was received must be repeated, plus every course in the subsequent semester should be taken for letter grade wherever possible in order to establish a grade point average that is hopefully safely above minimums to prevent future academic distress.

Quantitative component (Varies according to degree and program type):

M.Div. – The normal time for completion of all tracks of the M.Div. degree as prescribed is four years as a full-time student. The residential learning (RL) and distance learning (DL) programs are both full-time for four years, divided out as three years of coursework and one year of internship, and normally consisting of an initial two years of coursework (28 to 29 credits per year, which includes two January interims), a summer CPE unit (6 credits), a one-year off-campus internship (27 credits, normally in Year 3), and a final year of coursework (28 to 29 credits, which includes a third January interim). The collaborative learning (CL) program spreads the coursework over all four years, incorporating internship as taken concurrently with coursework, and has the following pace: 21 or 22 credits of coursework in year one (including January), 21 or 22 credits of coursework in year two (including January), plus usually one-third (9 credits) of the internship in the spring, 18 credits in year three (with no January), plus two-thirds (18 credits) of the internship, and finally 21 or 22 credits (including January) in year four.

M.A. – The normal time for completion time for all versions of the M.A. degree is one year, divided as typically 13.5 credits in the fall semester, a January course (2 credits), and 14.5 credits in the spring semester. A three-semester version is possible, which reduces the coursework in three consecutive semesters down to 9 or 9.5 credits each, plus still requires a January course.

M.A. in Diaconal Ministry- The normal time for completion of the residential, distributed, and collaborative learning MADM programs is full-time for two years of coursework (including a January course in each year), plus time for contextual learning. In all, this normally adds up to two years of coursework (23 minimum credits respectively in each

year), plus additional summer, semester(s), or overlapping internship registration (18 credits total for clinical pastoral education and internship).

The minimal rate of normal progress for degree students in all degree programs, at rates that qualify a student for institutional financial aid (i.e., full-time status), is 9 credits or more per fall and spring semester, plus a January interim (2 credits) in each year applicable (up to the maximum needed for that degree program), or a minimum of 6 credits or more per fall and spring semester to qualify a student for federal loans. ¶

If a student needs to deviate substantially from the normal number of credits per year, the student may coordinate additional time with the Academic Dean's Office 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 lower), 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.

Academic Probation

When a student fails to maintain academic progress either qualitatively or quantitatively, the student is placed on academic probation starting with the next semester, and must take courses for letter grade wherever possible. If the student does not regain satisfactory academic progress while registered as a full-time student during the next semester, the student may be subject to dismissal from seminary for academic reasons. If the student reduces their pace of coursework to part-time while on probation, they may have a second semester to get off probation if coursework completion shows that the student is making progress in raising their GPA closer to the acceptable minimum and with receiving permission of the faculty for that second semester. A student who falls below the expected level of academic performance should contact their academic advisor to determine what steps they can take to regain satisfactory progress.

Students on an extended plan (taking longer than the suggested catalog plans) who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress will be considered by the faculty on a case by-case basis.

2.17.3 Financial Aid during Academic Probation

As stipulated by federal regulations, a student not maintaining satisfactory academic progress is not eligible to receive federal financial aid. According to Wartburg Seminary policy, a student on academic probation is also not eligible to receive institutional grants from the seminary. However, scholarships and grants from outside sources such as congregations, synods, and other organizations are not usually affected by these regulations; therefore, students on academic probation normally may continue to receive financial help from outside sources.