

# SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

SPS makes every effort to create graduate programs that meet the needs of working adults. SPS therefore allows students to manage their own course schedules, to determine how many courses they can successfully complete each quarter and to take a quarter off when needed.

Although SPS programs are flexible, there are several policies that students must adhere to in order to maintain adequate academic progress and successfully complete a program. Students should familiarize themselves with the following policies governing all graduate programs.

## Degree and Certificate Requirements

To receive a graduate degree or a certificate of advanced graduate study from SPS, students must fulfill the following requirements:

- a. Completion of the program-specific curriculum, with
  - i. Adherence to policies and procedures found in Curriculum Policies and Procedures section;
  - ii. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (more information may be found in the Grade Requirements section).
- b. Adherence to policies on student conduct and academic integrity to the satisfaction of SPS.
- c. Timely completion of the program and submission of graduation or certificate forms. (More information may be found in the Degree and Certificate Requirements section (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate-academic-policies-procedures/degree-certificate-requirements/>)).

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal and state regulations require recipients of financial aid to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) in their programs of study. The University expects that students will make progress toward completion of the degree or professional development program in which they are enrolled. The following requirements apply to all students for all terms of enrollment within an academic year, including those terms for which no financial aid was granted.

For additional information on SAP requirements please contact the Chicago Office of Financial Aid (<https://chicagofinancialaid.northwestern.edu/how-it-works/maintaining-satisfactory-academic-progress/sps-graduate.html>).

## Academic Probation

Graduate students at SPS are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) throughout their studies and to successfully complete all classes taken each quarter. Academic probation is a warning status applied to students who do not meet these minimum expectations (programs may impose additional criteria for determining a student's academic standing). Students will be placed on academic probation if they have any of the following:

- a cumulative GPA under 3.00
- an F grade in a course in that term
- two incomplete (Y) grades

Students receiving a notice of academic probation must carefully follow any instructions in the notice and are required to meet with their academic adviser (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/student-services/>) to develop plans to improve their academic performance.

Graduate students on academic probation will be required to meet with their academic adviser (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/student-services/>) or a hold may be placed on their ability to register for additional courses. Students on academic probation may be dismissed from their program for unsatisfactory academic performance.

## Academic Probation for Accelerated Masters Programs

Graduate students at SPS are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) throughout their studies and to successfully complete all classes taken each quarter. Academic probation is a warning status applied to students who do not meet these minimum expectations. Students will be placed on academic probation if they have any of the following:

- a cumulative GPA under 3.00
- an F grade in a course in that term
- two or more incomplete (Y) grades

Students enrolled in an Accelerated Masters Program will also be placed on academic probation if they receive any course grade below a "B." Given the pace and demands of the accelerated curriculums, a grade lower than a "B" in any course is a warning that the student is at risk of falling behind, which has significant consequences in a cohort-based program.

Students receiving a notice of academic probation must carefully follow any instructions in the notice and are required to meet with their academic adviser (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/student-services/>) to develop a plan to improve their academic performance.

Graduate students on academic probation will be required to meet with their academic adviser or a hold may be placed on their ability to register for additional courses. Students on academic probation may be dismissed from their program for unsatisfactory academic performance.

## Additional Policies on Academic Probation

A student's academic performance may affect eligibility for federal financial aid programs. For more information, please refer to the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy or contact the Chicago Financial Aid Office (<https://chicagofinancialaid.northwestern.edu/how-it-works/maintaining-satisfactory-academic-progress/sps-graduate.html>) regarding SAP requirements.

## Dismissal from Program

SPS graduate students are expected to maintain a 3.0 ("B" grade) cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA). A cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or greater is required in order for a student to complete an SPS graduate-level academic program and be awarded their degree or certificate.

## Graduate Degree Programs

Students in SPS graduate degree programs will be dismissed from their program immediately under the following circumstances:

- After completing two courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 1.50

- After completing three courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.00
- After completing four courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.50
- After completing five courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.60
- After completing six courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.70
- After completing seven courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.80
- After completing eight or more courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.90<sup>1</sup>

## Graduate Certificate Programs

Students in a five-course SPS graduate certificate and advanced graduate certificate programs will be dismissed from their program immediately under the following circumstances:

- After completing two courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.50
- After completing three courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.65
- After completing four courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.85<sup>1</sup>

Students in a four-course SPS graduate or advanced graduate certificate program will be dismissed from their program immediately under the following circumstances:

- After completing two courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.65
- After completing three courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.85<sup>1</sup>

Any SPS student may also be dismissed for:

- Violating academic integrity
- Violating the student code of conduct

<sup>1</sup> A cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or greater is required in order for a student to complete an SPS graduate-level academic program and receive a degree or certificate.

## Dismissal Appeal

Students have the option to appeal an academic dismissal by submitting a Student Affairs Appeal.

To submit a Student Affairs Appeal, use the electronic form found on the SPS website on the Forms and Documents page (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php>). Students must include a statement explaining the reason(s) for their poor academic performance as well as a plan for future academic improvement. Additional supporting documents (doctors' notes, etc.) may be emailed to [spspetitions@northwestern.edu](mailto:spspetitions@northwestern.edu).

**Please Note: Students are required to wait a year before re-applying to the School of Professional Studies after a final appeal is denied.**