**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy**

In order to be eligible for US Department of Education Student Loans, United States students must meet the following Liverpool Hope University policies, which conform to US Department of Education regulations.

Undergraduate academic courses at Liverpool Hope University are known as “modules” and each carrying between 15 and 60 credits. The required full-time study programme is 120 credits per academic year.

Students must successfully complete 120 credits at each level of their degree programme in order to progress to the next year level.

* BA and BSc Degrees are either three or four year programmes, four year programmes include a foundation year or a placement year. Students who undertake both a placement year and a foundation year would study for five years.

All assignments with their grade weightings for individual assessments will be provided to students on each course at the beginning of the academic year. The Liverpool Hope University pass mark is 40% out of 100% for all undergraduate assignments, and 50% for postgraduate taught assignments, using the published Liverpool Hope University mark scales.

Student loan recipients are required to be in good standing and to maintain satisfactory academic progress towards their degree requirements for each semester in which they are enrolled. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as described below is evaluated annually at the end of each academic year. Students must progress at a pace that ensures completion of 360 credits within the maximum 72 months allowed in the academic regulations. Failure to maintain satisfactory progress as described below may result in cancellation of financial aid awards, and the student may have to repay any funds already received.

**Completion Timeframes**

The maximum timeframe for completion of an undergraduate certificate or degree programme, for students taking US Federal Loans, may not exceed 150% of the published length of the programme as measured in credit hours, in accordance with US Federal Loan regulations. If the student is temporarily suspended from the course this will not count towards this timeframe. Examples of maximum timeframes are below:

3 year undergraduate degree: maximum is 150% of 360 credits (3 years) which equates to 540 credits (4.5 years).

1 year postgraduate taught degree: maximum is 150% of 180 credits (1 year) which equates to 270 credits (1.5 years).

* For a three-year BA and BSc the timeframe is 540 attempted credits. Students normally attempt and complete 120 credits per year. All credits at one Level of Study must be completed before the next Level is attempted. Where a student needs to retake credits from a Level they will retake credits in the following year, before progressing to the following Level the year afterwards. Where a student needs to all credits from a Level, they will attempt 120 credits in the following year, before progressing to the following Level the year afterwards. No credit-rated block may be attempted more than twice. Where a credit-rated block has been successfully completed, it may not be attempted again.
* For a four-year BA and BSc the timeframe is 720 attempted credit. Students normally attempt and complete 120 credits per year. All credits at one Level of Study must be completed before the next Level is attempted. Where a student needs to retake credits from a Level they will retake credits in the following year, before progressing to the following Level the year afterwards. Where a student needs to all credits from a Level, they will attempt 120 credits in the following year, before progressing to the following Level the year afterwards. No credit-rated block may be attempted more than twice. Where a credit-rated block has been successfully completed, it may not be attempted again.

Each year the Board of Examiners considers whether the student is on track to complete within the timeframe; if not there their studies will be normally be terminated.

In exceptional circumstances a student may appeal to extend their timeframe.

Postgraduate (graduate) programmes have a maximum timeframe which exceeds 150% of the published length of the programme under special conditions of Interruption of Study (see below).

Any period of study in which a student does not receive Federal Loan aid will also still count towards the maximum timeframe for their academic programme, and towards the degree classification [the UK equivalent of a Grade Point Average].

Students do not select the number of credits to take but must register for a full 120 credits each year. Therefore the board each year can determine whether a student is on track to complete. All international students proceed at the same pace of 120 credits a year, except where redeeming failed credits [as above].

**Academic Probation and U.S. Federal Aid Probation**

When a student does not meet SAP the University will notify the student that they are ineligible to receive further US financial aid disbursements and their Financial Aid entitlements will be suspended.

However US students may appeal a Financial Aid suspension to reinstate their eligibility to receive federal loans. Students may only submit this appeal if they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances that prevented them from the meeting the standards of SAP (for instance injury, illness, death of a family member or other circumstance.) This appeal would have to be clearly explained in writing and what has changed in their personal situation that will ensure that they do meet the SAP standards moving forward. Supporting evidence should also be included in this appeal. The appeal should be sent in writing to the Student finance office within 14 calendar days of receiving their suspension notification either by email to financequeries@hope.ac.uk or by post to Liverpool Hope University, Student Finance, Hope Park, Liverpool L16 9JD.

The decision of the appeal will be communicated to the student within 14 calendar days after the submission has been received by the Student Finance team. Please note that all US federal aid disbursements will not be made to students during the appeal. All appeal outcomes are final. If the appeal is denied, then the student will no longer be able to receive US Financial Aid.

However, if the student’s appeal is successful and approved by the International Office, then they will be placed on probation or probation with an academic plan for one semester. For just probation, if the student is still not meeting the requirements of SAP by the end of the semester, they will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid. Students will be required to use their own funding until they are reaching SAP again.

However, for students on probation with an academic plan, they will need to ascertain requirements that last longer than one semester if it is not possible for a student to improve SAP within one semester. For example, there could be extra tutoring on a weekly basis or meeting with their course/personal tutor once a week. After one term has elapsed, the student would need to review the academic plan with the Student finance office and his/her academic tutor. If the student fails SAP after a period of probation with an academic plan in place, they will not receive aid and will also need to self-fund until they are meeting the requirements of SAP again.

Furthermore, any student that exceeds the maximum timeframe of their course cannot receive Financial Aid under US Department of Education regulations. This regulation is not covered by the SAP policy above and therefore is not subject to any Financial Aid warning, probation or appeal.

It is important to also note that the SAP policy is additional to the academic regulations of the subject of study at the University and does not guarantee the graduation outcomes of the student’s course. If the student fails to meet SAP, they may be re-enrolled on to their course, but still may be ineligible to receive Federal Aid under the regulations of the Title IV Direct Loan scheme. Furthermore, the requirements of the SAP policy will also not affect their registration and Tier 4 Visa status.

Academic probation does not exist in Liverpool Hope University’s own regulations. However, students who initially fail to gain SAP are normally given a specified timescale to redeem their position, as follows; this is a *de facto* system of academic probation, and relates to U.S. Federal Aid Probation as shown below.

1. **Students who have not passed 120 credits by June [but who have obtained an aggregate mark of at least 25]** will be given an opportunity to undertake further work for August. Their progress will be reviewed in early September.
* *If they pass the work submitted in the reassessment period,* they will be deemed to have fulfilled the requirement for Satisfactory Academic Progress [SAP], and will proceed to the next 120 credits according to the standard schedule.
* *If they fail to satisfy the examiners in any August assessments,* they will be deemed to have failed the requirement for Satisfactory Academic Progress [SAP], and will when permitted by the Continuation and Award Board, be required to retake all or part of the 120 credits in the following academic session, and will no longer be eligible for U.S. federal student aid. However, such students will be entitled to lodge an Academic Appeal, the outcome of which may be that students be given a specified timescale [usually no more than 2 or 3 weeks] to submit further work to gain the 120 credits in time to proceed to the next 120 credits according to the standard schedule, therefore meeting the requirements for SAP. Pending the final decision about whether the student’s further work has enabled them to gain the required 120 credits, the student would be placed on U.S. Federal Aid Probation. In addition to the University’s normal procedures for communication results, students in receipt of U.S. Federal Aid will in relation to all aspects of this paragraph, be informed of the consequences for U.S. Federal Aid.

**2 Students who have not passed 120 credits by June [and who have obtained an aggregate mark below 33]** will be deemed to have failed the requirement for Satisfactory Academic Progress [SAP], and will be required to retake all or part of the 120 credits in the following academic session. Such students will be entitled to lodge an Academic Appeal, the outcome of which may be that students be given a specified timescale [usually until the end of August] to submit further work to gain the 120 credits in time to proceed to the next 120 credits according to the standard schedule, therefore meeting the requirements for SAP. Pending the final decision about whether the student’s further work has enabled them to gain the required 120 credits, the student would be placed on U.S. Federal Aid Probation. In addition to the University’s normal procedures for communication results, students in receipt of U.S. Federal Aid will in relation to all aspects of this paragraph, be informed of the consequences for U.S. Federal Aid.

**Transfer Credits**

Transfer Credits from another institution of higher education are approved on an individual basis by the transfer student’s accepting academic programme at Liverpool Hope University. They count toward the attempted and completed credits at Liverpool Hope, thereby reducing the maximum timeframe for completion of the programme. They also count towards attempted and completed hours.

**Change of Majors**

Changes in major subjects can in some instances be completed within the original programme timeframe (for example, if a student is able to change their degree programme from Combined Studies to Single Subject Studies within their original academic Faculty (Academic Division), as within Education or Humanities, etc. Within the Combined Studies Degree (two majors), a student can only change one of their major subjects at the end of their first year, in which case they would have to take an extra year, in a part-time mode of study, to complete credits new subject.

**Change of Degrees**

If a student changes BOTH subjects or changes to a completely new Degree Programme any previous credits earned will not count and the student is deemed to be starting again with a new timeframe. However if any of the credits that were earned is applicable to the new degree then those would count towards both quantitative and qualitative.

**Pursuit of Second Degrees**

Liverpool Hope University permits students to pursue a second academic degree, either undergraduate or postgraduate, if they meet the relevant entry requirements for the new degree programme.

**Summer Schools**

There are no summer semesters or “summer school” courses offered within Liverpool Hope University’s undergraduate or graduate degree programmes at present.

**Incompletes**

There are no “incomplete” grades at Liverpool Hope University. However, students who do not submit work, but gain 25-39 for the course overall will have one reassessment opportunity.

**Grade Change Policy**

All Liverpool Hope University grades are technically “provisional” until they are formally approved by the University Continuation and Award Board in June or July. Normally provisional grades are approved unchanged, the only exceptions being:

1. The discovery of plagiarism in an assignment after the initial grade is awarded. All discovered plagiarized assignments will receive a fail grade as their final approved mark. But it is still possible to pass on aggregate marks.
2. A student’s Academic Appeal is upheld by the University’s Academic Appeal Procedure. A student can only appeal against a grade result on the grounds that published assessment procedures were not followed, but not on the grounds that they disagree with the grade awarded.
3. (Most unusually) the discovery by the Board of Examiners at the end of the academic year that an individual or a group of students was marked unfairly given the published mark scales and assessment criteria.

**Repeated Courses**

Students are allowed to repeat (retake) any failed module once only with approval from the University Continuation and Award Board. Any retaken course will receive the full credit value but, in some cases if the course has been failed due to academic misconduct, the overall grade will be no greater than “E” (indicating a bare pass at 40%). All time periods used to pass retakes will count towards a student’s programme timeframe in terms of attempted and completed credits. If a retake is failed, the student’s studies will normally be terminated. Once a course is passed, a student cannot retake it in order to achieve a higher grade. If a student is required to repeat a failed course, the uncapped aggregate for that course will normally count towards the degree classification [the equivalent of the Grade Point Average].

**Non-credit Remedial Courses**

Liverpool Hope University does not offer non-credit remedial courses.

**Appeals Procedure**

Students have the right to appeal against any academic decision, including termination of studies. A formal academic appeal follows where an informal early resolution has not been possible or the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome. An appeal can only be submitted by a student on one or more of the following grounds: 3.2.1. mitigating circumstances where, for Good Reason, the Continuation and Award Board was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the assessment of a student through the Mitigating Circumstances Policy when it made its original decision. A 'Good Reason' means that circumstances are beyond a student’s control and prevented the student from disclosing the relevant circumstances at the appropriate time. Personal embarrassment and unwillingness to disclose personal circumstances are not considered “good reason” for the purposes of an appeal. 3.2.2. that there has been a procedural irregularity in the assessment process; 3.2.3. that the Continuation and Award Board has acted in a way which is manifestly unreasonable. In this context, unreasonable shall be taken to mean perverse, i.e. the decision was not a possible conclusion that a similar meeting of the Continuation and Award Board might have reached. 3.2.4. Bias or reasonable perception of bias.

Academic Appeals should be directed to appeals@hope.ac.uk. The University’s full Appeals Procedure is published on the Student Gateway of the Hope website. Appeals will be dealt with in a prompt manner so that, if successful, the student can re-engage with their studies as quickly as possible. The implications of the appeals process for U.S. Federal Aid are summarised above under “Academic Probation and U.S. Federal Aid Probation”. If the Appeal is successful the Appeals Team will inform the student of any outstanding work that needs completion and/or of their pass and progress status. The appeals process automatically considers if a student had failed to make SAP, and what has changed to allow the student to get back on track.

If the appeals process determines that a student’s progress has been affected by valid mitigating circumstances, the student would be given an opportunity, as if for the first time to submit missed assessments or to attend modules again. The timescale will vary according to circumstances but for assessment-only issues the matter could be resolved by the following semester allowing the student to progress on schedule, in other cases progression would be delayed by 12months. However, in either case, the establishment of valid mitigating circumstances would lead to a recommendation that entitlement to U.S. Federal Aid be retained.

**Termination of Studies**

LHU only terminates a student’s registration on grounds of serious lack of engagement with their modules regarding attendance and the submission of assignments, repeated academic misconduct, and/or for serious infraction of the University’s Code of Behaviour. Any student who fails a retake of a course (the second attempt to pass the module including the full resit opportunity) will also have their studies terminated.

**Termination of Student Aid**

When a student formally Interrupts Study, Withdraws from the University, or has their studies Terminated, their student aid will be terminated. Renewal of student aid will only be approved after an Interrupted student has registered for new modules (courses). For all other students in the above categories, student aid can only be renewed after they have reapplied and been offered a place on a Liverpool Hope University academic programme.