

Yale Law School Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress for the Juris Doctor Degree

Title 34 Part 668 of the Code of Federal Regulations (34 C.F.R. § 668.34) requires institutions to establish reasonable Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards for “determining whether an otherwise eligible student is making satisfactory academic progress in his or her educational program and may receive assistance under the Title IV, HEA programs” and institutional financial aid (“financial aid”). SAP is the successful completion of degree requirements according to published increments that lead to degree completion within published time limits. Yale Law School evaluates students’ academic progress annually at the end of each academic year. The following standards apply to all matriculating students, whether or not they are financial aid recipients.

1. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

Students must maintain standards of SAP in both qualitative and quantitative (pace) terms.

- A. Quantitative (Pace Measures): In order to maintain SAP at Yale Law School, each student in the Juris Doctor (JD) program must complete a minimum of 83 units over the course of six semesters in residence, or its equivalent. Enrollment beyond six semesters, or at less than full time, is only approved by the dean in extraordinary circumstances. To maintain full-time status in good standing, each student must be enrolled in the four required courses in the first term (16 units) and in 12 to 16 units in each subsequent semester, generally averaging 13 or 14 units per term over the five semesters after the first semester in residence. In addition, by the end of the sixth term, each JD student must complete one course in Criminal Law and Administration; one course in professional responsibility and legal ethics; one course in legal skills (for students matriculating after June 30, 2012); and two writing requirements, the Substantial Paper and the Supervised Analytic Writing Paper, one of which must be completed and certified before a student may register for his or her penultimate term in the JD program. The maximum time frame for a student to complete study toward the degree is 84 months from the date of matriculation in the program.

- B. Qualitative Measures: Students will be disqualified as JD candidates and will not be allowed to continue in the School if they receive
 - (a) two Failures in any one term;
 - (b) a total of three Failures;
 - (c) Low Pass or Failure in four or more courses or individual work programs by the end of the third term;
 - (d) Low Pass or Failure in five or more courses by the end of the fourth term;
 - (e) Low Pass or Failure in six or more courses by the end of the fifth term; or
 - (f) Low Pass or Failure in a total of seven or more courses or individual work.

A student who has been disqualified as a JD candidate for not maintaining satisfactory grades will not be readmitted without a vote of the faculty.

Detailed information on all degree requirements, including conditions for continuing as a JD student, are described in the Bulletin of Yale Law School, which is published annually in August.

2. SAP Notice, Academic Plans, and Appeals:

Notice: At the end of each academic year, the registrar will send a degree progress report to each JD student. This report will include the number of in-progress units and completed units toward the degree requirements, as well as an indication of which specific requirements have been completed. Any student who is identified as not making satisfactory academic progress will be notified in writing of the deficiencies by the registrar.

Academic Plan: Any student who is identified as not making satisfactory academic progress will be required to meet with the appropriate dean before the beginning of the next payment period to establish an individual academic plan. The academic plan will ensure that the student is able to meet SAP according to the specific benchmarks established by the plan.

Appeals: Should a student wish to appeal the determination that he is not making SAP, he may do so by submitting a written petition to the registrar. Appeals will be reviewed by the registrar, and the student will be formally notified of the outcome of the petition in writing.

3. Financial Aid Eligibility

The Registrar's Office will notify the Financial Aid Office on an annual basis of those students who have failed to make satisfactory academic progress.

The Financial Aid Office will notify the student in writing that, based on his or her inability to achieve satisfactory academic progress, he or she is not eligible for a continuation of institutional or federal aid for the subsequent academic term and beyond until the academic deficiencies are remedied.

The student may appeal this financial-aid status in writing to the Director of Financial Aid, who will respond in writing within ten days of receiving the appeal. If the Director determines that the student is not eligible for a continuation of institutional or federal aid, he or she will be placed on financial aid probation.

If the student is working towards an academic plan, the Financial Aid Office will notify him or her in writing that his or her eligibility for institutional and federal aid has been approved for the following semester. At the end of the semester, his or her eligibility for institutional or federal aid will be based on the achievement of the plan's benchmarks. If the student achieves the appropriate benchmarks, the financial aid probation status will be lifted, but the student's continued aid eligibility going forward will remain contingent on his or her achievement of the academic plan's benchmarks through the plan's completion.

The Registrar's Office will notify the Financial Aid Office if any student fails to meet the benchmarks of the academic plan, at which time the student will be notified in writing by the Financial Aid Office that he or she is ineligible for institutional or federal aid for the subsequent term unless the benchmark is achieved prior to the start of the next term.