

Satisfactory Academic Progress

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The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has specific rules for satisfactory academic progress for Master's and for Ph.D. students. Federal regulations require that students receiving federal assistance make satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the standards set by the University.

For all students, permission to register each term is contingent, in part, on judgment that progress in the degree program is satisfactory.

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences holds each student within a particular program to the same academic standards.

Progress Toward the M.A. Degree

The Graduate School considers progress toward the M.A. degree to be minimally satisfactory when progress is made at a rate that will allow a student to complete the degree within four consecutive terms of full-time study, with the exception of the M.A. program in Conservation Biology; students in that program must complete the degree within eight consecutive terms of full-time study. Students will be evaluated annually to ensure that they are progressing at a pace that will allow them to complete their degree within the maximum time frame. This evaluation will be based on the number of credits that a student has completed of those attempted.

Students must also maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. The cumulative GPA is derived from all courses in which a student has registered and received a grade.

Master's students in the programs listed below may, **over a four-year period**, pursue a program of part-time study leading to the M.A. degree. The half and quarter [Residence Units](#) ^[1] are designed to accommodate part-time students in these programs. Students enrolled in these programs may register for half and quarter Residence Unit registration categories during the summer. For further information, see [Summer Session](#) ^[2].

- African-American Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History and Archaeology
- Biotechnology

- Classical Studies
- Classics
- Conservation Biology
- East Asian Languages and Cultures
- English and Comparative Literature
- French and Romance Philology
- Germanic Languages
- Italian
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Studies
- Mathematics with a specialization in Mathematics of Finance
- Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies
- Modern Art: Critical and Curatorial Studies
- Museum Anthropology
- Philosophical Foundations of Physics
- Philosophy
- Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences
- Religion
- Russia, Eurasia, and East Europe: Regional Studies
- Russian Translation
- Slavic Cultures
- Slavic Languages
- Sociology
- Statistics

Master's students in the programs listed below may, **over a five-year period**, pursue a program of part-time study leading to the M.A. degree. Registration for Residence Units is not required for these programs.

- American Studies
- East Asian Studies
- Human Rights Studies
- Islamic Studies
- Jewish Studies
- Medieval Studies
- Modern European Studies
- South Asian Studies

Progress Toward the Ph.D. degree

The Graduate School considers progress to be minimally satisfactory when progress is such that a student completes the M.A. degree within four semesters of full-time study, the M.A./M.Phil. degrees within eight semesters of full-time study, and the M.A./M.Phil./Ph.D. within 18 semesters of full-time study (see [Nine-Year Policy for Time to the Ph.D. Degree](#) ^[3] for more information). Students who receive credit for an M.A. completed elsewhere must complete the M.Phil. within six semesters and the Ph.D. within sixteen semesters.

Students must also maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. The cumulative GPA is derived from all courses in which a student has registered and received a

grade.

In addition, doctoral students whose programs require a dissertation prospectus or proposal must defend it successfully within eight semesters of first enrolling in their doctoral program. (Students with two Registration Units of advanced standing must defend successfully within six semesters.)

These time-to-degree requirements are the maximum registration for the M.A./M.Phil./Ph.D. in the Graduate School; some programs have a shorter time-to-degree requirement. Where the program's time-to-degree rule is shorter, the student must follow the program's rule. Failure to comply with these requirements will indicate a lack of satisfactory academic progress toward the degree.

Normally, [continuous registration](#) ^[4] is required of all doctoral degree candidates in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Under certain circumstances a student may take a [leave of absence](#) ^[5] if approved by the GSAS Dean's office. Approved leaves stop the clock on time-to-degree requirements and multi-year fellowship packages.

A leave may be approved at any time during a doctoral student's degree candidacy, except during the first year of study, when a [withdrawal](#) ^[6] is more appropriate. After completing M.Phil. degree requirements, however, students in the Arts and Sciences may not take a personal leave of absence; students may request only a medical or military leave.

Note: The rule commonly called the [Seven-Year Rule](#) ^[7] refers to the maximum number of years Ph.D. students are **eligible for GSAS financial support**.

Assessment of Progress

The satisfactory progress of doctoral students is assessed annually on the basis of academic performance, including the timely completion of all language examinations and all certifying and comprehensive examinations and thesis requirements, grades, and performance in any required teaching or research apprenticeships.

In addition, each year post-M.Phil. students and students in their eighth semester who are required to complete the M.Phil. by the end of the semester must submit the **Report on Progress in Candidacy** online through [SSOL](#) ^[8]. The dissertation sponsor reviews the student's report, determines whether or not the student is making satisfactory progress, and reports this evaluation of progress to the GSAS Dean's Office via SSOL in the spring semester. Students have access to the online report from mid-January through mid-March, and faculty have access until mid-April; specific deadlines can be found on SSOL.

Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Progress

A student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress will be advised of corrective steps to take, and apprised of the consequences of failing to take those steps. A student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress after such a probationary period will have his/ her candidacy terminated.

Additionally, each program maintains its own standards of satisfactory academic progress and

corrective procedures, and all students must familiarize themselves with these standards and procedures.

In cases of egregious failure to achieve progress, a student may be dismissed from the degree program without a probationary period.

Dismissing a Graduate Student in the Arts and Sciences

When a student has failed to make satisfactory academic progress and the department or program is considering dismissal, the Director of Graduate Studies or faculty member holding a similar position will confer with the GSAS administration. The department should communicate with the student its reasons for recommending dismissal. GSAS will proceed with the formal termination of candidacy, sending an official letter to the student and copying relevant faculty and administrators. A student's University privileges are not suspended until the dismissal is final.

The effective date of dismissal will be included in the official notification from GSAS. Typically the dismissal is effective immediately or at the end of the current semester. However, the department or program may request a later effective date of dismissal if it provides compelling reasons to do so.

A student may appeal a departmental recommendation to dismiss within ten (10) calendar days of receiving notification from GSAS by writing to the Dean of the Graduate School. The letter to the Dean should explain the grounds for challenging the department's recommendation to dismiss.

There are three grounds upon which an appeal of the decision may be made:

1. The student has new relevant information that was unavailable at the time of the hearing.
2. The student has concerns with the process that could potentially change or affect the outcome of the decision.
3. The student feels that the sanction issued is too severe.

After carefully considering the appeal, the Dean of GSAS will determine if a change in the outcome of the original decision is warranted. Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, the Dean will notify the student of the final decision in writing within ten (10) calendar days. There are no further possibilities of appeal beyond the Dean of GSAS.

Source URL: <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/satisfactory-academic-progress>

Links:

- [1] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/residence-unit-and-other-registration-categories>
- [2] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/summer-session>
- [3] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/nine-year-policy-time-phd-degree>
- [4] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/continuous-registration>
- [5] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/leaves-absence>
- [6] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/withdrawal>
- [7] <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/seven-year-funding-eligibility>
- [8] <http://ssol.columbia.edu>