



POLICY / PROCEDURE
Faculty Review of Student Progress (SAP)

Name:	Faculty Review of Student Progress
Date Adopted:	12-17-2019
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Responsible Department:	EALT, AEC
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FACULTY REVIEW OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Satisfactory Academic Progress, Attendance, Warnings, Probation, Dismissals, and Appeals

Satisfactory Student Progress and Faculty Review of Progress

WISR's programs are online, personalized and self-paced. In this type of learning context, student attendance is not measured, rather, faculty work closely with each student to monitor and measure multiple dimensions of each student's learning progress.

WISR has three primary measures that it uses to ensure that students are able to achieve what it terms "Satisfactory Academic Progress" while remaining sufficiently engaged in their program and likely to complete it within the maximum time allotted.

Qualitative Measure: Pass/Withdrawn Grading

WISR defines demonstrating a competency (a grade of "pass") as a grade equivalent to 83%—a "B" or better (3.0 on a 4-point scale). Should a student maintain enrollment, they will receive a mark of "pass" on their permanent academic record for any courses in which they complete. This is because if student performance in a course falls below 83%, the faculty begin work directly with the student to address academic deficiencies until the student meets required standards. Students who are withdrawn from WISR receive a "withdrawn" grade. Withdrawn courses count toward the number of semester

credit hours attempted. Semester credit hours are not earned when a student withdraws from a course.

Quantitative Measure: Attendance at One-on-One Faculty Meetings

Students are expected to meet with faculty in one-on-one sessions twice a month, and more if needed or requested by the student, for about an hour each session. WISR encourages students to ask for more time with faculty if it is needed. WISR considers student attendance at their meeting with faculty an indicator of the student's level of engagement in their studies.

This time in one-on-one sessions is in addition to small group sessions with the faculty member. Meeting times are determined on an individual basis with the intention to find a time convenient to both parties. If the student fails to attend these meetings such that they are not averaging twice-monthly attendance, this will trigger a review of student progress in which the faculty discusses concerns with the student about their progress. This discussion will include exploring the possibility of the student receiving additional student services and support.

Quantitative Measure: "Progress Pace"

Students are expected to progress through their program at an acceptable minimum pace, in order to complete their program in the maximum time allowed:

- M.S. in Education and Community Leadership: Four years (48 months);
- M.S. in Psychology, MFT: Six years (72 months);
- Ed.D. in Higher Education and Social Change: Six years (72 months).

Progress Pace Definition:

[Total number of months the student has been enrolled	Minus	Four months]	Divided By	[Maximum number of months expected for that program	Minus	Four months]
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*Four months is subtracted to account for a typically slower starting pace when students enter their program.

Example: A student who has been enrolled for 12 months in the EdD program, with an expected maximum time of 72 months, would be expected to have completed the following proportion of the required 60 semester credit hours:

12 months enrolled – 4 months = 8 months

72 months total – 4 months = 68 months

$8/68 = 11.8\%$ of the program completed in months

$.118 \times 60$ total semester credit hours ≈ 7 semester credit hours

The student is expected to have completed at least seven semester credit hours by month 12 of his/her program.

When Faculty Review Student Progress: The Semi-annual Review

WISR's Faculty reviews the quality and pace of each student's progress semi-annually. The purpose of these reviews is to help students make timely progress toward their degree and their personal and professional career goals.

When reviewing student progress every six months, faculty monitor not only the pace of each student's progress using the calculation above, but their quality of engagement and coursework as well. Faculty give special attention to what we can do to provide assistance to any student who has "only" met minimum requirements on two occasions in the last three courses they have completed.

Because additional qualitative factors may influence student persistence in their program over time, i.e., other than simply the quantitative measure above, WISR attempts to consider a wide range of factors that may affect student progress.

We term this additional level of assessment a "holistic review" of student performance. During the holistic review, faculty who have recently been working with a particular student share with other faculty their observations on:

1. the recent consistency with which students have been progressing in their coursework,
2. the quality of the student's coursework,

3. the extent to which they may be extraordinarily engaged in their WISR studies in various ways (which may include in some cases, integrating their WISR studies into their professional and/or community work).

If these additional qualitative criteria are met in positive ways, a student who is “behind” the pace of “good progress” may be deemed to be making “good progress” based on such a holistic review. On the other hand, a student who has completed the number of credit hours “expected” may be deemed to not be making “good progress” and in need of special faculty support and attention if their recent progress or quality of work has not been quite what we would expect.

When faculty have concerns about a student’s progress, they notify the student that they will be working with them to improve their academic progress and negotiate with that student a progress plan for the next six months. The purpose of the plan is to enable the student to make better progress, and to assess whether it is realistic for the student to succeed in completing the program within the maximum allowable time.

However, students who are consistently engaged in their studies, but who are slowed down due to disabilities or other extenuating factors may petition WISR faculty for permission to take somewhat longer than these maximum allowable times to complete their studies.

After the end of the six-month progress plan, WISR faculty may then take one of three actions:

1. If the student has demonstrated clearly that they are making good progress they will be notified that their progress is no longer under special review, but that there will continue to be reviews of the progress of all students every six months. The definition of “good progress” is based on a combination of a) student being engaged with a faculty member at least twice every month, b) the quality and quantity of the assignments completed, and c) most importantly, that they are now on a pace that will enable them to finish in less than the maximum allowable time for their degree program. [Unless faculty decide there is a special, extenuating circumstance, including for example, a disability.]
2. If the student has demonstrated significant progress in terms of engagement with faculty and the quality and quantity of assignments completed, but it is not yet clear whether or not they are on a pace to finish within the maximum allowable time for their degree program, they will be given another notification that their academic progress is under special review during the next 6-month period. At that the end of that time, either their progress will no longer require special review, or they will be placed on probation and required to take a leave of absence of a minimum of 6 months.
3. If the student has failed to demonstrate significant progress, based on all three criteria outlined in #1 above, they will be placed on probation and required to take a leave of absence for at least 6 months.

[Note: Students enrolled prior to July 2014 will have a longer period of time to complete their studies, but those who will not be able to finish within the maximum amount of time, will still be subject to a mandatory leave of absence if they do not show continual progress during each six-month period of time. Otherwise, they will be placed on probation and required to take a 6-month leave.]

In Cases of Persistent Lack of Progress

Since WISR faculty are committed to helping all students succeed, and because of the thoroughness of our admissions counseling process, dismissal is rare. However, in addition to the regular 6-month review of student progress, a faculty member can recommend review of a student's persistent lack of academic progress, or persistent failure to participate in mentoring sessions with a faculty member, to WISR Program Co-Directors and the Academic Dean (AcD).

Appeals

Appeals under this section are governed by WISR's Student Due Process and Appeals Framework. If the student is disenrolled or placed on a leave of absence by the AcD because they have judged that this is in the student's best interest due to their lack of engagement and/or progress in their studies, the student will be notified by email of the AcD's decision and an attempt to call them by phone will be made. The student will have ten (10) business days from the date of the email to appeal the AcD's decision to the President. The student will be notified by email of the President's decision and an attempt to call them by phone will be made. The student will have ten (10) business days from the date of the email to appeal the President's decision to the Board of Trustees. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final.

While the student is appealing the decision to place them on leave or withdraw, they will be given a refund of any unused tuition based on the AcD's recommendation for a leave. The student will later re-pay the refund if their appeal of the leave of absence is upheld.

If the student is placed on probation and required to take a 6-month leave, they will be given an opportunity, after a period of at least six months, to be taken off probation and officially re-enroll as an active student not on leave, if they can make the case that their circumstances and/or ability to complete the program have improved. The AcD will review the student's request to be taken off probation and to resume active status as an enrolled student. If re-enrolled, they will be given an initial six-month probation period to demonstrate good progress, at end of which time they will be eligible to be taken off probation. Nevertheless, they must continue to demonstrate good progress in each subsequent six-month period, or be subject to a warning, and then after that a subsequent period on leave while on probation. A student may receive no more than two warnings without being placed on a probationary leave. A student may receive no more than two probations, without then being subject to permanent dismissal.

While on Probation and on Leave

When a student is on leave while on probation, they of course incur no expenses for tuition and fees. If they apply to re-enroll, and are accepted, they must pay a non-refundable \$200 fee to re-register in the degree program they are pursuing or taking courses. Further, they will be on continued probation for the next six months, at the end of which time they will either 1) be re-enrolled in good standing, 2) be re-enrolled for another period of six months in which their academic progress is under special review, 3) have the option of extending their leave in order to ready themselves for re-enrollment at a later date, or 4) permanently withdraw.

Furthermore, in order to support students who are on leave while on probation, students have access to: 1) all WISR seminars and events, 2) WISR's online courses (to study, but not to submit work), and 3) WISR faculty will be available to meet monthly with the student in an effort to increase the likelihood that they can successfully resume their studies at WISR. However, faculty will not review work submitted for credit until the student is accepted for re-enrollment. Faculty may, if their time permits, give feedback to students on drafts of work.

Reviews of Each Student's Progress

End of Course Oral Reviews

WISR faculty use oral reviews at the end of each course to assess, and to give students feedback, on their progress toward the degree, and achievement of degree program learning outcomes (PLOs). These oral reviews are designed to evaluate student progress toward the degree, and are intended to offer constructive suggestions, and in some cases required further study and action, to help students strengthen weak areas, and to support growth by building on areas where the student shows strength. At the end of each course, the faculty member notes on the student's record any additional program learning outcomes they have addressed, and the evidence that supports their assessment.

In addition--for master's students--also a Mid-Program Review, a Review Prior to Beginning the Thesis, and the Graduation Review Board at the End.

The mid-program review is held about the time that they have completed half of their coursework.

The second review is at the time of the Review of the Master's Thesis Proposal. For this, the student convenes their Graduation Review Board (three WISR graduate faculty and an outside expert in the topic of their proposed thesis). At this time the Review Board engages in the following assessments:

1. They review the record of the student's previous achievement of program learning outcomes (PLOs).
2. If any Program Learning Outcomes have not yet been achieved, they then do one of the following:
 - If the Review Board deems it feasible for the student to achieve the remaining PLOs in the course of doing their thesis, then specify which PLOs must be addressed, and outline below the plan for accomplishing this. [If this option is deemed feasible, then the student's Graduation Review Board must determine not only that the Thesis submitted is of acceptable quality, but also that there is evidence that the PLOs have been addressed in doing the thesis.]
 - If the Graduation Review Board believes that it is not feasible for the student to achieve all the remaining PLOs during the thesis, then they must develop, and negotiate with the student, a plan for the student to complete those PLOs, not readily accomplished during the thesis, prior to embarking on the thesis. Once the student has completed the agreed-on work and study to achieve these PLOs, the Review Board will be reconvened to evaluate the evidence of the student having achieved those PLOs, and then the student will be approved to move forward with the Thesis, and the Review Board will state whether or not there are any remaining PLOs to be addressed during the thesis.

The final review is done by the Graduation Review Board when the student has submitted the final draft of their thesis, and is ready to be examined on their thesis and also have the Review Board evaluate the evidence of any PLOs not previously achieved.

In addition, for MFT students, there is an earlier review of their readiness to begin a Practicum:

The student is eligible to begin a practicum once they have completed 12 semester credit hours of coursework with the following courses: MFT 513, 551, 553, 559, 563 and 567. They confer with two WISR faculty, at least one of whom holds an MFT license to evaluate and discuss their readiness for the practicum. If they are then deemed ready, they may begin the practicum.

For EdD students:

For Doctoral students, there are four formal evaluation steps prior to the Final Graduation Review Board meeting, when the dissertation is reviewed, approved, and authenticated by the Review Board.

1. The Qualifying Exam. First, three WISR faculty members review the doctoral student's completed projects and coursework, after all the courses required for the

degree program have been completed (except for the dissertation and the exam/dissertation readiness “course”). The purpose of the review is to determine if the student has either completely achieved degree program outcomes, or sufficiently to be able to finish achieving those outcomes while doing their dissertation. In this way the faculty are evaluating if the student is prepared to undertake the rigorous study required for a doctoral dissertation, and to focus their attention on the dissertation, and on achieving any modest added progress toward degree program outcomes required and identified by faculty.

2. The Written Comprehensive Exam. The student also engages in a thoroughgoing review, critical reflection, and written analysis of what they have learned thus far—on how the WISR learning process has helped them to learn in areas of the doctoral program degree learning outcomes. The specific directions to guide the student in the written exam are as follows:

The student will:

Write a comprehensive self-assessment paper that evaluates, organizes and synthesizes their learning thus far during their doctoral studies. In that paper, the student will:

- Articulate and write a critical and well-informed statement about their field(s) of specialization that includes details and nuances beyond broad generalizations.
- Articulate and explore several insights and questions about this emerging, interdisciplinary field of “higher education and social change” and about their area(s) of specialization in particular that their Review Committee considers to be at the level of proficiency and to be promising of leading toward new knowledge and/or practices;
- Demonstrate the depth and breadth of their perspectives on what they’ve learned, and how they plan to build on this knowledge as they move forward toward their goals; and
- Articulate and discuss the evidence of the extent to which they have addressed each degree program learning outcome.

Oral Comprehensive Exam. The student then discusses their reflections and written analyses with three WISR faculty members—assessing their breadth and depth of knowledge in the area(s) of primary interest, and in the interdisciplinary field of higher education and social change, as well as their skills in action-oriented inquiry and knowledge-building, in preparation for undertaking the dissertation.

Dissertation Proposal. The faculty will evaluate the dissertation proposal with the following criteria in mind. If the proposal does not meet all criteria, faculty will work to

help the student to make the necessary improvements within a two-month period of time. The student will:

- develop a coherent, well thought out plan for their dissertation to the three WISR faculty members who, together with the outside topic expert, constitute their four-member Graduation Review Board, and
- will present a plan that meets standards for original, ethically-informed action-oriented inquiry, including
 - an appropriately thorough and targeted literature review,
 - a well-designed plan for collecting original data, and
 - well-formulated questions that reflect the student's interests and the potential to contribute to new knowledge and/or practices in the student's proposed area of study.