

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

### 1. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

1. To be eligible for US federal student loans, a student must make satisfactory academic progress (SAP). This policy applies to all students taking US Federal Loans at the London Film School.
  - 1.1. All students of The London Film School enrolled on one of the programmes listed in section 3 are expected to be making satisfactory academic progress consistent with the School's Assessment Policy. This is monitored by The London Film School and its partner universities and External Examiners.
  - 1.2. Reasons for being expected to be making satisfactory academic progress include expectations from The London Film School and its partner universities, including their academic standards, funding bodies and other organisations.
  - 1.3. Relevant data is made available to the relevant organisation on a regular basis and unless specified in advance by the organisation only made available anonymously.
  - 1.4. Monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress at The London Film School is the responsibility of the Director of Studies and the Board of Examiners. Records on academic progress are recorded by Academic Registry.

### 2. US Federal Student Aid, VA Benefits and Satisfactory Academic Progress

- 2.1. Students in receipt of FSA or VA benefits only: To satisfy US Federal Student Aid (FSA) or VA benefits eligibility requirements, LFS students applying for or receiving US Student Federal Aid (subsidised, unsubsidised) or VA benefits must make satisfactory academic progress.
- 2.2. A summary of the conditions for satisfactory academic progress, set out by the US Department of Education, can be found below. The full guidance is available from the FSA Handbook, Volume 1, Chapter 1.

### 3. Programmes of Study

- 3.1. The London Film Schools offers three postgraduate taught programmes:
  - MA Filmmaking
  - MA Screenwriting
  - MA Documentary Filmmaking
- 3.2. **MA Filmmaking**

- 3.2.1. The MA Filmmaking programme consists of three modules, each module spans across two terms (12 study weeks), and is offered in full-time mode only. The MA Filmmaking normally has three entry points per Academic Year: September, January, April/May.
- 3.2.2. The indicative length of study is two (2) years; the maximum period of study, including deferments and intermissions, is six (6) years.

### 3.3. **MA Screenwriting**

- 3.3.1. This MA Screenwriting programme consists of three modules, spanning across three terms (12 study weeks) each, and is offered in full-time mode only. The MA Screenwriting normally has one entry point per Academic Year: September.
- 3.3.2. The indicative length of study is one (1) year; the maximum period of study, including deferments and intermissions, is six (6) years.

### 3.4. **MA Documentary Filmmaking**

- 3.4.1. This MA Documentary Filmmaking programme consists of 5 modules, spanning across 6 terms (12 study weeks) each, and is offered in full-time mode only. The MA Documentary Filmmaking normally has one entry points per Academic Year: January.
- 3.2.2. The indicative length of study is two (2) years; the maximum period of study, including deferments and intermissions, is six (6) years.

### 3.4. **Maximum Period of Study for Students on a Student Visa**

- 3.4.1. Students on a Student Visa should note that their maximum period of study may be limited by their length of leave granted by UK Visas and Immigration. The length of leave will supersede any guidance on maximum length of study by the validating University.

### 3.5. **Maximum Period of Study for Students with External Funding**

- 3.5.1. Students' maximum period of study may also be limited by their source of funding. The maximum period of study specified in any funding agreement will supersede any guidance on maximum length of study by the validating university.

## 4. **Awards and Credit Points**

- 4.1. The MA is normally awarded to students who have accumulated 180 credit points (90 ECTS). In addition to the award of a Master's degree, two additional exit awards have been validated by the validating Universities: Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma. The table below lists all three awards, including credit points and module requirements.

The requirements for the MA programmes are:

<b>Award</b>	<b>Credit Points at FHEQ Level 7</b>	<b>Notional Learning Hours</b>	<b>Modules</b>
Master's Degree	180	1800	All
Postgraduate Diploma	120	1200	1,2
Postgraduate Certificate	60	600	1

- 4.1.1. Students are normally expected to meet the module prerequisites set out in the Course Handbook available from the LFS website and Moodle before progressing to the next stage of the programme.
- 4.1.2. Progression decisions are taken by the Boards of Examiners which takes place at the end of each term and is chaired by a senior member of staff from the university.
- 4.1.3. Transfer of credits from other universities are not accepted and students are required to commence the MA programmes from module one.

## **5. Monitoring of Satisfactory Academic Progress**

- 5.1. Monitoring satisfactory Academic Progress of all students on programmes listed in section 3 is the responsibility of the Director of Studies. Corresponding records are recorded and maintained by Academic Registry.
- 5.2. Personal Tutors also monitor students' academic progress and are responsible for reporting students who may not be making satisfactory academic progress or are otherwise considered to be 'at risk' to the Director of Studies and the Academic Registrar.
- 5.3. **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Students in Receipt of FSA or VA Benefits**
  - 5.3.1. In addition to the monitoring of all students in line with the validation agreements, monitoring of satisfactory academic progress of students in receipt of FSA or VA benefits is conducted in line with the criteria set out by the US Department of Education.
  - 5.3.2. The London Film School must be satisfied that a student in receipt of FSA or VA benefits meets the satisfactory academic progress criteria before any funds are released at the start of the second or any subsequent term.

## **6. Grades and Pace of Completion**

- 6.1. **Grading Scale: MA Filmmaking**

**Modules 1 and 2**

- Film component: Pass/Fail
- Work and Research Journals: Pass/Fail

**Module 3**

- Film component: Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail
- Work and Research Journals: Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail

6.2. **Grading Scale: MA Screenwriting**

**Modules 1 and 2**

- Script component: Pass/Fail
- Work and Research Journals: Pass/Fail

**Module 3**

- Script component: Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail
- Work and Research Journals: Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail

6.3 **Grading Scale: MA Documentary Filmmaking**

All modules: required to have achieved a minimum of 50% to achieve a pass grade.

6.3. **Grades**

- 6.3.1. Students are required to submit coursework for summative assessment for all modules. Coursework is assessed and moderated by staff of The London Film School and a sample is moderated by an External Examiner prior to confirmation of module results by the Assessment Board, chaired by a senior member of staff from the validating University.
- 6.3.2. Meetings of the Assessment Board provide an opportunity for staff from The London Film School and the University to monitor and discuss satisfactory academic progress which is recorded by both institutions in the form of grade tables and minutes.
- 6.3.3. In case of a Fail in one or more summative assessment components, students are entitled to *one* reassessment opportunity. These students are reported in the grades reports for the Board of Examiners.
- 6.3.4. In order to progress their studies to the next level, students must complete all summative coursework successfully (i.e. minimum grade of Pass). When determining whether or not this criterion has been met, any resubmission opportunities shall be taken into consideration.
- 6.3.5. Students who do not meet this requirement (including after an opportunity to be reassessed) may not be able to progress with their studies unless mitigating circumstances apply and are approved by the Director of Studies and confirmed by the Board of Examiners.

6.3.6. *Students in receipt of FSA or VA benefits only:* Where mitigating circumstances apply and are approved, students will be advised separately on the impact on the eligibility to receive FSA funds or VA benefits. Students should note that depending on the nature and length of any extensions granted, they may no longer qualify for FSA funds or VA benefits.

#### 6.4. **Retaking a Module**

6.4.1. In line with the regulations of the university, students who fail both the original assessment can be reassessed once only. Whether or not a student is entitled to a retake is dependent on the criteria listed below:

- i) The student must not exceed their maximum period of registration (six years);
- ii) The student has a satisfactory attendance record with an average attendance of at least 80%;
- iii) The student has attempted all coursework and failed as a result of not meeting minimum expectations rather than as a result of non-submission.

6.4.3. Students who are required to retake a module will be placed on Academic Probation until the end of the module when their circumstances are reviewed by the Board of Examiners. Students who successfully complete the module in their second attempt and did not require reassessment opportunities during their retake will normally be taken off academic probation.

6.4.4. Students who are required to submit coursework for reassessment during the retake will continue to be placed on academic probation for a further term.

6.4.5. Retake opportunities are subject to confirmation of student visa status.

#### 6.5. **Pace of Completion**

6.5.1. Academic Registry monitors students' 'pace of completion' by monitoring their progress in relation to both the indicative and maximum length of study set out in sections 3 of this policy.

6.5.2. The maximum time of study is also taken into consideration when processing deferment and intermission requests from students.

6.5.3. *Students in receipt of FSA and VA benefits only:* Circumstances may arise where satisfactory academic progress in relation to FSA or VA benefits is considered separately from satisfactory academic progress in relation to academic requirements set by The London Film School and the universities.

***Section 7 only apply to students in receipt of FSA.***

## **7. Financial Aid Warning, Appeals and Suspension**

### **7.1. Financial Aid Probation**

- 7.1.1. Students in receipt of FSA who are placed on academic probation (see section 6.4.3) will receive a Financial Aid Warning which will be reviewed together with their academic probation at the end of the module they are retaking.
- 7.1.2. Students a under Financial Aid Warning remain eligible for FSA funds.
- 7.1.3. Students who meet all satisfactory academic progress requirements following the retake of a module will normally be taken off academic probation and Financial Aid Warning.
- 7.1.4. Students who are considered not to be making satisfactory academic progress by the time their academic probation is reviewed at the end of the module will no longer be eligible to receive further FSA Title IV financial aid.
- 7.1.5. Students may continue to study in their course, and they can regain Title IV financial aid status following satisfactory academic progress.
- 7.1.6. Students will be informed about all decisions, including academic probation, Financial Aid Warning and termination of funding in writing.
- 7.2. **Appeals**
- 7.2.1. Students who have their funding terminated can appeal within ten (10) working days of receiving the notification of termination.
- 7.2.2. The following will be considered as appropriate grounds for appeal:
- i) The extended illness of the student – extended illness as defined as a documented chronic or recurring medical or emotional illness that causes the student to be absent from class for a significant period;
  - ii) Death in his/her immediate family<sup>1</sup>;
  - iii) The extended illness of an immediate family member that places hardship on the student;
  - iv) The student was the victim of a natural disaster that caused them to be absent from The London Film School.
- 7.2.3. Appeals must be submitted together with supporting documentation within ten (10) working days of the termination notification. The student's appeal must include an academic plan. Students are advised to develop their academic plan with their Personal Tutor.
- 7.2.4. The appeal will be considered by the Financial Controller, Director of Studies and Academic Registrar and students will normally be notified of their decision within ten (10) working days.

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<sup>1</sup> Immediate family includes parents, grandparents and siblings for a dependent student and parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse and children for an independent student

7.2.5. All decisions are final.

7.2.6. Students should note that their academic plan will be reviewed at the end of the term.

### 7.3. Appeals Outcome

7.3.1. If a student's appeal is successful, their FSA will be reinstated for one payment period. They will also be placed on Financial Aid Probation and the academic plan will be reviewed monthly with their Personal Tutor.

7.3.2. If a student's appeal is unsuccessful, they may continue with their studies using their own means, but they will not be eligible for further FSA funds. Students who choose to continue with their studies using their own means and subsequently meet satisfactory academic progress standards may be able to regain Financial Aid Probation status and apply for/receive FSA funds.

## 8. Version Control: Policy

Version Number	Changes	Author, Title	Date
0.1	-	Shirley Streete Bharath, Head of Operations	30/09/2015
0.2	Policy name changed; review and update in line with current policy, validation agreements and other guidance relevant to LFS' provision	Philip Ramge, Academic Registrar	04/10/2015
0.3	Revision to include all students, not just students in receipt of US Federal Student Aid	Philip Ramge, Academic Registrar	29/01/2016
0.4	Comments from Quality Management and Enhancement Committee added	Philip Ramge, Academic Registrar	16/02/2016
1.0	Final comments from Academic Board added; approved by Academic Board	Philip Ramge, Academic Registrar	29/02/2016
1.1	Comments from the University of Warwick added; Provision for students in receipt of VA benefits added	Philip Ramge, Academic Registrar	10/02/2017
1.1	Approved by Academic Board	-	13/03/2017
1.2	Consistency updates with implementation of new Assessment Policy and compliance with US Federal Loans	Academic Registrar	14/03/2022

