

### AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing

This Graduate Academic Standing policy is designed to promote academic student success and timely degree completion. It is also aligned with the requirements that graduate students must meet to graduate. George Mason law students are referred to law school [academic regulations](#) for policies regarding academic standing.

To graduate from the intended degree or certificate program, a graduate student must, at a minimum, along with any other degree requirements, present coursework that meets conferral requirements. See [AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates](#), [AP.6.9 Requirements for Master's Degrees](#), and [AP.6.10 Requirements for Doctoral Degrees](#) for further information.

Students who plan to apply for financial aid should review the requirements for making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), as found on the Financial Aid [website](#), which may differ from the requirements in this policy.

#### Definitions:

**Good Academic Standing:** Graduate students are considered in Good Academic Standing unless they are on Academic Probation or there is a notation of Academic Termination for the most recent graduate program(s) on the academic [transcript](#).

**Cumulative GPA:** GPA computed for all graduate-level institutional credit including, but not limited to, any George Mason graduate degree or certificate program pursued with the primary graduate program.

**Degree GPA:** GPA that is calculated for graduate students based on graded graduate level courses completed at the university and applied toward the current degree or certificate program requirements. The Degree GPA is calculated at the time of graduation after all current program requirements are completed.

The graduate student is responsible for timely requesting that any eligible George Mason graduate-level coursework from a prior academic program not intended for the current program degree GPA calculation or application towards current program degree requirements is removed. See [AP.6.6.4 Graduate Academic Clemency](#) for more information.

**Term GPA:** GPA calculated for an individual term.

**Academic termination:** Indicates that the student is separated from their primary graduate degree program as well as any George Mason graduate degree or certificate program being pursued at the time of termination and is not permitted to continue enrollment in the programs. A notification of termination is affixed to the student's academic record. A student may be eligible to pursue graduate study at George Mason in the future, in accordance with any applicable university and College/School [policies](#).

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Commented [PRG3]: Clarification of what has been happening already

### AP.6.6.1 Academic Probation

Graduate degree-seeking and non-degree status students shall be considered on Academic Probation if they receive a term GPA below 3.00 and/or if they receive a grade notation of **NC or NA** in an academic term. A graduate student shall not be on academic probation if a successful grade appeal raises the student's affected term GPA to 3.00 or above.

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When a student is placed on Academic Probation, the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) notifies the student, the appropriate College/School, and the LAU. The student's official transcript states "Academic Probation" for the affected academic term and remains on the transcript. Once on Academic Probation, the graduate student is expected to meet with an academic advisor to create a plan for academic recovery and/or consider alternative options.

The Academic Probation notation is put on the transcript for the affected term, and students are on academic probation during the next enrolled term. The graduate student must obtain a term GPA of 3.00 or better and not earn an NA or NC grade in the probationary term. If the student receives below the minimum 3.00 term GPA for that probationary term or receives an NA or NC grade, the student will meet the criteria for academic termination under **AP.6.6.2**. A graduate student shall not be placed on more than one term of Academic Probation during their graduate program. However, if a student receives a term GPA below 3.00 in the term that they have a graduation application filed, but has met all degree conferral requirements, including the minimum required 3.00 degree GPA, the student shall be permitted to graduate in that term but shall have a notation of academic probation for that term on the academic transcript.

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Any student that is on Academic Probation shall:

- not be permitted to retroactively drop or withdraw from courses that have unsatisfactory final grades after the last day of the term in which the grades were earned without an exception to academic policy approved by the College/School and the Graduate Division.
- be required to repeat any failed course at George Mason, when next offered in the student's academic program and **modality**, if that course is a core degree requirement in the student's current catalog year.

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### AP.6.6.2 Academic Termination

A degree-seeking (doctoral, specialist, master's, certificate) graduate student will be terminated for the reasons listed below unless an academic policy exception is obtained. Non-degree status graduate students will be terminated for unsatisfactory performance as described below. **Note that the university reserves the right to terminate any student based on cancellation (by the testing administrator) of any test score required for admission.**

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#### AP.6.6.2.1 Academic Termination Criteria

**Students May be Terminated for Any One of the Following Reasons:**

**Fully-Admitted Graduate Students Enrolled in a Degree and/or Certificate Program**

- Inability to make satisfactory progress toward degree as determined by the College/School and/or Graduate Division.
  - As determined through academic program benchmarks published to the graduate student by the local academic unit, College/School, and/or Graduate Division including, but not limited to:
    - performance on comprehensive, qualifying exams, portfolios, or other required examinations; or
    - failure to meet published time limits; or
    - academic standard violation(s) as determined by the Academic Standards Office that results in a sanction of suspension or a grade-based sanction that triggers GPA-based eligibility for termination under this section<sup>1</sup>; or
    - a finding of misconduct as determined by the designated entity; or
    - failure to meet required professional competencies; or
    - other required academic milestones or non-course requirements.
- Inability to attain a minimum 3.00 term GPA and/or obtaining NC or NA grade notations for two academic terms of enrollment.

**Provisionally-Admitted Degree Seeking Graduate Students**

- Any of the reasons listed for the aforementioned fully-admitted students; or
- Inability to meet provisions of admission within time limits; or
- Accumulate 12 credits of failing grades in undergraduate courses.

**Non-Degree Graduate Students**

- Accumulate 12 credits of failing grades in undergraduate courses.
- Inability to make satisfactory progress, as determined by the College/School and/or Graduate Division.
  - As determined through published academic benchmarks published to the graduate student by the local academic unit, College/School, and/or Graduate Division including, but not limited to,
    - academic standard violation(s) as determined by Academic Standards Office that results in a sanction of suspension or a grade-based sanction that triggers GPA-based eligibility for termination under this section<sup>1</sup>; or
    - a finding of misconduct as determined by the designated entity; or
    - failure to meet professional competencies; or

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<sup>1</sup> A finding of academic standard violation(s) through the Academic Standards process that results in a sanction of permanent dismissal effectively terminates the student from the academic program and requires no further action by the academic unit.

- other required academic milestones or non-course requirements.
- Inability to attain a minimum 3.00 term GPA for two academic terms of enrollment or obtaining NC or NA grade notations in two academic terms of enrollment.

**Note:** Undergraduate and graduate course grades are not combined to reach the termination threshold; they are considered separately.

These are minimum standards of performance; some programs have higher standards. The student is responsible for knowing the Academic Probation and Academic Termination criteria for their graduate program as well as the process for initiating an academic termination exception request to their College/School. See [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) in the catalog for further information about student obligations.

Once a student has met the criteria for termination, they will be provided an opportunity to submit an academic policy exception, as described below, through a process provided for by their College/School in conjunction with the Graduate Division and shall not:

- be permitted to retroactively drop or withdraw from courses that have unsatisfactory final grades after the last day of the term in which the grades were earned; nor
- resign and transfer, add, or change to another George Mason graduate program; nor
- be eligible for a graduate leave of absence

unless approved through an academic policy exception to termination or appeal.

#### **AP.6.6.2.2 Academic Termination Eligibility Notification**

##### **GPA and NA/NC Grade Notation**

In cases of termination eligibility due to a term GPA below 3.00 or NA or NC grade notations in two academic terms of enrollment, the Office of University Registrar (OUR) will notify the student through George Mason electronic mail within 10 business days of termination eligibility that the student's performance has reached the threshold for termination, provide notice of the start of the College/School's request for exception period which shall be no longer than 10 business days, direct the student to their respective College/School for information on submitting an academic termination exception request, and inform the student that program termination will occur and be finalized by the OUR if the exception period expires and no termination exception request has been submitted to the College/School.

##### **Time Limit**

When a student has one semester or summer term remaining before their published time limit to advancement or degree deadline, the College/School shall notify the student, in writing:

- of the approaching deadline; and

- the start of the College/School's time limit termination exception request period, which shall last not extend past the last day of classes for the expiring time limit semester or summer term; and
- how to obtain information regarding submission of a time limit termination exception request for an extension of time, if needed; and
- inform the student that program termination will occur and be finalized by the College/School within six weeks of the end of the expiring time limit semester or term if:
  - the student has not had their degree and/or certificate conferred or advanced to candidacy, as applicable; and
  - no time limit termination exception request was timely made.

**Commented [PG8]:** Legal wants OUR and the Colleges/Schools/Depts to use the same template language and confirm they are using that.

#### Other

For all other termination criteria, the College/School will be responsible for notifying the Graduate Division of its intent to terminate a student and provide documentation that published policies and procedures were followed. After review and approval, the Graduate Division will be responsible for notifying the student that the student's performance has reached the threshold for termination, provide notice of the start of the College/School's request for exception period, which shall be no longer than 10 business days, direct the student to information on submitting an academic termination exception request to the College/School, and inform the student that program termination will occur and be finalized by the College/School if the exception request period expires and no termination exception request has been made.

**Commented [PG9]:** Proposal after discussion with Legal regarding non-GPA, TL triggers for termination that may vary across units.

#### AP.6.6.2.3 Academic Termination Responsibilities

Each College/School and the Graduate Division shall publish on a publicly available web page the process(es) for initiating graduate academic termination exception requests, which include any time limit termination exception requests, and the criteria used in review. If a College/School approves a graduate academic termination exception request, the request is forwarded to the Graduate Division for an additional review and decision.

- If a College/School approves an initial time limit termination exception request, and the approved extension of time is no longer than a year, program termination will not occur at that time and the student's time limit term will be revised accordingly. Subsequent time limit extension requests or any extension requests for longer than a year, when supported by the College/School, are forwarded to the Graduate Division for review and decision.

Graduate students that have submitted a request for an exception to academic termination to their College/School and had the request denied shall have one level of appeal if timely submitted. Each College/School shall publish on a publicly available web page information that directs a student to information on how to file an appeal of a denial to an academic

termination exception request. The Graduate Division is responsible for publishing the criteria they and the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee (GAAC) use during their respective reviews.

During the review of any academic termination exception request or appeal, the student may continue in or begin new courses during the term of submission but may be responsible for any tuition or related charges. Continued or new enrollment in courses involving demonstration of professional competencies, including, but not limited to, externships or practicums, are at the discretion of the College/School. Students are advised to contact their academic program, the Mason Student Services Center and/or Office of International Program Services (OIPS), as applicable, to determine any impacts when choosing whether to continue with enrollment. Students are not permitted to register for subsequent terms until the student has a final approved exception request or appeal. If the student is terminated from the academic program **in alignment with all applicable policies and procedures, the termination is final and** they shall be immediately administratively dropped from any current and future course registration unless the student formally requests an administrative withdrawal. Students are not permitted to register for subsequent terms until the student has a final approved exception request or appeal.

If a College/School does not receive an academic exception request within their applicable exception period or the student does not timely appeal the College/School's denial of such a request, the College/School shall ensure an academic termination notification form is sent within one week to the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) so that a notation of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student's official record and any current or future course registration is administratively dropped or withdrawn by OUR within one week. See [AP.1.3](#) for more information.

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If, after a College/School's approval, a student's academic termination exception request is denied by the Graduate Division and the appeal period has expired with no submission made, or an appeal is denied by either the Graduate Division or Graduate Academic Appeals Committee with no further appeal option, the Graduate Division shall ensure:

- a letter of academic program termination is electronically sent to the student within one week, with a copy provided to the College/School as well as the Office of the University Registrar to put in the student's record; and
- an academic notification form is sent to the OUR within one week of the decision so that a notation of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student's official record and any current or future registration is administratively dropped or withdrawn within one week. See [AP.1.3](#) for more information.

If a student's academic termination exception request or appeal is ultimately granted, the student will become eligible again for academic termination if they fail to maintain

satisfactory progress as described under this policy and/or once again receives a term GPA below 3.00 or a NC or NA grade notation in a term. The student will be notified by the College/School of program termination, in writing, within six weeks of time limit termination eligibility or 10 business days of GPA, NA/NC grade notation, and/or other termination eligibility, and will not be provided the option of an academic termination exception request. The College/School shall ensure:

- the OUR is copied on the student's notification so that it can be added to the student's record; and
- an academic notification form is sent to the OUR when the student notification is sent so that a notation of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student's official record and any current or future registration is administratively dropped or withdrawn within one week. See [AP.1.3](#) for more information.

Students who receive an academic termination notation may apply for formal admission to a different George Mason graduate program under certain conditions. See AP.6.6.3 for further information.

#### **AP.6.6.3 Subsequent Admission to Graduate Study at Mason**

Former graduate students who have been terminated, dismissed, or have resigned from a George Mason graduate program are not permitted to take any additional coursework at George Mason unless a new graduate program application has been submitted, and the applicant has been admitted to graduate study. Time limits for the degree begin with the term of admission to the new program. Any previously earned eligible credit applied to a subsequent graduate program must have been earned within ten years prior to the term of admission in the new graduate program. Otherwise, an exception to academic policy must first be approved by the College/School. See AP.6.5.2 Transfer of Credits for further information.

The following restrictions **apply**:

- A student who was terminated from a graduate program or dismissed from George Mason while in a graduate program shall not be admitted to that same program for a minimum of two calendar years after the end of the academic term of termination or dismissal.
- Any student who resigns from a graduate program while on academic probation shall be on academic probation (AP.6.6.1) for one enrolled term if admitted to the same graduate program within two calendar years of the end of the resignation term.
- Any failing or unsatisfactory grades that were accumulated in a previous George Mason graduate program term that is within two calendar years of a subsequent graduate program admission term and were for courses that fulfill the new program's core requirements, shall not be excluded and will apply towards the new program's degree GPA and academic standing as described in AP.6.6. Accordingly, prospective applicants and academic programs should carefully consider whether admission, given such circumstances, is appropriate.

**Commented [PG11]:** Is there a way to track timing electronically.

**Commented [PG12]:** Feedback question for OGA: Is there a way that this could be automatically flagged for units? Can this time period of two years be enforced by those beyond the program?

Upon full admission to any graduate program at George Mason, after two calendar years from the end of the previous termination, dismissal, or resignation term, a graduate student may petition the Graduate College/School Dean or designee to grant academic clemency for up to six credits. See AP.6.6.4 Academic Clemency for more information.

Colleges/schools and local academic units may have additional restrictions concerning admission to a subsequent graduate program at George Mason. If so, those restrictions apply.

**AP.6.6.4 Academic Clemency**

Graduate students enrolling in a George Mason graduate program after a separation of a minimum of two calendar years may petition the Graduate College/School Dean or designee to have up to six previous graduate degree credits earned at George Mason removed from the new degree program academic record and degree GPA calculation. Courses and grades so removed will not count toward degree requirements. Note that the courses, with their original grades, and the notation “Academic Clemency,” will remain listed on the student’s transcript permanently. The petition for clemency must be filed within 12 months starting from the first day of enrollment in the new graduate program at George Mason. Approval of the request is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

### AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing

This Graduate Academic Standing policy is designed to promote academic student success and timely degree completion. It is also aligned with the requirements that graduate students must meet to graduate. George Mason law students are referred to law school [academic regulations](#) for policies regarding academic standing.

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    - failure to meet published time limits; or
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- Inability to meet provisions of admission within time limits; or
- Accumulate 12 credits of failing grades in undergraduate courses.

**Non-Degree Graduate Students**

- Accumulate 12 credits of failing grades in undergraduate courses.
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#### **AP.6.6.2.2 Academic Termination Eligibility Notification**

##### **GPA and NA/NC Grade Notation**

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##### **Time Limit**

When a student has one semester or summer term remaining before their published time limit to advancement or degree deadline, the College/School shall notify the student, in writing:

- of the approaching deadline; and

- the start of the College/School's time limit termination exception request period, which shall last not extend past the last day of classes for the expiring time limit semester or summer term; and
- how to obtain information regarding submission of a time limit termination exception request for an extension of time, if needed; and
- inform the student that program termination will occur and be finalized by the College/School within six weeks of the end of the expiring time limit semester or term if:
  - the student has not had their degree and/or certificate conferred or advanced to candidacy, as applicable; and
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#### AP.6.6.2.3 Academic Termination Responsibilities

Each College/School and the Graduate Division shall publish on a publicly available web page the process(es) for initiating graduate academic termination exception requests, which include any time limit termination exception requests, and the criteria used in review. If a College/School approves a graduate academic termination exception request, the request is forwarded to the Graduate Division for an additional review and decision.

- If a College/School approves an initial time limit termination exception request, and the approved extension of time is no longer than a year, program termination will not occur at that time and the student's time limit term will be revised accordingly. Subsequent time limit extension requests or any extension requests for longer than a year, when supported by the College/School, are forwarded to the Graduate Division for review and decision.

Graduate students that have submitted a request for an exception to academic termination to their College/School and had the request denied shall have one level of appeal if timely submitted. Each College/School shall publish on a publicly available web page information that directs a student to information on how to file an appeal of a denial to an academic

termination exception request. The Graduate Division is responsible for publishing the criteria they and the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee (GAAC) use during their respective reviews.

During the review of any academic termination exception request or appeal, the student may continue in or begin new courses during the term of submission but may be responsible for any tuition or related charges if their exception request or appeal is approved. Continued or new enrollment in courses involving demonstration of professional competencies, including, but not limited to, externships or practicums, are at the discretion of the College/School. Students are advised to contact their academic program, the Mason Student Services Center and/or Office of International Program Services (OIPS), as applicable, to determine any impacts when choosing whether to continue with enrollment. Students are not permitted to register for subsequent terms until the student has a final approved exception request or appeal.

If the student is terminated from the academic program in alignment with all applicable policies and procedures, the termination is final and they shall be immediately administratively dropped from any current and future course registration unless the student formally requests an administrative withdrawal. Students are not permitted to register for subsequent terms until the student has a final approved exception request or appeal.

⊖ If a College/School does not receive an academic exception request within their applicable exception period or the student does not timely appeal the College/School's denial of such a request, the College/School shall ensure an academic termination notification form is sent within one week to the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) so that a notation of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student's official record and any current or future course registration is administratively dropped or withdrawn by OUR within one week. See [AP.1.3](#) for more information.

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If, after a College/School's approval, a student's academic termination exception request is denied by the Graduate Division and the appeal period has expired with no submission made, or an appeal is denied by either the Graduate Division or Graduate Academic Appeals Committee with no further appeal option, the Graduate Division shall ensure:

- a letter of academic program termination is electronically sent to the student within one week, with a copy provided to the College/School as well as the Office of the University Registrar to put in the student's record; and
- an academic notification form is sent to the OUR within one week of the decision so that a notation of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student's official record and any current or future registration is administratively dropped or withdrawn within one week. See [AP.1.3](#) for more information.

If a student's academic termination exception request or appeal is ultimately granted, the student will become eligible again for academic termination if they fail to maintain satisfactory progress as described under this policy and/or once again receives a term GPA below 3.00 or a NC or NA grade notation in a term. The student will be notified by the College/School of program termination, in writing, within six weeks of time limit termination eligibility or 10 business days of GPA, NA/NC grade notation, and/or other termination eligibility, and will not be provided the option of an academic termination exception request. The College/School shall ensure:

- the OUR is copied on the student's notification so that it can be added to the student's record; and
- an academic notification form is sent to the OUR when the student notification is sent so that a notation of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student's official record and any current or future registration is administratively dropped or withdrawn within one week. See [AP.1.3](#) for more information.

Students who receive an academic termination notation may apply for formal admission to a different George Mason graduate program under certain conditions. See AP.6.6.3 for further information.

#### **AP.6.6.3 Subsequent Admission to Graduate Study at Mason**

Former graduate students who have been terminated, dismissed, or have resigned from a George Mason graduate program are not permitted to take any additional coursework at George Mason unless a new graduate program application has been submitted, and the applicant has been admitted to graduate study. Time limits for the degree begin with the term of admission to the new program. Any previously earned eligible credit applied to a subsequent graduate program must have been earned within ten years prior to the term of admission in the new graduate program. Otherwise, an exception to academic policy must first be approved by the College/School. See AP.6.5.2 Transfer of Credits for further information.

The following restrictions apply:

- A student who was terminated from a graduate program or dismissed from George Mason while in a graduate program shall not be admitted to that same program for a minimum of two calendar years after the end of the academic term of termination or dismissal.
- Any student who resigns from a graduate program while on academic probation shall be on academic probation (AP.6.6.1) for one enrolled term if admitted to the same graduate program within two calendar years of the end of the resignation term.
- Any failing or unsatisfactory grades that were accumulated in a previous George Mason graduate program term that is within two calendar years of a subsequent graduate program admission term and were for courses that fulfill the new program's core requirements, shall not be excluded and will apply towards the new program's degree GPA and academic standing as described in AP.6.6. Accordingly,

**Commented [PG14]:** Is there a way to track timing electronically.

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prospective applicants and academic programs should carefully consider whether admission, given such circumstances, is appropriate.

Upon full admission to any graduate program at George Mason, after two calendar years from the **end of the** previous termination, dismissal, or resignation term, a graduate student may petition the Graduate College/School Dean or designee to grant academic clemency for up to six credits. See AP.6.6.4 Academic Clemency for more information.

Colleges/schools and local academic units may have additional restrictions concerning admission to a subsequent graduate program at George Mason. If so, those restrictions apply.

**AP.6.6.4 Academic Clemency**

Graduate students enrolling in a George Mason graduate program after a separation of a minimum of two calendar years may petition the Graduate College/School Dean or designee to have up to six previous graduate degree credits earned at George Mason removed from the new degree program academic record and degree GPA calculation. Courses and grades so removed will not count toward degree requirements. Note that the courses, with their original grades, and the notation “Academic Clemency,” will remain listed on the student’s transcript permanently. The petition for clemency must be filed within 12 months starting from the first day of enrollment in the new graduate program at George Mason. Approval of the request is neither automatic nor guaranteed.