Students in receipt of William D Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program funding at NTU: arrangements for determining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

1. Background and context

Nottingham Trent University is registered to administer US Federal student aid. US Federal regulations state that, in order to be eligible to receive federal aid from the US Department of Education and receive their full loan entitlement each academic year, a student must be fully enrolled on an eligible education course and be judged to be making satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Loan schemes governed by these regulations are:

- Unsubsidised Direct Loans
- Subsidised Direct Loans
- Direct PLUS Loans

2. Nottingham Trent University Regulations for determining satisfactory academic progress

The University has robust academic regulations that set out the parameters of satisfactory academic progress, which are set out as follows:

Honours Degree:
http://www.ntu.ac.uk/adq/document_uploads/quality_handbook/138197.pdf
Foundation Degree:
http://www.ntu.ac.uk/adq/document_uploads/quality_handbook/138196.pdf
Postgraduate Taught Degree:
http://www.ntu.ac.uk/adq/document_uploads/quality_handbook/138195.pdf
Research Degree:
http://www.ntu.ac.uk/adq/document_uploads/quality_handbook/148646.pdf

In addition, the University is required to adhere to UK Government regulations (UKVI) relating to enrolment, repeating and duration of study at a specific academic leave for students studying in the UK on Tier 4 visas.

3. Procedure for assessing Satisfactory Academic Progress of US Federal Aid recipients at NTU

The academic progress of students will be assessed prior to the disbursement of Federal Aid at the start of each academic term to determine continued eligibility. The Student Financial Support Officer will seek confirmation from the student's academic school that satisfactory academic progress has been made under the following criteria in line with US Federal Regulations:

a. The student is on track to complete their academic course in no more than 150% of the published length of the programme measured as appropriate in academic terms. This time scale includes any previous period of study at other institutions for the same programme. You can find further information about the University's Tier 4 responsibilities on the International Student Support webpages.

b. The student's progress is in line with the level expected for his/her academic programme, as defined in the University's Assessment Regulations, and sufficient to enable continued academic progression on their course.

c. The student has appropriate standing at the time of the SAP assessment consistent with the institution's requirements for the successful completion of course.

Where SAP is confirmed, the student's financial aid will be processed as normal.

4. Financial Aid Warning

Where the academic school is unable to confirm that the student is making satisfactory academic progress (though the student is still enrolled on the course and is still in a position to complete their course within the stipulated timeframe), the student will be issued with a **financial aid warning** for the next academic term in writing. The student will continue to receive their financial aid during this period but will be expected to have resumed satisfactory academic progress at the end of the next academic term / prior to the next disbursement of financial aid. Where satisfactory academic progress is not confirmed by the end of the academic term, the student will be advised in writing that their financial aid will be suspended.

5. Appeals - exceptional circumstances affecting satisfactory academic performance

A student who has received written advice that their financial aid will be suspended may appeal (within 10 days of receiving written notification) if they consider that exceptional circumstances surrounding their progress can be demonstrated.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

a. Death or extended illness of an immediate family member (parent, spouse, sibling, dependent child).

b. Extended illness or personal injury of the student.

c. Other relevant exceptional circumstances.

Students will be required to indicate why they believe financial aid should not be terminated and provide reasons for failing to meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements. Students will also be required to supply documentary evidence in support of their appeal. This may include:

- Copy of death certificate
- Medical certificate from a registered doctor or psychiatrist
- Statement from tutor or other senior School official
- Bank statements
- Financial accounts
- Other relevant evidence specific to the appeal

All appeals should be submitted in writing along with supporting documentation to the Student Services Manager (Frontline Services). Disbursement of loan funding will not be made while an appeal is being processed.

The circumstances of the appeal will be considered further and a decision of the appeal will be communicated to the student in writing within 14 days of submission, if all necessary supporting evidence is complete.

6. Financial Aid Probation

Where student's appeal is upheld, the student will have their financial aid reinstated, but will be placed on financial aid probation for next academic term. The student will be expected to have resumed SAP prior to the next disbursement of financial aid or where appropriate, meet the conditions of an academic action plan that has been put in place for the student through consultation with the student's academic tutor and other relevant specialist staff, to ensure that the student is able to meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards by an agreed time in the future.

Further advice and support is available from:
Student Financial Support Service
Tel: 0115 848 2494
e-mail: financial.support@ntu.ac.uk