

# Applying for Financial Aid and Academic Progress

## 2024-2025 Academic Year

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal regulations require that academic progress be monitored using qualitative and quantitative measurements. These standards are applied equally to all students attending the institution whether or not the student is receiving financial aid and regardless of the student's level of enrollment or academic program (for example full-time enrollment, part-time enrollment, and all educational programs offered at the institution). Academic progress is reviewed after every term. If at any point it is clear the student will not be able to meet qualitative and/or quantitative standards for **timely** completion of degree, the student becomes ineligible for financial aid.

1. Masters students must maintain a cumulative and term GPA of 2.75 or above.
2. Completion of 67% of all units attempted in any incremental period.
3. MTCM / DTCM students must maintain at least half-time enrollment status.
4. DAOM students must maintain a full-time enrollment status.
5. MTCM / DTCM students must pass all courses with an A, B or C letter grade and are not permitted to exceed one Incomplete (I) grade per term.
6. DAOM must not exceed two unsatisfactory grades per year (NC, NP, I, W). DAOM must maintain a passing grade P (Pass) Satisfactory of all required coursework.
7. Maximum program timeframe: The maximum timeframe for a graduate program is a period defined by the institution that is based upon the length of the educational program. Generally, the maximum timeframe 150% of the program length.
  - May not exceed the time limits for coursework as described in syllabi and course descriptions.
  - Master/Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine – 12 terms (Spring, Summer, Fall)
  - Master of Acupuncture – 10 terms (Spring, Summer, Fall)
  - Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine – 6 terms (Spring, Summer, Fall)

### Academic and Financial Aid Warning

- Students who fail to meet the Qualitative and/or Quantitative progress requirements in any term will be placed on Academic and Financial Aid Warning for the following term of enrollment.
- Students are placed on Warning status for a period no longer than one (1) term.
- **During the Financial Aid Warning term, students may receive financial aid and must meet all SAP requirements.**
- A letter will notify students when they placed are on Academic and Financial Aid Warning. The reason(s) for the Financial Aid Warning and SAP Requirements for the following term will be explained in the letter.

Financial Aid Warning Reason	SAP Requirement
Term / Cumulative GPA less than 2.75	Complete subsequent term with 2.75 GPA or above and with grades sufficient to raise cumulative GPA to 2.75
MTCM / DTCM students must pass all courses with an A, B or C letter grade and are not permitted to exceed one Incomplete (I) per term.	Complete affected course work with a passing letter grade in the following term.
DAOM students must not exceed two unsatisfactory grades per year (NC, NP, I, W)	Complete affected course work with a passing letter grade.

Incremental Unit/Pace Requirement(s) not met	Complete more than 67% of attempted units in following term.
Breach in professionalism	Requirement contingent upon SPRC review
Exceed maximum program time frame	Requirement contingent upon SPRC review

## Academic and Financial Aid Probation

- Students who fail to meet their Warning term requirement(s) by the end of the Warning term, have the option to submit an appeal to request continued financial aid. If the appeal is approved, the student will be granted Academic and Financial Aid Probation for the following term.
- Students may be granted Academic and Financial Aid Probation for a period no longer than one term or until the completion of an approved Academic Plan. ALL SAP requirements must be met each term.
- Students who fail to meet their Probationary term requirement(s) and Academic Plan by the end of the Probationary term(s) will be disqualified from financial aid. Students who are disqualified from financial aid, but are not dismissed from the program can have aid reinstated after successful completion of an Academic Plan as approved by the SPRC.
- Students whose Probationary appeal is denied are not eligible for financial aid. An appeal denied by the Review Committee (SPRC) may be appealed to the President for continued enrollment in the program; decisions made by this Office are final.
- SAP Suspension may be appealed if unusual and/or mitigating circumstances affected academic progress. Such circumstances may include a severe illness or injury to the student or an immediate family member; the death of a student's relative; student activation for military service; or other circumstances as deemed appropriate for consideration by the SPRC the Academic Dean, the Registrar, and the Director of Financial Aid.
- The student must submit an appeal to the Financial Aid Office. The appeal must explain the special circumstances that led to the student not meeting SAP requirements. The SPRC Committee will review the appeal and the student will receive a response within two weeks from the date of submission.
- The SPRC Committee's decision result will be sent to the student by postal mail and by electronic mail.
- Students that have their appeal approved have one semester to meet SAP requirements or they will be suspended from financial aid. During their approved appeal semester, they will be eligible to receive financial aid.
- Appeal approvals will not result in retroactive funding.
- SPRC Committee decisions are final and cannot be appealed to another source.
- At the end of each semester, the Financial Aid Office will evaluate students who have been suspended from financial aid. Once a student again meets SAP requirements, their financial aid will be reinstated. The student will be eligible for federal loans for the entire period of enrollment in which the student resumes SAP.

## Incomplete Grades (I)

If you receive an I (Incomplete) in a course, it will be counted as an attempted credit, but not a passed class. While receiving an Incomplete in a course has no immediate adverse affect on your GPA, you should work with your professor to improve this grade. If/when the incomplete grade changes to a passing grade, it will be considered in your completion rate and your overall GPA.

## Multiple Retakes

- Repeated courses affect academic progress as follows:
  - Cumulative Grade Point Average – Only the most recent grade counts in the student’s Cumulative GPA
  - Cumulative Completion Rate and Maximum Time Frame – When a course is repeated, each course attempt will be counted as attempted hours.

## Withdrawal (W)

- If you receive a W (Withdrawal) in a course, it will be counted as an attempted credit, but not a passed class. Withdrawing from a course has no adverse effect on your overall GPA.

## Five Branches University Credit Transfer Policy and Guidelines

Five Branches University recognizes the importance of providing opportunities for students to transfer credits from other academic institutions. This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for the transfer of credits from regionally accredited colleges or universities, as well as other Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) schools, and for credit by examination.

### I. General Guidelines

- Eligibility for Credit Transfer:
  - a. Transfer credits may be granted for courses taken at a regionally accredited college or university within the last 5 years prior to enrollment, with a grade of 'C' or better.
  - b. Currently practicing medical professionals are exempt from the five-year time limit for transfer credits.
- Course Equivalency:
  - a. Transferred courses must be equivalent in length and content to courses offered at Five Branches University.
  - b. The determination of course equivalency will be made by the designated admissions advisor with the support of appropriate academic departments when needed.

### II. Transfer Credits from Other TCM Schools

Credits obtained at other Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) schools may be applied towards our program based on the regulations of the various accreditation agencies under which Five Branches University operates. These include the Accreditation Commissioner for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (ACAHM) and the California Acupuncture Board (CAB). Five Branches University follows the lower common denominator of these accreditation agencies' requirements. This statement means that when determining how many credits can be transferred from other institutions, Five Branches University adheres to the most restrictive or conservative policies among the relevant accreditation agencies, in this case, ACAHM and CAB.

### III. Credit by Examination

- Credit by Examination Option:
  - a. Students have the option to request credit by examination for a course if their prior performance in that course did not meet the required grade or timeline for a traditional credit transfer
  - b. Students may apply for credit by examination for up to one course per department.

### IV. Procedure for Credit Transfer

- Application for Credit Transfer:
  - a. Students seeking to transfer credits must complete a Credit Transfer Application.
  - b. The application should include transcripts, course descriptions, and other relevant documents.
- Evaluation Process:
  - a. The designated admissions advisor will evaluate the transfer request to determine course equivalency.
  - b. The university will notify the student of the outcome of the evaluation.
- Credit by Examination Application:
  - a. Students seeking credit by examination must submit a formal application to the Registrar's Office.
  - b. The application should include the department, course for which credit is sought, and justification for credit by examination.
- *Transfer Credit Fee:*
  - a. A fee of 15% of the tuition fee will be applied to all transfer credits.
  - b. The transfer credit fee is subject to a maximum of \$500.
  - c. Credit by examination is subject to a fee equivalent to 30% of the course's tuition fee

## V. Appeals for transfer credits

If a transfer credit or credit by examination request is denied, students have the right to appeal the decision. The appeals process and guidelines are outlined in the university's Appeals Policy.

### Appeals

Appeals must be made in writing to the Student Progress Review Committee. The Student Progress Review Committee (SPRC) is responsible for reviewing and approving appeals. An approved appeal restores financial aid to the student during the probationary term. The SPRC may require a meeting and/or further developed Academic Plan to ensure SAP requirements are met by a specific term. The appeal letter must contain the following:

- Describe any extenuating or mitigating circumstances that prevented compliance with the Progress Policy. Some examples include but are not limited to death of a relative, an injury or illness.
- Explain what has since changed in the student's situation and the precise steps the student will take or is taking to gain good academic standing.
- Include an Academic Plan that specifies what classes will be taken each term to ensure successful program completion and the date of the program completion. An Academic Plan is an agreement between the student and University. Any changes to an agreed upon Academic Plan must be made by an additional written appeal.

#### Approved Appeals – Probationary Status

- Students who appeal may be granted a probationary period. At the end of a probationary period, students must be meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirements or must be successfully meeting requirements of an academic plan in order to continue to receive financial assistance.

#### Denied Appeals – Reinstatement of Eligibility

- Students who choose to attend Five Branches University while on suspension, at their own expense, will not be automatically eligible for financial aid upon seeking reinstatement. Students must be meeting the academic progress standards in order to regain eligibility for subsequent enrollment periods. A minimum of six units earned at Five Branches University must be completed in order to be considered for reinstatement.

### Reinstatement of Aid

Students who are disqualified from financial aid, but are not dismissed from the program can have aid reinstated after the completion of a SPRC approved Academic Plan. The Academic Plan can include one or multiple terms until it

reaches its contracted goal. Each term of the approved plan, Satisfactory Academic Progress is reviewed and must be passed to receive aid for the following term.