



FAQ Satisfactory Academic Progress

What action to take when I am failing courses or when I think I will not pass enough courses by 23 August?

Please contact your Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Academic Advisors can help you set up a realistic study plan which may get you back on the right track. With some extra help and advice, you still may be able to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress if you tackle the issue early on. Therefore it is advisable to reach out to them as early as possible.

If there are some other reasons that cause you to fall behind with your studies, you also need to speak about this with your Academic Advisor. In case you obtain less than 30 credits in a full academic year, you are only allowed to keep your residence permit when you have an excusable reason. For this reason it is paramount that you report to the Academic Advisor as soon as possible because they need to assess whether you have an excusable reason. When you do not have an excusable reason for obtaining less than 50% of your credits, then unfortunately you are not allowed to continue your studies at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. You are not allowed to enroll in a different study programme at VU Amsterdam either.

I failed Satisfactory Academic Progress, will my residence permit be revoked when my residence permit is still valid for multiple years?

Yes, the rule applies in this case as well. Even when your residence permit is still valid for a few more years, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam is obliged by law to revoke your residence permit when your study results are below the standard (i.e. 50%).

What if I am enrolled in a pre-Master or preparatory year?

Please keep in mind that if you started a pre-Master or preparatory year, you will need to pass 100% in order to keep your residence permit and continue with the regular degree programme. This means that 50% is not sufficient. The 50% rule (i.e. 30 ECTS) will then apply for you as soon as you start your Master's degree.

What causes are considered as excusable reasons?

It may be the case that you encounter exceptional circumstances (i.e. excusable reasons) during your studies which have a negative impact on your academic performance. The following are accepted as excusable reasons:

- Illness
- Pregnancy
- Special family circumstances
- Disability
- Board membership activities



These exceptional circumstances should be reported to the Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Should you have a disability or impaired function, please report these as soon as possible after the start of your study programme. The Academic Advisors can help you to find a solution.

Can I use an excusable reason multiple times?

No, you can only use the same excusable reason once. For example:

In year one you did not pass enough courses due to illness. You are allowed to continue because this is an excusable reason. In year two you also did not obtain enough credits. However, illness cannot be used again as an excusable reason even when it is in fact the reason that you did not pass. In this situation your Academic Advisor either needs to assess that there is another valid excusable reason, or you have to quit your studies because you did not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.

I do not like the study programme, can I switch?

From the immigration law's perspective, you are only allowed to switch to another study programme at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam when you have met Satisfactory Academic Progress. When an excusable reason has been assessed, you are allowed to continue to study at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. However, you are only allowed to continue the study programme for which you were enrolled when the excusable reason was determined. In other words, you are not allowed to switch programmes when you did pass 50% of your courses regardless of the fact whether you have an excusable reason.

I did not obtain enough credits because I do not like my study programme. Is this an excusable reason?

No, unfortunately the law does not view this as a valid excusable reason for not passing enough courses.

Can I switch to another study programme when I have an excusable reason for not passing enough credits?

No, you are not allowed to switch programmes if you did not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress, even when you have an excusable reason. You are required to continue the current programme.

What about Binding Recommendation on Continuation of Studies (BSA – applicable to Bachelor students only)?

All Bachelor students have to meet the requirements of the Binding Recommendation on Continuation of Studies during their first year. These requirements vary per study programme, but they are always more strict than the rules of the IND. This means that if you pass BSA, you



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have gained enough credits to meet the requirements of the IND. However, you are not allowed to continue your study at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam if you do not obtain at least 30 credits each year. It is not possible to switch to another study programme at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Please remember that BSA only applies to the first years of your study, but that the IND rules apply to the entire study programme.

I am an Exchange student, does all of this apply to me?

Satisfactory Academic Progress is not applicable to Exchange students as they cannot stay longer than a year at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Where can I receive more information?

- International Office
Website: www.vu.nl/visa
E-mail: studentimmigration@vu.nl
- Academic Advisor
VUnet: [Academic](#) Advisor
- Dutch Immigration Service (IND)
Website: [IND](#)