

# BENNINGTON COLLEGE

## **Academic Progress and Academic Standing**

To proceed successfully through Bennington, a student must meet the academic requirements listed above. Concurrently, students must progress adequately each term; move through the curriculum with broad goals for achieving a liberal arts education; and, within that context, develop both an area of primary interest and the ability to do advanced work in that area. Academic advising is central to this process and active participation in advising makes it possible for students to make appropriate choices in their programs of study.

## **Academic Progress**

Academic progress at Bennington is both quantitative and qualitative and is evaluated by the Dean's Office at the end of each term in four ways:

1. By determining the number of credits a student has earned in a term, in an academic year, and cumulatively. Please see the quantitative standard below.
2. By reviewing a student's cumulative number of Pass, Marginal Pass, and Fail evaluations, and grades, if applicable. Please see the qualitative standard below.
3. By assessing satisfactory completion of Field Work Terms, generally required annually from each student enrolled for the full academic year.
4. By noting the timely submission and acceptance of a student's academic Plan.

After each academic term, student records are reviewed for academic progress as noted above. Students who do not meet satisfactory progress standards are notified (along with their families, when permitted by law). Students who are at risk of academic progress difficulties are placed on "notice." Students facing more severe challenges to their academic progress may be placed on academic warning or may be dismissed. A student may appeal an academic dismissal as described below; if the appeal is granted, the student will be permitted to return on academic probation. Explanations for each designation of academic standing follow the sections on quantitative and qualitative standards.

## **Quantitative Standard**

Success in meeting the quantitative standard is evaluated by measuring cumulative pace, which is the term used to describe the ratio of a student's cumulative credits earned versus cumulative credits attempted; it measures how quickly a student is progressing toward graduation within the expected amount of time.

Bennington students must complete their undergraduate degree in 10 terms (160 credits) or fewer. \* In order to assure that this will be the case, a certain cumulative pace must be maintained from term to term. Each term, a full-time student is expected to take and complete 16 credits. When calculating cumulative pace, therefore, the number of credits attempted per term is always set at 16 for full-time students, even if a student has registered for more or fewer credits in a given term. The only exception to this is for students who have been granted, by the Dean's Office, an accommodation of a disability in the form of a reduced course load (see Accommodation for Students with Disabilities). Students granted an accommodation in the form of a reduced course load are still expected to complete their undergraduate degree in 10 terms

(160 credits) or fewer, unless this is specifically waived in the form of an additional accommodation.

If a student completes less than a certain percentage (between 75% and 80%, depending on term standing) of the total expected credits, he or she will fall off the cumulative pace needed to graduate within the maximum amount of time allowed and will lose his or her good standing. The chart below details the minimum number of credits needed at the end of each full-time term at the College in order to maintain the necessary cumulative pace.

Term	Credits required to maintain Minimum Cum. Pace
1	12
2	24
3	36
4	48
5	62
6	74
7	90
8	103
9	116
10	128

In addition, at the conclusion of any term, any student earning a pace of 50% or below (e.g. earning 8 or fewer credits in a term) may be placed on academic warning or dismissed.

Upon approval from the advisor and the Dean's Office, a full-time student may be permitted to take a reduced course load of 12-15 credits for an occasional term, with the requirement that credits will be made up in future terms in order to maintain good standing. Of course, a student's cumulative pace towards graduation is affected when fewer credits are taken in any given term.

Students may apply for part-time status. This status means that a student is registered for fewer than 12 credits in a term. For these students, the number of credits attempted for the purposes of calculating cumulative pace is the number of credits for which a student has registered at the end of the term's drop-add period.

Credits earned before attendance at Bennington and transferred in count as both credits attempted and credits earned in the pace calculation.

**Please note:** Any withdrawals, regardless of the reason, after the term has started will result in zero credits earned out of 16 attempted and cumulative pace calculations will have to be adjusted accordingly.

*\*This limit does not mean that a student cannot take a leave or withdraw for a period of time; it simply means that a student cannot attend for more than 10 full-time terms.*

### **Qualitative Standard**

- A Pass (P) reflects satisfactory work and is equivalent to a range of performance from C- to A+.
- A Marginal Pass (MP) does not reflect satisfactory progress, but the student will receive credit for the course. An MP is the equivalent of a D grade.
- A Fail (F) means that the student will not receive credit for the course.

A student will generally lose his or her good standing (see below) or be dismissed from the College if he or she fails six or more credits in a given term (for full-time students) or half a program (for part-time students). A failure in a four-credit course combined with a marginal pass in one or more other courses in a given term will also generally result in the loss of good standing or dismissal from the College, as will a term containing 6 or fewer credits of full passes (e.g. 10 credits of MPs and 6 credits of Ps). A student's performance over the course of his or her time at the College will always be taken into consideration when assessing whether or not he or she meets the qualitative standard.

Any student who has academic difficulties in any course should discuss the problem with the instructor as soon as possible. The student should also bring the problem to the attention of his or her faculty advisor. The student also may discuss these difficulties with the Dean's Office and First-Year Advisor (if applicable).

Students are required to submit Plan essays on time and to pass an academic Plan by the end of their fourth term. Students will generally lose their good standing (see Academic Standing section) or be dismissed from the college for failure to submit a required Plan essay in any given term or if they fail to pass a Plan by the end of the fourth term. Two consecutive deferrals on a Plan will also result in loss of good standing.

Students are expected to have a cumulative average of C or above (or the equivalent) by the end of their sophomore year; this generally indicates readiness to begin advanced work in an area of study. However, a student may have passed several courses in a particular area of study but still not be deemed able to pursue advanced work in that area; these decisions are made through the Plan process and with individual faculty members. In such cases the student will be advised to propose another area of study and/or will be advised that one or more extra terms are necessary for graduation or he or she will be dismissed from the College.

### **Academic Standing**

The Dean's Office determines each student's academic standing after considering academic progress as described above. Any student whose work is not satisfactory or who has not submitted a Plan on time and obtained timely approval of a Plan, or who has not successfully completed the FWT requirement, may be placed on academic warning or dismissed from the College. Typically, students are placed on warning at the conclusion of a term, but a student may be placed on warning at any time. Students who cease attending class for two consecutive weeks for any reason may be dismissed during the term. Students who have failed at least half of their program before the end of the term may be dismissed during the term. Dismissal decisions are made by the Associate Dean of the College, in consultation with the faculty. Students who have been dismissed must have permission, in advance, from the Dean of Students to visit campus.

**Good standing.** All students enter Bennington in good standing. However, a student will be placed on academic warning or dismissed from the College if satisfactory cumulative pace is not maintained, or a satisfactory number of classes and Field Work Terms are not passed, or Plans/Plan essays are not submitted and approved when required.

**Notice.** Students may be placed on “notice” in order to alert them and their advisors that they need to pay particularly careful attention to their academic progress. Students on notice are still considered to be in good academic standing.

**Good Standing – SAP Plan (Satisfactory Academic Progress Plan).** Students who successfully complete a term of academic probation but are unable to regain the required minimum cumulative pace after just one term will continue on a SAP Plan until they regain a satisfactory pace. Students who only minimally meet the expectations to return to good standing from academic warning may be placed on a SAP Plan for the term following warning. Students who fail to meet the terms of their SAP Plan while in good standing – on SAP Plan will be dismissed from the college.

**Academic warning.** In order to be returned to good standing, students placed on academic warning are expected to pass 16 credits with no marginal passes, D’s, or F’s, and, if applicable, they are expected to submit their Plans on time and have them approved during the term, as well as satisfy FWT requirements for the term. Students on academic warning must also have a satisfactory cumulative pace to be returned to good standing at the end of the term. Students who do not return to good standing following a term of academic warning will be dismissed. Students who have been dismissed may submit an appeal to return for a term of academic probation, which shall be determined by the Faculty Advising Committee in its discretion. The Associate Dean of the College will advise the student in writing of the Committee’s decision, which is final, with no further appeal.

Circumstances that may provide the basis for such a request include serious injury or illness, or the injury, illness, or death of a parent or sibling. The appeal to return on probation must explain why the student did not achieve satisfactory academic progress as well as what has changed in the student’s situation to allow him or her to achieve satisfactory academic progress during a term of probation. If an appeal is not taken or is not granted, the student is dismissed. Students are normally limited to one such appeal during their time at the College.

Students cannot be on academic warning for two consecutive terms and are rarely granted a non-consecutive term of academic warning after returning to good standing. Therefore, students who fail to meet either qualitative or quantitative standards in a term of good standing and have previously been on academic warning will normally be dismissed.

**Academic probation.** Students whose appeals have been granted are placed on academic probation for the following term and are required to work with the Dean’s Office, their advisors, and the Faculty Advising Committee to complete a Satisfactory Academic Progress Plan (SAP Plan) for regaining and maintaining satisfactory academic progress. These SAP Plans must be drafted before students return for their term of probation and given provisional approval by the Dean’s office. The SAP Plans must be reviewed (and may be revised) by the Dean’s Office, faculty advisor, and the Faculty Advising Committee at the beginning of the term of probation and must be signed by the student after such review/revision.

Students who fail to complete a SAP Plan for probation, whose SAP Plans are not approved, or students who do not successfully complete the requirements set forth in the SAP Plan will be dismissed from the College.