Undergraduate Academic Standards

The Committee on Academic Performance (CAP) ensures that the minimum academic standards proposed by the individual departments for undergraduate students are consistent throughout the Institute and conform to the rules and regulations approved by the Faculty. In view of the individual nature of student academic performance, the CAP does not establish rigid standards of academic performance to be used throughout the Institute. The Institute generally expects undergraduate students to complete the requirements for an SB degree in four years; passing an average of 48 units per term for eight terms will accomplish this goal. Normally, however, the CAP accepts a minimum academic record of at least 36 units of credit with a term rating above 3.0 (on a 5.0 scale) at the end of any regular term, unless the Committee has specifically notified an individual student that a higher level of performance is required. (The latter would only occur as a result of previously poor performance.)

When these criteria are not met, the CAP considers each student’s academic performance on an individual basis. Consideration is given not only to the grades received in the subjects for which the student is registered, but also to the total number of subject units, the nature of the subjects themselves, progress toward the degree, and personal or medical factors that may have affected academic performance in a given term. The CAP website gives more detailed information concerning end-of-term review procedures (http://web.mit.edu/acadinfo/cap/endofterm). For further information, contact the CAP administrator (cap@mit.edu), Room 7-104, 617-253-4164.

Undergraduate Academic Standards for Federal Student Financial Assistance

Per federal regulations, a regular undergraduate student is eligible to receive federal student financial assistance if the student is enrolled at least half time per term and maintains satisfactory academic progress in his or her course of study.


To achieve satisfactory academic progress for purposes of federal student financial assistance, an MIT undergraduate must achieve the following qualitative and quantitative standards:

- Have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least a C (3.0 on MIT’s 5.0 scale); and
- Pass 67% of cumulative units attempted (defined as “pace”); and
- Not exceed 150% of the published length of the program.

Dropped subjects are not included in the GPA or pace calculations. Transfer credit, which carries no grade, is not included in the GPA calculation, but the number of units credited is included in the pace calculation. Incomplete grades are not included in the GPA calculation, but incomplete subjects are included in the pace calculation. Grades for repeated subjects are included in the GPA calculation, but repeated subjects count as only one subject in the pace calculation.

At the end of each term, the Committee on Academic Performance (CAP) considers the academic performance of undergraduate students eligible for federal student financial assistance whose performance falls below any one of the federal standards. After taking special circumstances into account, CAP decides on the appropriate action.

Students on, or eligible for, federal student financial assistance who are placed on academic warning by CAP are concurrently placed by Student Financial Services (SFS) on federal financial aid warning or federal financial aid probation.

- The status of federal financial aid warning is assigned to students who were not on academic warning in the prior term, but are now placed on academic warning by CAP. Students on federal financial aid warning may continue to receive federal student financial assistance for the academic warning term. Federal financial aid warning status has no effect on the amount of financial aid a student is eligible to receive from MIT, the federal government, or any other source during the federal financial aid warning term.

- The status of federal financial aid probation is assigned to students who were on academic warning in the prior term and continue to be placed on academic warning by CAP. Federal regulations mandate that students may only be placed on federal financial aid probation, which allows them to retain eligibility for federal financial aid, after a successful appeal. At MIT, the CAP review of a student’s academic progress and plans constitutes the required appeal process. Any decision by the CAP other than requiring the student to take a required academic leave from MIT constitutes approval of the appeal. Federal financial aid probation status has no effect on the amount of financial aid the student is eligible to receive from MIT, the federal government, or any other source during the federal financial aid probation term.

A student under CAP review will be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress for federal student financial assistance purposes unless the CAP requires the student to take a required academic leave from MIT.
Further information on federal satisfactory academic progress rules (http://sfs.mit.edu) can be found on the SFS website.