Graduate Policies & Procedures

Attendance Policy

Regular classroom attendance is expected of all students and individual faculty may require class attendance. Course grades reflect not only performance on written assignments and exams, but also participation during class periods. As discussions cannot be reproduced, many times absences cannot truly be made up. Excessive absences therefore have a negative effect on the student’s learning and performance. Students are responsible for all class work, and a student who misses a class is expected to have the initiative necessary to cover properly the material missed. Students must meet all course deadlines and be present for all quizzes, tests, and examinations.

Syllabus information will include a statement of the attendance policy for each course and the effect of nonattendance on grades. Reasonable provisions should be made by the instructor for documented representation at University-sponsored athletic or academic functions, mandatory military training and documented illness. The granting of provisions for other documented absences is left to the discretion of the faculty member.

Due to the nature of asynchronous courses, students are expected to participate in class, but in formats that may not require attendance at regular intervals.

Extended illness. The student should notify the Office of Student Engagement and Enrollment Services when the student is going to be absent from classes for more than one week because of an illness. Student Engagement and Enrollment Services will notify the student’s course instructors of the absence on his or her behalf.

Audit Status

The audit grading status is available for students who would like to enroll in a course for the knowledge gained or personal satisfaction, not for academic credit. Any course that is elected to be carried as an audit will be subject to the normal fees and regulations of the University. Regular attendance is expected, but neither tests nor examinations are required. No grade will be recorded, except that an instructor may assign a grade of W & to a student who misses an appreciable portion of the classes. The student’s record will be marked “audit” by the course so elected. A student may not audit a course and subsequently seek advanced placement credit for the same course. A student may audit a course and register for the same course for credit in a subsequent semester. Registration for the audit option must be selected by the end of the drop/add period in the given semester. Any course elected for audit cannot be changed to that of credit status after the end of the “add” registration period. Students receiving financial aid should be aware that registering for audit status may affect their financial aid eligibility. Selection of the audit status is accomplished through the normal registration procedures.

Class Attendance by Guests

Statement: The propriety for non-student presence in the classroom will vary dependent upon the nature of curricular offerings, dangers inherent to certain classrooms and labs, the optimum classroom environment for each class, and the preferences of each instructor. Guidelines specifying whether non-student guests will be permitted in the classroom, which are consistent with departmental policy, will be established for each class by the instructor.

Continuance

The following minimum requirements govern a student’s continuance in a graduate program. A student is also obligated to meet all additional requirements as delineated in the handbook of the student’s graduate program.

The following actions affect a student’s continuance:

- Probation occurs when a student’s grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.00.
- Suspension occurs when a student is unable to raise the GPA above 3.00 within the next 12 credit hours, thus preventing the student from registering for additional courses; reinstatement from suspension occurs only if the student is permitted to return to the graduate program after submitting an approved plan of study.
- Separation occurs when a student withdraws voluntarily from a graduate program.
- Deactivation occurs when a student fails to register for three or more consecutive semesters without permission or an approved leave of absence.
- Dismissal may occur for a variety of academic reasons or for infractions committed against the Code of Student Conduct.

Students who are placed on probation are still eligible to participate in all extracurricular activities as governed by the rules of the specific activity. However, students who are separated, deactivating, suspended, or dismissed from a graduate program are ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities.

Probation, Suspension and Reinstatement

Degree-Seeking Students

A degree-seeking student is defined as one who is formally admitted to a graduate program at either the master’s, education specialist, or doctoral levels. At the end of each semester – fall, spring, and summer – the record of a degree-seeking student who does not maintain a 3.00 cumulative grade point average (GPA) is reviewed. A student who does not have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 will be placed on probation.

Probation and Suspension Policy for Degree-Seeking Students

A degree-seeking student on probation will have 12 credit hours to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00. The student and Graduate Program Director should meet to discuss a plan for earning the return to good standing. The student must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 after completing the next 12 credit hours. If not, they will be placed on indefinite suspension and prevented from enrolling in graduate courses. This does not affect the student’s status with regard to undergraduate courses.

A student who believes the probation or suspension was due to an error in a grade assigned should contact their instructor.

Early Suspension for Degree-Seeking Students

If the Graduate Program Director determines the student cannot mathematically raise the GPA to 3.00 within 12 hours, the limit for degree-seeking students, they may discuss with the student whether an early suspension is warranted. If so, with the student’s written approval, the Graduate Program Director can request early suspension in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School, so that the student may consider reinstatement options. Reinstatement from Suspension Policy for Degree-Seeking Students

A degree-seeking student who has been suspended from a graduate program may be reinstated under the following conditions:

1. The student is responsible for initiating each of the following aspects of the request for reinstatement to the university:
   a. Providing to the GPD of the program that the student is seeking to either continue enrollment or to be newly admitted a written explanation and documentation of the factors and circumstances that contributed to the failure to achieve the academic standards as well as evidence that these issues have been resolved. Students should also explain why they will subsequently succeed if reinstated. Moreover, students who wish to maintain confidentiality regarding special medical or other personal issues, must obtain a letter from the Office of Student Outreach Services (SOS) certifying their validity and contribution to the suspension and that these issues have been or will be satisfactorily resolved prior to the reinstatement.
b. Requesting the reinstatement within 45 calendar days of the suspension unless a later request with appropriate justification is approved by both the graduate program director and Dean of the Graduate School or designee (if the student is pursuing a grade appeal that may overturn the suspension, the grade appeal procedures are to be followed first until a decision is reached on that appeal; if the appeal is denied and suspension upheld, then the student has 45 calendar days to initiate a reinstatement request).

c. Developing a plan of study in consultation with the appropriate Graduate Program Director (GPD) of the program that the student is seeking to either continue enrollment or to be newly admitted. The plan of study must specify the initial 12 credit hours to be taken and the steps necessary to complete the degree requirements within the eight-year (master’s) and the eight-year (education specialist and doctoral) time period as required by University policy. This plan should recognize that all prior courses in which grades of B- or less were earned must be repeated or replaced with an approved substitution. If reinstated, the student’s GPA will revert to 0.00 and courses with a grade of B or above that were earned within the past eight years will be treated as internal transfer credit and have no bearing on the GPA. Courses older than eight years must be recertified prior to internal transfer credit being awarded. Upon reinstatement, the student must achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 in the next 12 credit hours of graduate credit attempted.

2. The GPD is responsible for each of the following steps of the request for reinstatement:
   a. Reviewing the student’s letter and any written documentation the student provides, assisting in the development of the proposed plan of study, and assessing the student’s potential for successful completion of the program.
   b. Assessing the potential impact of reinstatement on departmental resources.
   c. Submitting a recommendation on the student’s request to the department chair either approving reinstatement and the plan of study for the student’s return, or providing justifications for denying reinstatement and/or the plan of study. Specifically, the GPD’s evaluation must address the reasonableness of i) the proposed plan of study; ii) the potential for successful completion of the program, and; iii) the potential impact of reinstatement on departmental resources. (Note: The GPD and the chair must agree for the student to be reinstated at the department level.)

3. If reinstatement is approved, the student will be informed in writing and the steps outlined in 1.a. and 1.b. of this policy shall be followed. A copy of the letter and the approved plan of study shall be forwarded to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will work with the Office of the Registrar to ensure the academic record is updated so the student may resume their study.

4. Upon reinstatement:
   a. All courses with grades of B- (2.70) or below will be dropped from consideration in the calculation of the grade point average for continuance or graduation. These grades will remain on the student’s transcript, but the courses will not be counted toward the degree.
   b. Courses with grades of B or above may be counted toward the degree if they were earned within the last eight years or have been recertified but will not be used in the calculation of the GPA.
   c. Reinstated students must achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 upon completion of the next 12 hours of credit attempted. Subsequent performance will be monitored by the GPD.

5. If the student’s request for reinstatement is denied, the student must be informed in writing by the graduate program director. The GPD’s denial must address the lack of reasonableness of i) the proposed plan of study, ii) the potential for successful completion of the program, iii) the potential impact of reinstatement on departmental resources, and iv) the right to appeal and the policy for appealing. A copy of the letter shall be forwarded to the Graduate School along with original materials submitted by the student.

6. The student has the right to appeal the decision to the Graduate Appeals Committee. The student must resubmit the written letter and documentation as outlined in 1.a. and 1.b. to the Graduate School within 45 calendar days of the Graduate Program Director’s letter denying reinstatement. The Graduate School will forward the materials to the Graduate Appeals Committee. The Graduate Appeals Committee will review the documentation, including the student’s reinstatement request, plan of study, and Graduate Program Director’s assessment of the plan of study. The Committee may seek additional information from the program or student to aid its review. The Graduate Appeals Committee will render its decision and inform the Graduate School. The Graduate School will send a letter to the student, with a copy to the GPD, informing him or her of the Graduate Appeals Committee’s decision. If the Graduate Appeals Committee supports the GPD’s original decision, the student shall remain separated from the program. If the Graduate Appeals Committee approves reinstatement, the steps outlined in 1.a. of this policy shall be followed. The decision of the Graduate Appeals Committee is final.

7. A student may be reinstated only one time to the same academic program.

Non-Degree-Seeking Students

A non-degree-seeking student may fall into one of two categories: one who is pursuing a specific certificate or licensure program or one who is unaffiliated with a specific program.

Probation and Suspension Policy for Certificate or Licensure Students

A student who has been permitted to pursue a certificate or licensure program must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00. If the student fails to do so, the student will be placed on probation. The student and the certificate director or the licensure director, or the graduate program director must discuss the plan for returning to good standing. The student must raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00 within the remaining allotted hours (not to exceed 12 credits). A student who fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 after these remaining hours will be indefinitely suspended and prevented from enrolling in graduate courses. This does not affect the student’s status with regard to undergraduate courses.

Early Suspension for Certificate or Licensure Students

If the director determines the student cannot mathematically raise the GPA to 3.00 within the remaining allotted hours (not to exceed 12 credits), then the director may discuss with the student whether an immediate suspension is warranted. If so, with the student’s written approval, the director can request immediate suspension in writing to the dean of the Graduate School so that the student may consider reinstatement options.

Reinstatement from Suspension Policy for Certificate or Licensure Students

A suspended certificate or licensure graduate student seeking reinstatement should follow the procedures outlined earlier in this policy under the Reinstatement Policy for Degree-Seeking Students with the exception that the student’s plan of study must specify the initial six credit hours (not 12) to be taken. Upon reinstatement, the student must achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 in the next six credit hours of graduate credit attempted. A student may be reinstated only one time to the same certificate or licensure program.

Probation and Suspension Policy for Unaffiliated Students

An unaffiliated student must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00. If not, the student is strongly advised to seek guidance from the Graduate School staff. The student must achieve a 3.00 by the completion of 12 hours. If not, the student will be indefinitely suspended and prevented from enrolling in graduate courses. This does not affect the student’s status with regard to undergraduate courses. Unaffiliated students may not be reinstated as unaffiliated students but may return to graduate courses if admitted to a degree program.

Early Suspension for Certificate or Unaffiliated Students

If the student cannot mathematically raise the GPA to 3.00 within the remaining allotted hours (not to exceed 12 credits) then the Graduate School...
School staff may discuss with the student whether an immediate suspension is warranted. If so, with the student’s written approval, the dean of the Graduate School may initiate immediate suspension.

Separation and Deactivation from a Graduate Program
A student may separate voluntarily from a graduate program at any time by notifying the graduate program director in writing.

If a student fails to register for three or more consecutive semesters, without prior approval from the graduate program director, their graduate status will be deactivated. To reactivate their graduate status, a student must submit a request in writing to the graduate program director and the Office of Graduate Admissions. The graduate program director must approve the student’s request for reactivation to be processed.

Dismissal from a Graduate Program
A degree-seeking student’s dismissal from a graduate program may occur for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Failure to maintain good academic standing based on minimum University grade point average (GPA) requirements following reinstatement (see Policy on Probation, Suspension and Reinstatement in the Graduate Catalog above);
2. Failure to maintain good academic standing based on specific program requirements (see specific program handbook);
3. Plagiarism, falsification of data, and/or other instances of academic dishonesty (see the Code of Student Conduct and/or the Policy for Responding to Allegations of Misconduct in Scientific Research and Scholarly Activity);
4. Inability to meet specific technical requirements (see specific program handbook);
5. Failure to pass a required examination or meet a program benchmark as determined by the appropriate review committee (see specific program handbook);
6. Failure to maintain satisfactory progress on a thesis or dissertation as determined by the designated thesis or dissertation committee (see specific program handbook);
7. Unprofessional and/or unethical behavior as a graduate assistant, student intern, student clinician, student teacher, student worker, or other University-affiliated role (see the University Code of Ethics and applicable standards); and/or
8. Any behavior that may involve criminal activity, that may pose a threat to the health or safety of the University community, that may infringe upon the rights or property of others in the University community, and/or that may breach the peace of the University community (see the Code of Student Conduct).

A student must be informed of their dismissal from a graduate program in writing by the graduate program director (GPD). The letter provides reasons for dismissal and information about appealing per the policy in this section.

A copy of the dismissal letter shall also be sent to the dean administering the program or their designee, the Graduate School, and, if relevant, the Office of Visa and Immigration Service Advising. All units notified, including the student, should also receive a copy of the Notice of Student Separation of Dismissal from Program form. Except in cases involving probation and suspension, the Code of Student Conduct, and/or the Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct in Scientific Research and Scholarly Activity, a student may appeal their dismissal from a graduate program in writing to the dean or their designee within 45 calendar days of the Graduate Program Director’s dated letter notifying the student of dismissal.

If dissatisfied with the decision of the dean administering the program or their designee, a student may appeal their dismissal from a graduate program in writing with the Graduate Appeals Committee by submitting a Student Appeal Request Form to the Graduate School. The student is also responsible for submitting all documents related to the dismissal (e.g., copies of decision letters by the GPD and dean and dismissal forms) with the official appeal. The student must submit their appeal of the dean or designee’s decision for dismissal within 14 calendar days of the decision letter.

If the original dismissal decision is based in full or in part on a course grade and that grade is being appealed, the student follows procedures for a grade appeal until that decision is rendered. If the dismissal status is unaffected by the grade appeal results (e.g., the appeal is denied, or the overturned grade does not alter the program’s dismissal decision), the student must then follow procedures for dismissal appeal, beginning with a maximum of 45 calendar days from the grade appeal decision letter to when the dismissal appeal is received by the dean or designee.

The Graduate Appeals Committee will review materials submitted by the student. It may also seek additional information from the program or student to aid its review. The Committee will render its decision and inform the Graduate School. The Graduate School will send a letter to the student, with a copy to the GPD and dean’s office, informing him or her of the Graduate Appeals Committee’s decision. If the Graduate Appeals Committee supports the GPD’s original decision, the student shall remain separated from the program. If the Graduate Appeals Committee approves reinstatement, the GPD shall work out a plan of study with the student that guides him or her to the successful completion of the program. The decision of the Graduate Appeals Committee is final.

A student’s dismissal shall ordinarily remain in effect for eight years before they may seek readmission to the same graduate program at the master’s level or for eight years before they may seek readmission to the same graduate program at the education specialist or doctoral levels. If the student seeks readmission to the same program after eight years and is accepted, they will work with the program to recertify courses for which a grade of B or better was awarded for those credits to count toward the degree as transfer credits. Their GPA will be reset to zero as a student returning from reinstatement (see policy Readmission to the Institution Following Separation or Dismissal). A student may appeal dismissal only one time for the same program.