Advising, Enrollment & Evaluation

In this section:

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Advisors

Academic and scholarly advising varies by graduate program across the University. Each graduate academic unit has one or more graduate advisors, and every graduate student must be assigned an advisor throughout their graduate training. This advisor may also be the student’s thesis or dissertation advisor. The advisor and student typically meet soon after the student’s admission to the program to develop a plan of study and on a regular basis thereafter to monitor and review progress.

Plan of Study

All graduate students must have a plan of study, which is a formal agreement between the student and their program or committee regarding the conditions the student must meet to earn the desired degree. The plan of study usually lists required courses and activities and describes the timeline for these requirements. The plan may also include suggested or optional courses and activities. Each college or school determines the mechanisms for establishing, changing, and monitoring students’ progress on plans of study. The plan of study should be in place no later than the end of the student’s first semester.

DegreeWorks is the online advising and degree auditing tool at WVU. Plan of study requirements must be included in each student’s DegreeWorks audit. Some programs may choose to use DegreeWorks as each student’s plan of study.

Advising of Non-Degree Students

Each dean establishes a mechanism to advise non-degree graduate students who intend to take the majority of their coursework in the dean’s college or school. Non-degree students with an interest in programs in two colleges or schools may be assigned to either by the Office of Admissions. It is expected that the student will take responsibility for understanding the policies of each unit and facilitate any needed communication between advisors.

Yearly Evaluation

All graduate students who enrolled in at least one credit during the academic year are provided with a written evaluation from their program following the end of each spring term. This requirement may be waived for students in good standing who are expected to graduate in spring or summer.

DegreeWorks

DegreeWorks is the online advising and degree auditing tool at WVU. All undergraduate students are required to have a completed audit for graduation. All graduate students beginning with the 2016-2017 catalog are required to have a completed audit for graduation. Please refer to this system regularly. Students can access Degree Works through the WVU Portal accessible at https://portal.wvu.edu. More information is available on the DegreeWorks website (https://registrar.wvu.edu/academic-records/degreeworks).

Degree Works is NOT an official evaluation. All degree requirements must be verified by student’s college or school prior to graduation. Students are responsible for complying with all academic policies published in the University catalog. If students have any questions about the information presented in this audit, they are encouraged to contact their advisor or the Office of the University Registrar at registrar@mail.wvu.edu.

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Registration Statement

For each course students attend in person and online, they must be registered for every course via STAR.

Credit Loads and Limits

Nine credit hours in a fall or spring term and six credit hours in the summer term is the minimum load to be considered a full-time graduate student. Courses taken under the audit option are counted toward attaining full-time enrollment status. Graduate students are not permitted to take more than 17 hours in a term without approval by their college or school and by the Office of Graduate Education and Life. No overload requests will be considered for the summer term. Requests for more than 18 hours in a fall or spring term will not normally be approved. Although students may enroll for up to 17 hours in the summer term, they are strongly discouraged from enrolling in more than 12 hours.

Minimum Enrollment

In any term during which a graduate student is using University research facilities, consulting with graduate committee members, or completing a thesis or dissertation (including the thesis or dissertation defense and submission of the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation, or ETD), the student must enroll for at least one hour of graduate credit. These students are assumed to be utilizing University services, facilities, and other resources, including faculty expertise, even if they are not enrolled in formal coursework.

In addition, students formally admitted to candidacy for graduate degrees are required to register for at least one credit hour each fall and spring term as a condition of their continued candidacy. Individual programs may also require summer enrollment to maintain candidacy. Students admitted to candidacy who fail to maintain continuity of enrollment may be dropped from candidacy.

Students who are not admitted to candidacy may take courses intermittently if allowed by their program and if they are not using University facilities or consulting with faculty while they are not enrolled.

Students who have completed all requirements for a degree (including the thesis or dissertation defense and submission of the ETD) prior to the first day of classes of the term of graduation do not need to enroll during that term.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students in good standing who wish to be away from their academic endeavors at WVU for one or more semesters but intend to return at a later date may request a leave of absence. Students should consult with their program or school/college concerning the required procedure to request a leave of absence. Some programs (such as some master’s programs or part-time programs) may not require students to request a leave of absence in order to enroll sporadically and remain in good standing. Doctoral students admitted to candidacy who do not wish to enroll for one or more semesters must be granted a leave of absence in order to maintain their candidacy. Leaves of absence are not required for summer terms unless otherwise specified by a student’s program.

Requests for leaves of absence must be submitted in writing to a student’s program director or department chair prior to the beginning of the semester for which the leave is desired. The program director or department chair (or an appropriate faculty committee or other administrator) determines whether or not to grant the leave of absence, the length of time granted, and any conditions the student must meet to return to the program following the leave of absence (including a date by which the student must inform the program that he or she plans to return). The student is informed in writing of the outcome of his or her request, and a copy of the outcome is retained in the student’s records.

Information concerning military deployments during a semester is available in the Military Leave (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#Military_Credit) section of the Undergraduate Catalog.

Non-Degree Students

Non-degree students are normally those taking classes for enrichment purposes, public school teachers taking classes for certification renewal, or students taking classes as prerequisites for admission to degree programs. Non-degree students may enroll in any course in the University for which they meet the prerequisites and any other restrictions on the course. Some departments restrict enrollments to majors only or require non-degree students to obtain instructor permission to enroll.

A non-degree graduate student may accumulate unlimited graduate credit hours. However, under no circumstances may a non-degree student apply more than twelve hours of previously earned credit toward a degree (see section on Course Credit Limitations (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/#Limitations)). If the student is later admitted to a degree program, the faculty of that program will decide whether any credit earned as a non-degree student may be applied to the degree.

Auditors

An auditor may register for courses and must pay full fees but does not receive credit for the courses. A student who audits a course must let one semester pass before enrolling in the same course for credit. A student may only change their status from audit to grade or grade to audit through their
advisor, during the registration period. Advisors will notify the Office of the University Registrar of the students intention prior to the end of the drop/add period. Attendance requirements for auditors are determined by the instructor of the course. The instructor may direct the Office of the University Registrar to remove an auditor from a class list or grade report if attendance requirements are not met.

**Attendance Policy**

Instructors or programs set attendance requirements and policies that are appropriate for the goals and instructional strategies of their courses. Instructors are responsible for keeping accurate attendance records when attendance is used in grading. Students who are absent from class for any reason are expected to take full responsibility for their own academic work and progress and are required to complete missed work or equivalent work, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Excused absences are absences in which the instructor agrees to provide an opportunity to make up missed class work or activities (e.g. assignments, exams). Events that justify an excused absence include religious observances, mandatory military obligation (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#enrollmenttext), mandatory court appearances, and participation in university activities at the request of university authorities. Other events may justify an excused absence at the discretion of the instructor or program.

Instructors appropriately notified regarding anticipated absences may use their judgment as to whether to allow make-up work. Instructors are expected to be flexible in allowing student to make up work missed on official or commonly recognized high holy days.

**Procedures:**

All attendance polices must be made available to students in writing (typically within the course syllabus) within the first week of class. Instructors shall indicated in their syllabus how much advance notice they require from a student requesting an excused absence.

Students who are absent from class for any reason are responsible for contacting their instructors promptly, unless the instructors’ policy require otherwise.

Instructors may require written documentation in advance of the absence from the academic or athletic unit sponsoring the activity for students participating at West Virginia University representative in official activities scheduled by academic or athletic units.

Students wishing to appeal an instructor decision of a denied absence accommodation may appeal to the Dean of the college/school for the relevant course.

Final course grades affected by attendance in an individual course may be appealed using the normal course grade appeal (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#appealstext) process.

**Withdrawal Policy**

There are two types of withdrawals: withdrawal from individual courses for which a student has registered and a complete withdrawal from the University. Deadlines, procedures, and polices concerning withdrawals are available at the Withdrawal Policies (https://registrar.wvu.edu/registration/withdrawal-policies) section on the Office of the University Registrar's website. Students are encouraged to discuss withdrawals with their advisor and to consider the impact of withdrawals on their required enrollment and degree progress as well as their eligibility for graduate assistantships, financial aid, or international full-time status. Students who decide not to return for a subsequent term must withdraw from all registered courses prior to the term to avoid being charged tuition and fees.

**RE-ENROLLMENT AFTER WITHDRAWAL**

After a student withdraws from WVU in two consecutive semesters (excluding summer sessions), a student may not register for further work without approval of the dean of the college or school in which the student wants to register. Enrollment is subject to conditions set by that dean.

**Anticipated Withdrawal Policy for the 2019-2020 academic year**

**COURSE WITHDRAWAL AND UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

There are three time frames for withdrawals. The tuition refund policy can be reviewed at the Refunds (https://studentaccounts.wvu.edu/refunds) page on the Student Accounts website.

**Withdrawal during the Drop/Add period**

Students may withdraw from an individual course or all courses during the drop/add period, which runs until the end of the first week of a standard fall or spring 16-week term. Withdrawals for courses beginning on different parts of term or in the summer must be within the deadline as indicated on the Add and Drop Dates (https://registrar.wvu.edu/calendars/add-and-drop-dates) section of the Office of the University Registrar's website. Courses dropped during the appropriate drop/add period will not be recorded on the student’s transcript.

**Withdrawal by the Withdrawal Deadline**
Generally, students can withdraw from one or several courses after the Drop/Add period but prior to the Withdrawal Deadline published in the University Calendar (during the 13th week of instruction for spring and fall terms). A grade of W will be recorded on the transcript, indicating the student withdrew from the course. The grade point average is not affected, but student progress within an identified major may be impacted, as well as the ability to retain financial aid. **Attempted Hours** on the transcript include all courses for which a W is recorded. If a student does not follow the university’s withdrawal procedures, the final grades earned by the student will be recorded on the transcript. **NOTE: No longer attending a course does not constitute withdrawal. Students who do not formally drop or withdrawal from a course they are no longer attending will receive a failing grade for the course.**

Withdrawing from all courses after the Withdrawal Deadline (Retroactive Withdrawal)

Withdrawal from all courses after the withdrawal deadline is considered a retroactive withdrawal from the University for that term. A retroactive withdrawal for one or more terms may be granted only under extreme circumstances and will require the approval of the academic college or unit in which the student was enrolled for the respective term(s). The Retroactive Withdrawal must be requested within 12 months of the Withdrawal Deadline for the term in question. If the withdrawal is granted, a grade of W will be recorded on the transcript for each course. A withdrawal from all courses constitutes withdrawal from the University for the approved term only.

**Important Notice:** Financial aid recipients who withdraw from all courses before sixty percent of the term is completed may be required to return a portion of any financial aid awarded for the term. Grades of W are counted in Attempted Hours and affect student completion rate, one of the standards for determining satisfactory academic progress. Students who do not receive at least one passing grade in a term must provide documentation which verifies continued participation in educational activities.

**MILITARY NOTE:** Students who are called to active military service during a term must submit a copy of their deployment orders to the appropriate institutional officer. For additional information relative to military withdrawals, or if students are being deployed after the 12th week of instruction of the fall or spring terms and want to keep their grades earned at the time of deployment, please refer to the Military Leave (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#Military_Credit) section of the catalog.

**PROCEDURES**

**Withdrawal during Drop/Add period or by the Withdrawal Deadline:** To withdraw from one or more courses by the Withdrawal Deadline, students should log on to the WVU Portal accessible at https://portal.wvu.edu and drop their courses through STAR.

**Retroactive Withdrawal:** To withdraw from the term after the Withdrawal Deadline, a student must request the Retroactive Withdrawal in writing from the college dean or designee. A successful petition will demonstrate that the student's performance was uncharacteristically low for that term, that the extreme circumstances arose after the Withdrawal Deadline, and that the student can now make satisfactory progress. If the petition is granted, the college/school in which the student is enrolled will request the withdrawal from all classes for the approved term directly to the appropriate institutional officer.

**General considerations when withdrawing from classes**

- Students who wish to withdraw from one or more courses are encouraged to meet with their academic adviser to discuss:
  - If their course load would be reduced below the minimum requirement set by their program.
  - The appropriate office to contact to determine if their course load might be reduced below the minimum hours required to qualify for financial aid, scholarships, international full-time student status, or a graduate assistantship.
  - If the course to be dropped is a co-requisite for another course the student is taking or a prerequisite for a course required the following semester. The student may be required to drop the co-requisite course or asked to take a substitute course the following semester.
  - If withdrawal from the University for a semester would jeopardize the student's standing in a particular program or major.
  - Students who receive financial aid, veteran benefits, or scholarships should consult with the appropriate unit to see if the withdrawal will affect their status for the current or subsequent terms.
  - It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all outstanding financial obligations to the University are satisfied and all required forms are received and processed. The withdrawal becomes official only after the request is received and processed by the appropriate institutional officer.
  - Students withdrawing from all of their courses in a term who are not living in university residential housing should vacate housing and turn in keys via the proper procedure. Check with the main desk at the residential hall for procedural details.

**Preferred Name Policy**

West Virginia University recognizes that students may use a different first name from their legal name. To facilitate this, the University allows students to select a preferred name to be used on class rosters, in DegreeWorks, MIX, eCampus and the online University directory (unless the student has directed nondisclosure), and other systems that do not contain official records as technically feasible. Preferred names are first names that are different than a student's legal first name. Official records of the University such as the transcript, diplomas, financial aid documents, and others, where legal name is required will not be available for the use of a preferred name. If a student changes names legally, these documents will reflect the legal name.

This accommodation is available to two groups of students: transgender and international students. The Office of the University Registrar may make exceptions for other students upon review.
Transgender students who wish to use a preferred name should contact one of the following units on campus to initiate use of their preferred name:

**Morgantown Campus**
Office of the University Registrar
Evansdale Crossing
Carruth Counseling Center/WellWVU
Health and Education Building
390 Birch Street
LGBTQ+ Center
Hodges Hall G-06
127 Hough Street

**Beckley Campus**
Trio and Diversity Programs
136 Benedum Center

**Keyser Campus**
Office of Enrollment Services
75 Arnold Street

International students who wish to use a preferred name should contact the Office of International Students and Scholars (Purinton House) to initiate use of the preferred name.

All students, regardless of University point of contact, will be asked to complete a form to request use of their preferred name. Submission of the form requires verification of photo ID by a WVU staff member. Alternatively, students may also send a letter to the Office of the University Registrar requesting the use of a preferred name. The letter should contain both the legal name and the preferred name as well as the student's WVU ID number. All letters must be signed and witnessed by a notary public.

The preferred name will remain in use until the student requests that it be deactivated. Deactivation can be initiated via the units listed above.

This process for using a preferred name does not impact students who officially change their legal name.

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- Grades in Graduate Courses (p. 5)
- Grading System (p. 5)
- Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory-Pass/Fail (p. 6)
- Grade Point Average (GPA) (p. 6)
- Incompletes (p. 7)
- Repeated Courses (p. 7)
- Official Transcripts (p. 8)

**Grades in Graduate Courses**
Letter grades are assigned in many graduate courses. Grades of C or below are considered substandard. Some programs allow credit toward the degree for courses in which any grade of C is earned; others do not. No credit is earned for graduate courses in which a grade of D is earned; individual programs determine if credit is earned toward the degree for professional courses in which a grade of D is earned.

**Grading System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor (College of Law only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Withdrawal from a course before the date specified in the University calendar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pass (See Pass/Fail grading below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Auditor, no grade and no credit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CR  Credit but no grade  
PR  Progress; final grade to be issued at end of second semester (used by Health Sciences only)  
S  Satisfactory  
U  Unsatisfactory  
H  Honors (used by Professional courses only)  
IF  Incomplete grade not removed by next regular term (computed as an F)  
UF  Unforgivable F

Note: Grades that are not reported by faculty at the end of a term will be designated with an NR on the official transcript. All grades of NR must be resolved in order graduate from West Virginia University.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory - Pass/Fail Grading

At the graduate level, the satisfactory-unsatisfactory ("S/U") grading option is used only for the course numbers 697/797 "Research." The "S" and "U" grades for 697/797 are not applied to the calculation of the GPA. "S/U" shall be the only grading option for 697/797.

Other courses for which faculty wish to use a binary grading option should use the pass-fail ("P/F") grading option. Grades of "F" earned using this option do apply to the GPA.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

GRADE POINTS

Each letter grade has a numeric value. Grade points are based on this number value and the credit hour value of the course.

- A- 4
- B- 3
- C- 2
- D- 1 (College of Law only; 0 points for all others)
- F/IF/UF- 0
- I- 0
- U- 0

The GPA is computed on all work for which a student registers, with the following exceptions:

- Courses with a grade of CR, H, PR, P, S, W, and X carry no grade value. The grade of incomplete "I" initially carries no grade value.
- When a student receives the grade of "I" and the incomplete grade is later removed, the grade point average is calculated on the basis of the new grade. If the "I" grade is not removed within the next semester, the grade is changed to IF and is included in the grade point average.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Only grades earned in WVU courses will be counted towards the institutional grade point average which determines, among other things, graduation status, major eligibility, academic awards, etc. Institutional GPA is based on all work for which a student received a letter grade other than W and P.

To be eligible to receive a graduate degree, a student must have an overall GPA of at least 2.75 at the time of graduation. To be eligible to receive a graduate certificate, a student must have an overall GPA of at least 2.75 in courses applied to the certificate.

Some degree or certificate programs require an overall grade point average higher than a 2.75. Certificate or degree programs may require higher and/or specifically defined grade point averages. Please refer to the specific program for more information.

Probation and most financial aid eligibility are determined by the institutional grade point average.

GPA CALCULATION

Students need to know how to calculate their overall and semester GPAs. The following example shows how to do it.

Assume a student registered for the following courses and earned the following grades:

- HIST 700 (3 credits) - A
- HIST 718 (3 credits) - B
- HIST 793 (3 credits) - C
- HIST 795 (1 credit) - F
- HIST 797 (1 credit) - S
Multiple the credit by the grade value to get the grade points earned for each course using the values for letter grades as described in the Grade Points section.

\[(\text{Number of Credit Hours}) \times (\text{Letter Grade Value}) = \text{Grade Points}\]

- HIST 700 with a grade of A (3 credits) X (4 Letter Grade Value for an A) = 12 Grade Points
- HIST 718 with a grade of B (3 credits) X (3 Letter Grade Value for a B) = 9 Grade Points
- HIST 793 with a grade of C (3 credits) X (2 Letter Grade Value for a C) = 6 Grade Points
- HIST 795 with a grade of F (1 credit) X (0 Letter Grade Value for an F) = 0 Grade Points
- HIST 797 with a grade of S (1 credit) X (N/A Letter Grade Value for a S - not calculated in grade points) = N/A

Add the total grade points earned: 12 + 9 + 6 + 0 + N/A = 27

Add the total number of credit hours attempted: 3 + 3 + 3 + 1 + S grade credits not calculated = 10

Divide the total number of grade points earned divided by the total number of credit hours attempted

\[\text{GPA calculation} = \frac{27}{10} = 2.7 \text{ semester GPA}\]

Students may also login to DegreeWorks and utilize the GPA Calculator.

**Incomplete Grades**

**POLICY:**

A grade of I (Incomplete) is a temporary grade assignment used when unforeseen, non-academic circumstances arise that prohibit students from completing the last course assignments or examinations at the end of the semester. The grade of Incomplete is typically assigned because of an excused absence from the final examination, or because assignments are unavoidably incomplete, as determined by the instructor. Generally, the student will have been active in the course up until the last day of the 13th week of classes and earned at least a D- to be eligible to request an incomplete.

- An instructor may not assign a grade of I without the student’s agreement and an Incomplete Contract on file. If a student has not requested an Incomplete, or the request for an Incomplete grade has been denied, the instructor should assign the grade earned in the course.
- Within the Incomplete Contract, the instructor is required to indicate a grade earned for the course assuming no additional work will be completed. Should the signed contract not be fulfilled, the instructor must either submit a grade of F or the grade indicated in the contract.
- If the student is unable to complete the work during the following term for non-academic reasons, the term of the contract may be extended with permission of the Dean. Additionally, the term of the contract can be extended if the instructor is not available or a portion of the course, for some legitimate reason, cannot be completed within the original time frame.
- An Incomplete grade not changed by the end of the next regular term (fall and spring semesters) will be replaced with a grade of IF, and the class must be retaken to satisfy degree requirements as necessary. Under legitimate, extraordinary circumstances, with supporting documentation and the approval of the Dean, an instructor can submit a grade change for an IF within five years of when the course was taken.
- All grades of I must either be resolved or replaced with an IF in order to graduate from West Virginia University.

**PROCEDURES:**

- Students who wish to be considered for an Incomplete must apply in writing to their instructor prior to the end of the term. If the instructor agrees, he or she sets contractual conditions under which the grade of I will be changed to a letter grade and the student will sign the online contract. The grade of incomplete is not granted until the Incomplete Contract has been approved by the department and college.
- The instructor should establish the date by which all work must be completed. Ideally, the date will be prior to the mid-semester point of the following regular term, but may not be later than the last day of class of that term.
- If the student does not complete the terms of contract, the instructor will assign the earned grade recorded on the contract at the time the Incomplete was assigned.
- The student is not permitted to re-register for the course to complete the missing work and remove the grade of I.
- Students may appeal any final grade imposed by a course instructor/coordinator, institution, or its constituent academic units through the procedures described in the Academic Standards (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification) section of the catalog.

**Repeated Courses**

Courses repeated that cannot be taken again for credit follow this procedure:

1. Both the original course grade and the second course grade are included in determining the overall GPA. The original course is excluded from earned or degree hours and is marked with an (A).
2. The original grade is not deleted from the student’s permanent record.
3. The second grade is entered on the student's transcript and marked as included (I) in the semester that the course was repeated.
4. Courses repeated more than once are handled the same way with the final attempt carrying earned or degree hours. All attempts are used for determining the GPA.

**Official Transcripts**

Students can order official transcripts through the Office of the University Registrar (http://registrar.wvu.edu/transcripts). Before ordering a transcript, students should ensure that all grades and degree(s) have been posted as transcript requests are processed immediately. All financial obligations to West Virginia University must be cleared before transcripts can be released. A West Virginia University transcript is a complete record of a student’s enrollment at WVU that includes all undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses.