Advising, Enrollment & Evaluation

In this section:

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- Plan of Study (p. 1)
- Advising of Non-Degree Students (p. 1)
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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 study and 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 may describe the timeline for these requirements. The Plan of Study 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.

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

Advising of Non-Degree Students

Each college or school establishes a mechanism to advise non-degree graduate students who intend to take the majority of their coursework in that 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. Students are responsible for understanding the policies of each program and facilitating any needed communication between advisors.

Yearly Evaluation

All graduate students enrolled in at least one credit hour during the academic year must be 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.

Degree Works

Degree Works is the online advising and degree auditing tool at WVU. All students are required to have a completed audit for graduation. Students can access Degree Works through the WVU Portal accessible at https://portal.wvu.edu. More information is available on the Degree Works website (https://registrar.wvu.edu/academic-records/degreeworks/).

All degree requirements must be verified by a student’s college prior to graduation. Students are responsible for complying with all academic policies published in the University catalog and relevant program documents. If students have any questions about the information presented in the Degree Works audit, they are encouraged to contact their advisor or the Office of the University Registrar (https://registrar.wvu.edu/).

Enrollment

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- Minimum Enrollment (p. 2)
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Registration

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

West Virginia University offers priority registration to veterans as part of the Forever GI Bill - Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act. Registration dates for other students are posted on the Office of the University Registrar’s website (https://registrar.wvu.edu/).

Credit Hour Loads and Limits

To be considered full-time, a graduate student must enroll in at least nine credit hours in a fall or spring term and six credit hours in the summer term, including audited courses. Graduate students are not permitted to take more than 17 credit 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 credit hours in a fall or spring term will not normally be approved. Although students may enroll for up to 17 credit hours in the summer term, they are strongly discouraged from enrolling in more than 12 credit 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 credit 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 continuous enrollment may be dropped from candidacy.

Students who are not admitted to candidacy may enroll in 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.

Leave 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 intermittently 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.

When possible, a request for a leave of absence should 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 their designee) 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 departmental or program records.

Information concerning military deployments during a semester is available on the Deployment page of the Center for Veteran, Military and Family Programs (https://wvuveterans.wvu.edu/current-students/deployment/) webpage.

Non-Degree Students

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. Non-degree students may not apply more than twelve credit hours of previously earned credit toward a degree (see section on Credit Sharing Limitations under the Rules for Attaining Multiple Credentials (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/#Rules) webpage). If a non-degree 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 toward the degree.

Auditors

A student who audits a course must register and pay full fees for the course but does not receive credit for the course. 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.

**UNIVERSITY SANCTIONED ABSENCES**

University sanctioned absences are absences in which the instructor will provide an opportunity to make up missed substantial class work or activities (e.g., assignments, exams) and will not penalize students for those absences. University sanctioned absences include mandatory military obligation (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#enrollmenttext), mandatory court appearances and participation in university activities at the request of university authorities. Instructors are expected to be flexible in allowing students to make up work missed due to university sanctioned absences. Instructors and students may consult with their Dean’s Office on events that constitute official university sanctioned events.

WVU supports its students who are also members of the United States armed forces, reserve units, and National Guard. Absences of less than three weeks of course work for military obligation (i.e. drill or training) are university sanctioned absences. WVU’s Center for Veteran, Military, and Family Programs (https://wvuveterans.wvu.edu/) has additional information on the drill schedule for the West Virginia National Guard and can provide official verification of a student’s military orders upon request.

For university sanctioned absences totaling more than three weeks of course work resulting from military obligation, see WVU’s Military Leave Policy (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#Military_Credit).

Students wishing to appeal an instructor decision regarding an absence for a university sanctioned event 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/coursecreditstermsclassification/#appealstext) process.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Other events may justify an excused absence at the discretion of the instructor or program. Instructors appropriately notified regarding anticipated absences that are not university sanctioned may use their judgment as to whether to allow make-up work.

Examples of events that may justify an excused absence include religious observances, illness of the student, illness of an immediate family member, death of an immediate family member, or extreme weather.

Several high holy days have been added to the academic calendar for instructors to reference in their academic planning. Instructors may consult the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (https://diversity.wvu.edu/about/staff/) for support regarding religious observances.

The Office of Accessibility Services (https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/about/) can serve as a resource to discuss student absences related to accommodations.

Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems are not university sanctioned and should not typically qualify for excused absences.

If an instructor chooses to allow excused absences for these other events, the stated attendance policy for the course should specify the number of days that may be missed and instructions for contacting the instructor for the excused absence.

Instructors may request third party documentation.

**PROCEDURES**

All attendance policies must be made available to students in writing (typically within the course syllabus) within the first week of class.

Students are responsible for notifying their instructor of expected university sanctioned absences within two weeks of the event or as soon as possible. Instructors may require written documentation in advance of the university sanctioned absence from the academic or athletic unit sponsoring the activity for students participating in official activities. Instructors may request additional verification from the Center for Veteran, Military, and Family Programs (https://wvuveterans.wvu.edu/) for students serving military obligation.

Students who are absent from class for any reason are responsible for contacting their instructors promptly, unless the instructors’ policies require otherwise.
Students wishing to appeal an instructor decision regarding an absence for a university sanctioned event may appeal using the Final Grade appeal process 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/coursecreditstermsclassification/#appealstext) process.

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.

Withdrawal 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 disbursed for the term. Grades of W are counted in Attempted Hours and affect student completion rate, one of the standards for determining financial aid satisfactory academic progress. Students who do not receive at least one passing grade in a term may be required to return a portion of any financial aid disbursed for that term according to their last date of attendance or participation on record. If a student, whose financial aid has been impacted, believes this date is incorrect, they may provide documentation that supports attendance or participation beyond the last date of attendance or participation on record.

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 13th 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.
  • If a student is enrolled in two co-requisite courses (courses that must be taken and completed simultaneously) and withdraws from one of those courses, the student will be automatically withdrawn from the other co-requisite course as well.
  • If their course load would be reduced below the minimum requirement set by their program.
  • If a student is enrolled in two co-requisite courses (courses that must be taken and completed simultaneously) and withdraws from one of those courses, the student will be automatically withdrawn from the other co-requisite course as well.
  • 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 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.

Grades

In this section:
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• Grading System (p. 5)
• Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory-Pass/Fail (p. 5)
• Grade Point Average (GPA) (p. 6)
• Incompletes (p. 6)
• Repeated Courses (p. 7)
• Official Transcripts (p. 7)

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>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Credit but no grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Progress; final grade to be issued at end of second semester (used by Health Sciences only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Honors (used by Professional courses only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td>Incomplete grade not removed by next regular term (computed as an F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF</td>
<td>Unforgivable F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNA</td>
<td>Failure Never Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSA</td>
<td>Failure Stopped Attending (Last date of attendance required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 to graduate from West Virginia University.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory and 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 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/FNA/FSA/IF/UF = 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, I, U, and X carry no grade value.
- When a student receives the grade of "I" and the incomplete grade is replaced, the grade point average is calculated on the basis of the replacement grade. If the "I" grade is not changed within the next semester, the grade is replaced with an IF, which is included in the grade point average.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

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 graduate degrees or graduate certificates require an overall grade point average higher than a 2.75. Graduate degrees or certificates also may require higher or specifically defined grade point averages. Refer to the specific program for more information.

Probation and most financial aid eligibility are determined by the institutional grade point average. Please review information on the Student Financial Support and Services (https://financialaid.wvu.edu/) page for detailed information regarding financial aid eligibility.

GPA CALCULATION

The example below illustrates how to calculate a GPA.

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) * (Letter Grade Value for an A) (4 points) = 12 Grade Points
- HIST 718 with a grade of B (3 credits) * (Letter Grade Value for a B) (3 points) = 9 Grade Points
- HIST 793 with a grade of C (3 credits) * (Letter Grade Value for a C) (2 points) = 6 Grade Points
- HIST 795 with a grade of F (1 credit) * (Letter Grade Value for an F) (0 points) = 0 Grade Points
- HIST 797 with a grade of S (1 credit) * (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 included = 10

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

GPA calculation = 27 (total number of grade points earned) / 10 (total number of credit hours attempted) = 2.7 semester GPA

Students may also login to Degree Works to utilize the GPA Calculator.

Incomplete Grade 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 (https://undergraduate.wvu.edu/strategies/academic-policy-committee/forms/). 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 request the incomplete form prior to the end of the term. If the instructor agrees, they will set the 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/coursecredittermsclassification/) section of the catalog.

Repeated Courses

Grades for repeated courses that cannot be taken again for credit are handled following 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 Request Transcript webpage (https://registrar.wvu.edu/academic-records/request-transcript/) for students at the Morgantown location; Transcript Request Procedures webpage (https://admissions.potomacstatecollege.edu/forms/transcript-request-procedures/) for students at the Keyser location, the Transcript Request webpage (https://techregistrar.wvutech.edu/academic-records/transcript-request/) for students at the Beckley location. Before ordering a transcript, students should ensure that all grades and degree(s) have been posted as transcript requests are processed immediately on the Morgantown Campus. 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. A WVU Potomac State College transcript is a complete record of a students enrollment at Potomac State College. A WVU Institute of Technology College transcript is a complete record of a students enrollment at WVU Tech.