

# Advising, Enrollment & Evaluation

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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.

## 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.

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## 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 beginning 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 wish to not 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.

Minimally, 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 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. However, 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 course. A student who audits a course must let one semester pass before enrolling in the course for credit. A student may change his or her status from audit to grade or grade to audit only during the registration 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 Policies

Instructors may set attendance policies that are appropriate for the goals and instructional strategies of their courses and instructors may include attendance records in determining the final course grade. All attendance policies that affect students' grades must be announced in writing (typically within the course syllabus) within the first week of class. Moreover, instructors are responsible for keeping accurate enrollment records, and for keeping accurate attendance records when attendance is used in grading.

Students who are absent from class for any reason are responsible for all missed work and for contacting their instructors promptly, unless the instructors' policies require otherwise. However, instructors cannot require documentation of student illness from any medical provider as part of an attendance policy, as medical conditions are confidential and frequently not verifiable.

## 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 policies concerning withdrawals are available at the 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.

## 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. In the alternative, 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

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 a 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

Grade	Description
A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Fair
D	Poor but passing (College of Law only)
F	Failure
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal from a course before the date specified in the University calendar.
P	Pass (See Pass/Fail grading below)
X	Auditor, no grade and no credit.
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 course (used by Professional school courses only)
IF	Incomplete grade not removed by next regular term (Computed as an F.)
UF	Unforgivable F (Not eligible for D/F repeat policy.)

Note: Grades that are not reported by faculty at the end of a term will be designated with an NR on the official transcript. Grades that are not reported will become an F at the conclusion of the next semester if a final grade is not submitted.

\*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.

## 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
- F/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 treated as an F (failure).
- If a student is working toward teacher certification, he or she is responsible for every registration in a course in which the grade of A, B, C, D, F, P, X or I is received.

### GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All academic units of the University have minimum standards of scholastic quality that must be met or exceeded. Beginning in January 2012, grades earned in Baccalaureate-level college work attempted at other accredited US institutions are included in the calculation of the overall GPA. All credits and grades accepted as transfer credit from all accredited US institutions will be used in the calculation of the cumulative GPA and total attempted and

earned credits. Study Abroad credit is treated as non-US and is awarded as credit only, regardless of whether it is taken through a US institution. Only courses with a grade of "D" or higher will be transferred to WVU as earned Study Abroad Credit. To be eligible to receive a baccalaureate degree, a student must have a GPA of at least 2.0 at the time of graduation. To be eligible to receive a graduate degree, a student must have a GPA of at least 2.75. To be eligible to receive a graduate certificate, a student must have a GPA of at least 2.75 in courses applied to the certificate. Some degree or certificate programs require a higher grade point average overall or in the major courses. GPA is based on all work for which a student received a letter grade other than W and P and coursework excluded under the provisions of the D/F Repeat Policy. The GPA for honors consideration for a baccalaureate is based on baccalaureate-level college work attempted at WVU as well as other regionally accredited US institutions.

## 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 16 hours and receive the following grades in these courses:

- English 101 – B
- Mathematics 126 - A
- Geology 101 - C
- Political Science 101 - B
- Spanish 101 - D
- Psychology 491 - P

1. Multiply the credit by the grade value to get the grade points earned for each course using values for letter grades as described in the Grade Points section.
  - English 101, 3, B, 3,  $3 \times 3 = 9$
  - Geology 101, 3, C, 2,  $3 \times 2 = 6$
  - Spanish 101, 3, D, 1,  $3 \times 1 = 3$
  - Mathematics 126, 3, A, 4,  $3 \times 4 = 12$
  - Political Science 101, 3, B, 3,  $3 \times 3 = 9$
  - Psychology 491, 1, P, 0,  $1 \times 0 = 0$
2. Add the total grade points earned and divide by the total credit hours *with a grade value*. Remember that P grades have no grade value, so in this case, the grade points earned total 39 ( $9+6+3+12+9$ ) and there are 15 credit hours ( $3+3+3+3+3$ ) for the GPA calculation. The GPA calculation for this student would be:  $39/15=2.6$ .

## Incomplete Grades

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. Students who are failing a course (exclusive of the incomplete work) may not request an Incomplete.

Students who want to be considered for an Incomplete must apply to their instructor prior to the end of the term. If the instructor agrees, the instructor and the student must negotiate the conditions under which the grade of I will be changed to a letter grade and sign a contract. The date to submit the incomplete work should not be set beyond the last day of class of the following semester. If the student does not complete the terms of contract then the instructor should submit a grade of F. All incomplete contracts must be filed with the department and Dean's Office.

To remove the grade of I, a student does not register for the course again.

If the Incomplete grade is not changed by the end of the next major term (excluding summer), the I grade will be replaced with an IF.

## 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.