Academic Standing Policy

*Effective Fall 2014*

*See UNC Policy Manual, Section II: Student Success Policies*

Student Academic Standing is defined as either: Good Standing, Academic Probation, Academic Suspension, or Academic Dismissal. Academic Standing considers both qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (percent completion) measures.

Good Academic Standing and Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

All students are expected to earn and maintain a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 each semester and to successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of their attempted hours. Successful completion of a course means that a student must have credit pending (i.e. incomplete) or must earn credit for the course with a grade other than F, U, NC or W.

Students in Good Standing will receive a notification if their semester completion rate falls below 67%.

Academic Probation Policies

Academic Probation for Continuing Students

Continuing students are placed on academic probation if the student’s cumulative Western Carolina University grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0 or if the student fails to complete 67% of their attempted hours at the end of a semester. Additionally, students who also fail to complete 67% of their attempted hours in their prior term of enrollment will be placed on academic probation.

 At the end of the term of academic probation, students must achieve the following:

* Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester, and
* Raise the cumulative GPA to good standing (2.0),

or

* Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester, and
* Earn a minimum 2.30 term GPA during the probationary term.

Failure to achieve one of the above academic criteria will result in academic suspension.

Academic Suspension & Dismissal Policies

*Effective Fall 2014*

*See UNC Policy Manual, Section II, E. Forgiveness Policies*

Academic Suspension

Students who are on Academic Probation and who fail to meet the criteria necessary for continued enrollment will be suspended. Students who earn all F grades or a combination of all F, U, or W grades will be suspended. All students have the right to appeal prior to the published appeals deadline. Students who are granted an appeal will be required to participate in a Learning Contract Program. Students who are suspended are not eligible to enroll at the university during the next regular (fall or spring) semester but may apply for readmission after they have served one semester of suspension.

When students return from Suspension, they are placed on Academic Probation and must have a Learning Contract. Failure to meet the terms of the Learning Contract will result in **Dismissal** from the university (see below).

Academic Suspension and Learning Contract Option for First-Semester Freshmen and New Transfers

In addition to the above criteria, first-semester freshmen and new transfer students who are placed on academic probation must meet specific guidelines in order to continue enrollment in the University.

First-semester freshmen and new transfers who earn a cumulative GPA within the range of 1.0 to 1.999 at the end of their first semester may return to the University for their second semester only if they choose to participate in the Learning Contract program.

Learning Contract Program

Students who are given a Learning Contract option and who choose not to participate in the Learning Contract program are not eligible to continue enrollment in the University for one term. If readmitted after a lapse in enrollment, students are reminded that they will return to Western Carolina University under the general guidelines for academic probation.

The Learning Contract Program specifies that these students work closely with an academic advisor. The student and advisor will discuss academic performance issues, set realistic goals, and make plans to reach those goals, including linking students with the campus resources that can help them succeed. Follow-up contacts will occur throughout the semester.

When appropriate, students should use the University’s grade replacement policy to improve their academic standing (excluding the First Year Seminar). Additionally, these students must successfully complete all the conditions of their Learning Contract Failure to meet these criteria will result in academic suspension.

Option for Students Suspended at End of Spring Semester

Students who are suspended at the end of the spring semester have the option to enroll in summer classes under a summer Learning Contract.

Appeal Process for Academic Suspension and Academic Dismissal

Appeals for reinstatement without having to serve a specified period of suspension are approved or denied by the Academic and Admission Appeals Board (referred to here as “Board”). The Board’s decision is final and is based upon the student’s letter of appeal, which should include the following:

* The reason for the student’s poor academic performance,
* Documentation of extenuating circumstances,
* A plan for rectifying the academic performance and raising the GPA to acceptable standards, and
* Documentation of the student’s previous academic history.

Requests for reinstatement must be submitted to the Advising Center by the deadline stated in the academic suspension notification letter, which also includes instructions for completing the request for reinstatement. A student whose appeal for reinstatement is approved will be designated as “Suspended/Reinstated” on his or her academic record and allowed to continue their enrollment under the Learning Contract program

**Readmission after Suspension**

Students who have been out the required amount of time may apply for readmission in the same manner as other former students. See the “Admission of Former Students” in this catalog.

**Academic Dismissal**

Students who have served a semester of **suspension** and who, while still on **academic probation,** fail to meet the 2.00 cumulative GPA and 67% successful completion rate or the terms of their academic plan will be **dismissed** from the university. Students who are dismissed must sit out for two years before they will be eligible to reapply for future enrollment at Western Carolina University.

**Figure 1. Conditions and Enrollment Eligibility for Good Academic Standing, Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic Standing** | **Conditions** | **Enrollment Eligibility**  |
| **Good Academic Standing** | * Cumulative GPA of at least 2.0,

**AND*** Maintain a 67% cumulative completion rate. Successful completion of at least 67% of attempted hours each semester.
 |  Eligible to continue enrollment. |
| **Academic Probation** | Continuing students:* Cumulative GPA < 2.0, or
* Failure to complete 67% of their attempted hours at end of a semester and failure to have completed 67% of their attempted hours in their prior term of enrollment

1st-Semester Freshmen/New Transfers:GPA between 1.0 and 1.999 at end of first semester | Continuing students:Students must achieve the following:* Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester, and
* Raise the cumulative GPA to good standing (2.0)

OR* Earn 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester , and
* Earn a minimum 2.30 term GPA during the probationary term.

1st-Semester Freshmen/New Transfers:Same criteria as for Continuing students, plus participation in Learning Contract Program.  |
| **Suspension** | * On Academic Probation,

**AND*** Did not meet the expected 2.0 semester GPA or complete 67% of attempted hours, or the terms of their plan.

**OR*** Earned all F grades or combination of all F, U, NC or W grades for the semester.

1st-Semester Freshmen/New Transfers:GPA below 1.000 at end of first semester | The student:* Is **not** eligible to enroll in the next regular (fall or spring) semester.
* May return to the university after serving the semester of suspension,

**OR*** If placed on suspension following the Spring term, a student may attend Summer School under a Summer Learning Contract and continue enrollment at WCU.
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| **Dismissal** | * Has served a semester of suspension,

**AND*** Did not meet the expected 2.0 semester GPA or complete 67% of attempted hours
 | The student:* Is **not** eligible to enroll in the university.
* May appeal/reapply for readmission after a period of at least two years.
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*\*Exception to Academic Warning Conditions:  Students who earn all F grades or a combination of all F, U, NC or W grades will be suspended without a period of Academic Warning.*

Withdrawal Policies

*Effective Fall 2014*

*See UNC Policy Manual, Section II, C. Course Withdrawal*

Course Withdrawals

After consultation with their academic advisor and the instructor of the course, a student may withdraw from any course prior to the expiration of one-half of the term and receive a W. Students are not permitted to withdraw from courses after one half the expiration of the term. A completed withdrawal form must be presented to the One Stop Student Service Center prior to the withdrawal deadline for posting. Course withdrawals do not count toward the twelve hours required for full-time enrollment and no refund is given.

**Students may withdraw from a maximum of 16 hours of courses during their career at Western Carolina University.** Any withdrawal beyond the limit will result in a Withdrew-Failing (WF) which will affect the semester and cumulative GPA as if it were an F.

Example:

Student has previously withdrawn from five 3-hour courses for a total of fifteen hours. The student may not withdraw from another 3-hour course as this would exceed the limit. The student would, however, be able to withdraw from another 1-hour course.

University Withdrawals

During the fall and spring semesters, a student may withdraw from the University through the last withdrawal date, as indicated by the registrar’s office. During summer sessions, a University withdrawal occurs only if the student withdraws from all summer sessions. University withdrawals will affect satisfactory academic progress and course completion rates but will not count towards the student’s 16-hour course withdrawal limit.

The University withdrawal process is initiated in the Advising Center, located in 214 Killian Annex. In the event of a University withdrawal, the student will receive a grade of “W” (“Withdrawn”) for all courses in which the student was enrolled. The “Fees, Expenses and Financial Aid” section of this catalog provides information regarding the effects of University withdrawal upon tuition and fee payments and financial aid.

A student may not use this policy for courses in which penalty grades were assigned as a result of academic misconduct. In all cases, the withdrawal date is noted on the student’s permanent record.

After the Withdrawal Deadline

There are three exceptions to the University withdrawal policy that will allow a student to withdraw from all courses. The exceptions are **medical withdrawals**, **withdrawals for deployment or other military contingency**, and **withdrawals for extenuating circumstances.**

**Withdrawal for Medical Reasons:**

A designated physician or her or his designee at Western Carolina University Student Health Services reviews all medical withdrawals and evaluates the medical documentation. Medical withdrawals are of two types:

Regular medical withdrawal (withdrawal for current semester):

* Requires medical documentation from a private physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or therapist. If the student has not been seen at Western Carolina University Student Health Services or Western Carolina University Counseling and Psychological Services, appropriate medical records from an outside provider are required.
* Requires documentation from outside providers to a designated Western Carolina University physician or counselor. Documentation may be by mail, by fax, or hand-delivered, but it must be in writing. This documentation must specifically recommend withdrawal and must give a specific date of withdrawal.
* Will not be granted if any final examinations for the current semester have been taken.

Retroactive medical withdrawal (withdrawal for a previous semester):

* Requires medical documentation from a private physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or therapist, or a Western Carolina University Student Health Services or Western Carolina University Counseling and Psychological Services physician, psychologist, or counselor who treated the student during the semester requested.
* Requires documentation from providers to the designated physician. Documentation may be by mail, by fax, or hand-delivered, but it must be in writing. This documentation must specifically recommend withdrawal and it must give a specific date.
* Students who attempt the final exam in a class will not be allowed to medically withdraw.
* Retroactive withdrawals must be completed by the end of the next regular semester (fall or spring).

Medical Withdrawal from One Course:

* A student may not typically withdraw from individual courses for medical reasons This includes courses in which penalty grades were assigned as a result of academic misconduct. A request to withdraw from a course or to reduce your academic load is not a University medical withdrawal.
* Students who wish to withdraw from fewer than all of their current classes for medical reasons may appeal to the dean of the division in which the course/s is/are being offered. In these cases, the student must provide documentation to the dean regarding the medical problem treated at Western Carolina University Student Health Services or Counseling and Psychological Services. If treatment has not occurred at the Western Carolina University Student Health Center, documentation from the outside provider will be required.

Western Carolina University is under no obligation to grant a medical withdrawal if final examinations have been taken. Such situations must be handled as grade replacements.

A notation of “W” is entered on the permanent record of the student for all withdrawals from the University for Medical Reasons and will affect the student’s course completion rate. However, a medical withdrawal will not affect a student’s sixteen-hour limit for withdrawals.

**Withdrawal for Deployment or Other Military Contingency:**

When a student is called to active military service during an academic term, he or she may choose one of the following two options:

* The student may request retroactive withdrawal to the beginning of the semester, with a full refund of tuition and fees.
* If at least 75 percent of the term has been completed, the student may request that the faculty member assign a grade for the course based on the work completed. The final decision about grading is left to the faculty member.

If the faculty member assigns a grade of “I,” the student must complete course requirements within one semester or make alternative arrangements with the faculty member (see “Incomplete Policy”).

If a student decides to enlist in the military, he/she will be subject to the regular withdrawal process.

**Withdrawals from the University for Extenuating Circumstances:**

Students can petition the Office of the Provost to withdraw from the University for extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may include: death or serious illness within the immediate family, major life event in the family (e.g. loss of home, incarceration), financial hardship, pregnancy, and others as deemed appropriate by a member of the Office of the Provost. Withdrawal for extenuating circumstances will affect satisfactory academic progress and course completion rates but will not count towards the student’s 16-hour withdrawal limit.

Grade Replacement Policy

*Effective Fall 2014*

*See UNC Policy Manual, Section II, D. Course Repeats, and Section II, F. Grade Exclusion or Grade Replacement*

Students may repeat a maximum of 16 credit hours. When a student repeats a course, only the most recent grade will be used in calculation of the student’s grade point average and counted in the hours toward graduation. However, all grades shall remain on the student’s transcript.

Exceptions:

1. The First Year Seminar may not be repeated.
2. Courses available for re-enrollment for additional credit are not counted as repeats unless the student declares a repeat or exceeds the number of times for which credit can be earned in the course.
3. Some academic programs may have policies that further regulate the number of repeats. Students should check with their advisor about additional regulations.

The 16 credit hour limit of the repeat/grade replacement policy may be appealed by the student in writing to the student’s advisor, department head or program director, and Dean.

Note:

* All course repeats, except courses available for re-enrollment for additional credit, require a permit for enrollment. *If a faculty advisor approves the repeat permit, he/she can call or email the department head to have the permit entered in Banner so the student can enroll. DO NOT SEND STUDENTS TO THE ONESTOP FOR REPEAT PERMITS. ONESTOP PERSONNEL DO NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO GRANT REPEAT PERMITS.*
* All repeats, except for re-enrollment for additional credit courses, result in a mandatory grade replacement. *(Regardless of the grade earned, the grade earned in the last course taken will replacethe grade of the previous course.)*

Note: Pursuant to actions of the North Carolina General Assembly and policy adopted by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina, a fifty percent tuition surcharge applies to students who take more than 140 semester hours and more than eight regular semesters (i.e., fall and spring) to complete a baccalaureate degree. The semester hours used to calculate the total of 140 hours include repeated, failed, and transferred credit courses.