

# Academic Progress

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## Graduate Credit

For purposes of academic accounting, credits expressed in “semester hours” are assigned to each course. One semester hour of lecture course credit is awarded for 13-15 contact hours per semester. One semester hour of laboratory credit is awarded for approximately 30 hours of work in the laboratory. Students may not earn “credit by examination” at the graduate level.

A graduate student’s earned semester hours include all hours in which a grade of C or better or a grade of P in a pass/not pass course was earned. A graduate student’s attempted semester hours include all hours for which a student earned a grade of A, B, C, F, P or NP.

## Transfer Credit

Previously earned graduate credit with a grade of B or above while enrolled at another regionally accredited graduate school may be eligible for transfer into the student’s current degree program if it has not been applied toward another degree (either at UAB or elsewhere). In addition, credit may be awarded for non-collegiate courses in accordance with American Council on Education recommendations and approval of the appropriate department chair and dean. All transfer credit requests must be initiated by the student and require the approval of the graduate program director and the Graduate School. Transfer of Credit forms are available online at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/online-forms>. Completion of this form does not guarantee that the transfer credit will be granted. No more than 12 semester hours of graduate credit can be transferred to UAB. Students wishing to request an exception to the transfer credit hour limit must receive the approval of the program director, department chair, and Graduate School Dean. Once transfer credit has been approved, it will be included in the calculation of the grade point average in the student’s current UAB program.

In programs offered jointly by UAB and other universities, all graduate credits earned in the program at a cooperating university are eligible for transfer to UAB. If a student earns credit in one UAB graduate program and is later admitted to another program, unused credits from the previous program, if applicable, are eligible for consideration for transfer into the current program.

## Grading and Grade Point Average (GPA)

The grade of A indicates superior performance, B indicates adequate performance, and C indicates performance only minimally adequate for a graduate student. Any graduate student completing a course at the 500 level or above with a performance below the C level will receive a grade of F; the Graduate School does not use the grade of D. In some graduate programs, a grade of C is a failing grade. It is the student’s responsibility to know and abide by program grading requirements which may be more stringent than that of the Graduate School.

Four (4.0) quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which an A is earned, three (3.0) quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which a B is earned, and two (2.0) quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which a C is earned. No quality points are awarded for a grade of an F. A graduate student’s grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total quality points awarded by a student’s semester hours attempted at the graduate level. Students can

view their cumulative GPA in [BlazerNET](#) and can view their term GPA on their transcript which is also available in [BlazerNET](#).

For courses designated as pass/not pass, a grade of P (passing) signifies satisfactory work. A grade of NP (not passing) indicates unsatisfactory work although there is no penalty assessed with respect to the grade point average (GPA).

## Other Grade Notations

**N (no grade reported)** A temporary notation made by the Office of the Registrar if no grade (A, B, C, F, I, or P) is assigned to the student by the course instructor. This notation is used only when the Office of Registrar is unable to obtain a grade from the instructor prior to the issuing of grades for the semester or when the course is designed to extend beyond a single term. It remains the instructor’s responsibility to assign a permanent grade. If the instructor has not submitted a grade by the end of the following term, the “N” (no grade submitted) is changed automatically to an “F” (failing) by the Office of the Registrar. The notation “N” cannot be extended. A notation of no grade submitted may not be used to meet a prerequisite requirement. A student cannot graduate with an no grade submitted notation on his or her academic record.

**I (incomplete)** The temporary notation of “I” (incomplete) may be reported at the discretion of the instructor to indicate that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all course requirements. An incomplete is never given to enable a student to raise a deficient grade. This notation should not be used unless there is reasonable certainty that the requirements will be completed during the following semester because, at the end of the next semester, the incomplete automatically changes to an F if it has not been replaced with a letter grade. In highly unusual circumstances, a student may request an extension of time to complete the requirements. This request must be submitted in writing in advance of the time when the grade automatically changes to an F because the approval of the instructor, graduate program director, and the Graduate School are all required.

A student cannot graduate with an I or N grade designation on their record.

**W (withdrawn)** A notation assigned by the Office of the Registrar reflecting an administrative action initiated by the student in accordance with regulations governing withdrawal from courses. “W” (withdrawn) may not be assigned by the instructor.

## Academic Standing

It is critically important that graduate students at UAB understand both the Graduate School’s and their program’s academic standing policy and that they are aware of their own academic standing at all times. For a student to maintain good academic standing in the Graduate School, they must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 (B average) and an overall satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses, as well as not be on probation for an academic integrity violation. Satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses is defined as earning at least as many hours of P as of NP grades.

A degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking graduate student, who, at the end of any semester, fails to meet the criteria to maintain good academic standing will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation must re-establish good academic standing within the next two semesters during which they are enrolled at UAB. Failure to reestablish good academic standing at the end of their second term of enrollment

while on academic probation will result in academic dismissal from the UAB Graduate School.

The rules stated above govern academic probation and dismissal administered by the Graduate School. Individual graduate programs may establish and administer program probation and dismissal governed by more stringent requirements. In general, a student's retention in a specific graduate program is contingent on the faculty's belief that the student is likely to complete the program successfully. If the faculty ceases to hold this belief at any point, the student may be dismissed from the program. It is a graduate student's responsibility to be aware of and abide by program academic standing requirements in addition to the general academic standing policy in the Graduate School. Program probation and dismissal policies preempt the Graduate School policies.

## Repeated Courses

Graduate students may repeat a course one (1) time in an effort to improve grades and/or to improve understanding of the course content only with the permission of the graduate program. All courses taken and all grades earned are permanently recorded on the student's transcript. Both grades will also be calculated in the student's GPA unless the Grade Replacement policy is applied; however, a student is only able to earn credit hours for the same class one time. Students wishing to repeat a course more than one time should seek approval of both their program director and the Graduate School. **Graduate programs may choose to not allow students to repeat courses.**

## Grade Replacement

A graduate student who repeats a course taken at UAB and earns a better grade the second time may request a grade replacement in which the grade for the first course be excluded from their GPA calculation. The grade replacement policy may be used a maximum of two (2) times, only once for any course, which allows a student to use grade replacement for two different courses. **Graduate programs reserve the right to not allow grade replacement or to allow less than the Graduate School's maximum number of grade replacements. In addition, individual programs may have course repeat and grade replacement policy rules in addition to those of the Graduate School.**

If approved, the student's transcript will show both the original grade and the course repeat grade; however, the first grade will be excluded from the student's GPA calculation and only the grade points and credit hours earned in the repeated courses will be counted toward degree completion. Once a course grade is replaced, the decision is irrevocable. In accordance with the UAB Academic Honor Code, any course grade of F for academic misconduct supersedes any other grade or notation for that class and therefore is not eligible for grade replacement.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the Graduate School of their request to apply the grade replacement policy to a repeated course as the process is neither automatic nor guaranteed. The grade replacement policy requires the approval of the graduate program director and the Graduate School. Grade replacement requests must be made prior to degree/certificate awarding. The grade replacement policy can only be applied to grades earned at UAB and may not be applied after the student has graduated.

The Grade Replacement Request form is available online at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-school-quicklinks/online-forms>.

## Graduate GPA Adjustment Policy

Occasionally, graduate students may have a cumulative Graduate GPA below 3.0 as a consequence of previous performance in coursework that is no longer valid, and/or taken as part of a program unrelated to that in which they are currently enrolled. When this occurs, Graduate GPA Adjustment may be appropriate.

Once during a student's graduate academic career, grades from previously completed UAB courses may be petitioned for removal from the cumulative graduate GPA under the following conditions:

- When courses have expired (5 years for masters and 7 years for doctoral) and they
  - 1) are not credited towards current degree requirements
  - 2) were not validated via the Validation of Expired Coursework process
- OR When the degree program has changed and previously completed courses are unrelated to the new degree requirements and are not counted towards degree requirements, regardless of the grade earned

When Graduate GPA Adjustment occurs, all previous graduate coursework will be removed from the graduate GPA calculation except in cases where previous coursework was applied toward a successfully completed program.

Coursework will remain on the academic record and UAB transcript, but will not be included in the student's graduate GPA calculation.

In accordance with the UAB Academic Integrity Code, any course grade of F for academic misconduct supersedes any other grade or notation for that class and therefore is not eligible for inclusion in the Graduate GPA Adjustment Policy.

Graduate programs reserve the right to not allow Graduate GPA Adjustment.

## Grade Changes

Final grades for an I (Incomplete) should be submitted no later than the grade submission deadline of the semester after the notation was originally awarded; Incomplete grades not changed by that time will convert to Fs. In general, grades submitted by graduate faculty members are not subject to change by reason of revision of the teacher's judgment; nor are submitted grades to be revised on the basis of a second trial (e.g., a new examination or additional work undertaken or completed). Grade changes submitted in order to correct an error in computation or transcription must be made within two semesters after the grades were originally submitted. These grade changes must be submitted via [BlazerNET](#) and require the faculty member's statement as to the reason for the change, the approval of the department head, and the approval of the dean of the school in which the course is taught.

## Time Limitations

Graduate students are generally expected to complete all degree requirements within **5 years of matriculation for masters and certificates, and 7 years of matriculation for doctoral students.** One extension of these time limits can be requested when mitigating circumstances preclude completion of requirements within the time limit. The request for an extension must include a written and signed completion plan outlining the timeline for degree completion. Instructions

for preparing a completion plan are available on the Graduate School website at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-school-quicklinks/online-forms>. Time limit extension requests require the approval of the student's dissertation committee (if applicable) as well as graduate program director and must be presented in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School for consideration and approval. Masters and certificate courses taken more than 5 years before graduation and doctoral courses taken 7 years before graduation will not be applied toward a degree without the approval of the graduate program director and Graduate Dean.

## Academic Ethics & Misconduct

Graduate students at UAB have joined a distinguished academic community that is guided by a conviction in the worth of knowledge and its pursuit. By virtue of their membership in this community, they accrue many benefits—among them, access to the ideas and materials of others. Graduate students not only learn from others but also engage in the pursuit of new knowledge and, in some instances, teach or provide service to others. Being a member of an academic community and functioning in multiple roles in the community carries with it certain responsibilities.

As members of an academic community, students, faculty, and administrators share a responsibility to seek truths and communicate them to others. As we pursue knowledge and encourage learning, we acknowledge the need for a free exchange of ideas and recognize the importance of listening to and maintaining respect for the views of others. We must always aspire to learn, apply, and communicate to others the best scholarly standards of the disciplines in which we are involved. High scholarly standards demand high ethical standards.

We must commit to learning and communicating the best ethical standards and their application to our disciplines. In interactions with others, we must demonstrate respect for them as individuals, give credit for significant academic or scholarly assistance, and respect the confidential nature of some exchanges. We must adhere to the highest standards of academic conduct, avoiding those acts of misconduct and dishonesty that undermine the purposes of the academic community.

All UAB students are expected to be familiar with the UAB Academic Integrity Code as well as any conduct codes that are specific to their schools or disciplines. The code represents a commitment to integrity in the academic community and a respect for an individual's educational endeavors.

## Conduct and Complaints

### Student Conduct Code

The Student Conduct Code promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights and responsibilities expected of students consistent with the core missions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This Code describes the standards or behavior for all students, and outlines student's rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations. Behavior that violates UAB standards of conduct listed within the Student Conduct Code and elsewhere will be subject to disciplinary action through the appropriate conduct process. Whether it is determined that an individual or group is responsible for the violation(s), either by direct involvement or by condoning, encouraging, or covering up the violation, appropriate response will occur with respect to the individual(s) and/or group involved.

## Academic Integrity Code

The University of Alabama at Birmingham expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Students, faculty, and the administration of the institution must be involved to ensure this quality of academic conduct. The purpose of the Academic Integrity Code is to support our academic mission and to maintain and promote academic integrity. All students in attendance at UAB are expected to pursue all academic endeavors with integrity, honor, and professionalism and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars.

To view the full Academic Integrity Code policy [here](#).

## Student Complaints

### Academic Matters

Judgments on academic matters are most appropriately made by individuals with expertise in the particular academic discipline involved. For this reason, complaints by students on academic matters are the responsibility of the department and school involved. Normally, such complaints can be resolved quickly through discussion with the faculty directly involved. In rare situations where such resolution does not occur, the student should contact the chair of the appropriate academic department to file a formal grievance. For programs where no department chair is available, the grievance should contact the school's Associate Dean.

The student's grievance should be submitted in writing and accompanied by any appropriate documentation. Grievances should be submitted at the earliest possible time. Consideration will not be given to any grievance submitted later than the end of the term immediately following the term in which the matter in question arose. The department should acknowledge the date the grievance is received and provide notice to the student of when an answer may be expected. It is the responsibility of the department chair to provide an answer to the student within 10 working days. If the matter cannot be settled within the department, the student has 10 working days from the day the department's response is received to appeal to the dean of the school in which the department is located. The dean should acknowledge receipt of the student's appeal and inform the student of the course of action within 10 working days of the date the appeal is received in the dean's office.

At the dean's discretion, an advisory panel may be appointed to study the disagreement and make a recommendation to the dean. However, it is the responsibility and prerogative of the dean alone to make, in a timely manner, a decision on any academic disputes which have not been resolved at lower levels, and the decision of the dean is final.

### Non-Academic Matters

When complaints on non-academic matters cannot be settled by the persons directly involved, a written complaint should follow the instructions in the [Student Complaint Policy](#).