Academic Progress

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 (https://padlock.idm.uab.edu/cas/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fidm.uab.edu%2fsso%2fblazernet%3finst%3dprod) and can view their term GPA on their transcript which is also available in BlazerNET (https://padlock.idm.uab.edu/cas/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fidm.uab.edu%2fsso%2fblazernet%3finst%3dprod).

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

Temporary Grade Notations

If an instructor does not submit a grade at the end of a semester, a temporary grade of “N” (no grade reported) will be recorded. A grade of N does not positively or negatively impact a student’s GPA. However, if no permanent grade has been reported by the end of the following semester, an F will automatically be entered in the student’s academic record for the course.

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.

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. 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 application for degree. 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.

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 (https://padlock.idm.uab.edu/cas/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fidm.uab.edu%2fsso%2fblazernet%3finst%3dprod) 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 Honor Code as well as any honor 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:

I have read and, by choosing to become a member of the UAB academic community, accept the UAB Honor Code. I understand that violation of this code will result in penalties as severe as expulsion from the university. I promise and confirm that I will not, at any time and under any circumstances, involve myself with abetting, cheating, plagiarism,
fabrication, or misrepresentation while enrolled as a student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Conduct and Complaints

Student Conduct

The university expects mature and honorable behavior from every student and reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action when such behavior is not forthcoming.

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The UAB Academic Honor Code

UAB 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. Academic misconduct undermines the purpose of education. Such behavior is a serious violation of the trust that must exist among faculty and students for a university to nurture intellectual growth and development. Academic misconduct can generally be defined as all acts of dishonesty in an academic or related matter.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following categories of behavior:

ABETTING is helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Allowing someone to copy your quiz answers or use your work as their own are examples of abetting.

CHEATING is the unauthorized use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids, the work of others, or computer-related information.

PLAGIARISM means claiming as your own the ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by someone else. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, the use of commercially available scholarly papers, failure to cite sources, or copying another person’s ideas.

FABRICATION means presenting falsified data, citations, or quotations as genuine.

MISREPRESENTATION is falsification, alteration, or the misstatement of the contents of documents, academic work, or other materials related to academic matters, including work substantially done for one class as work done for another without receiving prior approval from the instructor.

Violations of the UAB Academic Honor Code are punishable by a range of penalties, from receiving a failing grade on an assignment to an F in the course to dismissal. Any course grade of F for academic misconduct supersedes any other grade or notation for that class. Withdrawal from a course while a possible violation of the Academic Honor Code is under review will not preclude the assignment of a course grade that appropriately reflects the student’s performance prior to withdrawal if the violation is substantiated.

Procedure for Suspected Violation

In the event of a suspected violation of the Academic Honor Code, UAB follows this procedure:

1. Upon reaching the conclusion that academic dishonesty may have occurred and that action is warranted, the instructor should inform the student of the charge as soon as possible. The student has the right to hear the instructor’s reasons for making the charge, to inspect all relevant evidence in the instructor’s possession, and to respond to the charge. Based on the student’s response and all the evidence, the instructor will determine if a penalty is appropriate. If a penalty is deemed appropriate, the instructor will inform the student of the action to be taken. If the student is not in agreement with the findings or the penalty, the instructor will provide the student with a written statement of the action taken and the basis for it. A copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of the department.

2. Within two weeks of this notification of a judgment of academic dishonesty, the student may appeal the instructor’s decision by letter to the chair of the department or his/her designated representative. The chair, acting expeditiously, should take testimony from the student, the instructor, and all appropriate witnesses and make a decision. If the chair reverses the finding of academic misconduct, the instructor must reexamine the work in question and assign credit without prejudice. In the event that the chair is the instructor in the course, the dean will replace the chair in the appeal process.

3. In cases where a grade of F is assigned in the course and the student has utilized the appeal process described above (in section 2), the student has two weeks to appeal the decision by letter to the dean of the school responsible for the course. 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 appeal and make a recommendation to the dean. However, it is the responsibility and prerogative of the dean alone to make, in a timely manner, the final decision. The decision of the dean is final.

4. In cases where the final decision concerning an academic misconduct charge is an F for the course, a letter to this effect will be sent to the Office of the Registrar and be kept on file. The course repeat policy will not apply to course grades resulting from instances of academic misconduct. In these cases, the grades of F received will be computed in the UAB grade point average.

A student who has received the grade of F for two instances of academic misconduct will be expelled from the university. Under certain circumstances, a student may be expelled on the first offense. The student will be duly informed of the pending expulsion and will be provided the opportunity to be heard. The student has two weeks after notification to file a request for an appeal hearing with the Office of the Provost. The ad hoc appeals committee will consist of two people designated by the Provost, one student appointed by the President of the USGA, and two faculty members appointed by the chair of the Faculty.
Senate. The Provost will designate the person to serve as chair who will coordinate and preside at all meetings. Students expelled from UAB for academic misconduct will have that noted on their transcripts.

In addition, students should consult the policies of the school/program in which they are enrolled to determine school/program guidelines and penalties regarding academic misconduct and suspension for academic misconduct. Schools that suspend a student on the first offense may post this offense on the student’s UAB academic record.

A student suspended from a UAB school for academic misconduct will have a hold placed on his/her registration and will not be permitted to enroll in another UAB school without that school’s permission. Some UAB programs have policies preventing enrollment of students with past academic misconduct offenses.

Note that individual schools may have academic misconduct rules in addition to the above.

Non-Academic Conduct

Your first priority at UAB is to get a great education, plain and simple. The Non-Academic Conduct Policy, maintained by the office of Student Engagement, provides the guidelines that protect your chance at getting that top-quality education by setting the standard for what it means to be a successful student.

Non-Academic Student Conduct Policy (http://www.uab.edu/students/sarc/student-conduct)

Student Engagement, specifically regarding student conduct is one of many channels that the university can use to foster the personal development of its students. In cases where a student engages in non-academic misconduct, the conduct process is also an approach that we use to protect the safety of the university community. While the conduct process does adjudicate misconduct, it is not a legal system. The conduct process does not use the same procedures, burdens of proof, or rules of evidence as the legal systems. In order to maintain an educational tone, the university takes steps to ensure that the process is as non-adversarial as possible, while still safeguarding the rights of students.

The non-academic misconduct process is an integral part of the educational mission and goals of UAB and Student Life. The Office of Student Engagement oversees and implements the non-academic misconduct process. The nonacademic misconduct process is designed to provide and help maintain an educational atmosphere with emphasis on developing individual understanding and acceptance of personal and social responsibilities; creating a sense of belonging within a welcoming environment; and challenging and supporting students to reflect, integrate, and act upon their UAB experience.

Report a violation of the Code of Conduct (http://www.uab.edu/students/sarc/student-conduct)

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. 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 be forwarded to the appropriate office. If the administrative officer is unsuccessful in resolving the complaint, it may then be forwarded in writing to the Provost or a designee for further consideration. For specific information concerning the procedures and processes for non-academic complaints and grievances, contact the Office of Student Engagement or visit the following web site http://www.uab.edu/students/sarc/