

## Frequently Asked Questions about Student Academic Policies

The most current information about UNCW academic policies and regulations can be found in each year's UNCW Undergraduate or Graduate Catalogues. [links to both catalogues here]

The descriptions below provide a summary of answers to some of the questions we receive most often in this office.

- What does it mean to **drop a course**? How does one go about dropping a course?
  - When a course is dropped, it disappears from a student's academic records, as if there had never been enrollment in the course. The University **deadline** for dropping a course, posted on the **University Calendar**, is approximately one week after classes begin in a fall or spring semester, and just days after classes begin in the summer sessions. Students can drop courses via SeaNet prior to the drop/add deadline. Courses cannot be dropped once the deadline has passed. Students should check their schedule carefully prior to the drop/add deadline, to make sure that they are not enrolled in any courses they do not wish to continue. It is the student's responsibility to drop any course they do not wish to continue via SeaNet prior to the drop/add deadline.
- What does it mean to **withdraw** from a course? How does one go about withdrawing?
  - When a student withdraws from a course, the course will remain part of the student's academic record; instead of a regular grade, a "W" (or "WF") will be posted for that course on the student's transcript. A "W" has no impact on a student's GPA, although the course does count as hours attempted. A "WF" is calculated into the GPA just as a grade of "F" would be; hours count as GPA hours. The University **deadline** for withdrawing from a course is posted on the University calendar, and falls approximately seven weeks after classes begin in the fall and spring semesters. This time period is much shorter for summer sessions. Prior to the withdrawal deadline, students can withdraw from one or more classes via SeaNet. However, it is not possible to withdraw from all courses via SeaNet. Students wishing to withdraw from all courses for a given semester prior to the withdrawal deadline must report to the Office of the Dean of Students to complete the necessary form.
  - Students wishing to withdraw from one or more classes **after** the withdrawal deadline must do so by reporting to the Registrar's Office; a grade of "WF" will be posted for each course from which the student withdraws. Students wishing to withdraw from all courses for a term, after the withdrawal deadline, must report to the Office of the Dean of Students.
  - Should extenuating circumstances warrant, the grade of "WF" assigned for courses withdrawn after the withdrawal deadline may be appealed for change to a "W" when a student seeks withdrawal from all courses for the semester. For students with a major in the College of Arts and Sciences, the appeal should be made to Dr. Carol Pilgrim, Associate Dean for Student Policies and Curriculum. A successful appeal must include written documentation of extenuating circumstances such as: death of an immediate family member; traumatic and unforeseen circumstances beyond a student's control;

prolonged emotional instability, physical injury or illness which has resulted in the student's inability to complete academic responsibilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the appeal by submitting a written request and supporting documentation. The appeal must be made by the last day of classes in the semester following the one for which the withdrawal is requested.

- **Important note:** Instructors cannot assign a grade of "W". The only way to receive a "W" or "WF" is through one of the routes described above.
- What is a grade of "**Incomplete**"? What circumstances must be present in order for a grade of "Incomplete" to be awarded?
  - A student must initiate a request for a grade of "Incomplete" with the course instructor by explaining and providing evidence of extenuating circumstances that have prevented completion of all work in the course by the end of the term of enrollment. This request must be made before grades are posted for the course. Decisions about awarding the grade of "Incomplete" are at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor also determines the amount of additional time allowed to complete the work, up to a maximum of one regular semester (fall or spring). It is the student's responsibility to maintain communication and schedule timely appointments with the instructor regarding the completion of required work. When Incompletes are not satisfied by the date specified by the instructor, or by the end of the next regular semester, the "I" is converted to an "F", and cannot be changed. Also, any grades of "Incomplete" remaining at the time of a student's graduation will be converted to "F". A student cannot register again for a given class when attempting to remove a grade of "Incomplete" for that class.
  - The grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned only if all of the following conditions pertain:
    - The student is in good standing in the course and has satisfactorily completed the greater portion of the requirements for the class; and
    - The student is prevented from completing the remaining requirements by unavoidable circumstances (not by incompetence or neglect); and
    - The student can complete the remaining requirements with the allowed time (up to a maximum of one regular semester) without repeating the course; and
    - The instructor and student have discussed and agreed to the grade and conditions.
  - The grade of "I" (Incomplete) **cannot** be given for **any** of the following reasons:
    - A student otherwise in good standing fails to turn in an assignment or take the final examination with no communication with the instructor; or
    - The student is failing the course or needs to repeat it.
    - For these cases, the appropriate grade is "F". If the instructor later receives documentation of the student's incapacitation, the instructor may submit a grade change if approved by the department Chair and the Associate Dean of Student Policy. However, an "F" is the only appropriate grade when a student

has not completed coursework without being excused by the instructor. Students may retake such a course under the course repeat policy.

- When can a course be **repeated**? How does a **grade replacement** work?
  - Students who receive a grade of “C” (2.0) or better in a course may not repeat the course for credit or for a grade, but may audit the course without credit. When students repeat a course for which they have previously earned credit (e.g., as a transfer course), the status will automatically be changed to audit.
  - Students who receive a grade below a “C” (2.0) in a course taken at UNCW may repeat the course at UNCW. For the first five different courses repeated, the grade and hours of credit earned for the course the first time it was taken will be excluded in calculating the student’s GPA and hours toward graduation. All courses and grades will remain on the student’s transcript. It is important to note that the grade earned the second time a course is taken always replaces the grade earned the first time the course was taken, regardless of which grade was better.
  - In interpreting the grade replacement policy, it is to be understood that:
    - The “first five times” means
      - That the policy is automatically operative for a student the first time the student repeats a course, and
      - That the five repeats involve five different courses;
    - A student may repeat more than 5 courses, but the grade replacement policy will hold for only the first five;
    - This policy does not hold for repeating graduate courses (see the Graduate Catalogue for the appropriate policy).
  - Students enrolled in a special topics course for a grade replacement must enroll in the same topic for which they originally received an unsatisfactory grade.
  - Students should be aware that a given course may be offered infrequently, or in some cases, only once. Similarly, courses are sometimes removed from the curriculum. It is understood that grade replacement is an option only when a regularly scheduled section of the same course is offered.
  - Note: A poor grade received owing to admitted or adjudicated academic dishonesty shall not be replaced if the course is repeated. Both the penalty grade and the new grade will appear on the student’s transcript and count in the student’s GPA. A student may not appeal the policy stated in the paragraph to any faculty or administrative level.
  
- What is a **grade appeal**? What **process** needs to be followed when a student wished to appeal a grade in a particular course?
  - Any student considering a grade appeal should understand that each faculty member has the academic freedom and responsibility to determine grades according to any

method, chosen by the faculty member, that is professionally acceptable, communicated to everyone in the class, and applied to all students evenly. However, prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation by a faculty member is a violation of a student's rights and is the valid ground for a grade appeal.

- Any student who contests a course grade shall first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor involved. Failing to reach a satisfactory resolution, the student may appeal the grade in accordance with the procedures outlined below. These procedures are not to be used in cases involving student academic dishonesty. An appeal must be made no later than the last day of class of the semester following the one in which the grade was earned. Grades not appealed by that time are permanent.
  - The student must present a written appeal to the Chair of the department within which the contested grade was awarded. The written statement shall limit itself to descriptions of evidence pertaining to the valid ground for the appeal. By conferring with the student and the instructor, the Chair will seek resolution by mutual agreement.
  - Failing such resolution, the department Chair shall transmit the written appeal to Dr. Carol Pilgrim, Associate Dean for Student Policy. Dr. Pilgrim will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the appeal, and then will convene the Grade Appeals Committee.
  - The Grade Appeals Committee will consist of Dr. Pilgrim and five appointed faculty members. The Committee will consider evidence from the student and from the instructor, and then make a decision on the merits of the case. The Committee may either affirm the instructor's decision, or support the student's appeal. In the latter case, the Committee will also prescribe the method by which the student will be reevaluated. These results will be communicated in writing to the instructor, the student, and the department Chair. The grade resulting from the Committee's decision is final and may not be further appealed.
  
- What is meant by **academic retention**? What circumstances lead to **academic probation or dismissal**?
  - UNCW and the College of Arts and Sciences both encourage and require scholarship. In order to continue enrollment at UNCW, all students must meet the grade point requirements outlined below.

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### RETENTION CHART

Total Quality (GPA) Hours plus Transfer Hours	Good Academic Standing	Academic Probation	Required GPA for Eligibility to Continue
1-45	2.0	1.75-1.99	1.75
46 or more	2.0		2.00

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- Transfer students are placed in the retention charts above based on total hours transferred from all institutions attended. Transfer students' grade point averages (GPAs) are computed only on quality hours attempted at UNCW.
- An undergraduate student is automatically placed on **academic probation** when the cumulative GPA falls below 2.0.
  - Students who fall within the academic probation category at the end of any semester will be limited to enrolling in no more than 14 hours in the following semester.
  - A student on academic probation is expected to show satisfactory academic progress by the end of the next semester, regardless of the number of hours attempted. Satisfactory academic progress is generally defined as improvement in the GPA earned at the end of each semester during the probationary period. A student is expected to be in good academic standing within 30 credit hours after being placed on academic probation.
  - When a student is placed on academic probation, it is the responsibility of the student to arrange regular meetings with his or her academic advisor to consider specific academic intervention strategies.
- **Academic Dismissal:** Students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement for retention at the conclusion of the spring semester will be academically ineligible to enroll in UNCW course for the following fall. The student has the option of attempting to make up deficiencies during UNCW's summer sessions immediately following the spring semester in which the ineligibility was declared.
  - If a student is not in good academic standing at the conclusion of the summer sessions, the student will be dismissed from the university and will not be permitted to enroll for two consecutive regular semesters (fall and spring).

- Full-time students (at least 12 hours) who earn a 0.0 GPA in any semester will be dismissed from the university and will not be permitted to enroll for two consecutive regular semesters.
    - Full-time students (at least 12 hours) who do not earn at least a 1.00 semester GPA and pass at least nine academic hours in any semester will be reviewed by Dr. Pilgrim to determine academic eligibility.
    - Students who have been dismissed may appeal for readmission after a minimum of two consecutive regular semesters away from UNCW. Readmission is contingent upon the results of the Re-enrollment Review. Students wishing to appeal for readmission should pay careful attention to the early due dates (posted on the **Registrar's website**; see ADMISSIONS – FORMER STUDENTS) for submitting materials.
    - If a student's appeal is approved and the student is allowed to re-enroll, she/he must see an academic advisor before registering for classes.
    - Academically dismissed students may enroll in any summer session at UNCW.
  - Students who have been academically dismissed for the first time may seek administrative review of mitigating circumstances for authorization to enroll in the following semester under an academic contract.
    - Students in the College of Arts and Sciences who seek a review must submit the required appeal form and a written statement explaining their circumstances to Dr. Pilgrim. The appeal must be submitted within 10 days after the end of the last semester (spring or summer) in which a student is enrolled. Students must submit a hard copy of the appeal in person in 109 Bear Hall and at that time, schedule an appointment to meet with Dr. Pilgrim.
    - Students must understand that submitting an appeal does not guarantee an approval; indeed, the number of appeals approved each year is small. The appeal process may take several days to be completed.
  - After a second declaration of academic dismissal, eligibility for readmission during a regular semester (fall or spring) can be restored only by completing work during the summer sessions at UNCW sufficient to improve the GPA to the required level, as indicated in the Retention Chart above.
- What is meant by **Transient Study**? What is the appropriate **process** when a current UNCW student wishes to take a course at another university, to be transferred back to UNCW?
  - Students engaged in **Transient Study** earn credits toward degree requirements at UNCW by taking courses at other regionally-accredited two- and four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad.
  - Students should always obtain permission for transient study coursework of interest prior to enrolling in the course(s). To receive permission, a student must complete the "**Permission for Transient Study**" request available in mySeaport prior to registering for the course. The department's approval must be processed with the Office of the Registrar prior to the student leaving campus.

- Students should be aware that the number of credits earned outside of UNCW and allowed to count toward UNCW graduation requirements is limited. A maximum of 64 credits from a 2-year college can count toward UNCW graduation requirements (including both transfer and transient study credits). A maximum of 93 credits from a 4-year college or university can count toward UNCW graduation requirements (including both transfer and transient study credits). AP, CLEP, and military credit are included in these totals.
  - Students should also be aware that hours attempted and grades earned at other institutions are not used in computing their UNCW GPA. In other words, a student's UNCW GPA will not be impacted by taking courses elsewhere. Students should be careful not to repeat a course at another institution if they have previously earned a low grade in the same course at UNCW and wish to replace the grade. Transfer credit received for the course will prevent the student from repeating the course at UNCW to improve the UNCW GPA.
  - Credit hours earned at another institution are included in the determination of the GPA necessary for academic eligibility (see the Retention Chart). Thus, earning credits elsewhere can result in an increase in the GPA required for eligibility. Hours attempted and grades earned at other institutions are also used when determining graduation honors and distinctions.
- What are the **Attendance Policies** at UNCW and in the College of Arts and Sciences?
    - Students are expected to be present at all regular class meetings and examinations for the courses in which they are registered. Each faculty member is responsible for setting the policy concerning the role of attendance in determining grades for their classes. It is the responsibility of the students to learn and comply with the policies set for each class in which they are registered. Students should familiarize themselves thoroughly with each course's attendance policy, as explained in the course syllabus. Students should be aware that when a course policy allows for a specific number of absences with no penalty, that number typically includes absences for any reason (including those with documented justification). For many courses, absences beyond the allowed number mean that the student has not completed the same work as other students in the class and therefore cannot receive the same grade.
    - An instructor of any course may cancel a student's registration in the course if the registered student fails to attend the **first class meeting** of the term and fails to notify the instructor of her/his desire to remain enrolled within 24 hours of the class meeting time. However, students wishing to drop or withdraw from a class should not assume they have done so by not attending the first class or subsequent classes. Students wishing to drop or withdraw must take the necessary steps, described in this document and in the Undergraduate Catalogue.

- How long can courses be **added** to a student's schedule?
  - As long as the SeaNet registration system is open, students can enroll, or add, available courses to their schedule at any time from pre-registration up through the Drop/Add Deadline. The University **deadline** for adding a course, posted on the **University Calendar**, is approximately one week after classes begin in a fall or spring semester, and just days after classes begin in the summer sessions.
  - Students should be aware that there are risks involved when adding into a course after classes have begun. Just because it is possible to add a course does not mean that doing so is a good idea. Students are responsible for any work missed in the course prior to their enrollment. If one or more class meetings have been held, students are strongly advised to speak with the course instructor prior to adding, to determine whether adding is appropriate. When students add a course at the end of the drop/add period, there may be little or no opportunity to drop the course if it proves to be a poor fit for the student's needs.
  - Courses cannot be added once the deadline has passed. Students should check their schedule carefully prior to the drop/add deadline, to make sure that they are enrolled in every course they are attending and wish to continue (if there are open seats in the course). It is the student's responsibility to add each course she/he wishes to continue via SeaNet prior to the drop/add deadline.
  
- What is the maximum number of enrolled hours allowed for a single semester? What are the policies for requesting an **overload**?
  - Degree students may enroll in up to 18 hours in a regular semester (fall or spring) without special permission. The maximum number of hours allowed in a single summer term is 8, unless special permission is granted.
  - Students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher may request special permission to enroll in up to 21 semester hours. Students should always consult first with their academic advisor about the advisability of taking on a course overload. If the advisor agrees that the extra hours are appropriate, she or he should send an email to Dr. Pilgrim, verifying their endorsement and including the student's name, ID number, and number of hours requested. Special exceptions to the 3.5 GPA may be considered only when the student's GPA is very close to that criterion, and the advisor can provide strong justification for the additional hours.
  - Students should understand that once approved, processing the request may take several days. Thus, a request for permission for extra hours must be made well before the drop/add deadline.

- What is a **Directed Individual Study (DIS)**? How does a student enroll in a DIS? What are the requirements and policies for a DIS?
  - A DIS course, designated in each academic department as 491, involves investigation of a subject matter beyond what is offered in existing courses. Students interested in exploring a DIS must make arrangements with an individual faculty member. The student and faculty mentor design an individualized learning experience, with specific activities and means of evaluation specified prior to enrollment. A DIS course is an excellent opportunity for qualified students to learn about their chosen field at a more advanced level, working collaboratively with a faculty expert, often in cutting-edge scholarly and artistic projects.