

# American University Undergraduate Academic Rules and Regulations

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## Preamble

This document summarizes the body of academic regulations in place at American University for the conduct of undergraduate education. Based on a compelling rationale, an appeal may be made with respect to a specific undergraduate academic regulation by an undergraduate student or faculty member. Such an appeal should be directed in writing to the student's academic advisor.

### 1. Credit Hours

American University uses the Carnegie Classification definition of a credit hour. A credit hour is defined as at least twelve and a half hours of direct faculty instruction (in class or remote sites) with at least twenty-five hours of student work outside of that direct instruction, usually spread over fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

Typically, courses are 3 credits each, meaning that students meet in class and/or online for 2 ½ hours a week and do academic work outside class at least five hours a week over a fifteen-week semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. Courses that carry 4 or 5 credit hours require approximately one or two more hours of work each week in classes and require at least 1.67 or 3.33 additional hours of academic work outside class each week over a fifteen-week semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

Courses that meet less than 2 ½ hours a week for three credits must require students in those classes to do additional work outside of class in order to achieve the expected learning of a 2 ½ hour a week class. The curriculum committees for each academic unit and the General Education Committee (as appropriate) are charged with following the Faculty Senate's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee policies (see [Faculty Senate by-laws](#)) for approving such courses and certifying that the expected student learning for the course meets the 3 credit standard.

Research, [internships](#), independent studies, labs, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of academic credit, at a minimum, should state clearly learning objectives and expected outcomes and workload expectations that meet the standards set forth above.

### 2. Minimum Graduation Requirements

Students must complete at least 120 [credit hours](#) with a [cumulative GPA](#) of 2.00 or better. At least 45 of the last 60 credit hours must be completed [in residence](#) at American University, and at least 15 credit hours of upper-level course work in a major must be completed in residence. Students may transfer a cumulative total of 75 credits from the following: 1) a maximum of 75 credits from an approved four-year or two-year institution; 2) a maximum of 30 credits from one or a combination of Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate, CLEP subject examinations, or other AU approved test credit; or 3) a maximum of 30 credits for a combination of relevant work completed satisfactorily in college-level armed Services School course, or US armed Forces institute correspondence or extension courses, completed with a grade of 70 or better, as recommended at the baccalaureate level by the American Council on Education and which is appropriate for

academic credit as determined by the Admissions Office after consultation with the appropriate academic unit. Military Occupation Services (MOS) credit may be evaluated separately for academic credit.

The minimum graduation requirement of 120 [credit hours](#) must satisfy a major requirement and also satisfy the requirements for the [General Education program](#), the [college writing requirement](#), and the [University Mathematics requirement](#).

### 3. Grading System

Students are responsible for identifying implications for their progress and status at the university, including impact on financial aid, which results from any change in registration. Students are also responsible for verifying that all changes in registration are reflected in their official student record.

#### 3.1. Grades Calculated in Grade Point Average

A (Excellent)	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B (Good)	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C (Satisfactory)	2.00
C-	1.67
D (Poor)	1.00
F (Academic Fail)	0.00
FX (Administrative Fail in Course for Grade)	0.00

**Academic Fail:** Academic fail indicates the student's continued enrollment in the course and he or she did not satisfy the Instructor's summative requirements for passing the course.

**Administrative Fail:** Administrative fail is assigned by the instructor in lieu of a grade of F when a student never attended or ceased attending the class, rendering an assessment of academic performance impossible. Instructors will be asked to provide the last date of attendance.

#### 3.2. Additional Posting Symbols for Grades in Courses

R = Follows grade entry indicating course has been repeated.

N = No grade or invalid grade submitted (assigned by the [academic unit](#) or appropriate administrative officer when an expected final grade has not been received before the grade posting deadline. The academic unit and the registrar are expected to secure an appropriate final grade within one semester).

IP = Course in progress

### 3.3. Grades Not **Calculated** in Grade Point Average

I = Incomplete

L = Audit (no credit)

P = Pass

ZL = Administrative withdrawal from audit

W = Withdrawal from course (Assigned when a student, under regulations governing changes in registration, withdraws, or is administratively withdrawn from a course after the final date for adding a course.)

ZX = Administrative Fail in Pass/Fail Course ( 0.00 )

FZ = Academic Fail in Pass/Fail Course ( 0.00 )

**Academic Fail:** Academic fail indicates the student's continued enrollment in the course and he or she did not satisfy the Instructor's summative requirements for passing the course.

**Administrative Fail:** Administrative fail is assigned by the instructor in lieu of a grade of F when a student never attended or ceased attending the class, rendering an assessment of academic performance impossible. Instructors will be asked to provide the last date of attendance.

### 3.4. *Pass/Fail Grades*

Students may select the pass/fail option for no more than four courses after admission to the university. In any given semester, students may select the pass/fail option in only one course. Only elective courses may be taken pass/fail, and thus students must take for a letter grade courses in a major, in a minor, in General Education, and in courses that are taken to satisfy the College Writing or University Mathematics requirement. Those courses that can only be taken pass/fail are exceptions to the preceding rule and such courses are not included in the aforementioned four course maximum.

A grade of Pass indicates performance of no less than a 2.00 on a conventional grading scale. Pass/Fail grades are not calculated in the GPA.

### 3.5. *Incompletes*

At their discretion and before the end of the semester, professors may give an Incomplete status for a grade when extenuating circumstances prevent a student, who is otherwise passing a course, from completing it during the semester. Students on [academic probation](#) may not receive an Incomplete. The instructor must provide in writing to the student the conditions, which are described below, for satisfying the incomplete and must enter those same conditions when posting the grades for the course. Students are responsible for verifying that the conditions were entered correctly.

Those conditions must include what work needs to be completed, when the work must be completed, and what the course grade will be if students fail to complete that work, which, at the latest, must be before the end of the following semester absent an agreement to the contrary. Instructors will submit the grade of “I” and the aforementioned conditions to the Office of the Registrar when submitting all other final grades for the course. If students do not meet the conditions, the Office of the Registrar will assign the default grade automatically.

Incomplete courses may not be retroactively dropped. An Incomplete may not stand as a permanent grade and must be resolved before a degree can be awarded.

### *3.6. In Progress*

An In Progress (IP) is only available for designated courses and is a temporary posting that indicates the course is in progress. A faculty member may post an IP in lieu of a final grade for a course, research project, thesis, or capstone which has not been completed by the conclusion of the semester of registration and for which a final grade is not yet due. An IP grade may not stand as a permanent grade and must be resolved before a degree can be awarded.

## **4. Evaluation and Course Policies**

### *4.1. Class Attendance*

Individual instructors may have different attendance requirements; it is the student’s responsibility to check each course syllabus to determine policy and to speak to instructors regarding [excused absences](#) such as major religious holidays (posted annually by the Office of Provost and Kay Spiritual Life Center), medical or mental health events, and athletic team events. Unexcused absences may affect a student’s grades. Students may not be penalized for excused absences but are required to make-up all work missed as a result of the excused absence.

### *4.2. Final Exam Policy*

Students are expected to take final exams at the times scheduled by the Office of the Registrar. Accommodations are made for students with [excused absences](#) and for students with [documented disabilities](#). Students with two exams scheduled for the same time, and students with three or more final exams on a given day should submit a request to reschedule an exam to the undergraduate dean’s office of their home unit. This request must be submitted via email no later than November 1 in the fall semester and April 1 in the spring semester. The administrator in the undergraduate dean’s office will contact all faculty concerned to see if an accommodation can be reached. If that effort fails, the exam from the class with the lowest enrollment will be rescheduled. All rescheduled exams must occur during the final exam period. Unexcused absences at final exams may result in a failure for the course or other substantial penalty. Students must follow any additional policies or procedures set by individual academic units.

#### 4.3. Repetition of Courses

Students have a maximum of three attempts to pass a course. [Withdrawal](#) from a course counts as an attempt. Once students pass a course taken at AU, they may repeat it one more time unless the repetition exceeds the maximum number of three attempts. The repetition policy applies to a maximum of five courses including those courses repeated under the [Freshman Forgiveness policy](#) during their tenure at the university. Students are responsible for determining any academic or financial implications for repeating courses. In the context of this policy, passing a course includes meeting any stipulations needed to satisfy a university or major or minor requirement. Grades for each attempt are computed in the overall [cumulative GPA](#), but only the highest grade and the credit associated with that grade counts toward the major GPA requirements.

#### 4.4. Freshman Forgiveness

Degree students, during the first two semesters of full-time undergraduate study, may request Freshman Forgiveness for any two courses that have resulted in a grade of C- or lower. Transfer and nondegree students, except students in the Washington Mentorship Program, may not claim Freshman Forgiveness. Part-time degree students may request Freshman Forgiveness during the first 30 [credit hours](#) of study. Students must request Freshman Forgiveness within the next calendar year and they must repeat such courses within the next calendar year or at the first possible opportunity. Only the second grade is computed in the [cumulative average GPA](#), but both courses remain on the transcript. Students may not request Freshman Forgiveness for a course if they received a sanction for that course due to a violation of the [Academic Integrity Code](#).

[Full-time, part-time](#), and Washington Mentorship students are eligible to apply for Freshman Forgiveness. Certain classes may not be repeated for Freshman Forgiveness. Students should check with their academic advisor to determine which courses are not eligible for Freshman Forgiveness.

### 5. Evaluation of Academic Performance

Students are responsible for:

- identifying implications for their progress and status at the university, including impact on financial aid, which results from any change in registration,
- verifying that all changes in registration are reflected in their degree audit report and other official student records,
- reporting to their instructors any errors in calculating grades on assignments, tests, or other activities before the day of the final examination as posted on the Registrar's Final Exam Schedule, and for
- reporting to their instructors any errors in calculating or posting a course grade no later than one year from the day the course grades were posted by the Office of the University Registrar.



Judgment regarding standards of evaluation for a student's academic performance is a faculty responsibility; therefore students may not request a second evaluation of any work leading to the final grade for the course. Students should consult the policy on [Student Academic Grievances](#).

### *5.1. Cumulative Grade Point Average*

Computation of the cumulative grade point average includes only those in-residence courses (See Section 7.1) taken for conventional grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F, or FX). The following courses are not included in the grade point average: courses taken on a [pass/fail](#) basis, courses numbered below the 100 level, and courses with an [incomplete](#) or [in progress](#) grade. Credits accepted on transfer from other institutions are included in the total number of [credit hours](#) applicable to [degree requirements](#), but grades earned in such courses are not recorded on the permanent record at American University and are not used in computing the average needed for graduation.

GPA's will not be rounded for purposes of evaluating academic progress toward degree completion of academic standing (e.g., a cumulative or semester GPA of 1.99 will not be rounded to 2.00)

[Academic units](#) or [teaching units](#) will not accept C- or D grades in major and major-related courses, in minor courses, or toward courses that were taken to satisfy the General Education, [College Writing](#) or [Mathematics](#) requirements. A course with a grade of C- or D may be used as an elective toward graduation requirements and the C- or D grade is calculated in the cumulative average (See 4.3 [Repetition of Courses](#)).

### *5.2. Good Academic Standing*

Undergraduate students (degree and nondegree) are in Good Academic Standing if they are either enrolled in semester classes or are eligible to enroll in subsequent semester classes. There may be higher requirements for students receiving financial aid or other awards.

### *5.3. Academic Progress toward Degree Completion*

To maintain academic progress toward degree completion, undergraduates are to maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA and complete 80% of all attempted credits with grades that meet the program and university-wide requirements (see section 8). A W in a course constitutes an attempt but not a completion. Students who are not achieving these requirements may be subject to probation and dismissal.

### *5.4. Students' Academic Grievances*

In cases of complaint or disagreement over academic matters not resolved by consultation among the parties, the university provides the student the right to initiate a grievance procedure, as

described in the [Student Academic Grievance Policy](#) located on the Office for Undergraduate Studies website under “Academic Policies.”

#### 5.5. *Dean’s List*

Each [academic unit](#) issues a Dean’s List of its students who receive honors at the end of each semester. The minimum standard for inclusion in the list is a 3.67 GPA for the semester, earned in a full-time undergraduate degree or non-degree program during the regular term of not fewer than 15 completed credit hours of which at least 12 hours must be completed for A-F grade credit with a passing grade and during the summer term of not fewer than 12 completed credit hours all of which must be completed for A-F grade credit with a passing grade.

#### 5.6. *Latin Honors*

Latin Honors are calculated and recorded on the transcript and diploma by the Office of the Registrar upon graduation. To be eligible for Latin Honors, students must complete [in residence](#) at least half of the required [credit hours](#) needed for a degree at American University (60 of the 120 earned credits) and must achieve the requisite [cumulative GPA](#) as indicated in the chart below.

Cum Laude	3.67-3.80
Magna Cum Laude	3.81-3.90
Summa Cum Laude	3.91 or higher

#### 5.7. *Academic Warning*

When the [academic unit](#) determines that a student has lost [good academic standing](#) or failed to make academic progress toward degree completion, the academic unit may issue to the student in writing an academic warning. Students will be given an academic warning when either the student’s semester [GPA](#) falls below 2.00 or the student is not making satisfactory academic progress. An academic warning is not recorded on the transcript.

#### 5.8. *Academic Probation and Dismissal*

The Registrar will place students on academic probation when their [cumulative GPA](#) falls below 2.00 or when the Registrar is notified by the [Academic Unit](#) that a student has failed to meet other conditions for academic progress toward degree completion that may apply in some majors. Once any part-time student has attempted 12 credits, the student will be required to follow all regulations regarding probation and dismissal. The Registrar will notify students in writing of their academic probation status and the academic unit will provide a description of any conditions associated with the academic probation. Conditions that students must adhere to during the academic probationary period may include, but are not limited to, inability to petition instructors for [incompletes](#), successful completion of specific courses, minimum grades in courses, or the overall GPA to be achieved in the academic probation period.

Once placed on academic probation, students must maintain a minimum semester GPA of 2.33 and show academic progress toward degree completion towards raising their cumulative GPA to the required level and meeting any other requirements unrelated to GPA, as stated in their notification letter from their academic unit. Students are to check with the Office of Financial Aid to determine if any additional criteria are required in order to retain their financial aid. Students can be placed on academic probation for no more than two semesters in total, or three semesters in total if a summer term is included. After that threshold is reached, students will be dismissed from the University.

A student on academic probation may be subject to restrictions as to the load for which he or she may register. Such a student is ineligible to hold office in student organizations or to participate in intercollegiate competitions. Also, a student may with permission of the student's [academic unit](#) complete the season of any collegiate sport in which he or she is participating at the time he or she falls below a 2.00 cumulative average GPA.

The university will dismiss immediately students whose [cumulative GPA](#), after attempting or completing 24 [credits](#) (excluding courses in which the recorded grade is W, I, or IP), falls below 1.0 (D). Students who are dismissed with a GPA lower than 1.0 will not be considered for re-admission.

When dismissing students from the university, the university may give students the option of reapplying for admission after one calendar year has passed from the final day of the session during which the dismissal was implemented. The dismissal will be included in the letter from the [academic unit](#), and recorded by the Office of the Registrar on the transcript. Readmission applications are evaluated based on the total record of the student and consistent with the admission practices in effect at the time of application. A readmitted student is governed by the academic requirements in effect at the time of readmission.

Academic probation and dismissal are permanently recorded on the transcript. An [academic warning](#) is not recorded on the transcript.

## 6. Student Status

### *6.1. Designation of Full-time, Half-time, and Less-than-Half-time Students*

Students are considered full-time if registered for at least 12 [credit hours](#), half-time if registered for at least 6 to 11.99 credit hours, and Less-than-Half-time if registered for less than 6 credit hours. This designation applies to fall, spring, and summer, with summer status determined by total credits across all sessions.

For fall and spring, a typical load for a full-time student is 15 credit hours; however, the flat undergraduate tuition rate applies to a total of 17 credit hours. To register for more than 18 credit hours, students must receive permission from their [academic unit](#).

### *6.2. Nondegree Students*

Enrollment as a nondegree student does not guarantee acceptance into a degree program. If admitted into an American University degree program, nondegree students may apply no more than 30 nondegree American University credits.

### *6.3. Students' Class Standing*

Class standing is determined by the total number of [credits](#), with adherence to the policies for repetition of courses, that students have earned including graded courses at AU, IB/AP/CLEP/A-level credits, or transferred courses. Credits that are not included in calculating class standing are credits [not completed \(N, I, IP\)](#), or credits not accepted through transfer, examination, or experiential learning.

- 0-29 credit hours: freshman standing
- 30-59 credit hours: sophomore standing
- 60-89 credit hours: junior standing
- 90 credit hours or above: senior standing

### *6.4. Course Levels*

- 0-99 Non-Credit Courses
- 100-299 Undergraduate Introductory or Undergraduate Foundation Courses
- 300-499 Undergraduate Upper-Level or Undergraduate Advanced Courses
- 500-599 Graduate Courses that allow qualified, advanced undergraduates
- 600-799 Graduate Courses - No undergraduate students may take 600 – 799 Graduate courses except under specific circumstances where the courses are cross-listed with undergraduate courses as part of a combined BA/MA program or by special permission of the associate dean of the academic unit

### *6.5. Exceptions for Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Coursework*

Undergraduate students may take courses at the 600-level or above when they are accepted into a [combined master's/bachelor's degree](#). Students interested in combined bachelors/masters programs should refer to rules specific to the combined academic program in which they wish to enroll. Students must follow the Graduate Academic Regulations as they pertain to taking such courses.

## **7. Credit Requirements**

### *7.1. In Residence Courses*

The Office of the Registrar considers courses in residence when they are taken at American University, through any member of the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area (including ROTC), through AU Abroad, or are coordinated by AU [academic units](#) in any instructional modality.

Courses considered not in residence by the Office of the Registrar include those transferred into AU, those taken through a [Permit to Study at Another Institution](#), or [credits](#) accepted through exams including CLEP, IB, AP, FB, A-levels, or other approved exams for transfer credit.

Some AU courses and programs are offered at physical sites other than the AU campus and are considered [in residence](#) courses by the Office of the Registrar. With some exceptions, students receive in residence credit for such courses.

### *7.2. Study at Another Institution*

Grades for courses taken during a Permit to Study at another institution are not recorded on the AU transcript and are not computed in the [GPA](#). Such courses will not count in the total number of credits needed for [graduation](#) if the grade received is below a 2.0 on a 4 point scale. However, students must meet GPA requirements for individual courses taken at other institutions as required for electives or major or minor courses. Students must satisfy any additional requirements provided on the [Permit to Study form](#). Students who are issued a Permit to Study during fall or spring semester will be placed on Temporary Leave. When students present their transcripts to OUR for the Permit to Study, the Temporary Leave will be removed from the record.

#### *7.2.1 Permit to Study at Another U.S. Institution*

Students in [good academic standing](#) who wish to take courses that would not be considered [in residence](#) courses must receive prior approval by their [academic unit](#). Students who want to apply a course to their major or minor must receive [teaching unit](#) or equivalent approval. Students must secure approval from the academic unit prior to registering for the course and such approval is granted only for specific courses. Students may transfer up to a total of 10 [credits](#) during this course of approved study at another U.S. institution. The number of credits approved for transfer from an international institution requires advanced approval from the academic unit.

#### *7.2.2 Permit to Study Abroad*

Undergraduate students in [good academic standing](#) who wish to study abroad on any non-AU Abroad study abroad program or at any foreign university not partnered with AU must receive prior approval of their [academic unit](#) and of AU Abroad. Permission for such study is granted only when the student can demonstrate that the academic opportunity offered by the program or foreign university cannot be met through study at any one of AU's existing partner universities or study abroad programs. Grades for courses taken during a Permit to Study Abroad are not recorded on the AU transcript and are not computed in the [GPA](#), though they will count in the total number of

credits needed for graduation. Students will be allowed to transfer a maximum of 36 credits from studying abroad in a non-AU program via the permit process. Complete permit applications must be submitted before the end of the semester prior to the anticipated study abroad program. The University will not approve retroactive permits.

### 7.2.3 *Medical Permit to Study*

While on a Temporary Leave for medical reasons, students may request from their academic unit a medical permit to study in order to minimize disruptions to their academic progress. In order to receive a medical permit to study, students must have an approved [Medical Temporary Leave](#). Students should provide medical documentation only to the Office of the Dean of Students. With a medical permit to study, students may take two courses at another institution for up to eight [credits](#) per semester for a maximum of four courses for up to 16 credits. Individual academic units may have additional restrictions. Courses must be preapproved by the student's [academic unit](#) prior to enrollment. Course credits that are approved may count toward the 120 credits needed for graduation as defined in the academic [in residence](#) requirement.

## 8 University-Wide Requirements

### 8.1 *College Writing Requirement*

Students must satisfy the College Writing requirement within the first 30 [credits](#) earned [in residence](#). Students who do not satisfy the College Writing requirement within the first 30 credits will be blocked from registering for subsequent semesters until the requirement is met. Students must receive a grade of C or better in any course taken to satisfy this requirement. Students are allowed at most three attempts, per the academic regulations concerning [Freshman Forgiveness](#) and [repetition](#) of courses, to complete this requirement. Incoming freshmen may satisfy the College Writing requirement in one of the following ways:

- Earning a grade of C or better in WRTG-100 and WRTG-101, in WRTG-130 and WRTG-131, or in WRTG-102 and WRTG-103; or
- scoring 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Test or scoring 5 or higher on the Higher Level International Baccalaureate Examination, and also earning a grade of C or better in WRTG-106 or WRTG-132.

### 8.2 *Transfers' Writing Proficiency Exam*

Transfer students who present 6 hours of acceptable composition [credit](#) from another institution will satisfy the [College Writing requirement](#) by passing the Writing Proficiency Examination within the first calendar year of admission to AU. Students failing the exam twice must enroll in a College Writing requirement course that is approved by the College Writing Program and must pass the course with a grade of C or better.

Transfer students who present 3 hours of acceptable composition [credit](#) from another institution may satisfy the [College Writing requirement](#) within the first calendar year by passing a course that is

in the College Writing sequence and approved by the College Writing Program with a grade of C or better.

Students who do not satisfy the aforementioned requirements will be blocked from registering for subsequent semesters until the relevant requirement is met.

### 8.3 *University Mathematics Requirement*

Students must satisfy the University Mathematics requirement within the first 30 [credits](#) earned [in residence](#). Students who do not satisfy the University Mathematics requirement within the first 30 credits will be blocked from registering for subsequent semesters until the requirement is met. After students have matriculated at AU, no credit toward the University Mathematics requirement may be earned through transfer credit. Students meeting the requirement through course work must receive a grade of C or better. Students are allowed at most three attempts, per the academic regulations concerning [Freshman Forgiveness](#) and [repetition](#) of courses, to complete this requirement.

Incoming freshmen may satisfy the University Mathematics requirement in one of the following ways:

- Earning a grade of C or better in one approved AU mathematics courses at the level of MATH-150 or above, or one AU statistics course offered in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics;
- AP Calculus AB or AP Calculus BC score of 4, or 5;
- AP Statistics score of 4, or 5;
- SAT II Mathematics Level II Achievement test score of 650; or CLEP Calculus examination score of 75,
- British A-level mathematics examination with a grade of A or B
- International Baccalaureate higher-level mathematics examination scores of 6 or above

Transfer students and graduates of secondary schools outside the United States may also satisfy this requirement by:

- Passing one of the examinations given by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics which demonstrate competence equivalent to having successfully completed one of the following courses: MATH-15x Finite Mathematics, MATH-211 Applied Calculus I, or STAT-202 Basic Statistics. Only one of these examinations may be taken and that examination may be taken only once, during the first semester for which the student is enrolled in degree status. Eligible students should contact the Department of Mathematics and Statistics for more information about the Mathematics and Statistics Equivalency Examination  
or
- Transferring a course equivalent to MATH-221 or higher with a grade of B or better from an AG-rated collegiate institution.

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics will specify the appropriate placement of students in Math 100 and 200 level courses or statistics courses.

#### *8.4 General Education*

Students will be expected to satisfy their General Education requirements during the first 60 [earned credits](#).

There may be cases in which courses in the General Education curriculum also meet requirements of the major; however, students will not be able to substitute courses in their major field for General Education requirements.

Students presenting a 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement examination, a score of 75 on the CLEP examination, or grades for which they have received credit from the British A Levels, CEGEP, International Baccalaureate, German Abitur, or other international credential for which they have been granted credit by American University may apply the credit for up to four courses to meet the General Education Requirements in any of the five curricular areas. Credit toward General Education may be awarded only for examinations taken prior to entering American University.

Transfer students may satisfy some or all of their General Education requirements through transfer credit.

Because of the special nature of the General Education Program, after students have matriculated at American University, no credit toward the General Education Requirements may be earned through transfer credit unless the course is taken on an approved AU Abroad program. Students can take up to 6 credit hours of General Education courses abroad.

## **9 Major and Minor Requirements**

### *9.1 Minimum Requirements for Majors and Minors*

A major requires a minimum of 36 [credit hours](#), at least 18 of which must be earned [in residence](#) at American University. At least 18 credits must be earned in upper-level courses in the major, and at least 15 of those credits must be earned in residence. Students who wish to take an upper level course at another institution in the first 18 hours of major course work must receive permission from their [teaching unit](#) chair or equivalent. A grade of C or better is required for each course used to satisfy the major.



A minor requires a minimum of 18 [credit hours](#), at least 9 of which must be earned [in residence](#) at American University. At least 9 credits must be earned in upper-level courses in the minor. At least 12 hours of the minor must be outside of the course requirements for any major or other minor the student is pursuing. A grade of C or better is required for each course used to satisfy the minor.

### *9.2 Declaration of Majors and Minors*

Students are expected to declare a major before completing 60 [earned credits](#). The declaration must be approved by the [academic unit](#) or [teaching unit](#) designee in charge of the proposed major. The academic units or teaching units may require higher than minimal performance in major and related courses as a condition for acceptance as a major.

Students who decide to declare a minor field of study are expected to declare their minor no later than one year prior to the intended date of graduation, usually 90 [credits earned](#) at American University or the end of the junior year.

### *9.3 Changes in Major, Academic Unit Affiliation*

To change from one [academic unit](#) to another or to change majors within an academic unit within AU, students must be in [good academic standing](#) and receive the permission of the academic unit or [teaching unit](#) designee in charge of the program to which they wish to transfer. The various academic units and teaching units may establish additional requirements which must be met by each of their candidates for a degree.

### *9.4 Individualized Majors and Minors*

Students may design their own majors and minors by applying to a review committee overseen by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. Students intending to pursue an individualized major must submit his or her proposal at least a year before their intended graduation date. A maximum of 18 credit hours completed prior to the semester in which the application is being submitted may be included in an individualized major. No such restriction applies to an individualized minor. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 in order to submit proposals for individualized majors and for individualized minors.

Individualized programs must meet the minima described above in the section on [Minimum Requirements for Majors and Minors](#). Students are awarded a degree from an individual [academic unit](#).

### *9.5 Double Majors*

Students can [declare](#) more than one [major](#) if they have a minimum 2.50 [cumulative GPA](#) and if at least 18 [credits](#) are unique to each major. Individual [academic units](#) or [teaching units](#) may require a higher GPA and have other requirements that exceed the regulations.

If the majors are offered by more than one [academic unit](#) within the University, then students will designate at the time of [declaration of the majors](#) the single academic unit in which they will be registered and from which they will be graduated. Students will need to satisfy the general academic unit requirements of that single academic unit. When majors lead to different degrees (e.g., B.A. and B.S.), students will specify which degree they wish to be awarded. Electives may be used to satisfy double major requirements.

### *9.6 Dual Degrees*

Students who decide to [declare](#) a second degree in a major field of study are expected to declare their second degree one year prior to the intended date of graduation, usually 90 [credits](#) earned at AU or the end of the junior year. Students must have a 3.00 [cumulative GPA](#) at the time of declaration of the second degree. Students who fulfill all the requirements for two bachelor's programs (including [major, major-related](#), and [residence](#) requirements) and who have earned a total of 150 credit hours may be awarded two bachelor's degrees. At least 24 credits must be unique to each degree. Dual degree students can apply a maximum of thirty credits for approved exams. Students with financial aid or other awards are responsible for working with the Office for Financial Aid to determine the extent of aid or award coverage for the additional credits needed for the dual degree.

## **10 Special Programs and Degrees**

### *10.1 Honors Programs*

Students in the American University Honors program must graduate with a cumulative GPA of 3.67 and complete all courses in the honors program to receive the notation on the final transcript, American University Honors Program. In order to receive an Honors in the Major notation on the final transcript, students must be admitted by the teaching unit into the Honors in the Major, maintain a minimum GPA of 3.67 in the major, and satisfy all requirements for the Honors in the Major. Individual teaching units may set a higher GPA or impose additional criteria for Honors in the Major. American University Honors students can apply to Honors in the Major. All students can apply to more than one Honors in the Major.

### *10.2 Degree-Completion Scholars Programs*

The university offers a limited number of intensive cohort-based scholars programs that culminate in a bachelors degree. These scholars programs may be three or four years in duration. Prospective students may apply directly through the Office of Admissions.

### *10.3 Combined Bachelors and Masters Degrees*

A combined bachelor's/master's program involves tentative admission to graduate standing so that both a bachelor's and master's degree may be earned as the result of a planned program of study. Highly qualified students in [good academic standing](#) may apply to a graduate program for a

combined degree as soon as they have completed 75 earned [credits](#). With rare exceptions, students will apply no later than the semester in which they have 90 completed credits toward their degree. Admission during the junior year or equivalent allows sufficient time and preparation for curricular sequences and other research experiences that distinguish this option from separate bachelor's and master's degrees. No more than one graduate degree can be earned as a combined degree.

Students will be admitted to the combined program at two levels, i.e., for both the undergraduate degree and the graduate degree.

Once admitted during the junior year, students must follow a prescribed program of work, and their record must show which courses will be applied toward the undergraduate degree and which courses will be applied toward the master's degree. Once all undergraduate requirements have been satisfied, the student will be officially enrolled in the graduate program if they complete their bachelor's program in [good academic standing](#), and if they meet all University and [academic unit](#) or [teaching unit](#) requirements for admission to the master's program for the combined degree. Each academic unit or teaching unit sets its own admission standards and procedures for graduate students. Once enrolled in the master's program, students are then subject to the academic regulations governing graduate students.

The maximum number of credit hours that can be shared between the bachelor's and master's degrees is determined by the number of credit hours required for the master's degree, as shown in the chart below.

Credit hours required for the master's program	Maximum number of shared credit hours between bachelor's and master's degree
30-35	9
36-38	12
39 and above	15

#### 10.4 *Certificate Programs*

##### 10.4.1 *University Minimum Standards for Credit Certificate Programs*

All credit certificate programs must include a minimum of 12 [credit hours](#).

##### 10.4.2 *Admission to Credit Certificate Programs*

Admission to credit certificate programs is open only to those students who meet University minimum nondegree enrollment requirements. Admission requirements in excess of University minimums must be stated explicitly in the credit certificate program proposals.

##### 10.4.3 *Transfer of Credit*

Equivalent [credit](#) earned at an accredited college or University may be applied toward a certificate at the following rate: 3 credit hours for certificates from 12 to 18 credit hours in length, and 6 credit hours for certificates over 18 credit hours in length.

#### 10.4.4 *Minimum Standards: Academic probation, Dismissal, Readmission*

Students enrolled in undergraduate certificate programs must maintain a 2.0 [grade point average](#) to remain in good academic standing. Nondegree certificate students may be placed on academic probation, dismissed, or readmitted to certificate study according to regulations governing nondegree students.

Certificate students who are also enrolled in undergraduate programs may be placed on [academic probation](#), dismissed, or readmitted to certificate study according to regulations governing undergraduate students.

#### 10.4.5 *Minimum Requirements for Students in Certificate Programs*

Grades of C- or D in certificate program courses will not be accepted toward the fulfillment of certificate requirements although these grades will be included in the calculation of the cumulative [grade point average](#). Students in other than graduate certificate programs must have at least a 2.0 grade point average in certificate courses in order to be awarded a certificate.

#### 10.4.6 *Completion of Credit Certificate Programs*

Students in certificate programs must take a minimum of 6 [credit hours](#) during each 12-month period after they are admitted. All programs must be completed within four years.

## 11 Special Course Types

### 11.1 *Courses Taken for Audit*

Students do not receive credit for audited courses. Faculty may establish standards of class participation and/or attendance for auditing students. When auditors fail to meet those standards, the instructor will assign the grade of ZL (administrative withdrawal from audit).

### 11.2 *Independent Studies*

Students in [good academic standing](#) generally may register for two types of independent study. In an Independent Reading course, a student will read a body of material with a minimum of formal instruction. In an Independent Research project, the student will research a topic agreed upon by the student and the instructor. Individual academic units may have restrictions on this policy.

Before registration, the student and the supervising instructor must agree upon and document the title, objective, scope, [grade type \(letter grade or pass/fail\)](#), [credit value \(1–6\)](#), and method of evaluation for the independent study. The [teaching unit](#) chair or equivalent must approve the independent study and the instructor's involvement, ensuring that the independent study does not duplicate a course already in the semester's curriculum.

Independent studies may not be used as credit toward the [College Writing](#) or [University Mathematics requirements](#), or toward [General Education](#). Independent studies that substitute for a major requirement must be approved by the [teaching unit](#) chair or equivalent. A temporary grade of IP ([course in progress](#)) may be assigned, at the discretion of the instructor, at the conclusion of the semester of registration.

### *11.3 Community Service-Learning*

Students may earn degree [credit toward graduation](#) for community service-learning projects in conjunction with some courses offered by their [academic unit](#). A community service-learning project consists of at least 40 hours of approved field work. To qualify for [academic credit](#), the project must also have an academic component related to the course with which the project is associated.

Students earn one semester hour of [credit](#) for each project they complete satisfactorily. A maximum of 3 credit hours of community service-learning credit may be applied toward graduation. Credit cannot be used to fulfill requirements for [General Education](#) or for [University-wide College Writing](#) or [Mathematics requirements](#). Credits are offered only as [pass/fail](#) grades. Students may attach a community service-learning project to a General Education course, but the credit does not fulfill a General Education credit requirement.

Students must obtain the approval of the instructor before adding a community service learning project to their registration for the semester.

### *11.4 Internships*

Qualified, degree-seeking students may enroll in [credit-bearing](#), paid or unpaid Internship work assignments with a significant academic component under the guidance of an American University instructor. Instructor and teaching unit approvals are required for internships. An important component of any internship is the availability of an internship placement opportunity that will provide sufficient substantive work to merit academic credit. The work for the internship must meet the requirements defined below.

To enroll, students must be making academic progress toward degree completion in their major and must have completed 30 earned [credit hours](#) at the University; or, as a transfer student, at least one

semester (with a minimum of 12 earned credit hours). [Academic units](#) or [teaching units](#) may specify additional requirements before enrolling students in internships.

The table below illustrates the earned credits associated with the required minimum interned hours. While the table includes the average weekly interned hours associated with earned credits, students, with the permission of their instructors, may vary their scheduled hours as long as they meet the total minimum requirement by the end of the semester or term. Students who elect to work in excess of the minimum for fewer academic credit hours should consult their academic advisor.

Earned Credits/Minimum Hours Interned						
Earned credits	1	2	3	4	5	6
Minimum total hours interned required by end of term	70	140	210	280	350	420
Average number of hours interned weekly over 14 weeks	5	10	15	20	25	30

The maximum number of internship [credit hours](#) that may count toward a major is six credit hours. Academic units may require fewer than six credit hours to count toward the major. Students may take up to a maximum of 12 internship credit hours that count toward the 120 credit hours of their degree program. To receive academic credit, the work for the internship must be more substantive than administrative, with non-administrative work comprising in general at least 85% of the work performed. The instructor must provide the student an academic syllabus, with clear learning outcomes for the internship, communicate regularly with the student, and require academic assignments designed to provide an academic foundation and support for the internship. The instructor is responsible for the assessment of the student's performance which may include an assessment by the workplace supervisor. If the workplace supervisor provides an assessment of the student's performance, that assessment can count for no more than half the final course grade. The academic component of the course must be valued as at least half of the final course grade.

## 12 Registration

Students are responsible for identifying implications for their progress and status at the university, including impact on financial aid, which results from any change in registration. Students are also responsible for verifying that all changes in registration are reflected in their official student record.

### *12.1 Initial Course Registration*

Students must initially register or be on a waitlist for the courses in which they wish to enroll prior to the beginning of each session or they will incur a late registration fee. Before registration, students should plan their program with their academic advisor.

International students in F-1 or J-1 status must obtain approval from International Student and Scholar Services when registering for the first time or for a new program, when registering below a full-course load or equivalent (Reduced Course Load), when registering for an [internship](#), when taking an approved [Temporary Leave](#), or when [withdrawing](#) from the University. This approval is in addition to the normal requirements and may not be waived.

### *12.2 Add-Drop Period*

The add/drop period is the first 10 business days of the semester or the equivalent for summer and other non-standard sessions. During the add/drop period, students may add or drop courses or change course sections, except when [academic unit](#) or [teaching unit](#) explicitly prohibits it, without penalty or notice on their transcript.

### *12.3 Waitlist Rules*

Students often “waitlist” if they are considering adding a course or a new section of a course in lieu of the section in which they are currently enrolled. Students may not “waitlist” for more than one section of any course at any given time. Students may not waitlist for more than three unique courses at any point in time.

### *12.4 Change in Grade Type*

Students may change grade type ([letter grade](#) or [pass/fail](#)) up until the end of the eighth week of the semester or the equivalent for summer and other non-standard sessions. Students are responsible for verifying that such changes are reflected in their official student record.

### *12.5 Withdrawal from a Course or from All Courses*

Students may withdraw from a course or from all courses up until the end of the eighth week of the semester or the equivalent for summer and other non-standard sessions unless they have been charged with a violation of the [Academic Integrity Code](#). Some additional restrictions on course withdrawals may apply to particular academic programs, international students, athletes, and cooperative education students. Additional restrictions may also apply to courses used to satisfy the [University Mathematics requirement](#). When students withdraw before the eighth week of the semester or equivalent for other terms, a grade of "W" is entered for each course.

Students who want to drop or withdraw from all courses simultaneously must work with their academic advisor and file a Drop or Withdraw from All Classes Form. The date of the drop or withdrawal from classes will be based on the last date of attendance which must be provided by the instructors and included with the submission of the Drop or Withdraw from All Classes Form. If a student's last date of attendance is after the last day to drop a class and before the last day to withdraw from a class, the student will receive a “W” for each course. Such students may be eligible for a partial reimbursement. If a student leaves after the last day to withdraw from classes, the student will receive no reimbursement and should expect to receive failing grades for that semester.

Discontinuation of attendance at a class or notification to the instructor is not sufficient to constitute an official drop or withdrawal from a course. Occupied university housing must be vacated promptly by students who drop or withdraw from all classes.

### *12.6 Reduction of Course Load Due to Medical Reasons*

In the event a student encounters medical difficulties after the eighth week of the semester and wishes to withdraw from all courses or secure a reduced course load, the student must meet with the Office of the Dean of Students to provide medical documentation. After meeting with the Dean of Students, the student must meet with the academic advisor to file a petition requesting withdrawal from all courses or reduction of course load and all affected instructors must be consulted during the routing of the petition. The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies makes the final decision for such withdrawals from all courses or reduced course loads.

## **13 Interruptions in Studies**

### *13.1 Interruptions of Studies due to Temporary Leaves and Separation from the University*

A student who takes a Temporary Leave or Separates from the university is no longer taking courses at AU. The two interruptions from the university are different in the following ways:

- **Temporary Leave:** A Temporary Leave is a temporary separation from the university for a specified period of time after which the student is expected to return. A Temporary Leave is initiated by the student in consultation with the student's [academic unit](#).
- **Separation:** A Separation from the university results in the loss of active student status. Students who have separated from the university must reapply to regain active student status. A Separation can be initiated by the student or a representative of the university. If students are considering separating from the university, they should consult with their academic unit as soon as possible to determine whether there are other more viable alternatives. A student who is eligible to register for a semester but does not register will be automatically Separated. A student may not Separate from the university if their academic performance requires the student to be Academically Dismissed.

Student financial aid, merit awards, university housing, and immigration status may be affected by any leave or separation from the university. Students should consult with their academic unit or the appropriate university office (Financial Aid, Office of the Dean of Students, International Student and Scholar Services, etc.) for help in determining the effects of the separation in their case.



### *13.2 Temporary Leaves*

There are three kinds of Temporary Leaves: [general](#), [medical](#), and [military](#). Medical covers only personal health reasons. Family health reasons are covered under a general Temporary Leave. Students may not take more than two semesters of leave.

#### General Conditions for All Voluntary Temporary Leaves

- The leave period is counted as part of the time allowed for completion of degree requirements.
- Students on Temporary Leave are not registered with the university; therefore their use of AU facilities, such as the library or the fitness center, will be limited to general public privileges. Students are responsible for understanding the implications of a Temporary Leave for housing, financial aid, health insurance, and progress toward the degree.
- This policy will not be used in lieu of disciplinary actions to address violations of American University's rules, regulations or policies. A student who has engaged in behavior that may violate rules, regulations, or policies of the university community may be subject to the Student Conduct Code. A student may be required to participate in the disciplinary process coincident with the request for a voluntary Temporary Leave. A student permitted to take a Temporary Leave while on academic or disciplinary status will return on that same status.
- International students are advised that taking a voluntary Temporary Leave may affect their student visa status and should consult with the International Students and Scholars Service in the Office of Campus Life.
- Students who do not return to the university at the end of the leave will be automatically separated. Separated students must apply for readmission and must meet the then-current admission criteria and program requirements.

#### *13.2.1 General Temporary Leave*

Students desiring a Temporary Leave for reasons other than study at another collegiate institution should meet with their academic advisor. At the [academic unit's](#) discretion, based on whether or not it seems desirable to guarantee the student an automatic readmission, the academic unit will notify the Office of the Registrar to issue a Temporary Leave. The Temporary Leave will specify the duration of the leave (one or two semesters) as well as a limitation of one year maximum automatic continuance in the same undergraduate program. Students must request the leave no later than within the first two weeks in the semester in which the leave will begin. The academic unit can extend the leave only once and must notify the Office of the Registrar accordingly.

The Temporary Leave becomes void if the student attends any domestic or foreign collegiate institution during the period of leave, unless the student obtains a Permit to [Study at Another Institution](#) or a Medical Permit to Study from the [academic unit](#).

### *13.2.2 Medical Temporary Leave*

A student may petition the Office of the Dean of Students to take a Medical Temporary Leave for up to one year for personal health reasons. The student should provide medical documentation only to the Office of the Dean of Students that supports the requested action. The Office of the Dean of Students will notify the academic unit stating that they have the documentation and whether the documentation supports the petition. If the academic unit approves the petition, it will forward the verification from the Office of the Dean of Students along with the request for the Medical Temporary Leave to the Office of the Registrar. If the [academic unit](#) approves the Medical Temporary Leave, students may request from the academic unit a [Medical Permit to Study](#).

Students must petition the Office of the Dean of Students to return from a Medical Temporary Leave or to return from a semester during which they withdrew from all courses or received a reduced load that was approved for medical reasons. The Office of the Dean of Students will provide the [academic unit](#) verification when the student is ready to resume studies at the university.

### *13.2.3 National Service or Military Temporary Leave*

Students may be required to leave the University to fulfill short-term or long-term national service or military obligations that are unrelated to war or ongoing hostilities.

In the instance of shorter term absences (e.g., fulfilling periodic training obligations to serve in the U.S. National Guard) students must inform their instructors in advance of their absence(s) during a semester and a plan to complete course requirements should be agreed upon by the instructor and the student. Students who require short term leaves for military reasons must provide a copy of their military orders to their instructor.

In the event of a longer-term absence (e.g., an [international student](#) being required to leave the U.S. to serve in their home country to fulfill national service or military service obligations for a period of time during their college studies) the student may alert the academic advisor to notify the Office of the Registrar for a [General Temporary Leave](#) for national service or military reasons or for an extension of an existing Temporary Leave. Students applying for leave for this reason must provide documentation for the leave.

### *13.3 Separation from the University*

Students who separate from the university without notifying the Office of the Registrar will only be considered for readmission under exceptional circumstances.

Students who are eligible to enroll in courses for a semester, but who do not enroll will be separated from the university. Students whose grades would have led to academic dismissal may not voluntarily separate from the university. Students who separate from the university and are subsequently readmitted, will not be readmitted again after they separate from the university a second time for any reason.

Students in [good academic standing](#) wishing to separate from the university the following semester must notify the Office of the Registrar and may do so at any time up to and inclusive of the last day of classes, provided their academic progress during the semester does not result in academic dismissal. Separations requested after the last day of instruction or by students on [academic probation](#) will only be approved by the academic unit if the student's academic progress does not result in academic dismissal.

Following a separation, students in [good academic standing](#) can apply to the university admissions office for readmission in the following semester. Students on [academic probation](#) may apply for readmission after two full semesters (fall, spring, or summer).

#### *13.4 Involuntary Suspension*

The University may suspend a student from the University for an interim period pending disciplinary or criminal proceedings or medical evaluation regarding behavior relevant to such proceedings. The interim suspension will be effective immediately without prior notice whenever there is evidence that the continued presence of the student at the University poses a substantial and immediate threat to him or herself, to others, or to the stability and continuance of normal University functions. Interim suspension excludes students from University premises and other privileges or activities.

#### *13.5 Interruption of Studies Caused by Emergencies, Hostilities, or War*

Students whose work toward a degree is disrupted as a direct result of pandemic, hostilities, war, or some similar emergency shall be given every possible consideration. Included in the categories of students affected are those who cannot travel, are called to active duty, enlist in the armed forces, or are assigned to nonmilitary duties.

Students called to active military duty while enrolled at AU must provide the Office of the Registrar with a copy of their military orders. The orders should confirm the begin date and the end date of service. This policy is in addition to that described in the [Military Temporary Leave](#) policy elsewhere for events unrelated to hostilities or war.

Students should consult their [academic unit](#) and instructors on how best to complete their studies through alternative methods such as online learning and may be eligible for refund of tuition in some cases.

Students may resume their studies at the University if arrangements are made for their return within the six months following the end of their enforced absence and if their degree program is still offered by the University. They may continue to work for the same degrees in which they were enrolled at the interruption of their studies in accordance with the regulations in effect at the time they left.

### *13.6 Trauma and Bereavement Policy*

In the event of a personal tragedy or trauma, students may need to coordinate alternative arrangements to complete coursework. Students or their authorized representative may contact the academic unit

If students think it is not in their best interest to complete the semester or to return to campus the next semester, they may elect to take a [Temporary Leave](#) or [separate](#) from the university.

## Glossary

**Academic unit:** a free-standing school or college or the University Library; the academic units are the Kogod School of Business, School of Communication, School of Public Affairs, School of International Service, College of Arts and Sciences, and University Library.

**Active Status:** A student is considered to have active status with the university when one of the following criteria has been met; enrolled in courses (institutional and consortium), is enrolled in an AU Abroad or Washington Semester program, has arranged a Temporary Leave for a semester or is taking classes through another institution while on a Permit to Study. Students no longer have active status with the university when they withdraw, are academically dismissed or fail to enroll in a subsequent semester without arranging a Temporary Leave or Permit to Study. Students who fail to enroll in a subsequent semester and do not arrange a Temporary Leave or Permit to Study will be Administratively Separated from the institution.

**Excused Absences:** Students may receive an excused absence from class or exam attendance for reasons that include, but are not limited to, major religious holidays, a medical reason, athletic participation on an AU team, off –campus activities that are required and related to another class, or a family emergency. Instructors may require documentation for excused absences.

**Documented Disabilities:** Students who provide documentation of a disability may request reasonable accommodations in the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC). Examples of disabilities for which accommodations may be provided include learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Deaf and hard-of-hearing, blind and visually impaired, as well as medical, psychological, and physical disabilities. Students may enter the University with or without identifying their disability in the admissions process. All students who believe they may qualify for disability accommodations are encouraged to visit the ASAC to make an appointment with a counselor. More information about the ASAC may be found at <http://www.american.edu/asac>.

**Teaching Unit:** A department, school within an academic unit, division, program, institute, or center.