

American University

Academic Rules and Regulations for Graduate Students

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Effective August 24, 2020 for all American University students enrolled in graduate degree programs, in graduate certificate programs, or as graduate non-degree students.



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1. Preamble

This document constitutes the American University's Academic Regulations of graduate degree and non-degree programs except those offered exclusively by the Washington College of Law. When enrolled in a joint program, students must satisfy the Academic Regulations that relate to both units in which their degree is housed. Section 10 delineates how the academic rules and regulations apply to graduate students enrolled in courses, certificates, or programs aligned with the four-term calendar. Students are expected to know and follow these regulations; ignorance of a regulation will not be accepted as an excuse for failure to act in accordance with it. Academic units and graduate programs may establish additional regulations for their students, but all students must follow these regulations. Based on a compelling rationale, an exception to a specific graduate academic regulation may be granted.

2. Admissions Policies

2.1. Admission to Degree Programs

Individuals apply for admission to graduate study to the academic unit offering the degree program. Applicants are admitted to a particular program for a specific degree objective (M.A., M.S., M.F.A., Ph.D., etc.). Applicants are admitted to either full, conditional, or provisional status.

2.1.1. Minimum Requirements for Full Admission

Applicants must hold either an earned baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by one of the six United States regional accreditation agencies or a degree equivalent to a four-year U.S. baccalaureate degree from an international institution with a similar level of accreditation or recognition by its home country. Assessment of a foreign degree will be based upon the characteristics of the national system of education, the type of institution attended, its accreditation, and the level of studies completed. Applicants must provide proof of an undergraduate degree with an original certified transcript. Responsibility for the verification and approval of documents supporting graduate applications and the minimal requirements for full admission rests with the admissions office in each academic unit.

Applicants may be admitted without reference to their baccalaureate record if they earned at least a 3.30 cumulative GPA in a master's degree program completed at a

regionally accredited institution or if they earned at least a 3.50 cumulative GPA for the last 12 credit hours of a master's or doctoral degree program still in progress.

Applicants whose native or first language is not English must demonstrate proof of language proficiency by submitting satisfactory results from one of the following:

- English proficiency tests (specific scores that confer a passing grade on these exams can be obtained from AU's [International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#)):
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL);
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS);
 - Pearson Test of English-Academic (PTE-Academic); or
 - Successful evaluation on the Kansas Test administered by the ISSS office at AU.
- Successful completion of the highest level of course work in an approved intensive English-language program recognized by AU.
- An earned bachelor's degree from an accredited or approved institution where the medium of instruction is in English.

In addition to academic requirements for admission, international students, for purposes of obtaining a visa to study in the United States, must also provide proof of financial ability. To determine the required amount, they should consult the Cost Guides on the ISSS website.

Graduate degree programs may establish additional requirements.

2.1.2. [Provisional Admission](#)

Applicants may be admitted with provisional status. The academic unit must establish one or more academic provisions for the student to meet within the first one or two semesters of enrollment. If the provision(s) are not met, the student will be academically dismissed. Provisions can include, but are not limited to, earning a minimum cumulative GPA after 9 credits of study or earning a minimum grade in a specific course. Specific provisions must be provided to the student in the admissions letter. The academic unit has the right to remove the provisional status before the provision(s) are met, but once the student has met the provision(s), provisional status is removed.

2.1.3. [Conditional Admission](#)

If an applicant does not have a complete application, the academic unit may admit the student with conditional status. The student has one semester of graduate study to provide the university the missing application requirements. Failure to supply these items will result in dismissal. Items can include, but are not limited to, an official transcript from a previous institution or a letter of recommendation.

2.2. [Admission to Joint Degree Program](#)

Admissions procedures for joint degrees vary by individual program, but each academic unit administering the joint degree must review applications and make admissions decisions. While all units review the application, the student's home school is the one to which he/she applies.

2.3. [Admission to a Combined Bachelor's /Master's Program](#)

Through a combined bachelor's/master's program, a qualified undergraduate student may earn graduate credits that will apply to a master's degree upon completion of his or her baccalaureate degree. See [Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degrees](#) for more details about this option. Highly qualified AU undergraduate students in good academic standing may apply to a graduate program for a combined degree. Students must apply before completing 90 credits toward their degree except with the approval of the Associate Dean of the academic unit. Students are not required to re-apply for the graduate program once they have been accepted in a combined bachelor's/master's program. They must, however, satisfy the conditions of admission to the graduate program at the end of their undergraduate career. Each academic unit and teaching unit may add additional admission criteria. No more than one graduate degree may be earned in a combined degree program.

2.4. [Admission to an AU Dual Degree Program](#)

For admission to an approved dual degree program, the student must meet the admission criteria for each of the degrees and must be admitted separately to each degree program. The student must be admitted to the second program before completing the first. Admission to one degree program does not guarantee automatic admission to a second. Each admission decision is separate and conducted according to established procedures for the specific degree. The student must take all admission examinations required by each of the graduate programs.

2.5. [Admission with Non-degree Status](#)

Admission to attend classes with non-degree status is open to applicants who have a bachelor's degree or the equivalent. Enrollment as a non-degree student does not guarantee acceptance into a degree program. Students must have approval of the academic unit to enroll in a class with non-degree status.

2.6. [Admission to Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

Admission to attend classes in graduate certificate programs is open to applicants who have a bachelor's degree or the equivalent. Enrollment as a post-baccalaureate student does not guarantee acceptance into a degree program.

2.7. Admission from Non-degree Status or a Graduate Certificate Program to a Graduate Degree Program

Credits may be shared between the certificate and the graduate degree – see [5.4.3.1 Shared Credits with Previous Graduate Certificates or Non-degree Coursework between Graduate Degrees](#).

2.8. Readmission of Students with Previous AU Graduate Records

If an academic unit intends to readmit a student who either has

- a. been previously academically dismissed from American University or
- b. graduate coursework from American University with a cumulative GPA below 3.00 that has not been counted toward a completed degree,

then the academic unit must obtain approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies before the student is admitted to any graduate program, certificate program, or non-degree status. Specific conditions of provisional admission may be required by the teaching unit, academic unit, or DGS.

3. Evaluation of Academic Performance

3.1. Credit Hour

American University uses the Carnegie Classification definition of a semester credit hour. A semester credit hour is defined as at least 12.5 hours of direct faculty instruction per semester (in class, online, remote site) with at least 25 hours of student work outside of that direct instruction, typically conducted over a 15-week semester, or an equivalent amount of faculty instruction and work over a different time period.

Courses are typically 3 semester credits hours each, meaning that students meet in an instructional venue (in class, online, remote site) for 2.5 hours each week and complete academic work outside the instructional venue at least 5 hours each week for a 15-week semester or an equivalent amount of work spread out over a different period of time.

Courses that carry 4 or 5 semester credit hours require proportionately more work each week both inside and outside the instructional venue. Courses that carry 1 or 2 semester credit hours require proportionately less work, both inside and outside the instructional venue. Courses that meet fewer than 2.5 hours a week that are assigned 3 semester credit hours must require students to do additional work outside the instructional venue to achieve the expected learning objectives of a 2.5 hour a week course. At the academic unit level, the Educational Policy Committee in each academic or teaching unit is charged with approving such courses and certifying that the expected student learning objectives for the

course meet the 3 semester credit hour standard. At the University level, the Graduate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate and the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee must also review and approve such courses.

3.2. [Grade Point Average](#)

All graduate-level courses taken at AU and courses taken through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area while a student is enrolled in a degree program or a certificate program, or as a non-degree student, are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA for graduate students. If a student is admitted after having earned a graduate or undergraduate degree at AU, the cumulative GPA does not include grades from the earned degree unless coursework is [shared](#). Credits accepted as transfer credit from other institutions or earned during a permit to study at another domestic or foreign institution are included in the total number of credit hours applicable to degree requirements, but grades earned in such courses are not recorded on the transcript at American University and are not used in the calculation of the GPA needed for graduation.

Determination of the cumulative GPA for graduate students and the notification of graduate students regarding any deficiencies in GPA are the responsibility of the Office of the Registrar.

3.3. [Grading System](#)

The [grading scale](#) and the grade calculations used in the graduate GPA are equivalent to those used for undergraduate students.

3.4. [Grades for Thesis /Dissertation](#)

Thesis (797) and dissertation (899) course credits are graded as Satisfactory Progress (SP) or Unsatisfactory Progress (UP). With grades of either SP or UP, students receive credit for these courses, but the grades earned are not used in computing the GPA. These grades do not change upon the completion of the thesis or dissertation, and neither thesis nor dissertation credits may be retaken to change a previously assigned UP to an SP.

3.5. [Pass/Fail Courses](#)

Graduate students, unless approved by the associate dean, must earn a letter-grade for a course unless that course is only offered pass/fail or SP/UP. Courses that can only be taken Pass/Fail may be included as part of a student's Program of Study. A grade of Pass for a graduate student indicates performance of no less than a C, which indicates a numeric equivalent of 2.00. Neither Pass nor Fail grades are used to compute the GPA. A course that is only offered SP/UP may not be assigned grades of Pass/Fail.

3.6. [Excluding Graduate Credits from the GPA](#)

An academic unit may petition OGS to exclude up to 9 credits of graduate coursework from a student's graduate GPA in an uncompleted degree program or certificate under the following conditions:

- The student was enrolled in the same program and courses were taken over 5 years prior.
- The student was enrolled in a different degree program or certificate than the current degree program or certificate when the course was taken. Courses taken as a non-degree student may also be excluded from the GPA. The petition may be submitted after at least one year from maintaining enrollment (including temporary leave) in the other degree program or certificate. If the student was non-degree student, the petition may be submitted one year after taking the course(s).

Courses excluded from the GPA computation will still appear on the official transcript but will include notation that they are not included in the GPA. Courses excluded from the GPA may not be counted for credit.

3.7. Auditing Courses

Graduate students may register for courses that are not part of their Program of Study with an audit grade option. Faculty will establish standards for class participation and/or attendance for auditing students. When auditing students fail to meet those standards, the instructor will assign the grade of ZL (administrative withdrawal from audit). Tuition for courses registered for an audit grade option will be billed at the same rate as courses registered for academic credit. Other University requirements for auditing courses will be applicable.

3.8. Incompletes

The instructor of record may assign an Incomplete in place of a final grade when extenuating circumstances prevent a student, who has up to the time of request received a passing grade in the course, from completing all work during the stated instructional period.

Students on probation may not receive an Incomplete. To receive an Incomplete in a course, students must receive the permission of the instructor in advance of the assessment of final course assignments and agree on an incomplete contract before grades are posted. Multiple outstanding Incomplete grades may affect the ability of a student to maintain [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#).

The instructor must provide, in writing, the conditions for satisfying the Incomplete to the student and post them when entering the final grades for the course. Instructors must identify what work needs to be completed, when the work must be completed, and what the course grade will be if the student fails to complete that work. Remaining work must be completed before the end of the following semester. Earlier deadlines, such as by the add/drop date of the next semester, are recommended. Faculty may select any deadline

before the end of the following semester as deemed appropriate. Students who do not meet the established conditions will automatically receive the default grade. In exceptional circumstances, the Associate Dean of the academic unit, with the concurrence of the instructor, may grant extensions beyond the agreed deadline. The Associate Dean must inform the Office of the Registrar of the extension. Students may not drop a course once an Incomplete is granted. An Incomplete may not stand as a permanent grade and must be resolved before a graduate degree or post-baccalaureate certificate can be awarded. If a student separates or is dismissed from the University, any unresolved Incompletes will receive the default grade.

3.9. by the American University Faculty Senate [Independent Studies](#)

With the approval of their Graduate Program Director, students in [Good Academic Standing](#) may register for an independent study. The independent study must be identified as a course in the Program of Study. Before registration, the student and the supervising faculty member must agree upon and document the title, objective, scope, credit value (1 to 6 credit hours), and method of evaluation for the independent study. The instructor must notify the Graduate Program Director of the agreement for the study. Students will not have more than 9 independent study credit hours in any graduate program. Individual programs may set lower limits.

3.10. [Internships](#)

Graduate students may register for credit-bearing, paid, or unpaid internships with a significant academic component with the approval and guidance of a faculty member. The work for the internship may be no more than 15% administrative in nature, and instructors must weigh the academic component as at least half of the course grade. The internship must be identified as a course on the Program of Study. With the approval of the Graduate Program Director, students may enroll for 1 to 6 credits in a single internship. Individual graduate programs may set lower limits on the number of credits for which a single internship may be registered and limit the total number of internship credits in a Program of Study. Students may not exceed six internship study credit hours in any graduate program. The table below indicates the minimum number of total hours worked per credit hour allowed.

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

3.11. [Repetition of Courses](#)

Graduate students may repeat a course only once if grades, either letter or pass/fail, were

earned both times. Graduate students may repeat a course twice, with approval of the academic unit, if one of the attempts ended with a withdrawal. Dropping a course does not count as an attempt. Grades for each attempt are shown on the transcript and are used to compute the overall GPA, but only credits for one passed course are included in the credits required for the graduate degree.

3.12. Good Academic Standing

Graduate students are considered to be in Good Academic Standing if they are achieving Satisfactory Academic Progress toward the degree requirements of their program and have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.

3.13. Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students are making Satisfactory Academic Progress when, in addition to meeting any standards for the GPA that individual programs might set, they are meeting on time the defined milestones in their Program of Study, and they have received credit in at least two-thirds of the courses that they have attempted. For master's students, such milestones include, but are not limited to, completing the required coursework and completing the capstone experience satisfactorily. For doctoral students, milestones include, but are not limited to, completing the required coursework, passing the comprehensive examination(s) or equivalent, defending the dissertation proposal, completing the dissertation, and defending the completed dissertation.

For students writing a thesis or dissertation, it is the collective responsibility of the student and the student's Thesis Advisor or Dissertation Committee Chair to ensure that Satisfactory Academic Progress is being maintained. This process is coordinated by the student's Thesis Advisor or Dissertation Committee Chair, and oversight authority rests with the Graduate Program Director. Thesis Advisors and Dissertation Committee Chairs are required to review annually all students conducting theses or dissertations to determine that they are making Satisfactory Academic Progress, and to (1) inform the student and (2) inform the Graduate Program Director, who will communicate the finding to the Associate Dean of the academic unit. Students may request of the Graduate Program Director, at least once each semester, that their Thesis Director or Dissertation Committee Chair meet with them to discuss progress on the thesis or dissertation.

3.14. Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal

3.14.1. Students Enrolled in a Graduate Degree Program

The University Registrar will place students enrolled in a graduate degree program on Academic Probation when, after attempting and receiving credit in at least 9 credit hours of coursework, their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 or when students fail to receive credit in at least two-thirds of the courses they attempt. The Registrar will inform the students of their probationary status in writing. This notification will inform the students that they cannot receive an Incomplete grade while they are on

Academic Probation status.

Students will be placed on Academic Probation for the time it takes them to attempt 12 additional credits or three enrolled semesters, whichever is shorter. After the Academic Probation period is completed, students who fail to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or fail to raise their course completion rate will be academically dismissed from the University by the Registrar. If at any point while a student is on Academic Probation status, it becomes mathematically impossible to raise his or her cumulative GPA to 3.00 within the allotted 12 credits from the onset of Academic Probation, the student will be academically dismissed. Additionally, if a graduate student is not on probation and his/her GPA drops such that it is mathematically impossible to return to a cumulative GPA to 3.00 within 12 credits, then the student will be academically dismissed.

If the Program Director or Associate Dean of an academic unit determines that a student is not making Satisfactory Academic Progress for any academic reason, the Dean or Dean's designee may decide either to issue an Academic Warning or place the student on Academic Probation. The Dean may also academically dismiss the student without Academic Probation or Warning. The academic unit must notify the Registrar of the decision to apply a sanction. The Registrar will notify each student of the decision and the reason for the decision. In the case of an Academic Probation notice, the Registrar must inform the student, in writing, of the period for the warning or probation and of the conditions that must be met for the student to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress status. Students who are on an Academic Warning status for one semester may be subject to Academic Probation or be academically dismissed in subsequent semesters if the terms of the Academic Warning are not fulfilled.

Academic Dismissals are permanently recorded on the transcript. Academic Warnings and Academic Probation are not.

3.14.2. Students Enrolled in a Graduate Certificate Program

The Registrar will place students enrolled in a graduate certificate program on Academic Probation when, after attempting at least 6 credit hours of coursework, their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 or when students fail to receive credit in at least two-thirds of the courses they attempt. Students will be placed on Academic Probation for the time it takes them to attempt 6 more credits or two enrolled semesters, whichever is shorter.

If at any point while a student enrolled in a graduate certificate program is on Academic Probation status, it becomes mathematically impossible to raise his or her cumulative GPA up to 3.00 within the allotted 6 credits from the onset of Academic Probation, the student will be academically dismissed.

All other regulations concerning Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal for students enrolled in a graduate certificate program are the

same as those for students enrolled in a graduate degree program.

3.14.3. Graduate Non-degree Students

All regulations concerning Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal for graduate non-degree students are the same as those for students enrolled in a graduate degree program.

3.14.4. Incompletes and Academic Probation

If a student who is not placed on Academic Probation is assigned an Incomplete grade and the final assigned grade brings the student's cumulative GPA to below 3.00, the student will be placed on Academic Probation at the end of the semester when the grade was converted to the final assigned grade.

3.14.5. Appeal of Academic Dismissal

Appeals of academic dismissal are governed by the Process for Petitions to Appeal Academic Dismissals Policy.

3.15. Academic Integrity Code

Students are bound by the University's Academic Integrity Code, which ensures that all work done in pursuit of a degree, whether graded or ungraded, formal or informal, meets the highest standards of academic honesty. Suspension and academic dismissal are permanently recorded on the transcript as a violation of the [Academic Integrity Code](#).

4. Degree Requirements

4.1. Program of Study

The Program of Study is a formal plan listing the program requirements and electives, as described in the Academic Catalog, that a student must meet to complete a specific degree, including the dates by which each requirement is expected to be completed. Ph.D. students must meet with a designated advisor to outline their Program of Study by the end of the second semester; individual programs may require earlier deadlines. Programs of Study must be developed for master's students and should be completed during the first semester. Thereafter, students are expected to meet as needed with their designated advisor or Program Director to monitor their status related to Good Academic Standing and Satisfactory Academic Progress and to update the Program of Study as needed.

4.2. Course Levels

4.2.1. Course Numbers

- 500-599 Graduate courses that are not [core graduate courses](#), but courses of general importance in the discipline. These courses are open to qualified undergraduate students.
- 600-699 Graduate courses that are [core graduate courses](#) for the master's degree in the field of study. No undergraduate students may take 600-level courses unless
- a) they are seeking a [combined master's/bachelor's degree](#) or
 - b) by special permission of the Associate Dean of the academic unit. These classes may meet jointly with 400-level classes, but not with 100-, 200-, or 300-level classes.
- 700-799 Graduate courses that are customarily advanced content courses for the master's degree or for the Ph.D. in the field of study. Undergraduate students are not allowed in these courses, and they may not meet jointly with undergraduate classes.
- 800-899 Doctoral courses, limited to Ph.D. students. Certificate or master's students may enroll in these courses with permission of the Associate Dean of the academic unit.

4.2.2. Enrollment in Other Course Numbers by Graduate Students

Graduate students may only sign up for courses at the 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-levels with the approval of their Associate Dean.

4.3. Cross-listed courses

Graduate courses at the 600-level may be cross-listed with 400-level undergraduate courses, but only when a significant portion of the course content is appropriate for both levels of study. Graduate students taking a cross-listed course will register under the 600 course number and are expected to complete work in addition to the material covered in common with the undergraduate students in the class. Additional graduate student work should occur outside the common class time. Expectations for both sets of students will be clearly defined in the course syllabus.

4.4. Designation of Full-Time and Part-Time Status

Full-time student status is defined as registration for nine semester credit hours in fall or spring semester or four semester credit hours for summer semester. Part-time student status is defined as registration for five semester credit hours in fall or spring semester or two semester credit hours for summer semester. Enrollment in all summer sessions during a calendar year will be added to determine the total summer enrollment. Students who are registered for more than a part-time credit load in any semester, but less than a full-time credit load for that semester, will be considered part-time students.

Graduate students must remain registered for a full-time course load under specific conditions including having particular types of student loans and having international student status. The Office of the University Registrar will contact the Associate Deans of academic units following the end of the add/drop period to indicate students who have full-time and part-time status. It is the responsibility of individual graduate students to understand how changes in course load or full-time status may have an impact on payment schedules or other conditions of their obligations to entities providing them with educational loans.

4.5. [Continuous Enrollment](#)

Once enrolled in a degree program, graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment at American University by registering for at least one semester hour of credit each fall and spring semester, or maintaining matriculation through authorized 0-credit courses, until the degree objective is reached. Students who fail to register and who have not requested and received a [Temporary Leave](#) may begin being administratively separated from the University at the add/drop date of the academic term for which they failed to register. An academic unit may extend the deadline for administrative separation until the end of the semester for specific students by contacting the Office of University Registrar.

4.6. [Submission and Publication of Thesis / Dissertation](#)

Dissertations and theses must be submitted to the University Library in electronic format after final approval of the dissertation or thesis by the Examining Committee. See the [American University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\) website](#) for the details of the publication process. Dissertations and theses submitted to the University through the ETD process will also be deposited in the AU Library's online electronic archive, the [American University Research Commons \(AURC\)](#), as well as ProQuest's Digital Dissertations. The submission of the thesis or dissertation to the University in fulfillment of degree requirements grants the University the one-time, non-exclusive right to publish the document in the American University Research Commons. Distribution is subject to a release date stipulated by the student and approved by the University. As the owner of the copyright of the thesis or dissertation, students have the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, make derivative works based on, and publicly perform and display their work,

and to authorize others to exercise some or all of those rights.

4.7. Research Assurances and Research Ethics Training

Graduate students at American University who are conducting independent research are responsible for obtaining the appropriate research assurances for research that involves human participants, animal subjects, recombinant DNA, infectious materials, select or toxic agents, or human materials. For application forms and guidelines, please see AU's Research website at <http://www.american.edu/research/>. Copies of research assurances must be presented to the Graduate Program Director with the completed dissertation proposal at the time of the defense of the dissertation proposal.

Appropriate protocol review and oversight of faculty and student research is an essential component of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training on campus. All graduate students who are conducting research in partial fulfillment of a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation are required to participate in [RCR training](#). Documentation of RCR training must be presented to the Office of Graduate Studies to advance to candidacy.

Data resulting from research projects, including thesis and dissertation research projects, that do not receive a protocol review when appropriate from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements, cannot be published and must be destroyed. A research protocol cannot be reviewed and approved retrospectively by an IRB, IACUC, or IBC.

Willful avoidance of the oversight functions of University research review committees can result in a charge of research misconduct. Also, see [Research Compliance](#).

4.8. Time Limits to Degree

Students are expected to complete their degree within the time frame specified below. Programs may set lower limits for all students or for individual students in their program. Time limits must be included in the Program of Study. The time to degree may be extended by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. The Graduate Program Director must justify that the content of AU courses passed in excess of 9 years aligns with current knowledge and practices. Additionally, the Associate Dean of the academic unit must also approve. Temporary leaves do not count toward the time limits but cannot be used for the sole purpose of extending the time to degree. Voluntary and administrative separations will count toward the time limit to degree unless approved by DGS at the commencement of the separation.

Master's students are expected to complete all degree requirements in no more than six years after the date of first enrollment in the degree program. Doctoral students are expected to complete all degree requirements in no more than nine years after the date of first enrollment in the degree program. Each semester, the Registrar will identify students

who will exceed time limits to degree at the end of the current academic year and inform the students of the potential status change.

Under compelling circumstances, doctoral students may apply for one-year extensions beyond the expected time to degree, for a maximum of three extensions. Students must petition the Graduate Program Director for each one-year extension. Petitions must include a timetable listing specific goals from the Program of Study to be accomplished during the extension. Each extension must be approved by the Associate Dean of the academic unit and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Additional extensions will not be approved.

4.9. Substituting Courses

Graduate Program Directors may approve course substitutions in a student's Program of Study based on students' previous academic records and experiences. Substitute courses should have similar content to those specified in the degree requirements. In some instances, more advanced content could be substituted. Substitutions do not reduce the number of credits required for the degree and must be recorded on the students' Programs of Study.

4.10. Waiving Requirements

Waiving requirements is defined as satisfying degree or programmatic requirements by means other than those specified in the Academic Catalog. If a requirement waiver is not specified in the Academic Catalog, programs are not permitted to waive requirements or reduce the total number of credits required to obtain the degree, unless an exception is granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee.

Teaching units may modify the text for their programs in the Academic Catalog to delineate specific alternate means to meet degree or programmatic requirements. Such modifications to the Academic Catalog must follow proper procedures for changing a graduate program and must justify how mastery of the requirements' academic content is demonstrated by the alternative means.

4.11. Graduation

Students must submit an Application to Graduate at the beginning of the semester during which they expect to complete all degree and program requirements. Students who want to continue taking courses after graduating either must apply and be accepted to a new program, enroll as a non-degree student, or enroll through the alumni audit program.

A graduate student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 in order to be awarded a degree or certificate.

If a student has completed all requirements to graduate and has not applied for graduation, an

academic unit may apply for the student to graduate after one semester from completing all requirements. The academic unit must document multiple attempts to contact the student before taking this action. If the academic unit submitted an Application to Graduate on behalf of a student, the student must contact the Office of the University Registrar before receiving an updated transcript or diploma.

5. Credit Requirements

5.1. Criteria for Courses to be Accepted for Graduate Academic Credit

Graduate students will not receive credit for courses below the 500 level unless the course is an AU language course that is necessary for language proficiency levels for the graduate degree and is a graduate program requirement. Grades of C- or lower will not be accepted as fulfilling a degree or certificate requirement nor will it confer credit. Grades of C- or lower will be calculated into the cumulative GPA. Individual programs may set higher standards.

5.2. Transfer Credits

Students may request to transfer credit for courses taken prior to their admission to a graduate program at AU. The number of total credits transferred for a single degree program may be no greater than six credits and is limited by residency requirements. In no case may graduate credit be given for coursework designated as solely undergraduate by the institution where the coursework was completed. Proposed transfer courses must have been completed with a grade of B (3.00) or better and must have been completed no earlier than 5 years prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student is admitted to a graduate program at AU. Graduate programs may require that the proposed transfer courses have been completed more recently than the 5 years prior and may limit the number of allowable transfer credits to fewer than six.

Courses taken at American University toward a graduate degree earned before admission to a subsequent graduate program cannot be transferred but may be shared. See [Shared Credit for Non-Concurrent Degrees](#).

Transfer credits must be approved by a student's Graduate Program Director during his or her first semester of study and be included in the student's Program of Study. Transfer credits may be accepted by the approval of the Associate Dean of the academic unit in the second semester of study. Beyond the second semester of study, all transfer credits must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. Students must give the Graduate Program Director an official transcript from the institution at which the proposed course(s) was completed as well as a syllabus for each course requested for transfer. The academic unit must inform the Office of University of Registrar which courses will be transferred during the student's first semester

of study or afterwards pending the aforementioned approval.

Transfer credit will appear on the student's transcript, but grades from approved transferred courses at other institutions will not be counted in the student's AU cumulative GPA.

Master degree students may not transfer, [share between non-concurrent AU graduate degrees](#), or [complete via a permit to study](#) more than six (6) credits total, unless the credits are exclusively shared from a previous AU degree in which case nine (9) credits are allowed. Doctoral students may not transfer, [share between non-concurrent AU graduate degrees](#), or [complete via a permit to study](#) more than twelve (12) credits total.

5.3. Credits from Master's Degrees Applied to PhD Programs

Graduate Program Directors may approve up to twelve (12) credits to be shared or transferred for graduate students who are enrolled in a PhD Program and have earned a master's degree from American University or another institution. Requests to share or transfer more than twelve (12) credits must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee.

5.4. Shared Credits

Shared credits are credits counted toward AU graduate degrees, courses taken in non-degree status, or graduate certificates. Credits may also be shared from an undergraduate AU degree, but the credits must have been taken at the graduate level (i.e., 500 or above). Credits may only be shared once. Grades associated with the credits count in the GPA for each degree, certificate, or courses taken in non-degree status.

5.4.1. Shared Credits for Concurrent Degrees

Graduate students may only [share credits](#) between concurrent American University degree programs in three cases. These are:

- a. a [Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree](#),
- b. a PhD program and an earned master's degree at American University (see [Credits from Master's Degrees Applied to the PhD Degree](#)), or
- c. a [Dual Degree](#) Program

5.4.2. Shared Credits for Non-Concurrent Degrees

Students who have previously earned graduate degrees at American University may [share](#) up to 9 credits from the completed degree with a subsequent, non-concurrent, graduate degree. These shared credits must be approved by a student's Graduate Program Director during his or her first semester of study and be included in the student's Program of Study. Shared credits may be accepted by the approval of the Associate Dean of the

academic unit in the second semester of study. Beyond the second semester of study, all transfer credits must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. The academic unit must inform the Office of University Registrar which credits will be shared during the student's first semester of study or afterwards pending the aforementioned approval.

Master's degree students may not transfer, [share between non-concurrent AU graduate degrees](#), or [complete via a permit to study](#) more than six (6) credits total, unless the credits are exclusively shared from a previous AU degree in which case nine (9) credits are allowed. Doctoral students may not transfer, [share between non-concurrent AU graduate degrees](#), or [complete via a permit to study](#) more than twelve (12) credits total.

The same course must be listed as a degree requirement or elective in the Academic Catalog for both degrees to share credit. Proposed shared courses must have been completed with a grade of B (3.00) or better and must have been completed no earlier than 5 years prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student is admitted to a graduate program at AU. Graduate programs may require that the proposed shared courses have been completed more recently than the 5 years prior and may limit the number of allowable shared credits to fewer than six. Academic units may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee for exceptions to the shared credit regulations for non-concurrent degrees.

5.4.3. Shared Credits with AU Graduate Certificates or Non-degree Coursework

5.4.3.1. Shared Credits with Previous Graduate Certificates or Non-degree Coursework between Graduate Degrees

Graduate programs may approve specific credit hour limits and relevant coursework earned in a previous non-degree status or in a previous graduate certificate program to [share](#) with a degree program, but no more than 12 credit hours can be shared for credit towards a degree. Academic and teaching unit policies regarding the approval of semester credit hours of coursework earned in non-degree status or in a graduate certificate program must be posted and publicly available on the departmental website.

5.4.3.2. Shared Credits with Previous Graduate Degrees between Graduate Certificates

If a graduate certificate student has previously earned an American University graduate degree, the student may share 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. Approval of the academic unit is required. Proposed shared courses must have been completed with a grade of B (3.00) or better and must have been completed no earlier than 5 years

prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student is admitted to the certificate program.

5.4.3.3. Shared Credits with Current Graduate Degrees between Graduate Certificates

Graduate students who are enrolled in master's and/or doctoral degree programs may be simultaneously enrolled in a graduate certificate program. Credits may be shared between simultaneous graduate degrees and certificates with the approval of the Graduate Program Director of the master's or doctoral degree program.

5.5. In-Residence Credit and Residency Requirements

Courses are considered in residence when they are taken at American University, through an AU-coordinated off-site or online program, or through any member of the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#). Courses considered not in residence include those transferred from another institution into AU. Courses that are not taken in residence are not included in the computation of the GPA.

Both master's and doctoral degrees require a minimum of 18 semester credit hours of in-residence graduate coursework while enrolled in a degree program, exclusive of 797 or 899. Students in the Dual Degree option must complete a minimum of 36 semester credit hours of in-residence coursework at American University, with at least 50 percent of the credits unique to each degree. Individual program requirements may require more than 18 credit hours for either or both degrees. Courses used to satisfy residence credit requirements for an undergraduate degree may not also be used to satisfy parallel requirements for a dual master's degree.

5.6. Permit to Study at Another U.S. Institution

Students in good academic standing who wish to take courses at another U.S. institution that would not be considered in-residence courses must receive prior approval by their Program Director and Associate Dean. Students must secure approval from the academic unit prior to registering for the course, and such approval is granted only for specific courses. 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, although they will count toward the total number of credits needed for graduation. However, students must meet the GPA requirements of American University for individual courses taken at other institutions as required for their graduate Program of Study. Students must satisfy any additional requirements provided on the Permit to Study form.

Students may not [transfer](#), [share between non-concurrent AU graduate degrees](#), or complete via a permit to study more than 6 credits total.

5.7. Permit to Study Abroad

Students in good academic standing who wish to study at any foreign university not partnered with AU must receive prior approval by their Graduate Program Director and the Associate Dean. Permission for such study is granted only when the student can demonstrate that the academic opportunity offered by the foreign university cannot be met through study at any one of AU's existing partner universities. 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. However, students must meet GPA requirements of American University for individual courses taken at other institutions as required for their graduate Program of Study. Students must satisfy any additional requirements provided on the Permit to Study Abroad form.

Students may not [transfer](#), [share between non-concurrent AU graduate degrees](#), or complete via a permit to study more than 6 credits total.

6. Requirements for a Graduate Certificate

6.1. Graduate Certificate Programs for Credit

Academic units and the School of Professional and Extended Studies, at their discretion, may develop and administer graduate certificate programs for which there is academic credit. All graduate certificate programs for credit must include a minimum of 12 semester credit hours. All course work must meet the same requirements as those used for graduate academic programs. See [Criteria for Courses to be Accepted for Academic Credit](#). Some certificate programs for graduate credit may have additional requirements.

Students who are not enrolled in graduate degree programs but who are enrolled in graduate certificate programs are not permitted to enroll in courses in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Students in certificate programs must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours during each 12-month period after the start of their first semester of enrollment. All graduate certificate programs must be completed within four years. Students who do not meet these minimum requirements will be dismissed from the certificate program. If a student is readmitted to the program, the acceptance of previously completed credits will be determined by the academic or teaching unit upon readmission. The completion of the certificate will be noted on the student's official transcript for the semester it was completed.

6.2. Graduate Certificate Programs Not for Credit

Academic units, centers/institutes, and the School of Professional and Extended Studies, at their discretion, may develop and administer graduate certificate programs for which there is no academic credit.

7. Requirements for a Master's Degree

7.1. Approved Program of Study

An approved [Program of Study](#) includes, but is not limited to, coursework and a capstone experience.

7.2. Degree Requirements

A master's degree requires the completion of at least 30 semester credit hours of graduate work. The requirement for [residence credit](#) must be met. A detailed description of the degree requirements can be obtained from each graduate program and must be posted on the website of the teaching unit.

7.3. Capstone Experience

One capstone experience (e.g., thesis, research project, practicum, internship or other experience as determined by the graduate program) is required. The nature and scope of the capstone experience is determined by the graduate program and is included in the Program of Study. If the capstone is a comprehensive examination, the structure, content, and grading of the examination, as well as any policy on retaking the examination, will be determined by the teaching unit.

7.4. Thesis

Students who are writing a thesis as their capstone experience are expected to demonstrate their capacity to do original, independent research. Students must take no fewer than three semester credit hours of master's thesis research (797). A thesis advisory committee shall consist of no fewer than two members of the AU faculty. In consultation with the Thesis Chair, the student solicits faculty for the committee and submits their names for approval by the Graduate Program Director.

7.5. Jointly Administered Degree Programs

A Jointly Administered Degree Program is a specified combination of courses, typically from more than one academic or teaching unit, that combines elements of the various courses of study in those units for the purpose of providing a combined program of study

toward a specific degree. Both units have responsibilities to monitor student progress and provide academic advising. Upon completion of the Jointly Administered Degree Program, the student receives one graduate degree.

7.6. Dual Degree Programs

A Dual Degree Program is an approved combination of two separate degree programs. Students must be admitted to the second degree program before completing the first degree. Upon completion of a Dual Degree Program, a student will be conferred the two degrees included in the Dual Degree Program.

7.6.1. Dual Degree Programs within American University

Students may be enrolled in only one graduate program at a time unless they are enrolled in a Dual Degree Program. Credits that apply from one AU program to another must be approved by their respective academic units and under the following conditions:

- Students must meet all of the course, capstone, and other requirements for each degree program.
- Students apply for and receive each degree upon completion of all the requirements for that degree. The degrees may or may not be completed simultaneously.
- At least 50% of the courses taken in each program in the Dual Degree Program must be taken [in residence](#), and students must satisfy residency requirements as specified in these graduate regulations.
- The Dual Degree Program must either be listed in the Academic Catalog or approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. If the program is not listed in the Academic Catalog, DGS approval is necessary for each student before admission to a second degree program. DGS approval for a particular Dual Degree Program may only be granted for 3 students before it must be approved by the Graduate Curriculum Committee and listed in the Academic Catalog.
- The maximum number of credits that can be [shared](#) between the degrees must follow these guidelines:

		Credits for one degree		
		30 – 35 credits	36 – 38 credits	39 and more credits
Credits for the other degree	30 – 35 credits	Share 9 credits	Share 9 credits	Share 12 credits
	36 – 38 credits		Share 12 credits	Share 15 credits
	39 and more credits			Share 18 credits

Dual degrees programs that were approved and listed in the Academic Catalog prior to the adoption of this version of the Graduate Academic Regulations will be exempt from these limits.

7.6.2. Dual Degree Programs with Other Degree-Granting Institutions

Dual degree programs may be established with other institutions with approval from the Office of the Provost. At least 50% of the credits within the program must be earned through American University courses.

7.7. Combined Bachelor's and Master's Degrees

Students enrolled in a combined bachelor's/master's program may [share](#) credits between their bachelor's and master's degrees. These credits must be taken at the graduate level (500-level and above) and must meet degree requirements for each degree, as stipulated in the Academic Catalog. Credits at the graduate level may only be shared if:

- a. they satisfy major requirements for the bachelor's degree, or
- b. they satisfy [free electives](#) for the bachelor's degree. However, all available undergraduate and transfer credits must be used to satisfy free electives before using graduate credits. Students who complete their bachelor's degree with over 120 credits may be limited in the number of graduate credits shared through free electives.

Graduate credit cannot be shared to satisfy requirements for General Education, University Mathematics, or College Writing. Graduate credit cannot be shared with minors unless they are stipulated as major requirements for the bachelor's degree in the Academic Catalog or unless they are approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. The maximum number of shared credits is determined by the number of credits required for the master's degree:

Credit hours required for the master's program	Maximum number of shared credit hours between bachelor's and master's degrees
30-32	9
33-38	12
39 and more	15

Programs may set lower limits than those specified here.

Once admitted to a combined program, students must be assigned a graduate advisor. The student, undergraduate advisor, and graduate advisor must design a Plan of Study, which details how graduate coursework will satisfy bachelor's degree requirements. Appropriate graduate coursework in the Plan of Study may be substituted for specific bachelor's degree requirements. Students must have a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher when completing their undergraduate degree to share all credits in their Plan of Study. If the cumulative graduate GPA is below 3.00, only graduate courses with grades of B or higher will be allowed to be shared.

Although graduate standing is not officially granted until all bachelor's degree requirements have been fulfilled, students in a combined bachelor's/master's program are permitted to enroll in graduate-level courses based on their Plans of Study to fulfill both the bachelor's and master's degree requirements while still officially enrolled as an

undergraduate student. See [Admission to a Combined Bachelor's /Master's Program](#) and Residency. Once all undergraduate requirements have been satisfied, students must graduate from their bachelor's degree programs. They will be officially enrolled in the graduate programs only if they completed their bachelor's programs and they met all requirements for admission to the master's programs. Once enrolled in the master's program, students will be subject to the academic regulations governing graduate students. Bachelor's/Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment between the bachelor's and master's degree to remain in the program.

8. Requirements for a Doctoral Degree

8.1. [Approved Program of Study](#)

All doctoral students must have an approved [Program of Study](#). The ability to do independent research is an important part of the Program of Study and must be demonstrated by an original dissertation on a topic approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program in which the student is earning the degree. A dissertation is required of all candidates for a doctoral degree.

An approved Program of Study includes:

- a complete list of coursework, and
- a schedule with anticipated dates for:
 - planned courses in required and elective subjects,
 - the comprehensive examination(s) or equivalent,
 - an approved dissertation proposal, and
 - a successful defense and completion of the dissertation.

8.2. [Degree Requirements](#)

The Ph.D. degree requires a minimum of 18 semester-hour credits of coursework completed in residence, exclusive of dissertation credits. Individual doctoral programs at AU may require additional semester-credit hours, following the curriculum proposed by academic unit faculty and approved by the Graduate Curriculum Committee.

8.3. [Comprehensive Examination\(s\) or Equivalent](#)

The nature and scope of the comprehensive examination(s) or equivalent are determined by the doctoral degree programs housed within specific academic units. Options other than a written exam may be used by a doctoral degree program to assess integration and synthesis

of the body of knowledge accessed via the program curriculum and related research, practicum, or internship experiences. The completed comprehensive examination(s) is typically read by two faculty readers from the academic unit and is rated “with distinction,” “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” by each. In order to pass the examination, the student must obtain at least “satisfactory” on the examination from both readers. The faculty affiliated with a doctoral program may, however, elect to design a different system for grading comprehensive examinations in the academic unit.

A student who fails a comprehensive examination may apply to the Graduate Program Director for one additional attempt. If the Graduate Program Director approves the application, the retake of the exam should occur within six months of the date of the first attempt. Students who fail a retake attempt will be dismissed from the doctoral program. The Graduate Program Director will notify the Office of the Registrar of the outcome of all comprehensive exam attempts.

8.4. [Doctoral Dissertation Committee](#)

The appointment of the Dissertation Committee should be made well in advance of the defense of the dissertation proposal. All [core Dissertation Committee members](#) must hold the appropriate terminal degree. In consultation with the proposed Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chair, the doctoral student solicits faculty for the committee and submits the names of the Chair and other committee members for approval by the Graduate Program Director. If the status of any member of an approved Dissertation Committee changes, the doctoral student and the Graduate Program Director will recommend a replacement and report it to the Office of Graduate Studies.

At the time of the final examination of the dissertation, at least one additional member will join the core of the Dissertation Committee as an outside reader for the final examination. The purpose of the outside reader(s) is to provide a review of the dissertation by a colleague with the appropriate terminal degree who is an expert in the subject matter of the dissertation. The outside reader should have no direct association with the student. An outside reader serves an advisory role, and the charge to the outside reader is to determine if the dissertation meets general standards in the field, not necessarily to critique the work in detail. Once the dissertation has been successfully defended, all committee members sign the [dissertation title page](#). A letter of approval from the outside reader may replace the outside reader’s signature on the [dissertation title page](#).

8.4.1. [Ph.D. Dissertation Committee](#)

Customarily, the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee will have four or more core committee members, including the chair of the committee. The minimum number of core committee members, including the chair of the committee, is three. At least two of the core members must be full-time, tenure-line faculty members at American University

and preferably from the program in which the student is enrolled. Qualified individuals, either outside the department or outside the University, may be invited to sit on a committee as external members once the minimum requirement of two internal full-time, tenure-line faculty from American University has been met. Together, the internal and external members form the core of the Dissertation Committee. Core members are charged with guiding the student and providing detailed feedback during the dissertation process.

The chair of the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee must be an AU faculty member who holds a tenured position. Untenured, tenure-line faculty may be appointed as co-chairs of Ph.D. Dissertation Committees but must serve with a tenured faculty member. Adjunct faculty, term faculty, faculty from other universities, and emeriti faculty may not chair a Dissertation Committee but may serve on it. A Ph.D. Dissertation Committee chair who retires or leaves the University before the dissertation is complete may petition the Office of Graduate Studies to remain on the committee as chair, as a co-chair, or as a member.

8.4.2. Ed.D. Dissertation Committee

The core Ed.D. Dissertation Committee will consist of at least three members. The chair must be a full-time tenured, tenure-track, or appropriate clinical faculty member in the candidate's program of study. The committee must have at least one practice-active member. This could either be a practice-active faculty member at American University or a practicing professional from outside the university, who is a leader in the relevant field of practice. The third member may be a faculty member or another practicing professional from outside the university. An Ed.D. Dissertation Committee chair who retires or leaves the University before the dissertation is complete may petition the Office of Graduate Studies to remain on the committee as chair, as a co-chair, or as a member.

8.5. Advancement to Candidacy

Students advance to doctoral candidacy when they have completed all of the courses on their Program of Study, passed their comprehensive examination or equivalent, completed their RCR training, and defended successfully their dissertation proposal. The Office of Graduate Studies will certify a doctoral student has completed the requirements and contact the Registrar to advance the student to candidacy. Advancement to candidacy normally occurs by the end of the third year of study but may vary among doctoral programs. At the time of advancement to candidacy, students who have not petitioned for or received *en passant* degrees (e.g., M.A., M.S.) will automatically be considered for such degrees. If a student advances to candidacy after the deadline to submit a petition for the degree in that term, the student will be considered for a degree in the following term. Students who do not advance to candidacy may receive a master's degree according to the established guidelines in their graduate program.

Doctoral students who have not advanced to candidacy but are preparing to defend their proposal may take Course #898, which has variable credit hours (from one to nine) but is priced at the equivalent of one graduate credit hour. Course #898 cannot be taken more than twice.

Once doctoral students advance to candidacy, they will only need to register for Dissertation Credits (Course #899) for nine (9) credits per semester, or a total of 18 credits per academic year. The instructor of record of #899, or a suitable substitute, is expected to provide at minimum an average of one contact hour, either in person or remotely, with the student for the semester. Students receiving this instruction will continue to register in #899 until they defend their dissertations. The instructor of record will be the dissertation committee chair, but another member on the committee or the graduate program director is allowed in rare situations, such as the unavailability of the chair. If the instructor of record is not providing the required instruction, the instructor of record must receive a written progress report from the individual providing the instruction at the end of the semester before assigning a grade for the section. Students who have not received instruction and have not demonstrated work on their dissertation for a semester must receive grades of “UP” for #899.

Course #899 will be priced at the equivalent of one graduate credit hour. All doctoral students who have been admitted to doctoral candidacy must register and pay for dissertation credits and related university services during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year, unless they have an approved temporary leave from the University.

8.6. Examination of Dissertation

Each doctoral candidate is required to defend orally his or her doctoral dissertation as a requirement in partial fulfillment of the doctoral degree. The requirement for a dissertation examination is separate from, and is not fulfilled by, a comprehensive examination(s). The dissertation examination will consist of a public presentation by the candidate on the research reported in the dissertation, followed by a formal, public examination of the candidate by the Dissertation Committee. The Doctoral Program Director is responsible for posting publicly the announcement of the oral defense of the dissertation seven days prior to the date of the oral defense, including the teaching unit location and/or website, and the Graduate Studies website.

The Dissertation Committee has the following options:

- To accept the dissertation without any recommendations for changes. The departmental designee signs the [dissertation title page](#).
- To accept the dissertation with recommendations for minor changes. The chair then oversees and approves all required changes to the dissertation. Upon the chair's approval, the departmental designee signs the [dissertation title page](#).
- To recommend major revisions to the dissertation. The candidate makes the required changes and submits the revised dissertation to the Dissertation Committee for additional review and approval. Upon their approval, the departmental designee signs the [dissertation title page](#) for the revised dissertation.

- To recommend revisions and convene a second meeting of the Dissertation Committee to review the dissertation and complete the candidate's examination.
- To evaluate the dissertation, including its examination, as unsatisfactory. If the candidate fails, the candidate can petition the Dissertation Committee chair and the Dissertation Committee for one retake.

Following the examination, the chair must inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the examination. A copy of this statement is to be included in the student's file at the doctoral program office of the academic unit, and a copy is given to the student. The Doctoral Program Director will provide a copy of notice of the outcome of the examination to the Office of the Registrar.

9. Registration Policies

9.1. Initial Course Registration

Students must initially register for the courses in which they wish to enroll prior to the beginning of each semester, or they will incur a late registration fee. Before registration, students should consult a graduate advisor or their Graduate Program Director regarding their Program of Study.

9.2. International Students

International students in F-1 or J-1 status must obtain approval from [ISSS](#) when registering for the first time or for a new program, when registering below a full course load or equivalent (e.g., Reduced Course Load), when registering for an internship, when taking an approved temporary leave, or when separating from the University. This approval is in addition to those normally required by an academic unit and may not be waived.

9.3. Changes in Course Registration Once a Semester Begins

The add/drop period is the first ten 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 the academic unit or the teaching unit explicitly prohibits it, without penalty or notice on their transcript. After the add/drop period, students must receive instructor as well as Graduate Program Director approval in order to add a course. They must receive the new instructor's approval to change sections. Grade type can be changed until the end of the tenth week of the semester.

Students may withdraw from a course up until the end of the tenth 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. After the end of the tenth week of the semester, or the equivalent for summer and other non-standard sessions, students may withdraw from a course only by permission of the Associate Dean of the Academic Unit, and only in cases of well-documented emergencies beyond the student's control. A low or failing grade in a course is not grounds for withdrawal from the course.

A student may not withdraw from a course after the last class meeting. International students must receive approval from ISSS before withdrawing from a course. Discontinuation of attendance at a class or notification to the instructor is not sufficient to constitute an official withdrawal from a course.

9.4. Interruption of Studies

A student who takes a temporary leave or separates from the University is no longer taking courses at AU.

- **Temporary Leave:** A temporary leave is a temporary interruption in studies when the student is not actively taking classes at the University nor receiving support for thesis or dissertation work. The leave is for a specified period of time after which the student is expected to return to active status. 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 with no expected date of return to active 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 feasible alternatives.

Graduate students who take temporary leaves or separate from the University during a semester for which they are enrolled must apply with the Office of the Registrar to change their status. They must withdraw from classes for which they are registered.

Graduate student financial aid, merit awards, and graduate assistantship awards may be affected by any temporary leave or separation from the University. Students should consult with their Graduate Program Director or the University Office of Financial Aid for help in determining the effects of the proposed temporary leave or separation on their graduate career.

9.4.1. 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.

9.4.1.1. General Conditions for All Temporary Leaves

- An approved temporary leave period is not counted as part of the time allowed for completion of degree requirements and thus does not count toward the time limits, but temporary leaves cannot be used for the sole purpose of extending the time to degree.
- Since a temporary leave is not a registration, a student on leave is not registered and may only use university facilities as a member of the general public. This includes the library, fitness center, and similar facilities. Occupied university housing must be vacated promptly by students on leave.
- Students on temporary leave are not eligible for financial aid.
- 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 concurrently 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 reduction in load or a voluntary temporary leave may affect their student visa status, and they should consult with ISSS.
- Students who do not return to the University at the end of the temporary leave will be automatically separated.

9.4.1.2. [General Temporary Leave](#)

Students who desire a temporary leave to study at another education institution are directed to the [permit to study section](#). Students who desire a temporary leave for reasons other than study at another educational institution must obtain approval from the Associate Dean of their academic unit. This permit will specify the duration of the temporary leave and must comply with University Academic Regulations. Students must request the leave no later than within the first two weeks of the semester in which the temporary leave will begin. To extend the temporary leave, students must apply directly to the Associate Dean of their academic unit. The academic unit can extend the temporary leave only once. The permit becomes void if the student attends any domestic or foreign educational institution during the period of temporary leave, unless the student obtains a permit to study at another institution from the Associate Dean of the academic unit.

Degree seeking graduate students are allowed no more than two semesters of general temporary leave, either consecutive or non-consecutive, to remain enrolled in the same program. This limit does not apply to leave accrued while enrolled in a previous degree program.

9.4.1.3. [Medical Temporary Leave and Reduction in Load](#)

A full-time graduate student may petition for a permit to take a reduced course load to address a medical issue; full- and part-time graduate students may request a permit to take a medical leave of absence for personal health reasons. Petitions for all of these requests must include supporting documentation and are submitted to the Graduate Program Director and approved by the Associate Dean of the academic unit. The permit becomes void if the student attends any domestic or foreign educational institution during the period of leave, unless the student obtains a permit to study at another institution from the Associate Dean of the academic unit.

A student must provide sufficient documentation to the Dean of Students that the medical condition has been alleviated and that the student is ready to return to academic life at the University.

A student may take up to three semesters of leave if at least one of the semesters is medical leave with approval of the Associate Dean. The student needs approval of both the Associate Dean and the DGS to take any additional semesters of medical leave.

9.4.1.4. [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 Graduate Program Director and their instructors in advance of the temporary leave during a semester, and a written plan to complete course requirements must be devised by the instructor and the student. The written plan must be filed with the Graduate Program Director. 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 military temporary leave (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 graduate studies), the student may apply to the Associate Dean of the academic unit for a general temporary leave for national service or military reasons. Students applying for leave for this reason must provide documentation to support the request for the leave, including military orders specifying a beginning and end date. Long-term military temporary leaves may be extended beyond the two-semester limit with approval of the Associate Dean of the academic unit and Dean of Graduate Studies or designee.

9.4.2. [Separation and Suspension from the University](#)

Students whose grades would have led to academic dismissal had they not separated, voluntarily or involuntarily, from the University are treated, for purposes of readmission, as if they had been academically dismissed. Students who are separated must apply to the Associate Dean of the academic unit for readmission to the program. New degree requirements may apply.

9.4.2.1. [Voluntary Separation from the University](#)

Students in good academic standing wishing to separate from the University must notify the Office of the Registrar and may do so at any time, up to and inclusive of the last day of classes. Separations requested after the last day of instruction or by students on probation must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. Students may separate from the University only once for any reason.

If students are enrolled in classes when they separate from the University, a grade of "W" is entered for each course. Students who have withdrawn from classes to separate from the University may be eligible for partial tuition reimbursement.

Students in good academic standing can apply to the Associate Dean of their academic unit for readmission in the following semester. Students on probation may apply for readmission after two full semesters (fall, spring, or summer).

9.4.2.2. [Administrative Separation from the University](#)

Graduate students who fail to file for a separation with the Office of the Registrar and leave during a semester in which they have registered will receive failing grades in classes. Graduate students who leave the University during a semester for which they are registered or who fail to register for classes as expected without notifying the Office of the Registrar will be considered separated.

9.4.2.3. [Involuntary Suspension from the University](#)

The Academic Dean 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.

9.4.3. [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 the University must provide their academic unit with a copy of their military orders. The orders should confirm the beginning and end date of service. This policy is in addition to that described in the Military Temporary Leave policy for events unrelated to hostilities or war. Students will be advised by their academic unit and instructors on how best to complete their studies through alternative methods such as online learning and, in some cases, may be eligible for a refund of tuition.

Students may resume their studies at the University if arrangements are made for their return within the six months following the end of their forced 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. Students should communicate with their Graduate Program Director and the Associate Dean of the academic unit as soon as they know the date of their return.

9.5. [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 Office of the Associate Dean of the academic unit.

If students believe it is not in their best interest to complete the semester or to return to campus the next semester, the options exist to take a temporary leave or to separate from the University.

10. Four-Term Calendar

American University graduate programs and certificates may have courses offered in one of two approved academic calendars: the semester calendar, based on two terms in the fall and spring, or the four-term calendar, based on four terms throughout the academic year. This section contains any modifications to the academic regulations for students enrolled in four-term calendar courses, programs, or certificates.

10.1. Programs and Certificates in the Academic Calendars

Any graduate program or certificate must have all required courses offered within only one academic calendar. The academic catalog will indicate the academic calendar associated with graduate program or certificate is the four-term calendar. All courses in an approved Program of Study for students must align with the same academic calendar for the program or certificate.

10.2. Enrollment in Courses in the Academic Calendars

Students enrolled in a semester calendar program Fall 2020 will be allowed to enroll in T4 courses, with the permission of the Associate Dean of the academic unit. Additionally, students enrolled in a semester calendar program Spring 2021 will be allowed to enroll in T1 courses, with the permission of the Associate Dean of the academic unit. For the purposes of these regulations, four-term courses taken by students enrolled in semester program will be treated as semester courses during the semester in which the term begins and ends.

Cross-calendar enrollments/credits cannot exceed 49 percent of the student's total program credits. Academic units must keep track of all on-campus program students that cross-enroll into any of the Four-Term Academic Calendar courses.

Non-degree students, upon registering in non-degree status, must declare one academic calendar for the courses they intend to take. Should no courses be available in one of the academic calendars for non-degree students, then they will automatically be declared for the other academic calendar by default. All courses taken as a non-degree student must align with the declared academic calendar. A non-degree student may choose to change his or her declared academic calendar, but it may only take effect after current coursework in the first calendar has been completed.

10.3. Rules and Regulations for Students Enrolled in Four-Term calendar Courses, Programs, or Certificates

All rules and regulations in previous sections apply to students enrolled in four-term courses,

10.3.1. [Credit hours for Students in Four-Term Calendar Courses, Programs, or Certificates](#)

Credit hours for four-term calendar courses are equivalent to the Carnegie definition of semester credit hours described in [3.1](#). Four-term calendar courses are typically 3 semester credit hours each, meaning that students meet in an instructional venue (in class, online, remote site) for 3.75 hours each week and complete academic work outside the instructional venue at least 7.5 hours each week of a ten-week term. Courses that meet fewer than 3.75 hours a week that are assigned 3 semester credit hours must require students to do additional work outside the instructional venue to achieve the expected learning objectives of a 3.75 hour a week course. Courses that carry more than or less than 3 semester credit hours require proportionately more or less work each week, respectively, both inside and outside the instructional venue. Courses that meet for terms greater than or less than 10 weeks will require proportionately more or less contact hours to the weekly instruction time both inside and outside the instructional venue.

10.3.2. [Incompletes for Students in Four-Term Calendar Courses, Programs, or Certificates](#)

All rules and regulations for incompletes in section [3.8](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar courses except that remaining work must be completed before the end of the following term. Earlier deadlines, such as the add/drop date of the next term, are recommended. Faculty may select any deadline before the end of the following term as deemed appropriate.

10.3.3. [Internships for Students in Four-Term Calendar Courses, Programs, or Certificates](#)

All rules and regulations for internships in section [3.10](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar programs and certificates except for the following: With the approval of the Graduate Program Director, students may enroll for 1 to 5 credits in a single internship. The table below indicates the minimum number of total hours worked per credit hour allowed.

Earned Credits/Minimum Hours Interned					
Earned credits	1	2	3	4	5
Minimum total hours interned required by end of term	70	140	210	280	350
Average number of hours interned weekly over 10 weeks	7	14	21	28	35

10.3.4. [Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal for Students in Four-Term Calendar Courses, Programs, or Certificates](#)

All rules and regulations in section [3.14](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar courses, programs, and certificates except for the following: Students enrolled in a graduate program aligned with a four-term calendar will be placed on Academic Probation for the time it

takes them to attempt 12 additional credits or four enrolled terms, whichever is shorter.

Students enrolled in a graduate certificate program aligned with a four-term calendar will be placed on Academic Probation for the time it takes them to attempt 6 additional credits or two enrolled terms, whichever is shorter. Non-degree students on probation must take courses in only one academic calendar. If the courses are aligned with the four-term calendar, all regulations concerning Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal for graduate non-degree students are the same as those for students enrolled in a graduate degree program aligned with the four-term calendar. Otherwise, section [3.14.3](#) applies.

10.3.5. [Program of Study for Students in Four-Term Calendar Courses or Certificates](#)

All rules and regulations in section [4.1](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar programs and certificates except that the Programs of Study should be completed during the first term.

10.3.6. [Designation of Full-Time and Part-Time Status for Students in Four-Term Calendar Programs or Certificates](#)

Full-time student status for students enrolled in four-term calendar programs and certificates is defined as registration for six credit hours in each term. Part-time student status for students enrolled in four-term calendars programs and certificates is defined as registration for three credit hours in each term. Students who are registered for more than a part-time credit load in any semester, but less than a full-time credit load for that semester, will be considered part-time students.

Graduate students must remain registered for a full-time course load under specific conditions that include having particular types of student loans and having particular types of visas. The Office of the University Registrar will contact the Associate Deans of academic units following the end of the drop/add period to indicate students who have full-time and part-time status. It is the responsibility of individual graduate students to understand how changes in course load or full-time status may have an impact on payment schedules or other conditions of their obligations to entities providing them with educational loans.

10.3.7. [Continuous Enrollment Status for Students in Four-Term Calendar Programs](#)

Once enrolled in a degree program, all graduate students enrolled in four-term calendar programs must maintain continuous enrollment at American University by registering for at least one semester hour of credit each term or maintaining matriculation through authorized 0-credit courses. Students who fail to register and who have not requested and received a [Temporary Leave](#) may begin being administratively separated from the University at the add/drop date of the academic term for which they failed to register. An academic unit may extend the deadline for administrative separation until the end of the academic term for specific students by contacting the Office of University Registrar.

10.3.8. [Time Limits to Degree for Students in Four-Term Calendar Programs](#)

All rules and regulations in section [4.8](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar programs except each term, the Registrar will identify students who will exceed time limits for degree completion at the end of the current academic year and inform the students of the potential status change.

10.3.9. [Graduation for Students in Four-Term Calendar Programs](#)

All rules and regulations in section [4.11](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar programs except that students must submit an Application to Graduate at the beginning of the term during which they expect to complete all degree and program requirements. In addition, if a student has completed all requirements to graduate and has not applied for graduation, an academic unit may apply for the student to graduate after one term from completing all requirements.

10.3.10. [Transfer Credits for Students in Four-Term Calendar Programs](#)

All rules and regulations in section [5.2](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar programs except that transfer credits must be approved by a student's Graduate Program Director during his or her first term of study and be included in the student's Program of Study. Transfer credits may be accepted by the approval of the Associate Dean of the academic unit in the second term of study. Beyond the second term of study, all transfer credits must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. Students must give the Graduate Program Director an official transcript from the institution at which the proposed course(s) was completed as well as a syllabus for each course requested for transfer. The academic unit must inform the Office of University of Registrar which courses will be transferred during the student's first term of study or afterwards pending the aforementioned approval.

10.3.11. [Shared Credits for Non-Concurrent Degrees With One or More Degrees on the Four-Term Calendar.](#)

All rules and regulations in section [5.4.2](#) apply to students who share credit with non-concurrent degrees where at least one is aligned with the four-term calendar, except that the shared credits must be approved by a student's Graduate Program Director during his or her first term of study and be included in the student's Program of Study. Shared credits may be accepted by the approval of the Associate Dean of the academic unit in the second term of study. Beyond the second term of study, all transfer credits must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee. The academic unit must inform the Office of University of Registrar which credits will be shared during the student's first term of study or afterwards pending the aforementioned approval.

10.3.12. [Shared Credits for Non-Concurrent Degrees with One Degree Program in the Four-Term Calendar and One Degree Program in the Semester Calendar.](#)

Students may share credits as a [Dual Degree Program](#) between two degrees in different calendars by meeting the follow conditions:

- The Dual Degree Program must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies or listed in the Academic Catalog.
- The Dual Degree credit sharing must follow the restrictions outlined in Section [7.6.1](#).
- The student must be admitted to the second degree program before completing the first.
- The student must enroll and begin coursework for the second degree in first available academic term or semester after completing the requirements for the first degree. The student must also have submitted an [Application to Graduate](#) before the end of the last semester or academic term while enrolled in the first degree program.

10.3.13. [Four-Term Graduate Certificate Programs for Credit](#)

All rules and regulations in section [6.1](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar graduate certificate programs except that students in these certificate programs must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours during each 12-month program after the start of their first term of enrollment. The completion of the certificate will be noted on the student's official transcript for the term it was completed.

10.3.14. [Initial Course Registration for Four-Term Calendar Courses](#)

Students must initially register for the courses in which they wish to enroll prior to the beginning of each term, or a late registration fee may be assessed. Before registration, students should consult a graduate advisor or their Graduate Program Director regarding their Program of Study.

10.3.15. [Changes in Course Registration Once a Term Begins for Students Enrolled in Four-Term Calendar Courses](#)

All rules and regulations in section [9.3](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar graduate courses, except for the following:

The length of the add/drop period and the drop period for any term in a four-term calendar is determined by proportionally scaling the associated periods from those for semesters based on the number of days in the terms. The Registrar will provide [a website](#) that will specify these periods based on the number days in the term. In addition, students may withdraw from a course until the end of the drop period from the start of the term unless they have been charged with a violation of the Academic Integrity Code. After the drop period, students may withdraw from a course only by permission of the Associate Dean of the Academic Unit, and only in cases of well-documented emergencies beyond the student's control.

10.3.16. [Interruption of Studies for Students in Four-Term Calendar Courses, Programs, or Certificates](#)

All rules and regulations in section [9.4](#) apply to students enrolled in four-term calendar

graduate programs and certificates except for the following:

- Graduate students who take temporary leaves or separate from the University during a term for which they are enrolled must apply with the Office of the Registrar to change their status.
- For any type of temporary leave, the period is limited to four terms, either consecutive or non-consecutive, to remain enrolled in the program.
- Students may request leave no later than the end of the add/drop period in the term in which the temporary leave will begin.
- Long-term military temporary leaves may be extended beyond the four term limit.
- A student may take up to six terms of leave if at least two of the terms are medical leave with approval of the Associate Dean. The student needs approval of both the Associate Dean and the DGS to take any additional terms of medical leave.

Appendix - 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 Education, School of Public Affairs, School of International Service, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Professional and Extended Studies, Washington College of Law, and University Library.

Candidacy: A status for PhD students who have completed all of the courses on their Program of Study, passed their comprehensive examination or equivalent, and successfully defended their dissertation proposal.

Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree: A program in which students earn two degrees (a bachelor's and a master's) consecutively and share credit between the degrees.

Core (Course): A course that is mandatory in a graduate degree program. That is to say, the graduate degree could not be earned without that course, unless there is an approved [course substitution](#).

Core Dissertation Committee members: All members of the Dissertation Committee who work directly with the PhD student. This does not include the outside reader.

Dismissed (Academic): A status if a student does not meet certain academic expectations in his or her graduate academic career and may not return for future semesters unless readmitted. Dismissal is noted on the official transcript. A student must have permission from DGS in order to be readmitted to the same or other programs.

Drop (a course): To remove oneself from the roster of a course before the add/drop date. The temporary enrollment in the course will not appear on the transcript.

Dual Degree Program: A graduate program that allows a student to be enrolled in two graduate degree programs simultaneously. Students in dual degree programs may share a prescribed amount of credit between the two degrees.

Free Electives: Credits earned toward the bachelor's degree that do not satisfy major requirements, General Education requirements, the University Mathematics requirement, or the College Writing requirement, but are counted toward the 120 credits necessary to graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Jointly Administered Degree: A specified combination of courses, typically from more than one academic or teaching unit, that combines elements of the various fields of study into

one degree.

Outside Reader: An additional person on a dissertation committee with expertise in the subject matter and with no direct association with the student. The outside reader determines if the dissertation meets general standards in the field and need not necessarily critique the work in detail.

Probation (Academic): A status assigned when a student does not meet certain academic expectations during his or her graduate academic career. Depending upon the circumstances, failure to meet future academic goals may result in academic dismissal. Probation does not appear on the official graduate transcript.

Separation: A loss of active student status with no expected date of return. Students can be separated voluntarily (by their own action) or administratively (by AU's action). A student must apply or reapply to return as a student.

Share (Credits): To have credits counted toward more than one degree or program. Grades associated with the credits would count in the GPA for each degree or program. Credit may also be shared from courses taken as a non-degree student with a subsequent degree program.

Substitute (Courses): To use alternative courses, ideally with similar but more advanced content, to meet course requirements for a degree.

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

Transfer (Credits): To allow students to use course credits taken at an institution prior to their admission into a particular AU graduate program to count toward that AU program. Transferred courses are not used to calculate the AU cumulative GPA.

Waive (Requirements): To allow students to satisfy degree or programmatic requirements by means other than what is specified in the Academic Catalog. Programs are not permitted to waive requirements or reduce the total number of credits required to obtain the degree by means other than what is specified in the Academic Catalog, unless an exception is granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee.

Warning (Academic): A notification to a student, initiated by the Dean or designee, indicating that the student is not making Satisfactory Academic Progress. Depending upon the circumstances, failure to address the terms of the academic warning may result in probation or dismissal. Warnings do not appear on the official transcript.

Withdraw (from a course): To remove oneself from the roster of a course after the add/drop date. The enrollment in the course will appear on the transcript as a “W.”