

GRADUATE ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic success, a goal that Western wants all students to achieve, can be measured in many ways. This section identifies and explains the standards that Western has established as measures of academic success and indicates the policies and procedures that apply to students who fail to meet the standards. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the faculty Academic Policies Committee, the Graduate Studies Council, and the Faculty Senate, is responsible for the development and implementation of these academic standards and policies.

Unit of Credit

Western Colorado University uses the semester hour as the basic unit of credit. Semester credits assigned to a course are based on the specific learning objectives and the expected outcomes. The University's assigned semester hours are consistent with the federal definition of a credit hour and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's established minimum class times for credit courses. The minimum expectation for one semester credit is one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks of seminars and lecture-based classes. An equivalent amount of work is required in laboratories, internships, practica, on-line, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Contact Hour Guide

To establish a statewide approach for reporting FTE student enrollment, CCHE and IHEs have established criteria for assigning credit hour values to courses since 1985. This guide identifies the typical relationship between base contact hours, credit hours and types of faculty involvement.

Base Contact Hour. The Base Contact Hour represents a standard measurement of student academic engagement in a course. Per the US Department of Education, "a student is expected to be academically engaged through, for example, classroom attendance, examinations, practica, laboratory work, internships, and supervised studio work. In the case of distance education and correspondence education, academic engagement would include, but not be limited to, submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that was assigned by the institution; contributing to an academic online discussion; and initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course. Merely logging into the electronic classroom does not constitute academic engagement."

Semester System Term: One contact hour (chrs) = 50 minutes. A base contact hour is 750 minutes. This translates to a minimum of fifteen 50-minute hours per semester.

Contact/Credit Hour Conversion Table I

Instructional Activity	Definitions	Minimum Base Contact HRs For One Credit Hour
Lecture	Formal presentation/ communication by faculty.	1.0 (15 chrs)

Recitation: Discussion/Seminar	Two-way (student and faculty) communication of course materials.	1.0 (15 chrs)
Laboratory: Academic/Clinical	Instructional activities conducted by faculty requiring student participation, experimentation, observation or practice.	2.0 (30 chrs)
Laboratory: Vocational/Technical	Instructional activities involving training for employment in a work-like environment with active faculty teaching role.	1.5 (22.5 chrs)
Art Studio	Painting, sculpture and other lab-type activities conducted by faculty.	2.0 (30 chrs)
Field Instruction	Instructional activities conducted by faculty and designed to supplement individual course work.	2.5 (37.5 chrs)
Music: Private Instruction	Formal presentation in a one-to-one relationship between student and instructor.	0.5 (7.5 chrs)
Music: Studio	Band, ensembles, music labs and the like conducted by faculty.	2.5 (37.5 chrs)
Physical Education/Recreation Courses	Physical education and Recreation activities conducted by faculty designed for the development of skill proficiencies.	2.0 (20 chrs)

contact/credit hour conversion table ii

Instructional Activity	Definitions	Minimum Base Contact HRs For One Credit Hour
Thesis/Dissertation	A thesis, which may be research or expository, critical or creative work, required for graduation with a master's degree. A dissertation is an original investigation showing mature scholarship and critical judgment, demonstrating knowledge of research tools and methods, required for graduation at the doctoral level. Thesis and dissertation credits should correlate with the scope and level of research work	1.67 (25 chrs)
Internships	Credit hours for placement in business and industry environments that offer degree-seeking students professional-level experience and responsibility. To qualify for state support, the internship should be well supervised and carefully structured (i.e., based on learning objectives that are related to the student's academic discipline and established in cooperation with the student, employer, and faculty advisor).	2.5 (37.5 chrs)
Independent Study Research	Student projects or other required activities with minimal faculty associated direction where a student is formally enrolled during a period of research or independent study instruction in pursuit of a CCHE- approved degree program.	1.67 (25 chrs)

Practicum; Clinical Practicum	Practical student work under the supervision of a faculty member or under supervision of a professional in the student's field and regular consultation with faculty member.	1.67 (25 chrs)
Student Teaching	Student teaching and practicums in which university faculty are actively involved and present in the field.	The State of Colorado requires students participating in an accredited teacher licensure program to complete a minimum of 800 hours of student teaching over the course of one academic year. Western students complete 848 hours per year because of the length of our semesters. 848 hours per year equates to 24 hours per week, plus 5 full weeks of full-time lead teaching in their final semester. Semester I: 384 hours. Semester II: 464 hours.
Master's Capstone	Non-standard graduate course offerings, such as Capstones that do not match the description of any other instructional activity type. The graduate faculty advisor is required to keep records.	1.67 (25 chrs)

Direct Instructional Time and Student Directed Learning

For classes offered with either full or partial online components of instruction and student learning, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's established minimum expectations for credit courses apply, as defined above. 'Direct faculty instruction' is defined as 'Direct Instructional Time' and 'Out-of-class student work' is defined as 'Student Directed Learning'. Due to the distinct blended learning models of most graduate programs, specifics of Direct Instructional Time and Student Directed Learning are determined by each graduate program, consistent with the federal definition of a credit hour and as monitored by the Higher Learning Commission.

Internships

Internships, residencies and place-based learning opportunities are integral elements of some of Western's graduate degree programs. Learning outcomes, number of credits and specific details of each placement are defined and assessed by each specific program.

Course Numbering System

500-599 Level Courses: Courses at this level are non-degree, professional development-oriented, and may not be used to satisfy graduate degree requirements.

600-699 Level Graduate Courses: Courses at this level are intended for graduate degree-seeking students. They are more than an extension of the baccalaureate education; they are qualitatively different, and, at a minimum, students should be required to undertake original scholarly/creative activity, assume greater responsibility for mastering the subject matter, and develop close working relationships with professors. It is assumed that students taking 600-level graduate courses have acquired the ability to use language and information sources effectively and engage in analytical thought and creative processes.

Academic Load

Full-Time Status

During the **fall** or **spring** semesters, a minimum of nine (9) credit hours is considered a full-time course load for graduate students. Graduate students may take a course load of up to 15 credit hours without special approval. A student may petition to enroll in more than 15 credit hours during the fall or spring semesters if the student's grade point average is at least 3.500 from most recent course work. Petitions for course overload may be requested through the School of Graduate Studies and must be approved by the student's advisor, program director, and School of Graduate Studies. If the student's cumulative grade point average is below 3.500, the petition also requires approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

During the **summer** semester, a minimum of six (6) credit hours is considered a full-time course load for graduate students. Graduate students may take a course load of up to nine (9) credit hours without special approval. An additional three (3) credit hours of student teaching, internship, or other on-the-job credit may also be taken. A student may petition to enroll in more than 12 credit hours during the summer semester if the student's grade point average is at least 3.500 from most recent course work. Petitions for course overload may be requested through the School of Graduate Studies and must be approved by the student's advisor, program director, and School of Graduate Studies. If the student's cumulative grade point average is below 3.500, the petition also requires approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Part-Time Status

During the **fall** or **spring** semesters, graduate students who enroll in fewer than nine (9) credit hours are classified as a part-time student. During the **summer** semester, graduate students who enroll in fewer than six (6) credit hours are classified as a part-time student.

Federal Financial Aid

To qualify for federal financial aid, a graduate student must enroll in a minimum of 4.50 credit hours during any semester. Consult the Office of Financial Aid with questions.

Requirements for International Students

International students must comply with any regulations or conditions associated with their visa status, in addition to the requirements of this enrollment policy. F-1 visa holders enrolled in less than nine (9) credit hours in either the fall or spring semesters must file a request with the Western's SEVIS Coordinator in the Office of the Registrar. F-1 and J-1 visa holders have no summer enrollment requirement per federal immigration regulations; however, if the summer semester is the first

semester of an academic program, six (6) credit hours are required to maintain the visa status.

Graduate Course Load and Student Status for VA Students*

Student status for VA Benefits is based on a semesterly course load. Western offers several academic sessions of varying lengths. Any combination of credit hours pursued across multiple academic sessions in the fall and spring semesters must total 9+ credit hours to qualify for full-time benefit levels, 6.75 credit hours for three-quarter time benefit levels, 4.50 credit hours for part-time benefit levels, and 2.25 credit hours for quarter-time benefit levels.

Any combination of credit hours pursued across multiple academic sessions in the summer semester must total 6+ credit hours to qualify for full-time benefit levels, 4.50 credit hours for three-quarter time benefit levels, 3-credit hours for part-time benefit levels, and 1.50 credit hours for quarter-time benefit levels.

The table below does not apply to Federal Student Aid. If you are applying for Federal Student Aid, there is a different enrollment status standard for determining aid eligibility. See **Full-Time and Part-Time definition above**.

Fall and Spring Semester Parts of Term	Academic Load	Graduate Student Status	Rate of Pursuit
Full Term Session	9+ Credit Hours	Full-time	100%
	6.75 Credit Hours	Three-Quarter Time	75%
	4.50 Credit Hours	Part-time	50%
	2.25 Credit Hours	Quarter-time	25%
Summer Semester Parts of Term	Academic Load	Graduate Student Status	Rate of Pursuit
Full Term Session	6+ Credit Hours	Full-time	100%
	4.50 Credit Hours	Three-Quarter Time	75%
	3.00 Credit Hours	Part-time	50%
	1.50 Credit Hours	Quarter-time	25%
10-week Session	6+ Credit Hours	Full-time	100%
	4.50 Credit Hours	Three-Quarter Time	75%
	3.00 Credit Hours	Part-time	50%
	1.50 Credit Hours	Quarter-time	25%

*The university does not have access to military records and cannot determine eligibility. All eligibility and payment questions should be directed to the Department of Veterans Affairs by calling 1-888-GIBILL-1.

G.I. Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

Registration

Course Descriptions

Course descriptions provide a summary of the course content. If there is a prerequisite that must be met before a student may register for the course, this information is stated in the course description. Prerequisites

may include specific courses, class standing, declared major, and other requirements. If there is a co-requisite course in which a student must be registered, this information is also stated in the course description.

Add/Drop

After classes have begun in a 16-week semester, students may add an open class without petition until 5 p.m. on the fourth day of the semester. After the fourth day and until the end of the official drop period, students may add a course only with approval by the instructor. The add deadline for any course that meets for less than 16 weeks is two days. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to approval by the student's academic advisor, the program director, and Dean of Graduate Studies. The student is responsible for understanding and communicating with the instructor, understanding course policies, and understanding any consequences of adding a course after the first class meeting. Students may drop a course during the first 15% of the class meetings. This rule applies both for classes that meet for a full semester and for classes that meet in sessions shorter than a full semester. (Note the difference between this rule and "withdrawal," is explained below.)

Western Colorado University faculty reserve the right to drop students from class rolls if they miss the first class meeting or online assignment. Not all instructors require attendance the first class meeting, but many do. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all first class meetings. If circumstances such as weather or flight arrangements prevent students from attending the first class session, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor of each course to request that their seat in the class be held.

Variable Credit Courses

Variable credit courses are courses which may be offered for a range of credits, as published in the catalog for each specific program. The learning objectives and academic requirements for these courses are established between individual faculty and individual students, and have specific academic outcomes defined before the course work begins. Students must register for variable credit courses prior to beginning the studies associated with the course. Internship hours or study completed before the course registration is complete will not be counted towards the hours required for the course credit. The student must be enrolled for the credits during the term in which the studies begin. This coursework is part of a student's academic load for the semester. A request for changes to variable credit registration after the work begins may be considered through a petition process in extenuating circumstances. The petition must be signed by the instructor for the variable credit course, the program director, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. To register for a variable credit course, the student must submit a completed and signed Variable Credit Course form to the Office of Graduate Studies. Some disciplines may have additional requirements for registration in variable credit courses. Substituting variable credit courses for required courses in the major is at the discretion of the discipline.

Active Status & Periods of Non-enrollment

To maintain active status, graduate students must register in at least one graduate course per academic year (summer through spring terms). Graduate students may return to classes after a period of non-attendance of up to one academic year as a continuing student without submitting a Graduate Application for Readmission.

Students planning to take time off from classes for one semester (and up to one academic year) should submit a "Non-attendance Plan" to the School of Graduate Studies prior to taking leave from classes in order to maintain access to computing accounts during their period of non-attendance.

Prior to departure from Western, students who have on-campus housing must contact Residence Life. Students with financial aid should contact the Office of Financial Aid for exit counseling. Students should discuss departure plans with their academic advisor.

Students who wish to enroll in classes after an absence of one semester (and up to one academic year) who did not submit a non-attendance plan prior to non-attendance must submit a "Registration Reactivation Request" to the School of Graduate Studies in order to re-enroll in classes.

Graduate students wishing to enroll in classes after an absence of over one year must submit a Graduate Application for Readmission.

Catalog Year

Degree requirements are determined by the Catalog of the year in which a student enters as a degree-seeking student.

During the five-year period after initial enrollment as a graduate degree-seeking student, students may elect to satisfy requirements specified in a Catalog more recent than the one under which they entered. Students must indicate to the School of Graduate Studies the Catalog Year they want used for the evaluation of their credit, provided they complete all degree requirements within five years.

A student who does not complete all degree requirements within five years must meet all the requirements of the Catalog in effect the year in which they apply for graduation. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the respective program director and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Withdrawal from Individual Courses

After the official Add/Drop period, a student may only withdraw from a course with approval of the course instructor and the student's academic advisor. Students who obtain these authorizations will receive a grade of "W" (which has no effect on the student's grade-point average; refer to sections on Grades and Grade-Point Average that follow). If two-thirds of the scheduled class time in any given course has been completed, the student is not allowed to withdraw, and a grade for the course (which does affect the student's grade-point average) is recorded. Specific withdrawal deadlines are published on the Office of the Registrar (<https://www.western.edu/registrar/>) website. Course instructors may also withdraw a student from a class for reasons such as inadequate academic progress or attendance, academic dishonesty, or disruptive behavior.

Withdrawal from the University

Students who wish to withdraw from the University may do so at any time during the semester. Withdrawals from courses shorter than one semester (16-weeks), may be granted up to and including the last day of class. If a course has concluded before a withdrawal is processed, a grade is recorded. Students must contact the graduate program director and the School of Graduate Studies for approval to officially withdraw from the University.

A medical withdrawal may be requested when a student has a documented health or mental health condition preventing completion of the semester. A student who wishes to withdraw under a medical withdrawal must withdraw from all in-progress classes. Students must contact the Office of Student Affairs to initiate a medical withdrawal.

After the official Add/Drop period, but before the withdrawal deadline, a student wishing to withdraw entirely from the University will be given a grade of "W" for all courses except variable-credit courses. Once two-thirds of the scheduled class time in any given course has been completed, a student wishing to withdraw from the University will be given a "W" grade for each course.

Withdrawal from Variable Credit Courses

After 15 percent of the course has been completed, a student wishing to withdraw from the University when enrolled in a variable credit course (i.e., special topics, independent studies, internships, etc.) must receive the approval of the graduate program director. If a student obtains this authorization, a grade of "W" or "WF" may be assigned; a "WF" may be assigned if the student is failing the course at the time of withdrawal.

Withdrawal in Absentia

If illness, injury, or other circumstances prevent a student from being on campus to request withdrawal from the University in person, the student may notify the Office of Graduate Studies.

Prior to departure from Western all students should check out by contacting applicable departments. Students that live in on-campus housing must contact Residence Life. Students with financial aid must contact the Office of Financial Aid for exit counseling and should not register for courses in a future term.

Re-entry

Graduate students in academic good standing who have been withdrawn from the University for one or more semesters, but fewer than five calendar years, who wish to return must submit a Graduate Application for Readmission to the School of Graduate Studies.

University Graduation Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 30 graduate semester credits for each master's degree. This may include up to nine (9) transfer credits accepted as part of a graduate degree program or up to nine credits, numbered at 600 or above, taken at Western as a non-degree student or as part of a different discipline (see the section on Transfer Credits.)

Candidates for a graduate certificate must take all associated credits in residence at Western.

Completion Requirements

Every candidate for a degree must earn a minimum of 21 credits from Western Colorado University. This 21 credit minimum must include the final credit earned.

Certificates

A graduate certificate is a formal collection of courses that together form a specialized, coherent program of study offered by one or more academic unit(s). As such, a graduate certificate is distinct from a master's degree in providing continuing education for professionals or enhancing the educational programming for graduate students. All graduate certificates should enhance existing programs, not take their

place, and sufficient resources must exist to support the certificate program.

Certificate Requirements

A graduate certificate is an academic credential granted by Western Colorado University. Students that wish to earn a graduate certificate must follow the requirements of admission, complete approved graduate-level coursework, apply to receive the credential and enroll in at least one graduate-level credit during the term in which the certificate is awarded and posted to the transcript.

- a. The total number of credits required for a graduate certificate may vary by academic discipline but must require a minimum of nine (9) credit hours.
- b. Graduate certificates may include courses that are a part of an academic program, explicitly created for the certification, or cross-listed courses.
- c. Courses for a graduate certificate must be 600-level or above. A minimum course grade of B- is required to earn credit toward the certification.
- d. Students may use Western graduate certificate coursework and credits to fulfill some requirements for a Western graduate degree with the approval of the relevant academic disciplines and SGS Dean.
- e. Specified courses may be required for more than one graduate certificate. In that circumstance, the credit hours associated with such a course may contribute to only one of the graduate certificates. Additional graduate-level coursework, approved by the academic unit and the SGS Dean, must be completed to meet the credit hour requirement of the second or subsequent certificate.
- f. Students may not use credits earned at another institution to meet the requirements of a Western graduate certificate.
- g. Students must complete the requirements for a graduate certificate during the five (5) year period after initial enrollment. The period begins with the first course taken toward the certification. Credits taken more than five (5) years before initial enrollment in a graduate certificate program will not be counted toward certificate requirements.
- h. The Office of the Registrar verifies the completion of certificate requirements and posts the certificate to student transcripts. Western's third-party diploma/certificate service issues students a paper certificate upon completion.
- i. The relevant shared governance structure must approve all changes to certificate requirements.

Graduate Degree and Non-Degree-Seeking Students

- a. Graduate certificates are designed for students who have earned a bachelor's degree or equivalent.
- b. Currently enrolled Western graduate students may complete a graduate certificate that enhances their career.
- c. Degree-seeking graduate students may add a certificate before completing degree requirements by meeting admission and/or completion requirements for the desired certificate.
- d. International students (J or F visa students) may pursue certificates only as degree-seeking students.
- e. Non-degree-seeking students may pursue a graduate certificate with the approval of the academic disciplines offering the certificate as long as the applicant has at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent from an accredited institution.

- f. For non-degree seeking or post-baccalaureate students, graduate-level credits earned at Western less than five (5) years before formal admission to a graduate certificate program may be applied toward the certificate, with approval of the academic unit and SGS Dean, provided that at least half of the credit hours required for the certificate are earned during or after the semester in which the student is admitted to the certificate program.

Grades

For the purpose of calculating a student's grade-point average, numerical values are assigned to letter grades on the following scale:

Grade	Grade Points
A	4.000
A-	3.670
B+	3.330
B	3.000
B-	2.670
C+	2.330
C	2.000
C-	1.670
D+	1.330
D	1.000
D-	0.670
F	0.000

Grade-Point Average

To obtain grade points earned in a course, multiply the number of credits per course by the number of points for the grade earned in the course. A minimum grade of B- in each course applied to a degree program is required. A minimum of a 3.0 grade-point average is required for graduation. Credits transferred from another institution must have been earned at the equivalent of a 3.0 GPA or above, and are not calculated in the Western grade-point average (GPA).

Other Grades Assigned

At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, a student who is unable to complete a course for reasons beyond the student's control (e.g., illness) may be assigned an "Incomplete" (IN). It is expected that the student has completed more than one-half of the course work at an acceptable level at the time of the request for an "Incomplete." The student and the faculty member must agree upon a plan for the completion of the work within a time period not to exceed one calendar year. When faculty give an "Incomplete," they must designate the student's existing grade in the course, the work to be completed for the "Incomplete" to be removed, and also indicate the grade that will be automatically given after one year if the work is not satisfactorily completed.

A grade of "Technical Failure" (TF) indicates that the student discontinued participation in the course without official approval. A "TF" is assigned 0.000 grade points and is calculated into the student's cumulative GPA.

Some courses or projects are intended to last longer than one semester. Such courses may be designated by the graduate program at the time of registration and will be given an "In Progress" designation at the end of the semester. The "In Progress" (IP) designation can be used for a maximum of one year, at the end of which a grade must be assigned.

Grades of "IN", "IP" and "W" are not counted in the computation of a student's GPA.

Probation and Dismissal

When a graduate student's course grade is below a B- in any graduate course, the student and the program director will be notified and the university places the student on academic probation. In order to be removed from probation, the student must retake the course to replace a grade lower than a B-. In the semester following placement on probation, the student's grades in each course must be at least a B-, and the student must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA. If the student fails to meet these standards, the program may dismiss the student at the conclusion of that semester. Dismissal is permanent. Provisionally admitted 3+2 students are subject to graduate academic policies during year four of the undergraduate program.

In extenuating circumstances, the student may appeal by following the Academic Due Process for Students which is defined at the end of the Academic Policies section of this catalog. Dismissal may occur prior to probation in situations deemed egregious by faculty, the program director and Dean of Graduate Studies. Egregious circumstances may include but are not limited to: involvement in criminal or illegal activity; unprofessional or unethical behavior; continuous ineffective performance in a residency or practicum; or earning less than a B- in multiple graduate courses in the same semester. Any formal grievance must be filed within six months of the dismissal, as outlined in the Formal Grievance Procedure.

Advising

All graduate students are initially assigned an academic advisor in the graduate program from which they are seeking a degree. The graduate advisor is identified by the program director. The graduate academic advisor assists the student in developing and maintaining a degree plan.

Degree Completion

Required course substitutions, and accepted transfer credits must be approved by the student's advisor and the graduate program director, and be submitted to the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar performs an official degree audit within the first two months of a student's final year prior to degree completion to ensure compliance with program requirements.

Students who have completed all other coursework and degree requirements must continue to enroll in at least one 600-level graduate credit hour during any semester/summer term in which they are actively completing a thesis or graduate capstone. This includes but is not limited to work with Western faculty, or use of Western facilities. The number of credits in which a student must enroll is at the discretion of each program.

Students must complete a degree plan which contains one of the following completion requirements.

Comprehensive Examinations

Students must earn a minimum of 30 semester credits as part of a graduate degree program and must successfully complete the comprehensive examination as prescribed by the respective graduate program before the degree will be conferred. The delivery format and evaluation process for the examinations are established by the graduate program and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to student

registration in the program. A faculty committee will be established to evaluate student performance on the examinations.

When a comprehensive examination is given, the following rules apply:

- Students must be registered when they take the examination.
- The examination is to be given by the student's faculty committee and must be consistent with the requirements established by the specific graduate program.
- A majority of the committee must approve the examination.
- The examination may be oral, written, or both.
- A student who fails the comprehensive final examination may retake the examination only once (dependent upon the respective graduate program's requirements).

Thesis

Students must earn a minimum of 30 semester credits of graduate work, including at least three thesis credits. A faculty advisor is assigned to guide the student's thesis. If the Thesis is not completed at the end of the term in which the student is registered, an Incomplete (IN) grade or a Failing (F) grade may be reported.

Graduate Capstone

Students must earn a minimum of 30 semester credits of graduate work. Graduate work includes a Graduate Capstone, which can take many forms depending on the program, and which the student's academic advisor will facilitate. Graduate Capstone credits are determined by the specific program requirements. If the Graduate Capstone is not completed at the end of the term in which the student is registered, an Incomplete (IN) grade or a Failing (F) grade may be reported.

Graduation Audit and Participation in Commencement

Students are responsible for meeting all academic requirements. The University assists students in monitoring their academic progress by providing an advisor, copies of students' permanent records, and DegreeWorks, an online advising and graduation audit tool.

The Office of the Registrar performs graduate degree audits and certifies graduate requirements, and the Dean of Graduate Studies authorizes students on the graduation list. Requests for exceptions and special consideration are reviewed by the Academic Policies Committee, which then makes recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Studies. In order to participate in commencement a student must have six or fewer credits left to complete graduation requirements and be registered for those credits the following summer and/or fall term.

Application for Awarding of Degree

Students are required to file an "Application for Graduation" with the Office of the Registrar during the first two weeks of the semester in which they expect to complete all degree requirements. Degrees are awarded at the end of the semester in which all degree requirements are completed provided all requirements are completed and grades recorded within 25 working days after the last day of that semester. If requirements are not completed and recorded within that period, the graduation date for the diploma and transcript is the semester during which the work is completed and grades recorded. In this case, students must notify the Office of the Registrar when all requirements are completed and file a new "Application for Graduation."

Academic Integrity

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The University assumes, as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters, that students will be honest and that they will submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for practices that are fair require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable conduct in the course of their academic work. Dishonest work may include, but is not limited to, the following infractions:

Plagiarism. Presenting another person's work as one's own, including paraphrasing or summarizing the works of another person without acknowledgment and the submitting of another student's work as one's own, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

Cheating on Examination. Giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination is considered cheating. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the instructor).

Unauthorized Collaboration ("Collusion"). Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as being one's own, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with assistance from another person or source, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty to knowingly provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by an instructor is allowed.

Falsification. It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise or assignment (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources or the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data).

Multiple Submissions. It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit.

Consequences of Violations. Violations of academic integrity may result in the following: a grade of F or a zero for the assignment, an F for the course, withdrawal from the course, or suspension or expulsion from the University. Serious violations of academic integrity are reported to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Academic Due Process for Students US Department of Education Program Integrity Regulations Complaint Process

Pursuant to the United States Department of Education's Program Integrity Rule, Western is required to provide all prospective and current students with the contact information of the state agency or agencies that handle complaints against post secondary education institutions offering distance learning or correspondence education within that state. Students are encouraged to utilize the institution's internal complaint or review policies and procedures through the Office of Student Affairs or Office of the Provost prior to filing a complaint with the state agency or agencies. The link below provides a list of contacts from each state in which a student may file a complaint.

<http://www.nc-sara.org/content/state-portal-entity-contacts> (<http://www.nc-sara.org/content/state-portal-entity-contacts/>)

To file a complaint against a Colorado institution of higher education, forms can be found here:

<https://cdhe.colorado.gov/filing-student-complaint> (<https://cdhe.colorado.gov/filing-student-complaint/>)

It is the objective of these procedures to provide for the prompt and fair resolution of the types of problems described herein which students may experience at Western.

Definitions

Complaint. An informal claim by an affected student that a faculty member or an academic administrator has violated, misinterpreted, or improperly exercised his/her professional duties.

Complainant. An affected student who makes a complaint.

Grievance. A written allegation by an affected student that a faculty member or an academic administrator has violated, misinterpreted, or improperly exercised his/her professional duties. The grievance should include the possibility of a remedy.

Grievant. An affected student who files a grievance.

Respondent(s). The faculty member(s) and/or academic administrator(s) identified by the affected student as causing or contributing to the complaint or grievance.

Grievance Committee. A committee composed of one faculty member selected by the grievant, one faculty member selected by the respondent, and three faculty members selected by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (or assignees).

Time Limits. When a number of days are specified herein, they shall be understood to exclude Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, University vacation days, and other days when the University is not in session and holding classes.

Academic Administrator. Professional personnel of the University, other than teaching faculty, who are in positions to make academic decisions affecting students, including but not limited to, department chairs, program directors, Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President.

Informal Complaint Procedure

The complainant shall discuss the problem with the respondent(s). If the problem is not mutually resolved at this time, the complainant shall confer with the immediate supervisor(s) of the respondent(s). This usually will be the program director of the graduate program to which the respondent(s) is assigned. If satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the complainant must confer with the Dean of Graduate Studies. If satisfactory resolution is still not achieved, the complainant must confer with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Formal Grievance Procedure

If the complaint is not suitably resolved, the student has the right to file a grievance with the Vice President for Academic Affairs within six months of the time that the grievant could or should have known of the action which is the basis of the problem. This written allegation shall indicate what has already been done to resolve the complaint.

Preservation of relevant documents and of precise records of actions taken is advantageous. The Grievance Committee shall be formed under the supervision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and a hearing shall be scheduled within 15 days after that officer receives the written grievance from the grievant. The Grievance Committee shall hear testimony from the grievant, the respondent, and whomever else it deems appropriate. Within 15 days after completion of the hearing(s), the Grievance Committee shall submit its findings to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for implementation as for academic affairs for implementation as deemed appropriate by that officer. A copy of the finding of the committee and of the implementing decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be given to the grievant and the respondent. The grievant may withdraw the grievance at any point in the proceedings by doing so in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs may grant an extension of the time limit for good cause.

If the grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily after the above procedures have been completed, the grievant is advised that he/she may appeal to the President of Western Colorado University, and ultimately, to the Board of Trustees.