

Academic Rules and Procedures

Academic Advising Program

Upon admission to Alma College, each student is assigned a faculty advisor on the basis of academic and career interests. Working with this advisor, students plan their courses and evaluate their progress. For those students who are uncertain about their interests, advisors are specially selected who can assist them in exploring and establishing a career direction through a well-developed plan of coursework and co-curricular experiences. Students' academic goals may also change during the course of their college careers. Accordingly, students may change advisors at any time, especially when an academic major is declared.

Conditions of Enrollment

Registration. Returning students usually select courses during the registration period in the preceding term. Newly admitted students make course selections during Becoming A Scot Days. The selections are then reviewed with their faculty advisors during Orientation week, at which time the schedule may be adjusted.

Changes in Registration. Students must file changes through the approval process with the Registrar's Office. Courses may be added during the first week of each term if approved by the advisor and during the second week if approved by both the advisor and the instructor. No courses, except for those scheduled for the last seven weeks of the term, may be added after the second week.

Withdrawal. Withdrawal from an individual class may occur through the ninth week of a 14-week course, the fifth week of a seven-week course, or the third week of a four-week course. Neither the course nor the withdrawal will appear on the student's record. Please refer to the Alma College Academic Calendar for specific course add and drop dates.

Class Load. The class load for a 14-week term shall be no less than 13 and no more than 18 credits for full-time status. Students who wish to qualify for full benefits from the Veterans Administration, Social Security or other financial aid sources are advised to enroll for not less than 13 credits. Athletes should be aware that the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association requires a 13-credit load for eligibility.

Class Attendance Requirements. Class attendance requirements are set by each individual instructor. Among the options available is mandatory attendance, with absences resulting in a lower grade. Faculty members who do not implement a mandatory attendance policy will take measures to combat a common student misconception — that if attendance is not required (with penalties attached), it is not important. To this end, the syllabi for all classes will explicitly state the attendance policy.

Commencement Attendance. Seniors are required to participate in Commencement unless excused by the Provost or the Registrar.

Final Examination Schedule. The Final Examination Schedule is established by the Registrar and published at the beginning of each term. Instructors will announce testing plans in the course syllabus; the final test or activity (presentation, paper, etc.) must be at the officially-scheduled time. Make-up examinations are given only with the permission of the instructor and may be charged a fee.

Withdrawal from College. Students who wish to withdraw from Alma College must complete the withdrawal process by contacting the Center for Student Opportunity. If this process is not completed, students will forfeit their deposits and refunds. The College assumes that students beginning a term intend to complete it. Students who leave during a term without completing the withdrawal process may receive failing grades for course enrollments.

Service members who must withdraw during the term due to unanticipated deployments or mobilization, activation, and/or temporary duty assignments may have the option to complete the term off campus, if feasible. The student would need to consult with faculty members and the Registrar's Office to review the options available.

If completion of the term is not an option, students withdrawing would be assigned non-punitive grades of "W" (for "withdraw") for the term.

Grading Practices

Grading System. The following letters and grade points are used to record evaluations of student work: "A" (4.0); "AB" (3.5); "B" (3.0); "BC" (2.5); "C" (2.0); "CD" (1.5); "D" (1.0); "DE" (0.5); and "E" (0.0 — failing). An "E" will be recorded for such reasons (other than failure to meet course requirements) as dishonesty, excessive absence or failure to comply with other conditions specified by the instructor.

Incomplete Grades. Incomplete ("IN") grades must be replaced by letter grades within six weeks after the end of the term or they automatically convert to "E."

Work in Progress. Work in Progress ("IP") must be successfully completed and graded within one year of the date of enrollment, or the grade automatically converts to "E" unless the instructor initiates Withdrawal Pass ("WP") or Withdrawal Fail ("WF"). Work in Progress grades may be used only for independent study or practicum courses. A grade of "Z" is assigned by the Registrar when a grade has not been received from an instructor.

Satisfactory Grade Option. Students may elect the Satisfactory Grade Option ("S" or "F") by filing the approved form with the instructor's consent at the Registrar's Office before the deadline to drop the class. If the student elects this option, evaluation of the course work is recorded as "S" (equivalent to a "C" or better) or as "F" (failing, no credit). Neither grade is computed in the GPA.

Application of the "S/F" option is limited as described below:

1. It is available only to students of sophomore, junior or senior standing.
2. No more than 16 credits may apply to the 136-156 required for the degree.
3. No more than six credits per term may be elected under this option.
4. No course counting for a Teaching Major or Minor and no education course presented for teacher certification may be graded using this option.
5. No more than four credits of the 36 required for the major (or six credits of the 56 required for an interdepartmental major or POE) may be graded under this option.

Some classes are graded only "S" or "F" and the student has no option. Credits earned for these courses are not subject to the limitations described above.

Grade Reports. Grade Reports are made available to all students on the student portal at the end of each term and to first-year students and sophomores at mid-term.

Appeal of Grades. Appeal of grades may be made when the student has evidence that the final grade is unfair, but the appeal must be made not later than six months after the recording of the initial grade. The appeal proceeds first to the instructor, then to the department chair, and, if the disagreement still stands, it may go to the Provost.

Academic Progress

Classification of Students. Students admitted to Alma College may earn degree credits. If enrolled in a full class load, students will be certified as regularly enrolled students and classification will be based on the number of credits earned: freshman (0-24); sophomore (25-55); junior (56-89); or senior (90 plus). Eligibility for some forms of financial aid may depend upon progress toward the degree as indicated by these classifications.

Probation and Dismissal. Students must achieve a 2.0 GPA to graduate. Students with less than a 2.0 GPA will be placed on probation and may be dismissed or barred from registration whenever such action is considered to be in the best interest of the student or the College.

Probation Guidelines. The Probation Guidelines in the chart below are based on an ascending scale of grade point deficiencies and the number of terms enrolled in college. Normal progress is defined as any condition above unsatisfactory progress (i.e., jeopardy).

Only students who are making unsatisfactory progress will be subject to restrictions on athletic eligibility, extracurricular activities and/or financial aid eligibility. Students will qualify for the recommended status when either the GPA equals or falls below, or the grade point deficiency equals or exceeds, the posted criteria.

Probation Guidelines				
# Terms	Unsatisfactory Progress		Satisfactory Progress	
	Dismissal	Jeopardy	Probation	Warning
1	—	1.25 (-12)	1.75 (-4)	<2.00 (-0.5)
2	1.50 (-16)	1.70 (-10)	<2.00 (-0.5)	
3	1.70 (-14)	1.85 (-8)	<2.00 (-0.5)	
4	1.80 (-12)	1.90 (-6)	<2.00 (-0.5)	
5	1.90 (-10)	1.95 (-4)	<2.00 (-0.5)	
6	1.95 (-6)	<2.00 (-0.5)		
7-10	<2.00 (-0.5)			

Academic Dismissal. Academic dismissal constitutes involuntary separation of the student from the College for a minimum of one Fall or Winter term. Re-enrollment, on academic jeopardy, is contingent upon approval of the Academic Standards Committee. Approval typically will be granted upon evidence of improved performance in academic work as demonstrated by successful (cumulative 3.0 or higher) completion of the equivalent of 13 credits of coursework which meets the requirements for transfer credits. In no case will a student be readmitted for the regular term succeeding the term in which the student was dismissed. First-term freshmen and first-term transfer students are not subject to academic dismissal.

Academic Jeopardy. Academic Jeopardy represents “unsatisfactory progress toward the degree” for determining eligibility for such programs as intercollegiate athletics and financial aid. Unsatisfactory progress also results from failure to complete credits according to this schedule: first year — 25; second year — 56; third year — 90; fourth year — 110; and fifth year — 136. Students who are subject to this level of probation may re-enroll at Alma College in a subsequent term according to the conditions as follows:

1. Arrangement with the academic advisor of a plan for improving academic performance to include repetition of classes, change of academic program, participation in the academic enrichment program, weekly meetings with the advisor to monitor progress and/or reduction of course load.
2. Agreement to the restriction of participation in extracurricular activities including varsity athletics, Greek societies, community government and/or hours of employment.
3. Completion of an interview with an administrator in the Center for Student Opportunity to verify understanding of and compliance with these conditions prior to re-enrollment.

First-term transfer students will qualify for jeopardy status according to the criteria for first-term freshmen. After the first term of

enrollment at Alma, however, the published guidelines will apply.

Academic Probation and Warning. Academic Probation and Warning are categories of probation which should warrant the student’s concern, but are not subject to the extracurricular restrictions cited above. Eligibility for some forms of financial aid, however, may be affected.

Right of Appeal. Individuals or groups affected directly by committee actions or decisions have the right to appeal such actions or decisions by submitting dissenting reports first to the committee, and second to the Faculty Organization and/or Student Congress (except in those cases where appeal procedures are delineated in the description of committee functions.)

Notification of these actions will be sent from the Office of the Provost to the student after review by the Academic Standards Committee of the faculty.

In accordance with Veterans Administration regulations, students who receive VA benefits and remain on probation for two consecutive terms will be deemed ineligible for further VA certification. To qualify again for VA benefits, such students must achieve a 2.0 GPA.

Other Procedures

Academic Minors. Students may obtain a minor in some fields of study. The minor must be a concentration of at least 24 credits including the requirements listed by the department. Every 24-credit concentration does not constitute a minor; to qualify, it must be approved by the department on a minor declaration form available at the Registrar’s Office.

The GPA in the area of the minor concentration must be at least 2.0 (“C”).

Repetition of Coursework. Repetition of coursework is permitted. In each case, the most recent effort is counted. Each effort is recorded on the student’s permanent record. Students may repeat a course that they passed previously to try to improve the original grade; however, no additional credits will be earned for the repeat.

Waiver Petitions. To secure waiver of College policies or requirements, students may petition the Academic Standards Committee. Comments from the advisor and other concerned parties are often required before the petition will be reviewed. There is no charge for the petition process. Petition forms are available in the Registrar’s Office.

Academic Dishonesty. Appropriate disciplinary action, including possible separation from the College, will be taken when students engage in plagiarism; the exchange of information on examinations; assisting or receiving assistance in the completion of an examination, the writing of an essay or the preparation of a laboratory report; or any other attempt to obtain deceptively an unearned grade.

Disciplinary Procedures. Disciplinary action following academic dishonesty is handled initially by the faculty member in whose class the offense occurred, who may impose penalties up to and including failure in the course. (Note: A student may not drop a course in which he or she has been failed for cheating.) All infractions and actions are to be reported to, and recorded in, the Provost’s Office. These cases are then reviewed by the Provost, who, especially in the case of repeated offenses, may apply more severe penalties than those imposed by the instructor. Finally, the Provost may refer cases to the Campus Judicial Committee, which may impose penalties up to and including suspension or expulsion from the College.

Appeals Procedures. A student may appeal the instructor’s decision to the Provost. The student may appeal the Provost’s decision to the Campus Judicial Committee.