

# ACADEMICS

## GRADING AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Class Standing

Students are classified by the Registrar's Office at the beginning of each semester. Class standing is determined as follows:

| Class Standing          | Hours         |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Freshman                | fewer than 28 |
| Sophomore               | 28 to 59      |
| Junior                  | 60 to 89      |
| Senior                  | 90 to 124     |
| Fifth Year              | More than 124 |
| Graduate                | 1 to 65       |
| Special (interest only) | 1 or more     |

### Grading Information and Transcripts

#### Grading System

Westminster uses the following grades:

| Letter Grade | Description               |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| A, A-        | Excellent                 |
| B+, B, B-    | Above Average             |
| C+, C, C-    | Average                   |
| D+, D, D-    | Poor                      |
| F            | Failure                   |
| CR           | Credit                    |
| NC           | No Credit                 |
| W            | Withdrawn                 |
| WF           | Withdrawn Failing         |
| AW           | Administrative Withdrawal |
| AU           | Audit                     |
| I            | Incomplete                |
| T            | Temporary                 |

Grading criteria is established by each faculty member and communicated through the corresponding course syllabus. Grades of NC, W, AU, T, and I yield no credit toward graduation and are not computed in the grade point average. Grades of NC or I may not be used to replace any previous grade for a course. "T" grades are intended to be a short-term, temporary grade to clear the registration for a given term and should only be used for senior projects, graduate or undergraduate thesis work, continuing registration coursework, and internships that require a very short extension only. "T" grades should be resolved and replaced with regular grades within one week of the end of the term. "T" grades are not intended to take the place of an incomplete grade when the student meets the criteria for an incomplete (provided below) and should not be used for regular coursework when the student has failed to take a final examination or turn in final coursework that would otherwise result in a lowered grade. WF grades count as F in GPA calculations.

### Grade Points and Grade Point Average

A student's academic standing is expressed by a grade point average. Grade points are assigned as shown below:

| Letter Grade | Grade Points Per Credit Hour |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| A            | 4.0                          |
| A-           | 3.7                          |
| B+           | 3.3                          |
| B            | 3.0                          |
| B-           | 2.7                          |
| C+           | 2.3                          |
| C            | 2.0                          |
| C-           | 1.7                          |
| D+           | 1.3                          |
| D            | 1.0                          |
| D-           | 0.7                          |
| F            | 0.0                          |
| WF           | 0.0                          |

### Calculating the Grade Point Average

The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the sum of grade points earned by the total number of hours attempted. All hours taken at Westminster are counted except those for which a mark of CR, NC, W, AU, T, or I is recorded. Hours transferred from other academic institutions count for credit only; they do not count in the grade point average.

### Grade Changes

Changes to final grades submitted to the Registrar's Office are only made in the case of instructor error and require the signatures of the instructor, the dean of the appropriate school, and the Provost.

### Grade Reports

Grade reports are available on Self-Service at the end of each semester or term. Individual course grade rosters are not posted. Students needing additional copies of grade reports for reimbursement programs or other verifications may obtain additional copies from the Registrar's Office.

### Credit/No Credit Option

Students may elect to take a maximum of two courses on a credit/no credit basis. However, students must earn passing letter grades in courses applied toward their majors or minors. Therefore, if a student chooses to elect credit/no credit on a course that is required in his or her major or minor, the student will need to repeat that course in a future semester. Courses offered only on a credit/no credit basis are excluded from these limitations. Students who declare a major or minor in a given subject after having taken a course in that subject on a credit/no credit basis may be required by their major or minor department to retake the course for a letter grade. Students who take courses credit/no credit must perform work at the level of C- or higher to receive credit. Grades of credit/no credit are not included in GPA calculations.

### Incompletes

When extenuating circumstances occur beyond a student's control, such as medical issues or family emergencies, students can request that faculty assign them an incomplete grade. At the time of request, students should have a passing grade and have completed at least two-thirds of the required course-work. Generally, incomplete grades are not given when the

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incomplete work includes team-based projects and assignments, although exceptions can be made.

If a faculty member determines an incomplete grade is warranted, all work must be completed by the date specified by the faculty member within 10 weeks after the course has ended. Adjunct faculty members must inform the department chair of the incomplete and devise a plan to assure follow through during the extended period. If the work is not completed by the end of the period specified, the temporary mark is changed to the grade indicated by the instructor, or if no grade has been indicated the mark is changed to an F. When coursework in which a student has received an Incomplete has been made up, the final grade is entered with I and the letter grade (for example, IA).

Alternatives to incomplete grades may include a) students repeating a course to improve the grade and their GPA, or b) filing a petition with the Review Committee for a late withdrawal when the extraordinary circumstances faced by the student are documented and resulted in failing all classes in a term. Faculty members may adopt late assignment rules or more restrictive incomplete policies and are encouraged to articulate those policies on the syllabus.

**Note for graduating students:** A grade of "I" for any class in a student's last semester will automatically move them to the next graduating semester.

### Ordering Official Transcripts

Specific information for ordering official transcripts may be found on the [Registrar's Office](#) webpage.

Unofficial transcripts for current students are available on the web using Self-Service regardless of outstanding obligations.

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## Course Audits and Repeats

### Auditing Courses

Students may elect to audit courses at Westminster according to the guidelines listed in the Academic Policies and Procedures section of this catalog. Courses that are entered on students' permanent records as audited (AU) earn no credit and fulfill no requirements.

### Repeated Courses

The grade and credit hours for a repeated course are entered into the computation of a student's grade point average and counted toward graduation only once. That is, the credit hours and grade points cannot be used or counted twice. In the case of repeated courses, the highest grade awarded is used in the calculation of the student's grade point average and completion of requirements. Repeated course grades on student transcripts are marked by an R in front of the final grade.

Note: Some courses, such as HPW courses and some music courses such as Westminster Chorale, are designated as repeatable courses and are so noted in the individual course descriptions. These courses will count in the hours and the GPA more than one time.

### Academic Renewal

After at least one semester's grades have been posted, a currently enrolled undergraduate student may petition the Registrar in writing for academic renewal. This is a procedure which allows students to request that their academic records be reviewed for the purpose of discounting for grade point average computation all courses bearing grades of D+ or lower and entered on the academic record ten or more calendar years prior to the request. Under this procedure, courses meeting the criteria do not count toward the total hours, upper division hours, or WCore hours needed for graduation. The renewal option can be used only once during a student's undergraduate career. ***This procedure does not apply to students pursuing a second undergraduate degree.***

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## Academic Standing, Probation, and Suspension

### Good Standing

The academic standing of each undergraduate student is determined by examining records at the end of Fall and Spring semesters and when

corresponding final grades are submitted for incomplete work. Students must earn the minimum semester grade point average shown below to be in good academic standing at the university. Students already on probation may be returned to good standing during summer semesters but cannot be placed on probation or suspended during summer semesters.

| Total No. of Hours Attempted at Westminster* | Minimum Semester GPA Required |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1-13   | 1.70                          |
| 14-27  | 1.80                          |
| 28 and above                                 | 2.00                          |

\* This policy is intended to aid first-time students and does not apply to students who have been awarded transfer hours from other institutions.

### Probation

Students failing to achieve good academic standing are placed on academic probation. While on academic probation, students may register for no more than 13 credit hours, may not register for an internship, and may participate in only one curricular or extracurricular activity, unless an additional activity is required for the major and is approved by the program director. Curricular activities include choir, drama, and journalism. Extracurricular activities include student government and students on academic probation are not eligible to participate in university athletics.

Students who meet semester grade point average requirements, but not cumulative grade point average requirements, may be considered for continued probationary status rather than suspension if the term grade point average shows substantial progress toward meeting all grade point average requirements. To be returned to good standing, students must have a 2.0 semester and cumulative grade point average. This applies only to Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

### Suspension

Students who fail to earn the minimum grade point average required for good standing during a probationary semester are suspended from the university. Students may not register for any classes while suspended and must remain out of the university for one or more regular semesters. To be readmitted, students must appeal for readmission.

### Academic Appeals Procedure for Readmission

Students who have been suspended must reapply for Admission to the College and will submit additional academic appeals information as part of that process. Normally, suspended students remain out of the university for one or more regular semesters; however, if students feel extenuating circumstances contributed to their failure to meet minimum grade point averages, they may choose to appeal for readmission immediately following the suspension. Students will be notified of the Appeals Committee meeting and given an opportunity to present their case to the Committee. Decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

### Admission and Retention in Academic Programs

Supplemental applications for admission and standards for retention are established by the faculties of some programs, and students may be excluded from a program for cause, as outlined in the appropriate sections of this academic catalog.

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## Academic Grievance Procedures

Students have the right to appeal or petition an academic decision. For the appeals procedure to be followed after suspension, see Academic Appeals Procedure for Readmission. The other appeals reside within each school. The student must make the appeal or petition, in writing, in accordance with the applicable school or program procedure. Please see the appropriate dean or program director for a copy of the procedure. Written appeals must be submitted during the first four weeks into the next semester and must include documentary evidence that the student feels has a bearing upon the request.

A faculty committee from the school involved reviews the appeal. The student may be present at the hearing. The decision of the faculty appeals committee

will be reported to the student within five school days of the date of the hearing.

If the decision of the faculty committee within the school is not acceptable to the student, the student may file a written appeal to the provost within five (5) school days following notification of the faculty committee. The provost will assemble a committee, consisting of the dean of students and deans of the schools not involved to consider the appeal. All materials included in the faculty's deliberations, including the student's written appeal and the proceedings of the faculty hearing, are made available to this provost committee and become part of the proceedings. The hearing before the provost committee will be held within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the written appeal. The student may be present at the provost committee hearing. The student and faculty representatives may call members of the university as supporting witnesses. The decision of the provost committee is reported to the student within five (5) school days of the date of the hearing.

**Note:** The individual school grievance process must happen before the grievance goes to the Provost's office.

#### **Decisions of the Provost's Committee are final.**

Students have the right to continue their enrollment and participation in academic programs until final decisions are reached. Failure of students to file appeals within specified time limits is considered acknowledgment of the action without intent to appeal.

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## Academic Integrity

Westminster University is a community of learners where students, faculty, and staff gather to create and share knowledge and ideas. In an academic community, integrity is the core principle that guides our individual and shared work. Members of such a community consistently and directly acknowledge how their thoughts and products build on and incorporate the work of others. Westminster is committed to engaging students through well-developed academic programs in a supportive atmosphere. A Westminster education invites students to become lifelong learners who lead lives of consequence and responsibility. All members of the Westminster community are expected to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and to exemplify the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. These values are further defined below.

When first learning how to conduct research and incorporate sources into their academic work, students often struggle with academic writing style and correct citations. These struggles are opportunities to learn new skills and to develop self-awareness. In order to maintain academic integrity, students have a responsibility to learn the accepted practices for acknowledging their use of others' ideas and language. Intentional and repeated breaches of academic integrity may result in serious academic consequences and even disciplinary sanctions.

### Academic Misconduct Definitions

Intentional actions that violate the principle of academic integrity are referred to as academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, helping another person cheat or plagiarize, and furnishing false or misleading information to any community member.

**Cheating** includes but is not limited to copying from another student's work, using unauthorized notes or technology, arranging for a substitute to take an exam or quiz, giving or receiving unauthorized information prior to an exam or quiz, unauthorized collaboration with others on an assignment, and submitting the same material for more than one class without the authorization of the instructors.

**Dishonesty** includes but is not limited to fabrication of data or furnishing false or misleading information to any faculty or staff member.

**Plagiarism** includes but is not limited to unauthorized use of language, information, or ideas generated by another person or by technology such as an AI language model, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, without acknowledging the source. Students must identify the sources they use in their work by using one of the generally accepted citation methods.

All members of the university community — students, faculty, and staff — have the responsibility to report academic misconduct.

## Academic Misconduct Process

Faculty are encouraged to adopt instructional and assessment methods that teach students how to use and acknowledge sources responsibly and that limit opportunities for academic misconduct. Faculty are further encouraged to include academic integrity statements in their syllabuses, to include links to the Academic Integrity Policy, and to state the course-specific consequences for academic misconduct.

When a faculty suspects that a student has engaged in academic misconduct, they should begin by considering the seriousness of the incident.

**Level 1** misconduct is usually characterized by unintentional error, although more serious misunderstanding of citation and its purposes may be involved. If the student has made a Level 1 error, they should meet with their professor for additional instruction and may be referred to the Writing Center, a research librarian, an individual tutor, or other supports as appropriate. There is no need to submit a report. Academic consequences and/or conduct sanctions are not recommended.

**Level 2** misconduct is characterized by poor, perhaps spontaneous, decision-making. The student's actions may have been intentional, but they may not have recognized the seriousness of their actions or how to complete their work in ways the academic community would regard as honest and appropriate.

**Level 3** misconduct reflects pre-meditated dishonesty. The student's actions were intentional, they recognized the seriousness of their actions, and they understood how to complete their work in ways the academic community would regard as honest and appropriate.

If a Level 2 or Level 3 infraction is suspected, the faculty must meet with the student(s) involved, present relevant documentation, and assess their level of understanding and intent. If the faculty determines that a student is responsible for intentional academic misconduct, they should impose appropriate course-specific academic consequences in accordance with the academic integrity policy stated in their syllabus. Recommended academic consequences include 1) warning the student of the seriousness of academic misconduct and assigning an appropriate learning experience, 2) requiring the student to resubmit the assignment or exam, 3) giving a reduced or failing grade for the assignment or exam, or 4) giving a reduced or failing grade for the entire course.

Faculty must report all Level 2 and Level 3 violations of academic integrity to the appropriate academic dean and the Dean of Students. In the case of repeated infractions by a single student, a student conduct officer, in consultation with appropriate academic dean(s), may recommend that the student be required to engage in remediation, be placed on probation or suspension, or be expelled from the University. The Dean of Students will notify the student of the remediation plan or the change in their academic status. Students may appeal such decisions following the Academic Grievance Procedures discussed above.

### Academic Integrity Values

The International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) states that "the fundamental values of academic integrity are honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage." ICAI explains the meaning of these terms as follows:

**Honesty:** "Honesty begins with individuals and extends out into the larger community. As students and faculty seek knowledge, they must be honest with themselves and with each other. In study halls and laboratories, in libraries, playing fields, and classrooms, cultivating and practicing honesty lays a foundation for lifelong integrity."

**Trust:** "The ability to rely on the truth of someone or something is a fundamental pillar of academic pursuit and a necessary foundation of academic work. Members of the academic community must be able to trust that work, whether student work or research, is not falsified and that standards are applied equitably to all.... Trust is reciprocal: being worthy of others' trust and allowing oneself to trust others go hand-in-hand."

**Fairness:** "All members of the academic community have a right to expect fair treatment and a duty to treat others fairly. Faculty members are fair ... when they lead by example, communicating expectations clearly, responding to dishonesty consistently, and upholding academic integrity principles unflinchingly. Students engage in fairness by doing their own original work, acknowledging borrowed work appropriately, respecting and upholding

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academic integrity policies, and by maintaining the good reputation of the institution.”

**Respect:** “Respect in academic communities is reciprocal and requires showing respect for oneself as well as others. Respect for self means tackling challenges without compromising your own values. Respect for others means valuing the diversity of opinions and appreciating the need to challenge, test, and refine ideas.”

**Responsibility:** “Upholding the values of integrity is simultaneously an individual duty and a shared concern. Every member of an academic community—each student, staff, faculty member, and administrator—is accountable to themselves and each other for safeguarding the integrity of its scholarship, teaching, research, and service.”

**Courage:** “Being courageous means acting in accordance with one’s convictions. Like intellectual capacity, courage can only develop in environments where it is tested. Academic communities of integrity, therefore, necessarily include opportunities to make choices, learn from them, and grow.... Only by exercising courage is it possible to create communities that are responsible, respectful, trustworthy, fair, and honest and strong enough to endure regardless of the circumstances they face.”

(International Center for Academic Integrity, “The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity.”)

### Guidance for Applying the Academic Integrity Policy

| Level/<br>Seriousness  | Examples<br>of Student<br>Behavior  | Considerations  | Academic<br>Consequences   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Level 1:</b> Usually characterized by unintentional error, although more serious misunderstanding of citation and its purposes may be involved.   | Editorial errors, incomplete quotations, missing textual citations, failure to properly acknowledge individual contributions to group work.   | Repeated incidents of these behaviors by a single student should be reported.   | Consequences should be minimal (e.g., 10% reduction in grade of this assignment only).<br><br>Warn student of consequences of repeated incidents. Provide additional instruction to student and urge them to meet with a writing consultant, librarian, or tutor to learn more about citation practices. |
| <b>Level 2:</b> Behaviors characterized by poor, perhaps spontaneous, decision-making. Student’s actions may have been intentional but they may not have recognized the seriousness of their actions or how to complete their work in ways the academic community would regard | Feigning illness to avoid an exam; giving aid in quizzes, exams, papers, or other homework without specific permission from the instructor; seeking and receiving such aid; submitting work completed in one course to satisfy an assignment in another course; minor plagiarism (one | Faculty must hold a meeting with the student before responding. This meeting should be a fact-finding effort and may include a third-party, such as a program chair, another faculty member, or dean. Level 2 incidents must be reported and consequences should be imposed. To determine | Student may be required to resubmit an assignment or exam, typically for a reduced grade. Student may be given a failing grade without the opportunity to resubmit. For the most serious Level 2 incidents, instructors may choose to assign a failing grade for the course.                             |

| Level/<br>Seriousness   | Examples<br>of Student<br>Behavior  | Considerations   | Academic<br>Consequences   |
|---|---|--|--|
| as honest and appropriate.  | or two short excerpts of improperly cited material or limited use of an unsanctioned AI language model to complete an assignment).  | appropriate consequences, faculty may consider whether the behavior was premeditated and its potential impact on the student’s grade.  |  |
| <b>Level 3:</b> Behaviors reflect pre-meditated dishonesty. Student’s actions were intentional, they recognized the seriousness of their actions, and they understood how to complete their work in ways the academic community would regard as honest and appropriate. | Buying, selling, or providing a paper or a copy of an exam; having someone else take an exam or taking an exam for someone else; using hidden notes or other unauthorized materials during an exam; possessing and/or using a cell phone, calculator, other device, or AI language model when they are not permitted; sabotaging someone else’s work; altering or forging documents or identities; changing the letter or numerical grade on an exam or assignment after the instructor has assigned the final grade; multiple instances of plagiarism in one assignment or across several assignments. | Faculty must hold a meeting with the student before responding. This meeting should be a fact-finding effort and may include a third-party, such as a program chair, another faculty member, or dean.<br><br>All Level 3 incidents must be reported and consequences should be imposed. To determine appropriate consequences, faculty may consider whether the behavior was premeditated and its potential impact on the student’s grade. | Level 3 incidents deserve the most severe penalties. The student should earn a failing grade on the assignment with no opportunity to resubmit. Students may earn a failing grade in the course. In the most serious cases, faculty may recommend to the dean that the student be placed on probation, suspended, or expelled. |