

ACADEMICS

GRADUATE GRADING AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Grading Information

Grading System

Westminster uses the following grades for the mid-semester and semester grade reports:

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W	Withdrawn
WF	Withdrawn Failing
AU	Audit
I	Incomplete
T	Temporary
EX	Exceeds Project Standards
M	Meets Project Standards
DN	Does Not Meet Project Standards

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, flight training courses, 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 except in the case of flight training courses. "T" grades are not intended to take the place of an incomplete grade when the student meets the criteria for an incomplete 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.

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

Letter Grade	Grade Points Per Credit Hour
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	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.

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 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.

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 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 Standing, Probation, and Suspension

Academic Probation and Suspension Policy

Students in all graduate programs are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in order to be in good standing. Students whose term grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on academic probation must earn a semester grade point average of at least 3.0 the next semester in which they enroll.

Probationary students who fail to earn a semester grade point average of at least 3.0 that semester will be suspended from their graduate program.

Probationary students whose semester grade point average is 3.0 or higher but whose cumulative grade point average still remains below 3.0 will continue on academic probation. Probationary students whose cumulative grade point average reaches 3.0 or higher will be returned to good academic standing. According to NCAA regulations, students not in good academic standing are ineligible to participate in athletics.

Probationary students are required to meet with the program director prior to enrolling for the upcoming semester. Please see the graduation requirements of each graduate program for what constitutes a passing grade for individual classes.

Appeals for Readmission

Suspended students may petition their individual Program Review Committee for readmission at any time prior to the beginning of the semester in which they wish to enroll; however, unless extenuating circumstances exist, suspended students are required to remain out of the university for at least one semester before appealing for readmission. Students who feel extenuating circumstances contributed to their failure to meet minimum grade point requirements may choose to appeal for readmission immediately following the suspension.

Students who have been out of the university for more than two semesters must also submit an application for readmission to the Admissions Office. Students readmitted after more than two semesters will be required to meet program requirements for the catalog in effect at the time of readmission.

To appeal for readmission, students must submit a letter to the program director giving evidence that supports the request for readmission. Petitioning students will be notified of the review committee meeting and will be given the opportunity to present their cases in person. Decisions of the review committee are final. Students readmitted through the appeals procedure are placed on continued probation and must meet the minimum 3.0 grade point average requirement that semester.

Academic Grievance

Students have the right to appeal or petition an academic decision. For the appeals procedure to be followed after suspension, see Appeals for

Readmission. For other appeals or petitions, the student must make the appeal or petition, in writing. The student must file the grievance with the Dean of the school. 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 business days, of the date of the hearing, while school is in session.

If the decision of the faculty committee is not acceptable to the student, the student may file a written appeal with the Graduate Programs Grievance Committee within five business days, while school is in session, of notification of the faculty decision. The Graduate Programs Grievance Committee is made up of three Graduate Directors outside of the program, the Dean of Students, and three Academic Deans, except the one whose school is involved in the appeal. The student and faculty representatives may call members of the university, off-campus supervisors or mentors as supporting witnesses. 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 the Graduate Programs Grievance Committee and become part of the proceedings. The hearing before the Graduate Programs Grievance Committee will be held within fifteen business days, while school is in session, of receiving the written appeal. The student may be present at the appeal hearing. The decision of the Graduate Programs Grievance Committee is reported to the student within five business days, while school is in session, of the date of the hearing.

Decisions of the Academic Grievance Committee are final. The final decision will be a majority decision from the committee. 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.

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 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/ Seriousness	Examples of Student Behavior	Considerations	Academic Consequences
Level 1: 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). 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.
Level 2: 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	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	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	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,

Level/ Seriousness	Examples of Student Behavior	Considerations	Academic Consequences
<p>or how to complete their work in ways the academic community would regard as honest and appropriate.</p>	<p>to satisfy an assignment in another course; minor plagiarism (one or two short excerpts of improperly cited material or limited use of an unsanctioned AI language model to complete an assignment).</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>instructors may choose to assign a failing grade for the course.</p>
<p>Level 3: Behaviors 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>