

AP.5 UNDERGRADUATE POLICIES

AP.5 Undergraduate Policies

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AP.5.1 Student Classification

Admitted undergraduates are classified as follows:

- **Freshman**, 0–29 credits completed
- **Sophomore**, 30–59 credits completed
- **Junior**, 60–89 credits completed
- **Senior**, 90 or more credits completed

Full-time undergraduates are classified as those students enrolled in 12 or more credits per semester. Completed hours are defined as a combination of all credits earned at the university plus credits transferred from other institutions or obtained by testing. Please note that different criteria for full-time status may apply for tuition, verification, and financial aid purposes. For more information, contact the offices of Student Accounts (<http://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/>), University Registrar (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/>), and Student Financial Aid (<https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/>), respectively.

AP.5.2 Academic Standing

The following system of academic progress became effective in fall 2022 and applies to all undergraduate degree and nondegree students at Mason.

Academic standing is based on both the cumulative GPA and the GPA at the end of an academic period.

AP.5.2.1 Academic Period

Academic period refers to fall semester, spring semester, or summer term when determining academic warning, probation, and suspension.

AP.5.2.2 Academic Standing Categories

Students who plan to apply for financial aid should review the requirements for making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), as found on the Financial Aid website (<https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/>), which differ from Academic Standing.

- **Good Academic Standing:** Students are in good academic standing unless they are academically dismissed, suspended, or on probation. Students on academic warning are considered to be in good academic standing.
- **Warning:** Students are on academic warning if any of the following conditions are met:
 - The student receives a GPA below 2.00 for their first academic period of enrollment at Mason.
 - The student has a GPA below 2.00 for the academic period and has a cumulative GPA at 2.00 or above.
 - The student receives a GPA below 2.00 for the academic period, has a cumulative GPA below 2.00 and has never received an academic warning.

Notice of academic warning does not appear on the student's transcript.

- **Probation:** Students are on academic probation if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The student has previously received an academic warning in any previous semester.
 - The student receives a GPA below 2.00 for the academic period.
 - The student has a cumulative GPA below 2.00.

Student will continue on probation and avoid suspension if their current academic period GPA is 2.00 or above, until their cumulative GPA reaches 2.00 or above.

Students returning from suspension are placed on academic probation.

See Section 5.2.4 for further details.

- **First Suspension:** Students are on academic first suspension if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The student has not previously been on academic first suspension.
 - The student has been on academic probation in any previous academic period.
 - The student receives a GPA below 2.00 for an academic period.
 - The student has a cumulative GPA below 2.00.

See Section 5.2.5 for further details.

- **Second Suspension:** Students are on academic second suspension if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The student has not previously been on academic second suspension.
 - The student has returned from an academic first suspension.
 - The student receives a GPA below 2.00 for the academic period.
 - The student has a cumulative GPA below 2.00.

See Section 5.2.5 for further details.

- **Academic Dismissal:** Students are on academic dismissal if all of the following conditions have been met:
 - The student has returned from academic second suspension.
 - The student receives a GPA below 2.00 for the academic period.
 - The student has a cumulative GPA below 2.00.

See Section 5.2.6 for further details.

AP.5.2.3 Termination from the Concentration or Major

Undergraduate students in any academic standing category may be reviewed for possible termination by their dean according to the published policy approved by the major program. Termination from a concentration, a major, or from all majors in a college—may be imposed as a result of excessive repeating of required courses without achieving the minimum standard, and for other evidence of continued failure to make adequate progress toward completion of the concentration or major. Students must be notified a semester in advance of their possible termination and given a chance to meet the standard or to appeal according to published college/school procedures. Once a termination decision has been made, a letter of termination is sent to the student by the dean and notification of termination from the concentration or major is affixed to the student's academic record. Students who are terminated are no longer eligible to pursue that concentration or major, but may declare a different major within the university to complete their undergraduate degree.

AP.5.2.4 Academic Probation

When a student is placed on academic probation, the university notifies the student, and the student's official transcript states "Academic Probation" for the affected academic term. While on academic probation, the student is under the supervision of their School or advising unit.

Students who incur an Academic Probation can register for a limited number of credits (see AP.5.2.7 Academic Performance and Credit Level). Additional requirements may be asked of the student to help increase their success in their academic future.

Students are removed from academic probation when their cumulative GPA is 2.00 or above at the end of an academic period.

AP.5.2.5 Academic Suspension

First Suspension: Students who incur suspension following a spring semester or summer term serve a period of suspension through the next fall semester. Students who incur suspension following a fall semester serve a period of suspension through the next summer term.

Second Suspension: A second suspension is for one calendar year: two semesters and a summer term.

Students returning from suspension are on probation as long as their academic period GPA is 2.00 or above and until their cumulative GPA is 2.00 or above (see policy 5.2.4). Additional requirements may be asked of the returning student to help increase their future academic success. Course credits earned elsewhere during the period of suspension from Mason (for academic or nonacademic reasons) are not accepted for the degree program.

Nondegree undergraduate students placed on suspension have no specified rights of return to the university. Nondegree students who have been suspended and wish to resume their studies after a period of absence must qualify for readmission through the Office of Admissions (<https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/>).

AP.5.2.6 Academic Dismissal

An academic dismissal is a status that is usually permanent. In exceptional cases, students who have been dismissed may apply for readmission after a minimum absence of three calendar years from the university, but only if they meet one or more of the following conditions after having been dismissed:

- Demonstrate academic success (2.50 GPA or above) in at least 18 credits of classes taken during the period of dismissal at an accredited two- or four-year college or university.
- Provide other evidence of a renewed ability to achieve academic success.
- Provide evidence that all degree requirements will be met once an additional 12 or fewer credits are complete.

Meeting the above requirements does not guarantee a return. The Office of Admissions and the appropriate school or college dean will make individual decisions in the best academic interests of the student and the university. For students seeking readmission to a new school or college, the new dean will make the decision in consultation with the former dean and the Office of Admissions (<https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/>). For more information, see AP.5.2.9 Academic Clemency.

AP.5.2.7 Academic Performance and Credit Limit

Undergraduate students who meet the criteria for one of the following categories will be limited to enrollment in a maximum of 13 credits for the following academic periods until they achieve good standing.

- on warning and have just completed their first academic periods at Mason
- on probation
- returning from suspension

Students registered for 14 or more credits are responsible for seeking academic advisement and adjusting their enrollment to a maximum of 13 credits.

AP.5.2.8 Academic Standing and Student Activities

Only students in good academic standing are eligible to hold or run for elective or appointive office in any organization or activity associated with Mason, compete in any athletic or other activity representing Mason on either an intercollegiate or a club level, or serve as a working staff member of any student organization. Note that students on warning are considered to be in good standing (See AP.5.2.2 Academic Standing Categories). Some organizations and activities may impose stricter academic criteria for participation.

A student whose eligibility for an activity requires the completion of a semester (fall or spring only) will have fulfilled that requirement when the student's publicly scheduled exams are over, unless continued eligibility depends on the grades received in those exams.

AP.5.2.9 Academic Clemency

Undergraduate students returning to Mason after a separation of a minimum of three calendar years may petition their academic dean to have up to 16 previous credits earned at Mason removed from the calculation of their cumulative GPA. Courses and grades so removed will not count toward graduation requirements. Note that the courses, with their original grades and the notation "Academic Clemency," will remain listed on the student's transcript permanently. The petition for clemency must be filed within 12 months starting from the first day of the re-enrollment semester at Mason; approval may depend on successful

completion of that semester. Approval of the request is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

AP.5.3 Requirements for Undergraduate Programs

AP.5.3.1 Declaration of Major

To plan a sound academic program, undergraduates should select a degree and major as soon as it is practical but no later than four weeks before the end of the sophomore year. To declare a major, students should confer with the appropriate advisor in the new major program. Students approaching the recommended point for declaring a major, but still uncertain of their choice, should consult:

Office of Academic Advising
Undergraduate Education
Johnson Center, Suite 228
advisor@gmu.edu

Note that all degree components including Mason Core, majors and concentrations must be contained in a single catalog year. See AP.4.2.2 Catalog Requirements for Degrees (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/degree-application-conferral-graduation/#ap-4-2-2>) for exception regarding minors.

AP.5.3.2 Requirements for Bachelor's Degrees

- **Admission.** Candidates must have been officially admitted into degree-seeking status.
- **Residency.** At least one-fourth of the total credits applied to the degree must be completed at Mason and include at least 12 upper-level credits (courses numbered 300 or above) in the major program. A maximum of 30 credits earned in non-degree status at Mason can be applied toward a bachelor's degree.
- **Credit Hours.** Students must complete at least 120 credits that count toward graduation and fulfill all degree requirements. A few programs require more than the minimum 120 credits.
- **Quality.** Candidates must achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher, and must meet all higher standards for grades allowable in majors, minors, or certificates. The Mason cumulative GPA does not include transfer courses.
- **Upper Level.** Students seeking a bachelor's degree must apply at least 45 credits of upper-level courses (numbered 300 or above) toward graduation requirements.
- **Mason Core** (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>) (formerly University General Education). Candidates must complete categories of general education courses and writing requirements as described for their catalog year. This includes satisfying the requirement of two semesters of English composition (ENGH 101 Composition (Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)(Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>) and ENGH 302 Advanced Composition (Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)(Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)) with a grade of C or better. Additionally, as part of the university's commitment to student writers in all undergraduate programs, at least one upper-division course in each major has been designated as fulfilling the writing-intensive (WI) requirement.
- **College/Department General Education.** Students must satisfy additional general education requirements for specific degree programs, as described on each individual college page.
- **Major.** Students must satisfy all requirements for their major and degree program, as described on each individual college page, and as detailed in the degree evaluation for their catalog year.

AP.5.3.2.1 English Composition Requirement

Mason requires students to complete at least two semesters of English composition. Students who complete the Honors curriculum complete the English composition requirement through coursework in those programs. Equivalent credit may be granted through course transfer or external exam. Exemption (but not credit) may be granted through a proficiency exam administered by the English department. All other students must enroll in ENGH 101 Composition (Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)(Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>) (or ENGH 100 Composition for Multilingual Writers (Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)(Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)) upon admission and, after meeting its prerequisites, ENGH 302 Advanced Composition (Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>)(Mason Core) (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>). Students must attain a minimum grade of C in composition courses to fulfill degree requirements.

AP.5.3.2.2 Writing-Intensive Course Requirement

As part of the university's commitment to student writers in all undergraduate programs, at least one upper-division course in each major has been designated as fulfilling the "writing-intensive" (WI) requirement. While other courses in the major may require written projects, teachers of the designated WI courses will devote class time to instruction on how to complete assignments successfully, assign and grade a minimum of 3500 words, provide constructive feedback on drafts, and allow revision of at least one graded assignment. See the description of each major for the specific course or courses that fulfill the WI requirement. For a complete list of approved courses, see Writing Intensive (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/#wi>) courses.

AP.5.3.3 Second Bachelor's Degree

A second bachelor's degree may be earned, either concurrently or sequentially. To graduate with two degrees, students must present at least 30 Mason credits beyond those required by either degree alone. For sequential awarding of degrees, students must be readmitted for the second degree through the Office of Admissions and complete a minimum of 30 credit hours after that point to have fulfilled the residency requirement for that degree.

Students who are concurrently pursuing two bachelor's degrees at Mason must present a detailed program of study for both degrees and obtain authorizing signatures from the chair or director of each degree program and the dean or director, if required by the college, school, or institute. Students may declare the second concurrent degree by completing the Declaration of Second Bachelor's Degree section of the Change/Declaration of Academic Program Form. Both degrees must be declared the semester before the student intends to graduate. Students pursuing concurrent degrees should apply to graduate when both degrees are complete, or be prepared to meet the requirements noted above for sequential awarding of degrees.

AP.5.3.4 Minors

Students may elect minor programs of study in addition to major fields. Minors usually require between 15 and 21 credits of study, at least 8 of which must be applied only to that minor and may not be used to fulfill requirements of the student's major, concentration, an undergraduate certificate, or another minor. Students must complete at least 6 credits in their minor at Mason and achieve a minimum 2.00 GPA in courses applied to the minor. Students interested in a minor should 1) consult the appropriate departmental sections in this catalog for the full details of the requirements, 2) meet with the appropriate minor advisor in order to obtain the required signature on the Minor Declaration form and, 3) submit a completed Minor

Declaration form to the Office of the University Registrar. Note that these minor requirements are university minimum requirements; individual programs may have higher standards and/or more restrictive requirements which are listed in the appropriate departmental sections in this catalog.

AP.5.3.5 Undergraduate Certificates

There are two types of undergraduate certificates: certificates that are designed for students external to Mason, and those that require co-enrollment in a bachelor's program for current undergraduate students. All students pursuing undergraduate certificates must be admitted to Mason in degree-seeking status. Students external to Mason apply directly to the program through Undergraduate Admissions. Current students can elect to add an undergraduate certificate by submitting a completed Undergraduate Declaration of Certificate form to the Office of the University Registrar.

More than half of the credit hours for an undergraduate certificate must be taken at Mason, and more than half must be taken in degree-seeking status. Students must achieve at least a 2.00 GPA in courses applied to the certificate. Undergraduate certificate programs where the student is co-enrolled in a bachelor's program must have 15 unique credits that cannot also be used to fulfill the requirements of a major, a concentration, a minor, or another undergraduate certificate.

When the student is co-enrolled in a bachelor's degree program the completed undergraduate certificate may be posted to the transcript only after completion of a bachelor's degree. Note that these are university minimum requirements; individual programs may have higher standards and/or more restrictive requirements.

Students who are directly admitted to an undergraduate certificate program alone have eight semesters to complete certificate requirements. Such students who are given permission to re-enroll following an absence from Mason may not count the four-year time limit as beginning on the date of re-enrollment. International students attending in F-1 or J-1 status have a more restrictive time limit; contact the Office of International Programs and Services (<https://oips.gmu.edu/>) for information. Students who will not meet the published time limit because of circumstances beyond their control may petition their dean for an extension. Failure to meet the time limit or to secure approval of an extension request may result in termination from the program.

AP.5.3.6 Change of Academic Program

Students considering a change in their academic program (major or degree) are encouraged to see an advisor in the Academic Advising and Transfer Center or a faculty advisor in their prospective discipline. Departmental sections of this catalog describe requirements for acceptance. Students not meeting the requirements may appeal to the department chair for an exception.

Once a student has completed 60 credits, a change of major requires a meeting with an advisor in the new major before the change is complete. To file a change of major, signatures of advisor or designate in the new major program must be obtained on the Undergraduate Change/Declaration of Academic Program form (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/>).

AP.5.3.7 Credit for More than One Undergraduate Major

Students seeking to graduate with a BA or BS degree in two or more subjects must meet departmental requirements for the major in each field. For each major, at least 18 credits used to fulfill its

requirements cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of another major, a concentration, a minor, or an undergraduate certificate.

Students pursuing two or more concurrent majors must complete the Second Major section of the Undergraduate Change/Declaration of Academic Program form (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/>). The applicant must present a detailed program of study for both majors and obtain the authorizing signature from the chair or director of the second program and from the dean or director, if required by the college, school, or institute. When required by a specific academic unit, department chairs and deans or directors must also approve all changes to the programs of study. Students may begin a program at any time that permits completion before the anticipated graduation date.

AP.5.4 University Honors

A student graduates with distinction from the University when at least 60 undergraduate institutional credits applied toward graduation are earned at Mason, and the student's cumulative GPA is at least equal to one of three values:

- 3.90, summa cum laude
- 3.70, magna cum laude
- 3.50, cum laude

A student graduates with recognition from the university when between 45 and 59 (inclusive) credits applied toward graduation are earned at Mason, and the student's cumulative GPA is at least 3.80.

In addition, high achieving students may qualify for membership in one of the many recognized university honor societies. In 2011, George Mason University was awarded a chapter in Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest all-disciplinary honor society. In 2012, Mason was awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society dedicated to the liberal arts. Membership is by invitation only to both of these honor societies.

AP.5.5 Dean's List

The Dean's List recognizes undergraduates who achieve a high level of academic performance during a semester. Students in degree status who take at least 6 credits in a semester (excluding courses graded satisfactory/no credit) and earn a semester GPA of 3.50 or higher with no grade below C, merit placement on the Dean's List. Courses subsequently repeated and excluded will not retroactively affect Dean's List status. This notation will be placed on the individual's permanent record.