

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policies and Procedures Affecting All Students

Knowledge of University Policies

Each student is responsible for knowing George Mason's rules, regulations, requirements, administrative policies, and Academic Policies. This catalog is the normal repository of academic policy statements, but corrections, changes, or interpretations can be promulgated by other means, including electronic publication.

When the university or one of its academic units changes course requirements, grading procedures, or criteria for acceptance into particular programs, academic standing, or graduation, the changes apply to all students enrolled at the time of implementation of the change and thereafter.

Students have certain choices regarding the set of degree requirements under which they graduate, as detailed in the Catalog Requirements for Degrees in AP.4 Degree Application, Conferral and Graduation (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/degree-application-conferral-graduation/>). PDFs of all previous catalogs may be found online (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/>). Additionally, the Special Collections and Archives section of the Fenwick Library has copies of all previous catalogs. They may not be checked out, but may be photocopied. Any student in doubt about an academic matter should consult a faculty advisor or dean.

Students are subject to the university's stated policies regarding patents and copyrights. These policies are available online (<http://osp.gmu.edu>).

Catalog Requirements for Degrees

Catalog year refers to the setting of course and non-course requirements within academic programs as stated in the school and college section of a specific catalog. However, catalog year does not set academic policies other than program requirements in place. Not all programs and degree components are available in all catalogs. For any one degree, all requirements must be met as stated in a single catalog. The only exception is that Bachelor's degree students may select a minor from another catalog year for which they are eligible, as noted below.

Bachelor's degree candidates may choose to graduate under the terms of any catalog in effect during their enrollment in degree status. Students who have been inactive for two or more years or who have attended another institution without prior approval from their academic dean or director must graduate under a catalog in effect at or after their re-admission and during their enrollment in degree status.

Master's and doctoral degree candidates who have been continuously enrolled may choose to graduate under the terms of any catalog in effect during their enrollment in degree status. Students who have been inactive more than one year, however, may be required by their program to graduate under a catalog in effect after they have been granted permission to re-enroll. In no case may a student choose the requirements of a future catalog year that take effect after the student's degree is anticipated.

Mason ID Card

Fairfax Campus: Student Union I, 1203
Phone: 703-993-1004

Science and Technology Campus: Beacon Hall, First Floor Lobby
Phone: 703-993-7042

Mason Square Campus: Van Metre Hall, 220
Phone: 703-993-2095

Web: masoncard.gmu.edu (<https://masoncard.gmu.edu/>)

Email: masonid@gmu.edu

After registering, students should obtain either a Mason ID card or Mason Mobile ID. It must be presented to use library services, is required for admission to university events, meal plan access, and campus housing. It is not transferable and is valid as long as the student has active status.

Official Communication with Students

Web: masonlive.gmu.edu (<http://masonlive.gmu.edu>)

George Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their George Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. Students are also expected to maintain an active and accurate mailing address in order to receive communications sent through the United States Postal Service.

Chosen Name and Pronouns Policy

Web: University Policy 1143 (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/preferred-name-policy/>)

A student may designate and use a Chosen Name and Pronouns for University purposes, except when use of a legal name is required by the University or by law.

A student may designate a Chosen Name and Pronouns in University information systems only when such systems allow for such designation.

The University will ordinarily use a student's Chosen Name and Pronouns in university communications and reporting except when use of a legal name is required by the University or by law. By way of example but not limitation, Chosen Names will be reflected on class rosters, in Canvas in Patriot Web (including Stellic), and in directory listings.

A student's legal name shall be used for billing, verification of enrollment, payroll (W-2s), official transcripts, communication with external authorities, or as otherwise required by the University or by law. The University may identify students by both Legal Name and Chosen name at any time.

A student may not use a Chosen Name for any kind of misrepresentation. A student may not use profanity in a Chosen Name.

Free Speech at George Mason

At George Mason University we include and embrace a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do and protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views. Freedom of expression in an intellectually and culturally diverse environment provides all members of our community the opportunity

to learn, grow, and contribute to our shared mission to create a more just, free, and prosperous world. George Mason University is committed to protecting free speech and free expression on its campus and in its education programs.

Being exposed to competing perspectives is essential for questioning our assumptions, testing our beliefs and refining our knowledge. Our goal as a community must be to create an environment where we can engage in difficult and challenging conversations with civility and mutual respect, where confronting opposing ideas and perspectives becomes an opportunity to learn from and with each other. For more information and access to specific policies, please visit our website (<https://www2.gmu.edu/1stAmendment/>) (<https://www2.gmu.edu/1stAmendment>) dedicated to free speech at George Mason. If you believe your freedom of speech or expression has been disrupted, you may report an incident of disruption of constitutionally protected speech by going to the website and clicking "Submit a report".

George Mason facilities are intended primarily for the use of its students, faculty, and employees in their efforts to advance the educational mission of the university. No use shall be permitted that is unlawful, threatens the safety of the George Mason community, or is inconsistent with the mission of the university. In maintaining a safe campus, in which its students, faculty, and employees can advance the educational mission of George Mason without disruption, the university may establish constitutionally permissible time, place and manner restrictions on the use of its facilities and property (e.g., registration requirements, times when use is permitted, limitations on amplified sound). These can be found in University Policies 1103 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/space-utilization-and-scheduling/>), 1109 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/poster-posting/>), 1140 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/utilization-of-facilities-by-the-general-public/>), and other applicable policies and procedures. These policies and procedures ensure that George Mason can focus on its educational mission, provide a safe environment for learning, and preserve the aesthetics of its campus.

Change of Status, Address

Each student is required to provide George Mason with current contact and identifying information, including permanent and local addresses, telephone numbers, and legal name. Each student must also maintain the university e-mail account assigned at the time of admission. Students are responsible for official communications directed to George Mason e-mail accounts. For more information, check the website (<http://masonlive.gmu.edu>).

Addresses should be updated over the Internet using Patriot Web. Name and Social Security number changes require official documentation and must be processed in person at the Office of the University Registrar or with the original copy of a notarized request.

Appeals of Academic Procedures

Students have the right to seek an exception to academic policy and appeal adverse decisions regarding those requests. The academic exception and appeals process begins in the academic unit. Each academic unit at George Mason has a written statement of that unit's academic exception and appeal process on file in the dean or director's office. Undergraduate students initiate appeals of unit decisions with the Senior Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. Graduate students initiate appeals of adverse decisions with the Senior Associate Provost for Graduate Education. *The Provost's Office does not consider,*

and this procedure does not apply to, grade appeals or appeals of Honor Committee decisions.

Undergraduate Appeals

The Provost's Office may refer cases to the University Academic Appeals Committee. The committee consists of five faculty members, including at least one member of the Faculty Senate and the provost (or designee), who serves *ex officio*, in a nonvoting capacity. The committee hears only those cases where procedural irregularities or a questionable application of university policies is demonstrable, or when the provost or the committee deems the case relevant to the application of university-wide policies. The burden of proof rests with the student, who must provide clear and convincing documentation to support the contention that the decision was unfair based on the criteria stated above. The committee's decision is final. The University Academic Appeals Committee is not charged to hear grade appeals or appeals of Honor Committee decisions.

Graduate Appeals

Specific procedures regarding exceptions to graduate academic policies, including how to appeal an adverse decision, can be found here (<https://provost.gmu.edu/academics-and-research/graduate-education/>) on the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President's website under Graduate Education. All appeals must be in writing, and they must demonstrate that the student has exhausted all options within the academic unit.

NC-SARA Complaint

Out-of-state students who have exhausted George Mason's complaint processes may contact Virginia's SARA Portal Entity. NC-SARA maintains a directory of SARA State Portal Entities. Additional information can be found at the SARA Student Complaints page.

Student Requests for Academic Actions

All requests for academic actions, such as special permissions or exceptions to published academic regulations, must be submitted to the head of the unit in which the student's program is housed, for example, the department chair, institute director, or school or college dean. Forms and instructions on how to initiate an academic action are available in the academic unit and on the unit's web site. For undergraduate exploratory/undeclared/undecided students, non-degree, guest matriculant or exchange student, your appeal is processed through the Mason Care Network, located in SUB I, Suite 3600. Students will be informed of the average wait time for decisions on academic actions undertaken within their units. Those who need assistance with the academic actions process may consult their academic advisor, department coordinator, or their school/college's academic affairs office.

Academic Assessment

As a student, you may be asked to participate in assessment activities, such as surveys and focus groups, that provide George Mason with critical and actionable information upon which to build program improvement. In addition, assessment of student learning outcomes, perceptions, and achievements across the curriculum, based on student work examples from a variety of courses, provides the foundational base upon which George Mason acts for continuous program improvement. This work is done under strict conditions of anonymity for the student and without effect on individual grades.

Students may contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) at oiiep@gmu.edu with questions or concerns about

assessment activities at George Mason. Additional information can be found on the OIEP website (<https://oiep.gmu.edu/>).

Student Work, Intellectual Property

University Policies 4002 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/copyright-in-university-works/>) and 4003 (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/patenting-university-inventions/>) control ownership of copyrightable works and patentable inventions made at George Mason. Generally, George Mason does not assert ownership of copyrightable works and patentable inventions made by students (who are not also George Mason employees) to fulfill the requirements of a particular course. George Mason generally owns copyrightable works and patentable inventions made by students who are not employees if they are made in the course of sponsored research or with substantial use of significant university resources. If a student (undergraduate or graduate) is also an employee (such as a research or teaching assistant), George Mason generally owns copyrightable works and patentable inventions made as part of that student's employment responsibilities. Students with questions are encouraged to consult the policies and to contact the Office of Technology Transfer, ott@gmu.edu or 703.993.8933.

Student Conduct and the University Community

Office of Student Conduct
Student Union Building I, Room 4100
Phone: 703-993-6209
Fax: 703-993-2893
Web: studentconduct.gmu.edu (<http://studentconduct.gmu.edu>)

Students enrolling in the university assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the university's function as an educational institution. The Code of Virginia (Section 23-9.2:3) confers on the university the responsibility for maintaining order within the university and the right to adjudicate referrals where students are alleged to have violated the Code of Student Conduct.

Students may learn more about the Code of Student Conduct by accessing it here (<https://studentconduct.gmu.edu/university-policies/code-of-student-conduct/>).

The Office of Student Conduct addresses referrals regarding the conduct of Mason students and their guests. Questions regarding student conduct policies should be directed to the Office of Student Conduct, SUB I, Room 4100, 703-993-6209; their website (<https://studentconduct.gmu.edu>); or via email at osc@gmu.edu.

Privacy of Student Records

Office of the University Registrar
Student Union I, Room 2101
Phone: 703-993-2441
Email: registrar@gmu.edu
Web: ferpa.gmu.edu (<https://ferpa.gmu.edu>)

George Mason University intends to comply fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, a federal law that protects the privacy of students' academic records. Students are notified annually of their rights under FERPA and provided information regarding procedures implemented by the university to comply with FERPA.

Under FERPA, eligible students are granted certain rights with regards to education records:

1. The right to inspect and review their education records within 45 days of the request.
2. The right to request amendment of education records if the student believes they are inaccurate.
3. The right to require George Mason University to obtain written consent to disclose personally identifiable information from the student's education records unless an exception applies.
4. The right to file a complaint concerning alleged FERPA violations with the U.S. Department of Education.

Public Notice Designating Directory Information:

Directory Information may be disclosed by the university without the student's prior consent under the conditions set forth in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). George Mason may disclose Directory Information, but is not required to do so.

University Policy 1122 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/ferpa-compliance/>): FERPA Compliance defines directory information as:

- Student Name
- Email**
- Address**
- Phone Number**
- Student ID (G Number) *
- Date of Birth*
- Major Field of Study
- Dates of Attendance
- Enrollment Status
- Previous Institutions
- Class Level
- Degrees and Awards Received
- Photographs
- Participation in Officially Recognized Sports and Activities
- Weight and Height of Athletes

*Denotes Limited Directory Information. This information will only be used for verification purposes and to school officials who have access, consistent with FERPA, to such information and only in conjunction with a legitimate educational interest.

**Denotes Directory Information that may be released pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-405(C).

George Mason assumes that students who do not request to withhold disclosure of their directory information consent to the release of this information.

Code of Virginia § 23.1-405(C), amended by HB2449 on July 1, 2019, prohibits all Virginia public universities from disclosing a student's email address, physical address or telephone number under the directory information exception of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), UNLESS:

1. The disclosure is to students enrolled in the institution for educational purposes or institution business, and the student has not opted out of such disclosure, or
2. The student has affirmatively consented in writing.

Enrolled students are all active students, regardless of academic program levels: undergraduate, graduate, certificates, non-degree and continuing education.

George Mason does not disclose non-directory information such as social security numbers, grades, grade point averages, class schedules, academic actions unless the student has provided consent, the release is to the parent of a dependent student as required by § 23.1-1303.B.5 of the Code of Virginia, or the disclosure meets a qualified exception under FERPA.

Preventing Disclosure of Student Information:

Currently enrolled students may withhold disclosure of directory information under by submitting the **Request to Prevent Disclosure of Student Information Form**. The form may be submitted at any time and is effective immediately and until revoked. Students who submit a **Request to Prevent Disclosure of Student Information Form** will have a Confidential Hold placed on their account.

Confidential (Private) Hold:

A Confidential Hold prevents disclosure of student directory information without written consent. Students who elect this hold must conduct all university business in person with a photo ID or via their official George Mason email address, or university computing and networking services that require students to log in using their George Mason credentials.

No student information will be released over the phone. The student's name will not appear in any convocation or commencement program.

Confidential status does not convey a right to be anonymous in the classroom or to impede routine classroom communication and interactions. Students with confidential status should expect to be identified in class by name and to have their George Mason email address used for class purposes. Information may be released pursuant to other exceptions, such as to a school official for legitimate educational interests or if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.