

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policies and Procedures Affecting All Students

Knowledge of University Policies

Each student is responsible for knowing 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 (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/degree-application-conferral-graduation/>). PDFs of all previous catalogs may be found online (<http://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, Room BE 1034
Phone: 703-993-7040

Arlington Campus: Van Metre Hall, 220
Phone: 703-993-9095

Loudoun Campus: 21335 Signal Hill Plaza, Suite 130
Phone: 703-993-4350

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

Email: masonid@gmu.edu

After registering students should obtain a Mason ID card. It must be presented to use library services and is required for admission to university events and when using facilities after normal operating hours. 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>)

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 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 Blackboard, in Patriot Web (including Degree Works), 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 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 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".

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 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 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 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 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 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 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 Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. Graduate students initiate appeals of adverse decisions with the 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.

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

The regular evaluation of student learning, perceptions, and achievements is fundamental to the continuous improvement of Mason's academic programs. All academic programs at Mason, including Mason Core, have student learning outcomes that are assessed periodically. Student work in various courses may be used for such assessments. Student anonymity is assured and grades will not be affected. Student participation is an essential component of the improvement process, and students may be asked to engage in a variety of assessment activities including surveys and focus groups.

Students may contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) at oiiep@gmu.edu (oir@gmu.edu) with questions or concerns about assessment activities at Mason. Additional information can be found on the OIEP website (<https://oiiep.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 Mason. Generally, Mason does not assert ownership of copyrightable works and patentable inventions made by students (who are not also Mason employees) to fulfill the requirements of a particular course. 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), 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>)

Each year, Mason informs students of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. The university intends to comply fully with this act, which protects the privacy of education records, establishes the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and provides guidelines for amending inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Students also have the right to file complaints with the Family Policy Compliance Office (U.S. Department of Education) concerning alleged failures by Mason to comply with the act.

The Notification of Rights under FERPA and the Public Notice Designating Directory Information detail students' rights and the procedures implemented by the university to comply with FERPA.

FERPA is a federal law that affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. Specifically, it affords students the right to:

1. inspect and review their education record;
2. request the amendment of inaccurate or misleading records;
3. consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their education record to a third party; and
4. file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures of the university to comply with the act.

George Mason University strives to fully comply with this law by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. FERPA authorizes the release of "directory information" without the student's prior consent under certain conditions, which are set forth in the act. George Mason University has defined its "directory information" in accordance with the law. Please visit the FERPA website (<https://ferpa.gmu.edu>) for additional information about student privacy and FERPA.

Public Notice Designating Directory Information

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). Directory information is information that Mason may disclose, but is not required to do so.

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

- Student Name
- *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

***Limited Directory Information:** Student ID number and Date of Birth are considered to be limited directory information, which may be used for verification purposes only, and not released as directory information.

As of July 1, 2018, the Code of Virginia Section 23.1-405(C) prohibits George Mason University from disclosing a student's email, address or telephone number under the exception in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for directory information or the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) unless the student has affirmatively consented in writing to the disclosure.

Beginning on July 1, 2019, HB2449 provides an amendment to 23.1-405(C). This amendment allows for the disclosure of a student's

email, address or telephone number to other students enrolled in the institution for educational purposes or institution business and the student has not opted out of such disclosure.

George Mason does not disclose social security numbers, grades, grade point averages, class schedules, academic actions nor the number of credits enrolled in or earned unless the student has signed a consent form.

Preventing Disclosure of Student Information: Currently enrolled students may withhold disclosure of directory information under FERPA. To withhold disclosure, students must complete the Request to Prevent Disclosure of Directory Information Form. The form may be submitted at any time throughout the year and will immediately affect prospective disclosures. Mason assumes that failure on the part of any student to specifically request the withholding of a category of directory information indicates individual approval for disclosure.

Confidential (Private) Hold: Prevents disclosure of all student information. A student who elect this hold must conduct all university business in person with a photo ID or via their official Mason email address. No student information will be released over the phone.

Students in this category may still use interactive web and other electronic systems, such as Patriot Web, for transactions (including registration) which are protected by a secured login. Confidential status does not convey a right to be anonymous in the classroom or to impede routine classroom communication and interactions. A student with a confidential status should expect to be identified in class by name, and to have their Mason email address used for class purposes. A student must remove this hold in order for their name to appear in the commencement or convocation program.