ARTICLE FIVE: ACADEMIC POLICIES

See the University Catalog for additional policies, approved by the University Faculty, regarding Auditing Courses, Special Auditing, Class Attendance, Grading System, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Registration, Student Withdrawal from Class, Student Withdrawal from the University, and Transcripts.

Section A – Scheduling Policies

Academic Calendar Guidelines
Guidelines for creating Academic Year Calendars are established by the Regents and the University Senate. The Provost’s Office has the primary responsibility for developing calendars meeting the guidelines. The University Senate Executive Committee reviews the proposed calendar(s). Calendars for at least eight years in advance will be made available on the University web site. Suggestions for revising the academic year calendars should be directed to the University Senate Executive Committee. However, calendars for the current academic year and the two subsequent academic years cannot be modified. (US 12/08)

Regent/System Policy or State Statutes
1. There must be at least 170 days of faculty/student interaction (34 weeks) within an academic year. Faculty and student interactions are defined as organized services and include classroom, registration, advising, and exam periods.
2. The faculty contractual period must be 39 weeks in length.
3. Classes cannot begin before September 2.

UWEC Guidelines
1. Academic Year contracts should begin the Monday of the week before the week when classes start except when this causes the May commencement to fall on Memorial Day weekend. In those years, Academic Year contracts should begin on the Monday two weeks before the week when classes start.
2. If there is only 1 day of classes prior to Labor Day, wait until after Labor Day to start classes.
3. If classes begin prior to Labor Day, be sure students can use the previous weekend to move into the dorms.
4. There should be approximately 43 MWF and 29 TTH class days each semester.
5. Semester lengths should be kept as equal as possible.
6. At least 13 full five-day weeks should be included to facilitate lab courses.
7. Finals should be scheduled over 5 days.
8. When finals must stretch over a weekend, a study day should be included prior to the first day of finals.
9. Commencement should fall on Saturday and occur after finals if possible. If the Saturday after finals falls on December 23 or later, the previous Saturday should be used for commencement.
10. Fall semester should end no later than December 22.
11. Winterim should consist of no less than 14 days including Saturdays. Classes cannot meet on Sundays.
Section B – Instructional Policies and Procedures

Master course files

Dean’s responsibility
Each course offered by the University has a master course file in the office of the Dean of the College in which the course is offered. When a new course is proposed and approved by the Department/Program and the College’s Curriculum Committee/Academic Policies Committee, a new master course file is established. Periodically the course information is updated to reflect evolutionary changes in the course content. Major or minor revisions may be made as the characteristics, content and pedagogy of the course change. Courses also may be deleted from the curriculum. The Dean’s responsibility is to maintain the master course file for each course, including the original course proposal and a record of any actions taken on the course. All members of the faculty and academic staff have access to these files.

Department Chair’s responsibility
Department Chairs are responsible for forwarding to the Dean in a timely manner for appropriate curricular action new course proposals, major or minor revisions of existing courses, periodic course updates, and proposals to eliminate courses. For multiple-section courses, a single topical outline/timetable should be prepared which reflects the common body of knowledge addressed in the course. Once approved, a new course or revised version of an existing course may be offered upon publication in the University Catalog.

Section-specific information provided to students for courses offered in a given semester or year should be maintained in the department or program office.

Student Purchase of Supplies
If a course requires the purchase of special supplies or equipment by students, an appropriate statement, including the approximate cost, should appear in the catalogue description of the course. If no such statement appears, an appropriate announcement must be made at the first meeting of the class. If an instructor requires the use of a book not provided through the Instructional Resources Rental Department, at least one copy of the book must be available on reserve in the Library for general use. (US 4/10)

Overview of Courses
Each instructor will provide students with a written general chronological outline of topics for a course, its approximate timetable for major projects, and the instructor’s method for evaluation of student achievement. (FS 11/80, US 3/10) In addition, instructors should be sensitive to the student time constraints when scheduling tests during the week prior to final examinations. (FS 5/83)

Admission to Class – General Policy:
All students must be properly registered for any course which they attend.

Class Attendance and Authorized Absence Policies: (US 11/09)
Instructor’s Responsibility
University Senate action provides as follows: Instructors will maintain student attendance records. The instructor will keep such records and student course-related work for reference during the session and for at least one year following the end of the session. (US 5/10)
At the beginning of each course, the instructor must provide students in class a written copy of his/her policy specifying the role of attendance in the instructor's method for evaluation of student achievement. A copy of the statement must also be given to the instructor's immediate supervisor. (FS 4/86)

In the event a student is found by an instructor to be absent without explanation for an extended period, usually in excess of one week, this absence is to be reported directly to the Associate Dean of Students. The absentees will be contacted immediately in an effort to determine the cause(s) of the absence. The instructor will be informed of their findings (FS 5/71; amended 11/79; amended 10/09). In matters of student absence, the Associate Dean of Students are available to assist instructors where there is concern regarding the excessive absence of a student. The Associate Deans of Students can be of greatest assistance when concerns are brought to their attention early in a semester.

Student’s Responsibility (US 11/09)
Because class participation is an integral component of the development of a successful learning community, all students are expected to attend all class sessions of courses in which they are enrolled. While attendance is expected, it is recognized that absences are at times unavoidable. If an absence is necessary, the student should take responsibility for contacting her/his instructor(s) as soon as possible to discuss the ramifications of being away from class. In some instances, significant personal issues result in the need to seek additional assistance (see Authorized Absences).

It is important for the student to realize that when classes are missed she/he may be at a disadvantage as it is often impossible for the instructor to reconstruct activities that took place in the classroom, laboratory, or field during the absence. Additionally, missing any classes may result in lower grades because the student may miss foundational material needed to succeed in the course. Even under the best of circumstances, extended absences can be problematic, with the real possibility that the student may not be able to complete the course successfully.

Authorized Absences (11/09)
The determination of what constitutes an authorized absence involves a joint effort between the offices of the College Dean and the Dean of Students. Authorized absences include: (1) participation in an approved field trip listed in the catalogue as a requirement for a course in which the student is enrolled; or (2) participation in an authorized extra-curricular activity on the regularly approved calendar of university events [such absences are reported by the Dean to each Department at least 48 hours in advance of the trip or event]; or (3) Labor Day employment; or (4) active military service; or (5) accommodation of students’ religious beliefs [see Accommodation of students’ religious beliefs policy]; or (6) illness, injury, or emergency of such severity as to prevent the student from being able to attend class.

In the case of severe illness, injury, or emergency, instructors should be kept apprised of the situation through direct communication with the student and/or via the Dean of Students Office which will assist students and communicate with instructors as needed.

When absences are authorized, instructors are obligated to work with students to determine the best way for students to resume participation in the class without a penalty. If the absences are lengthy, the student, instructor, College Dean, and Associate Dean of Students should work together to determine if it will be possible for the student to successfully complete the course.
Medical Excuses

Excuses will not be issued by Student Health Services for course related activities. Specifically, Student Health Services will not provide “medical excuses” for missed classes, missed examinations, or the late completion of assignments. Faculty and students should together resolve the dilemmas resulting from an illness or injury based on the student’s own explanation of the problem.

In some situations, clinicians at Student Health Services will give students specific advice impacting their ability to attend class or complete assignments. At the clinician’s discretion, written advice may be given. Students may wish to share this advice with instructors, but they are not required to do so. Student Health Services personnel will routinely inform the Dean of Students Office on the student’s behalf if an absence is expected to be three days or longer. That office will then inform the student’s instructors.

Requests for illness verification may arise in certain specific situations. These requests will likely be granted if deemed to be in the student’s best interest. There are some situations in which verification from the office of Student Health Services will be provided; they are listed below. Situations where verification is appropriate:
1. Health reason for termination of a housing contract.
2. Disability requiring handicap parking permit.
3. Health problem resulting in cancellation of an airline reservation or other reservation when required to obtain a refund.
4. Health problem causing withdrawal from the University after usual deadlines.
5. Required clearance for return to work.
6. Health problem leading to a student requesting an “incomplete” in a course.

Field Trips and Scheduled Events

Field Trips

The faculty of the University has affirmed that field trips shall be sanctioned as a feature of the instructional program. Such trips should be anticipated and included in the catalogue description of the related course. Requests for trips not included in the appropriate catalogue descriptions will be approved only upon careful evaluation and subject to the procedures outlined below.

Fees

All fee charges to students for participation in field trips must be in compliance with General Administrative Policy Paper (GAPP) #29. Contact Business Services and/or the Provost and Vice Chancellor’s office for additional information.

Scheduled Events

Scheduled events where students represent the University, as in intercollegiate sports or forensic activities, are handled in the same manner as course-related trips.

Accommodation in Testing Situations for Non-Native Speakers of English

In courses that require tests (in which the primary language of instruction and assessment is English) to be taken during class time, students who are non-native speakers of English may request extended test-taking time (time and a half). To determine eligibility, English proficiency is evaluated by the Academic Skills Center (for U.S. permanent residents/citizens) or by the Department of Foreign Languages (for international students). Students approved for the accommodation are given a verification form to present to their course instructors. Students must provide verification during each semester at least one week before the test for which accommodation is needed. Verification is valid for one semester.
The accommodation policy does not apply to other forms of evaluation (e.g. papers, projects, group presentations) or to situations in which students must demonstrate clinical or similar skills. (US 2/09)

**Final Examinations**

**General Policies**

Every curricular offering bearing credit and a letter grade shall be concluded with a final examination unless an alternative method of evaluation is determined by the instructor. (FS 4/70) Faculty should be sensitive to the student time constraints when scheduling tests during the week prior to final examinations. (FS 5/83)

Final examination week is part of the 34 weeks (170 scheduled days) defined in Board of Regents policy as days on which both faculty and students are required to be on campus. All classes are required to meet as shown in the official schedule for final examination week.

**Change of Schedule by Instructor**

Administrative policy requires that any departure from the published examination schedule be approved in advance by the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of the College since changes initiated without proper clearance may result in conflicts between examinations or in unreasonably heavy schedules on a single day for some students. All changes must be coordinated through the Registrar's Office (S-128), so that there will be no room conflicts.

**Change of Schedule by Student Request**

No student will be permitted to reschedule a final examination unless there are extraordinary circumstances over which the student has no control (e.g. hospitalization or military obligation). Verification of the circumstances must be furnished by the student. A student with three or more examinations scheduled for one day may request the change of an individual examination time. Changes are not allowed for reasons such as an already purchased plane ticket, leaving campus early, a family vacation, or conflict with employment, unless such work commitment existed prior to the publication of the examination schedule.

A request for a change in the time of an individual final examination must be approved by the instructor, the department chair, and the assistant/associate dean of the college in which the course is offered. Make-up examinations must be scheduled during finals week or later and must be arranged by the student with the instructor. (US 1/03)

**Grading System: Change of Grade**

One full year after the end of a session is the deadline for any change of grade. (FS 10/84; US 5/10)

**Accommodation of Students' Religious Beliefs**

UWS Chapter 22 calls for the reasonable accommodation of a student’s sincerely held religious beliefs with regard to examinations and other academic requirements. The law requires written and timely notification to students and instructors of the rules and complaint process; provides that a student can conveniently and confidentially notify an instructor of potential conflicts; permits a student to make up an examination or academic requirement at another time or by an alternate means without prejudicial effect (provided the student notifies the instructor within the first three weeks of classes or the first full week of summer session); and a procedure for handling and resolving complaints. To address the requirements of the law the following procedures shall be in effect:
1. The claim of a religious conflict shall be accepted at face value. To be granted an alternative means of meeting an academic requirement, students must notify their instructors within the first three weeks of class (first week of summer session or short course) of specific days or dates on which they will request relief from an academic requirement because of a sincerely held religious belief.

2. Any student with a scheduling conflict between an academic requirement and any religious observance must be given an alternative means of meeting the academic requirement.

3. Instructors may schedule alternate non-conflicting requirements before or after the regularly scheduled examination or other academic requirement.

4. Students or instructors who have disagreements about the application of the law should seek an informal resolution through the Student Development and Diversity office.

5. Should the informal resolution fail complaints of failure to provide reasonable accommodation of a student's religious beliefs may be filed under procedures adopted pursuant to Chapters UWS 6 & 13. (US 3/94)

**Student Academic Grievance Procedures**

Students have the right to file academic grievances under provisions established by the University Senate (4/79) and approved by the Chancellor.

An academic grievance is defined as "an allegation by a student of substantial and unjustified deviation, to the student's detriment, from any of the following: 1) officially announced or published policies, procedures, and/or requirements regarding admission into programs, or individual classes; 2) officially published grading policies of the University; 3) the instructor's requirements for a course as announced to the class at the beginning of the semester; 4) the instructor's own grading policies as announced to the class or as demonstrably applied to other students in that same class." Students are required to seek resolution through informal discussion with the respondent(s) before filing a formal grievance.

The full text of the Student Academic Grievance Procedures is published in the handbook Student Services and Standards and is also available from the Student Development and Diversity office.

**Academic Misconduct on the Part of Students**

UWS 14 prescribes procedures for investigating and remediating cases of academic dishonesty on the part of students. Local implementation by the University Senate (3/89) is published in full in the Student Services and Standards Handbook.

**Student Participation in Curricular Development**

Provision has been made for student membership on most department curriculum committees and all College curriculum committees. Official student observers are appointed to the University Senate Academic Policies Committee. In addition, the channels of communication between student government and university government provide for academic recommendations passed by the Student Senate to be received directly by the Executive Committee of the University Senate and forwarded to the appropriate University Senate committee for action.

**Section C – Curricular Development**
Changes in Courses, Programs, Policies

Initiation of Changes
Suggestions for curricular modification and development may originate with any member of the faculty or academic staff, and all members are encouraged to offer suggestions for improvement. Most proposals for courses and programs are initiated at the level of the department or equivalent unit. Proposals for changes in university-wide academic policies are usually initiated through or by the Academic Policies Committee of the University Senate.

Local Levels of Decision Making
The responsibilities of the College faculties are specified in the Constitution of the University Faculty and University Academic Staff (Article Four, Sections E and F) and implemented by provisions of the College constitutions.

College Level
Action on:
- creation of new courses and deletion, modification, updating of courses;
- changes in major, minor, emphasis, credit-bearing certificate, and pre-professional program requirements; and
- suspensions and reinstatements of minors, emphases, and pre-professional programs is required and completed at the College level.

The following are exceptions to this rule:
1. General Education courses require action by the University General Education Committee (UGEC) in addition to College approval.
2. Changes in requirements in the University Honors Program require approval by the University Senate Academic Policies Committee.
3. Establishment, elimination or change in requirements in study abroad program requires approval by the University Senate Academic Policies Committee.

University Levels of Action for Undergraduate Programs and Academic Policies
Proposals regarding undergraduate programs typically proceed from the College to the University Senate Academic Policies Committee, the University Senate, and the Chancellor. These include the following:
- Establishment, renaming, or elimination of minors, emphases, credit bearing certificates, and pre-professional programs
- Establishment, elimination or renaming of majors
- Establishment and elimination of degrees
- Establishment, elimination, or renaming of departments
- Establishment of new prefixes (resulting from establishment or renaming of departments)
- Applications for extramural grants/programs with new curricular implications

By action of the University Senate, the University Senate Academic Policies Committee approves credit bearing certificate programs and study abroad programs and reports these actions for the record to the University Senate.

Establishment of a new college/school requires action by the University Senate Academic Policies Committee, the University Senate, and the Chancellor.
Elimination or renaming of a college/school requires action by the college/school curriculum committee, college/school faculty, the University Senate Academic Policies Committee, the University Senate, and the Chancellor.

Proposals for establishing or changing university academic policy (e.g., final examinations, authorized absences, grading system) proceed from the College or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to the University Senate Academic Policies Committee, the University Senate, and the Chancellor.

Levels of UW System and Board of Regents

The following require action by UW System and the Board of Regents:

- Establishment of a new major
- Establishment of a new degree
- Establishment, elimination, or renaming of a college/school

{ See following chart for Undergraduate Academic Program Changes: Is Action Required? }
### Undergraduate Academic Program Changes: Is Action Required?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Proposal</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept. or equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses (including Honors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish new course</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliminate course</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substantial course content change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change title/credits/prerequisites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors — Establish new course</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors — Change/eliminate course</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credit-Bearing Certificate Programs(^1) &amp; Study Abroad Programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish or eliminate certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change certificate requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish new study abroad program</td>
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<td>Eliminate study abroad program</td>
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<td>Change study abroad requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minors, Emphases, &amp; Pre-Professional Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish or eliminate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspend or reinstate</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change Requirements</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rename</td>
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<td>Majors</td>
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<td>Eliminate major</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspend or reinstate major</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change major requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rename major</td>
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<td>Degrees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliminate or rename degree</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change requirements (university)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change requirements (college/school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departments</td>
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<td>Establish new department</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliminate or rename department</td>
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<td>Schools/ Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish new college/school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliminate or rename college/school</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply for extramural grants/programs with new curricular implications</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulation Agreement</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Prefix</td>
<td>Y</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Y = Yes  N = No  — = Not Applicable  I = Information Only  P = Provost/Vice Chancellor  D = Dean

*General Education courses require action by the University General Education Committee (UGEC). Refer to the current UGEC Procedure Manual.

**University Faculty are informed of changes through publication in the University Bulletin or by action and minutes of the University Senate. On petition, the Full Faculty may review and confirm, modify, or reject any action of the University Senate.

***All actions are recommendations to the Chancellor. Administrative acceptance is accomplished at the various levels by the Department Chair, Dean, or the Provost/Vice Chancellor.

\(^1\)Undergraduate/graduate and graduate only certificate programs require action by the Graduate Council.
Procedure and Guidelines for Changing Departmental Student Credit Targets

A department or functional equivalent may request a change in its student credit hour target at any time. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to submit in writing reasons supporting the request to the Dean of the appropriate College. The Dean shall evaluate the request and make a recommendation to the Provost and Vice Chancellor, who, after consultation with the University Senate Academic Policies Committee, shall establish a new student credit hour target or confirm the existing one. The following guidelines are to be used for the setting of target averages for each department. These guidelines must be used with discretion and with the full understanding of departments and programs to which the guidelines are being applied:

1. The Nature of the Discipline
   Studio courses, for example, traditionally generate fewer student credit hours than appreciation courses.

2. Method of Instruction
   For example, discussion classes are traditionally smaller than lecture courses, and lecture lab courses are smaller than straight lecture courses.

3. Accreditation Requirements
   Some accreditation agencies have rather specific requirements; others make strong recommendation concerning class size and work load.

4. Mix of Upper and Lower Level and Graduate/Undergraduate Courses
   The exact weight given to the mix of courses will depend on the particular discipline taught by each department.

5. Geographic Logistics
   Consideration should be given for time used in travel.

6. The Size of the Department and the Program in Relationship to the Overall University Student Credit Hour Production
   Each department target average has to be examined in light of the impact upon the University as a whole. For example, regardless of the educational justification for a target of 150 student credit hours per full time equivalent faculty, such a target could not be sustained by any department that grew at a rate far exceeding the growth of the rest of the University. Therefore, program management should be considered in establishing targets.

7. The Stage of Development of a Program
   Special provisions may be made in setting targets for new programs so that these programs can be given a chance to develop. After a time, upward adjustments of the target may be made.

8. Source of Funding
   In some cases targets may be set primarily on the basis of requirements imposed by sources of funding.

Departmental Review and Planning

The University conducts a review of departments and programs within a maximum of every seven years. The review process is coordinated by the University Senate Academic Policies Committee for undergraduate programs and by the Graduate Council for graduate programs. (FS 5/84)