

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Attendance

In order to give students a larger share of responsibility for their own education, Williams College does not administer a general system of required classroom attendance. *The College expects students to make full use of their educational opportunities by regular class attendance and to assume the academic risks incurred by absences.*

Although no formal system of class attendance is maintained by the College, instructors may set such standards of attendance as they deem necessary for the satisfactory conduct of their courses. Students who fail to meet these standards may be warned by the instructor and notice sent to the Dean that continued absence could result in their being dropped from the course. A failing grade will be assigned to any regularly graded course dropped after the designated course change period. Students who do not attend the first class meeting in a semester course or Winter Study Project may be required to withdraw by the instructor. Attendance is required at announced tests and final examinations unless the student is specifically excused by the instructor or the Dean's Office. Satisfactory attendance in four quarters of activities approved by the Department of Physical Education is required except for students excused by the Dean and the Director of Health.

Registration

Registration for fall and spring semesters and for the Winter Study Program takes place at designated periods during the academic year. There may be a \$5 per day late fee for any registration changes accepted after the announced deadlines, including the subject designation for cross-listed courses.

New students register online in early summer; soon after arrival at Williams, they meet with their assigned Academic Advisors to discuss the curriculum and their course selections. All course changes for new students are made after these meetings. During the first two years of study, students are limited in the number of courses they may take in one department or subject each semester as follows:

- First-year students may take no more than one course with the same course prefix, nor more than two in one department, in a semester.
- Sophomores may take no more than two courses with the same course prefix, nor more than three in one department, in a semester.
- Sophomores may take no more than three courses with the same course prefix, nor more than four in one department, during the full year.
- A student may take no more than a total of five courses with the same course prefix, nor more than eight in one department, during the first two years.
- Any exception to the above *early concentration rule* may be requested by a petition (goldenrod) to the Committee on Academic Standing (C.A.S.) filed at the time of registration.

Course Change Period

Course changes may be made during a designated period at the beginning of each semester. No course changes may be made after that period except with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing, after consultation with the Dean's Office. During Winter Study, a second Winter Study Project may be added if the instructor approves but the original Project may not be dropped. A late fee of \$5 per day may be assessed for each course change accepted after the announced deadline.

First-year and first-semester transfer students may be permitted to withdraw from one course (incurring a deficiency but no grade penalty) as late as the tenth week of the semester. Upperclass students also may withdraw from a course under the same conditions once in subsequent years. A withdrawal, recorded on the transcript as a "W," is granted only with the approval of the instructor and a dean and only if there is complete agreement between the instructor and the dean that, despite conscientious effort to do the work, continuation in the course would be detrimental to the overall educational interest or health of the student. The deficiency thereby incurred must be removed in the normal manner. *See "Deficiencies," page 13 of this document.*

Course Load

Students are required to complete four courses each semester. In exceptional cases, students may, upon petition to the Committee on Academic Standing and with departmental approval at the time of registration, elect a pattern of five semester courses in the fall semester and three in the spring or three in the fall and five in the spring; a pass-fail course cannot be used as the fifth course in this pattern.

If a student with a disability believes that he/she is unable to pursue a full course of study, the student may petition the Disabilities and Accommodations Advisory Committee for permission to pursue a reduced course load. Such a petition must be accompanied by a professional evaluation that addresses the student's inability to maintain a full course of study and discusses the rationale for a reduced course load. Upon consideration of a student's petition and supporting documentation, the Disabilities and Accommodations Advisory Committee makes a recommendation to the Committee on Academic Standing, which renders decisions. Such cases are considered on an individual basis and may be initiated at any time during the student's tenure at Williams.

Fifth Course Pass-Fail Option

Except in the case of the unbalanced course program described above, a student may, at the beginning of any semester, enroll in a fifth course that must be specified as the pass-fail course. *By the sixth week, a student must decide whether to continue the course, and if so, whether on a pass-fail or regularly graded basis.* A form for designating the option chosen will be sent from the Registrar's Office. A processing fee of \$5 per day may be assessed for fifth course grading option designations accepted after the announced deadline. A course graded "Pass" may *not* be used as one of the thirty-two semester courses required to complete the degree, to fulfill distribution or major requirements, or to make up a deficiency. A pass-fail course converted to a fifth regularly graded course may be used to fulfill distribution or major requirements or to make up a deficiency incurred in a prior term. The grade received will be included in the calculation of the student's cumulative grade-point average.

The Gaudino Option

- ◆ This initiative attempts to encourage students to engage in courses of interest beyond their area of focus or "expertise"—dare yourself to enroll in challenging but intriguing courses that you would otherwise not take!
- ◆ You can declare a G—option at the beginning of the semester for courses taken at Williams, starting as early as the spring semester of your first year and as late as the fall semester of your senior year. You can sign up for at most one G—option course per semester, and at most *two* in your undergraduate career.
- ◆ You *cannot* invoke the G—option on a course used to satisfy divisional or other college requirements (EDI, Q, W).
- ◆ You *cannot* invoke the G—option for any course that fulfills major or concentration requirements *unless* it is the very first course you take in that major or concentration.
- ◆ You will have up to 30 days after grades are posted to elect to invoke the G—option for a course from the previous semester. If your course grade is above a certain floor and the instructor of the course approves, then the course grade will be changed to **G** on your transcript and the GPA will not be affected by the original grade. The course *will* count toward graduation, but the transcript will reflect that you declared the course to be an intellectual stretch.
- ◆ Any course can be taken with the G—option unless the course description in the College Bulletin explicitly states otherwise.

Declaring the G—option

- ◆ You can declare a regular course at Williams as one of your two G—options any time during the drop/add period of any semester for which you are eligible to declare one. You cannot un—declare the G—option after the end of drop/add!

Invoking the G-option

- ◆ You may ask the Registrar's Office to invoke your option for a G-option course within 30 days after grades are posted. After 30 days you will keep the grade you earned in that class if you don't notify the Registrar that you wish to invoke the G-option. To apply the option, your course grade has to be no lower than the lesser of: (a) your current GPA minus 0.67; or (b) the grade of B-. In addition, the registrar will ask the instructor of the course to assert that you were "intellectually present." If either of these conditions is not met, then the grade you earned cannot be removed. "Intellectual presence" implies that you have attended and participated in all the class meetings and that you have done all the required work. Some instructors might have other requirements. You should feel free to meet with and interact with your instructor to get the most out of the experience.
- ◆ Year-long courses are a special case. If a student elects to declare a hyphenated course then s/he has three options once the student completes the *second* of the two courses:
 - (a) take no action (and thus the two grades stay on the transcript);
 - (b) invoke the option for the first of the two courses but not the second (ie, only the second grade stays... thinking: I was uncomfortable at first, but then I conquered the discomfort);
 - (c) invoke the option for *both* courses (both grades go away).

*Note that a student cannot keep the first course grade and G-option the second one—that is *not* allowed! Also, no matter which choice the student selects (a), (b), or (c), this only counts for *one* of his/her two allowable options in his/her college career.*

Winter Study Project

Students must pass a Winter Study Project in each of their four years. Winter Study Projects are graded Honors, Pass, Perfunctory Pass, or Fail. All work for Winter Study Projects must be submitted by the last day of the Winter Study Program; work may be accepted after this date only with the permission of a dean. Students who fail their Winter Study Projects will be placed on Academic Probation by the Committee on Academic Standing and will be required to make up the deficiency. (See "Deficiencies," page 13 of this document.) Students who fail through gross neglect of work will normally be required to resign. A student who receives a second Perfunctory Pass grade in Winter Study will be required to pass a fifth course, which may be graded on the regular A-E or pass/fail basis, in the following spring or fall semester.

Grading System and Records

Williams uses the following system of grades: A, excellent; B, good; C, fair; D, passing; E, failing. These letters, with plus and minus value, have the following numerical equivalents in calculating grade averages:

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	D = 1.00	E = 0
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67	

A permanent record of each student's grades is kept and this official record forms the basis for any academic action by the College.

A transcript of a student's cumulative academic record is available from the Registrar's Office upon written request. Transcripts will not be issued for students who are in financial arrears.

Provisions relating to student records, access to them, and safeguards on their use are in the *Student Handbook*.

First-Year Student Warnings

In the middle of each semester, instructors report to the Registrar those first-year students whose grades at that time are unsatisfactory. The students and their academic advisors receive notices of warnings as a matter of routine. The Dean's Office may inform parents of students who receive two or more warnings.

Extensions of Deadlines

Deadlines for course work are set by the instructor with the following limitations:

- ◆ for courses *with final exams*, the latest that written work may be due is 5:00 p.m. on the last day of reading period.
- ◆ for courses *without final exams*, the latest that written work may be due is 5:00 pm. on the third-to-last day of the exam period.

If work is due before these deadlines, the instructor *may* grant an extension up to these deadlines solely at his or her discretion. Short extensions beyond these deadlines may be granted by a dean but only with the concurrence of the instructor. No extensions will be granted beyond the examination period except in the case of serious illness.

Instructors may require students who have missed announced quizzes or hour tests to present satisfactory explanations to a dean before they are permitted to make up the exercises.

If a student is absent from a final examination, a make-up examination may be given only with the permission of a dean and at a time determined by the dean.

Deficiencies

A student receives credit for a course by obtaining a grade of at least *D minus*. A student may not repeat a course for which degree credit has been awarded. If the student fails a course, he or she must make up the deficiency.

If a failure occurs in the first semester of a full-year course, the student may, with the consent of the instructor, continue the course and receive credit for the second semester only. If a failure occurs in the second semester of a full-year course, credit for passing the first semester may be retained only with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing.

A senior who incurs a failure in the first semester in a required major course may be dropped from the College at midyear.

Normally deficiencies can be made up only by courses taken after the deficiencies have been incurred.

A student must make up a deficiency in one of these ways:

- 1) obtain a grade of at least *C minus* in a summer school course, approved in advance by the Registrar, at a regionally accredited four-year college or university; (The grade will not, however, be included in the calculation of the student's cumulative grade point average.)
- 2) pass an extra graded course at Williams in the semester following the failure;
- 3) in the case of a first-semester failure of a year-long language course, obtain a grade of at least a *C minus* in the work of the second semester of that course. The failure for the first semester will, however, remain on the student's record and will be included in the cumulative grade point average.

A deficiency must normally be made up before the start of the following academic year, or in the case of a deficiency incurred in the spring semester, no later than the following fall semester. A student may, in consultation with the Dean's Office, petition the Committee on Academic Standing with an alternate plan.

Separation for Low Scholarship

It is the policy of Williams College not to permit a student to remain in residence after it has become evident that he or she is either unable or unwilling to maintain reasonable standards of academic achievement. At the end of each term, the Committee on Academic Standing reviews all academic records that fail to meet the following minimum academic requirements:

For first-year students: *Three* grades of *C minus* or better and no failures each semester, and *at least Perfunctory Pass* on the Winter Study Project

For upperclass students: *Four* grades of *C minus* or better each semester, and *at least Perfunctory Pass* on the Winter Study Project

Students whose records fail to meet these minimum academic requirements or whose records otherwise fail to show adequate progress may receive an academic reminder, be placed on academic probation, or be required to resign.

Students who are required to resign from the College for academic reasons are normally not permitted to return for at least one year from the date of their resignation. A student who has been required to resign from the College may petition the Committee on Academic Standing through the Dean for reinstatement on two conditions only: all deficiencies must have been made up and a letter submitted to the Committee that offers convincing evidence that the student is ready and able to complete work toward a degree at Williams without further interruption.

When required to resign, students must vacate their rooms promptly. Financial aid students must also see the Director of Financial Aid before leaving to discuss loan repayment and renewal of aid in the event of readmission.

A student who fails to meet minimum academic standards in his or her final semester at Williams may be required by the Committee on Academic Standing to meet them by earning grades of at least *C minus* elsewhere before the B.A. will be awarded. If such work is required, it must be completed within three years unless stipulated otherwise, and the courses must be approved in advance by the Registrar.

Withdrawal from the College in Good Standing

Students may request personal leaves of absence from a dean and, if granted, withdraw from the College. Such time away, often as a period of reassessment and self evaluation, can prove to be beneficial educationally. A withdrawal in good standing may be granted for not less than one semester and not more than three years. Students who withdraw in good standing are readmitted with the approval of the Dean's Office and are expected to complete the degree without further interruption.

Students may request permission from a dean to withdraw at any time. If a student is granted a personal leave of absence after the semester begins, but before the end of the drop/add period, the transcript will list the date of withdrawal as the day before the term began. If a personal leave is granted after the end of the drop/add period, but before the end of the eighth week of the semester, the transcript will list the date of withdrawal, but the semester will not count toward the maximum of eight allowed to complete the degree. If a personal withdrawal is allowed after the eighth week of the semester, the transcript will list the date of withdrawal and the courses in progress, each with a W; the semester will normally count toward the maximum of eight allowed to complete the degree and the student will incur deficiencies that must be made up before returning to the College.

Refunds

Payment refund or credit in the event of withdrawal is described [here](#).

Eligibility for and Completion of Majors

To be eligible for any major, students must have received grades of *C minus* or better in each course in the major taken in the first two years of college and *Honors* or *Pass* on any Winter Study Project taken in the major department or program. A senior may enter a major only upon the approval of the department chair and the Committee on Academic Standing.

All semester courses in the major must be taken on a regularly graded basis. In addition to passing each major course and, where required, a major Winter Study Project, the student must maintain an average in the major of 1.67 or higher. Seniors who have an average below 1.67 in the major field normally will not be allowed to continue. A senior who receives a grade of E in the first semester of a required major course may be dropped from the College at mid-year. A student who falls below these standards may continue in the major only with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing.

A senior major exercise is not required by every department but is by some. All departments requiring such an exercise specify it as such in the description of their major programs in the "Courses of Instruction" section, and all students in those departments must complete the exercise satisfactorily.

Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A student is eligible to represent the College in any athletic, dramatic, literary, or musical event and be in the student government, or other organization as a member, substitute, or officer, unless he or she is declared ineligible:

- 1) by the Dean;
- 2) by vote of the Discipline Committee; or
- 3) by vote of the Committee on Academic Standing because of a dangerously low record.

The Student Honor Committee may recommend to the Dean loss of eligibility as a penalty for a violation of the Honor Code.

Dean's List

All students who attain a semester average of 3.50 or higher in a program of four or more courses are placed on the Dean's List for that semester.

Phi Beta Kappa Society

Students of the highest academic standing are eligible for election to membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Society in accordance with the following rules:

1) The requirements for election to membership shall be a grade point average of 3.3 and *Honors* or *Pass* in all required Winter Study Projects. There shall be two elections of new members for each class, at the end of the junior and senior years.

2) At the end of the junior year, all students in the highest five percent of the class, ranked by cumulative grade point average, shall be eligible for election provided they have met the requirements and have completed enough courses to be considered candidates for the B.A. degree in the following year. A student who leaves Williams at the end of the junior year to attend graduate school may be elected under the above procedures.

At the end of the senior year, all students not yet elected and in the highest 12.5 per cent of the class, ranked by cumulative grade point average, shall be eligible for election provided they have met the requirements.

3) Students shall be eligible for election only if they have been students at Williams College for at least two years.

4) Honorary members may be elected from distinguished alumni of at least twenty years' standing. No more than one such member shall be elected each year.

5) Any student who shall have gained his or her rank by unfair means or who in the judgment of the Dean of the College is not of good moral character is ineligible to election.

6) The name of a member elect shall be entered on the roll only after he or she has accepted the election and has paid to the Treasurer the regular entrance fee.

7) Any undergraduate member who withdraws from the College before graduation or who falls short of the minimum Phi Beta Kappa scholastic standing may, upon a two-thirds vote of the members present at the annual meeting, be deprived of membership in the society.

- 8) Any undergraduate member who is expelled from the College shall be deprived of membership in the Society.
- 9) While connected with Williams College as an officer of instruction or administration, any graduate of Williams College who is a member of another chapter of Phi Beta Kappa shall be considered a regular member of the Williams chapter.
- 10) While connected with Williams College as professor, associate professor or assistant professor, or an officer of administration, any member of another chapter of Phi Beta Kappa shall have all the privileges of the Williams chapter, including holding office and voting. While connected with Williams College, any other officer of instruction or administration who is a member of another chapter shall have all the privileges of the Williams chapter, except holding office and voting.

Awarding of Degrees

By vote of the Trustees, the degree of Bachelor of Arts is conferred at Commencement upon students who have completed the requirements as to courses and grades to the satisfaction of the Faculty. The right to a degree may, however, be forfeited by misconduct at any time prior to the conferring of the degree. No degree *in absentia* will be conferred except by special vote of the Trustees on petition presented to the Dean. Diplomas will not be authorized for students who have not paid College charges or have not returned all books belonging to the library.

Graduation with Distinction

The Faculty will recommend to the Trustees that the degree of Bachelor of Arts with distinction be conferred upon those members of the graduating class who have passed all Winter Study Projects and obtained a four-year average in the top:

- 35% of the graduating class — Bachelor of Arts *cum laude or higher*
- 15% of the graduating class — Bachelor of Arts *magna cum laude or higher*
- 2% of the graduating class — Bachelor of Arts *summa cum laude*