

How to Raise Your QPA



Everyone wants to graduate with the highest possible QPA. A good QPA can open doors to better jobs and careers or entrance into professional or graduate school. Here's a quick explanation of how a QPA works and what you can do to make sure you achieve a QPA that makes you proud. We'll look at how QPA's are computed and what they mean, see the importance of Freshman year in establishing a strong QPA, and learn some tricks to raising your QPA at Lynchburg College.

Understanding the Grading Alphabet and QPA math

Grades at Lynchburg College are notes with the letters A through F with additional plus or minus designations. The grades represent a 4-point scale. A, the highest grade, stands for 4 quality points (or grade points); F, the lowest grade, stands for 0 quality points. Often, students will say "I have a 3.0 g.p.a." This means, I have a B average. A complete explanation of the letter and quality-point based system is contained in the college catalogue.

Since each course is counted as having a certain number of credit hours, with most courses having 3 credit hours, but some having 1, 2 or 3 credit hours, each course has a different weight, or a different number of quality points. For instance, a 3-credit course in which a student received an A would have 3 (hours) x 4 (quality points) or a weight of **12 quality points**. A 2-credit course in which a student received an A could have 2 (hours) x 4 (quality points) or a weight of **8 quality points**. A student's quality point average for a given semester is computed by dividing the number of quality points earned by the number of semester hours undertaken. The following illustrates the computation of a semester point average:

Course	Semester Hours	Grade	Quality Points
English 111	3	A-	11.1
Sociology 100	3	B-	8.1
English 111	3	A-	11.1
Biology 111	4	B+	13.2
French 101	3	D+	3.9
History 101	3	A	12.0
HMSR 141	3	C	2.0
Total	17	(total undertaken)	50.3

Even though the math is easy, some students prefer to work with a QPA calculator. Here are links to two different QPA calculators. Decide which one you prefer!

<http://www.laurasmidiheaven.com/Tools/QPACalculator.shtml>

<http://www.iastate.edu/~registrar/info/QPAcalc.html>

Students have two kinds of QPA's. One is a **semester quality point average**. As the name implies, it is the average of all the courses a student takes each semester. The other is a **cumulative quality point average**. It shows the average of all the courses the student has taken so far. Here's an example of a Lynchburg College academic summary showing both semester and cumulative quality point averages.

1st Semester			
ART 110	INTRO TO VISUAL ARTS	3.0	B+
SPAN 102	ELEMENTARY SPANISH	3.0	C+
ENGL 111	COMPOSITION I	3.0	B-
G S 105	CAREER DEVELOPMENT	1.0	S
HIST 101	HIST OF CIVILIZATION	3.0	B
G S 104	STUDY STRATEGIES	1.0	S
G S 100	FRESHMAN SEMINAR	1.0	S
Hrs att 12.0 (15.0) QP 33.90 QPA 2.82			
2nd Semester			
ENGL 112	COMPOSITION II	3.0	C+
HIST 102	HIST OF CIVILIZATION	3.0	A
MATH 106	LIBERAL ARTS MATH	3.0	D+
BUAD 100	PERSPECTIVES ON BUS	3.0	B
Hrs att 12.0 QP 31.80 QPA 2.65			
Hrs att passed QP QPA			
LC Graded	24.0	24.0	65.70 2.73
LC Passed	-----	3.0	----- ----
TOTAL	24.0	27.0	65.70 2.73

This student is a freshman who has completed 4 three-hour graded courses each semester. And 3 additional one-hour ungraded courses fall semester. The first semester, she received a semester **QPA of 2.82, a B- average**. The second semester, she received a **QPA of 2.65, a C+ average**. This gave her a cumulative **QPA of 2.73, or a B- average** for her freshman year.

The Freshman Year advantage

As you know, the QPA is the number of quality points earned divided by the number of hours undertaken. The fewer hours a student has, the more each hour counts towards the QPA. Compare these two first-semester freshman averages to see how this works.

Average I

3 ENGL 111 B
 3 MATH 106 B
 3 HIST 101 B
 2 HPE 102 B

Average II

3 ENGL 111 B
 3 MATH 106 B
 3 HIST 101 B
 2 HPE 102 B

3 COMM 101 A

3.2 QPA, a B+ average

A grade in **one course** made the difference between an entire letter grade on 12 hours.

3 COMM 101 F

2.3 QPA, a C+ average

But now, let's see what difference a course can made for a Senior with a lot of credit hours. Let's compare these two averages for a student who has already accumulated 100 credit hours with a B average in 3 years at LC:

Average I

3 CRSE 401 B

3 CRSE 402 B

3 CRSE 403 B

2 G S 435 B

3 CRSE 404 A

3.0 QPA on 114 hours

Average II

3 CRSE 401 B

3 CRSE 402 B

3 CRSE 403 B

2 G S 435 B

3 CRSE 404 F

2.9 QPA on 114 hours

The difference between an A and an F only made the difference of **1/10 of a quality point** in this senior's average.

It's almost impossible to raise your QPA as a Senior if you are not working from a solid base of success. **The quality point average you make as a freshman is crucial to your success for all four years in college.**

Two Tricks for Maintaining and Raising Your QPA

If you do poorly in a course, it will affect your QPA. But the ***Repetition of Courses*** policy can help you raise your QPA. Here's how it works:

If a student repeats a course at Lynchburg, only the most recent grade will be considered in the calculation of the cumulative quality point average. Repeated courses are indicated on the grade transcript with a suffix of R on the original grade, for example: "FR," "DR," etc. In the event the grade of F is received in the repetition of a course previously passed, the quality points will be lost, though the previously established credit will remain. If a student fails a course more than once, the previous grades of F will be disregarded in computing the cumulative average. No additional credit may be granted for a repeated course.

Here's an example of how it can raise your QPA. A student failed two courses his freshman year and ended up with a QPA of 1.5.

3 ENGL 111 F
3 COMM 101 F
3 MATH 106 B
<u>3 SOCI 101 B</u>
1.5 Semester QPA
on 12 hours

The student was advised to repeat his 6 hours of failed courses in the spring. He also took 6 hours of new courses for a total of 12 hours in the spring. When he repeated the courses, he got grades of C in them and he got grades of B in the new coursework. Here's what happened to his QPA as a result:

Fall Semester

3 ENGL 101 FR

3 COMM 101 FR

3 MATH 106 B

3 SOCI 100 B

***3.0 Semester QPA
on 6 hours***

Spring Semester

3 ENGL 101 C

3 COMM 101 C

3 ART 110 B

3 BUAD 100 B

***2.5 Semester QPA
on 12 hours***

**2.6 Cumulative
QPA
on 18 semester**

Repeating courses you did poorly in at LC will raise your cumulative QPA. You must repeat the courses at Lynchburg College (not at another college) for this policy to take effect.

Pass/fail courses at Lynchburg College are a good way for a Junior or Senior to raise or maintain a cumulative QPA. Pass/Fail. Eligibility for P/F courses is based on:

1. Specific designation as P/F on course listing (school decision);
2. Elective status not being used to satisfy General Education, major, or minor requirements;
3. Junior standing;
4. Limit of two courses per semester;
5. Limit of four P/F grades; and
6. Submission of specific form, signed by faculty advisor, to Registrar's Office by the end of the fourth week of the semester.

Students are expected to meet the same standards as graded students. A failure is recorded as an F and is computed in the quality point average. P grades are not assigned quality points but are counted in total hours.

The instructor is not told of a student's enrollment under the P/F option and reports a regular letter grade. **The student may opt for the letter grade at a specified minimum level.**

To make the most of the Pass/Fail option, Juniors and Seniors should look at their cumulative QPA before deciding what letter to grade to opt for. If a student has a QPA of 3.0 or better, the student should opt for a grade of B or better in the course. That way, if the student gets a B or better, the QPA will be maintained or raised. But if the student gets between a C+ and a D-, the cumulative QPA will not be affected. **Of course, if a student fails a Pass/Fail course, the failing grade will count and will affect the student's QPA!**