

## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

### ACADEMIC LOAD

A full-time graduate student's academic load is nine or more credit hours per semester. No student carrying fewer than nine credit hours of work per semester will be classified as a full-time graduate student.

### BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The values and attitudes that should guide student behavior consistent with maintaining an environment conducive to learning are set forth in the Lynchburg College catalogue and *The Hornet*. Responsibility and authority for maintaining order in the learning environment are assigned to faculty.

The following standards and procedures apply to all learning environments. However, each School and each instructor may have codes to specify additional standards suitable for learning environments or activities.

No student in Lynchburg College classes, laboratories, performances, lectures, and/or organizations shall behave in any way that obstructs or disrupts the normal functioning of the environment. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, behaviors that persistently or grossly (1) inhibit the ability of other students to learn; (2) interfere with the meaningful participation of other students; or (3) inhibit the ability of an instructor or presenter to do his/her job. Specifically, students should foster an optimal learning environment by doing the following:

- Arriving on time.
- Being seated when it is time to begin and being attentive throughout.
- Refraining from engaging in conversations with others unless participating in group activities
- Using courteous tone when speaking.
- Refraining from leaving the event while it is in progress (except for illness or with prior approval).
- Treating others with respect.
- Refraining from eating.
- Respecting the process of discussion and group activity
- Leaving the facility in a neat and clean condition.

Problem behavior may be identified through direct observation by a faculty or staff member or through a complaint brought by a student to a faculty or staff member. Policies concerning violations of the Behavioral Standards for Learning Environments are provided in *The Hornet*.

### CHANGING DEGREE PROGRAMS

Students who wish to change from one master's degree program to another must submit a new degree application (unless changing between counselor education programs). No application fee will be charged. New required information relates only to the specific requirements applicable to the program not previously included

in the initial application (e.g., interview for counselor education applicants). Students who have been inactive from their first program for more than two years should submit three new recommendations relevant to the new program. Applications for all students seeking to make a degree change will be reviewed for admission based on the particular requirements of the program they are seeking, as well as their prior graduate academic record at Lynchburg College.

### CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance, preparation for classes, and the prompt completion of assignments are obvious responsibilities expected of students. Each instructor will inform students of the attendance policies in effect for each class. A statement about attendance policy will comprise a portion of the course syllabus.

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS AND CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES

All graduate programs require a capstone experience to assess student success within the program. A written comprehensive examination is required in most M.Ed. programs. It is an alternative to the School Leaders Licensure Assessment in the M.Ed. in educational leadership program, the portfolio in the M.Ed. in reading program, the National Board Certification process in the M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction program, the national exam in counseling, and the thesis in the M.A. in history program. The examination, which should be taken at the end of the graduate program, is given three times each year on the first Saturday of November, the third Saturday of March (unless in conflict with Easter weekend), and the last Saturday of June. Students must apply to take the exam at least three weeks prior to the examination date. Application forms are available in the Office of Graduate Studies. Students pursuing the M.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling must take and pass the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (national exam).

Students pursuing the M.A. in music will complete a comprehensive exam inclusive of written and oral components. Further information is available from the program director.

The M.S.N. program embeds final assessment components into the practica, and no comprehensive exam is required.

The M.A. in English program requires the thesis.

The comprehensive exam for the students in the DPT program is described in program syllabi.

For the Ed.D. program, a written comprehensive exam is required. The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to reflect on doctoral studies and experiences and to document the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the area of leadership.

### DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ED.D.

The following principles serve as a foundation for the Ed.D. in leadership studies dissertation:

1. **Research should be organized around highly challenging problems** embedded in the day-to-day work of institutions. Successful problem-solving begins with a working map of the elements that comprise the problem, the multiple pathways toward solutions, and an integrating framework for forming a coherent field of improvement activity.
2. **Researchers need to work in close collaboration with other practitioners** from the beginning. The full range of stakeholders must be involved in solving organizational problems.
3. **Openness is fundamental.** A participatory culture is essential. This means involving others in helping to solve specific problems. It also means promoting the exchange and development of powerful practices.
4. **Innovations must be linked to a local context.** It is not sufficient to know that a program or innovation can work. Students need to know how to make it work reliably within local organizations.
5. **An evidence-based practice must discipline the enterprise.** Continuous improvements require measuring key components that contribute to improved performance. This rigorous system of measures must be guided by a working theory about how various instructional processes, organizing routines, and cultural norms interact to affect desired outcomes.

While the dissertation may include qualitative or quantitative research techniques and strategies, elements of action research may also be included.

#### **DROPPING OR ADDING COURSES**

A student who wishes to drop or add a course or change to audit (i.e., attend without credit) must obtain the appropriate form from the Office of the Registrar. For the change to be effective, the signature of the advisor and instructor must be obtained, and the form must be filed with the Registrar's Office within the specified time periods (stated below). If illness or extenuating circumstances preclude a student from personally processing a change form, the Office of the Registrar will process the change when notified in writing of the request. The effective date of all changes is the date the schedule change form is received by the Registrar's Office. The grade of F is assigned for each course not completed and processed in this manner.

**Add Period:** Prior to the completion of the sixth day of class of the semester, schedule conflicts should be resolved and courses added.

**During First Three Weeks:** Courses dropped during the first three weeks do not become part of the student's permanent record. An administrative fee of \$5 will be charged for each student-initiated section or course change made after the Add Period. A student who wishes to audit a course (i.e., attend without credit) should apply to the Office of the Registrar. Overload fees are determined on the basis of enrollment at the end of this period.

**After Completion of Three Weeks–Before Expiration of Ten Weeks:**

The grade of W will be assigned for all courses dropped during this period. A course is dropped only when the procedure outlined above is followed. A student may change from credit to audit during this period.

**After Ten Weeks–Until the End of the Semester:** A student may not withdraw from a course or change from credit to audit during this period. Students who withdraw from the College or are suspended after the tenth week of the semester are assigned grades for all classes (either W or F). These grades become part of the student record and are used to determine semester and/or cumulative QPA in the same manner as if the student had completed the semester.

**DPT Add–Drop Policy:** Because the doctor of physical therapy program is only available for enrollment on a cohort basis, students cannot drop or add individual courses during any semester.

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

The giving of a final exam is optional; however, when a final examination is not given, an alternative assessable exercise or assignment appropriate to the nature of the course is given. In either event, the relative importance of the examination, exercise, or assignment in determining the total course grade lies with the instructor.

**GRADING SYSTEM**

Grades for graduate work are A (4.0), A- (3.7), B+ (3.3), B (3.0), B- (2.7), C+ (2.3), C (2.0), or F (0). All grades represent passing work except F. In the School of Education and Human Development, a grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) will be assigned to internships in the counseling program. Final grades are given at the end of each semester and are distributed to all students.

The grades used to indicate the quality of a student's work are relative, not absolute; their significance varies according to the level, the objectives, the materials, and the procedures of a given course. Instructors are guided by the following definitions in evaluating the achievement of their students.

- A The grade of A is awarded for excellence. According to the nature of the course, the grade may indicate one or more of the following: deep and extensive scholarly mastery of the material, genuine critical thought, clear insight into problems and understanding of values involved, notable originality and creativity, and unusual distinction in the acquisition of appropriate skills.  
(Quality points per semester hour: A+, 4.0; A, 4.0; A-, 3.7)
- B The grade of B indicates that the student's work, while not excellent, is distinguished in many ways. The work shows a depth of understanding of content and proficiency in skills and it indicates initiative, enthusiasm,

and creative thought.

(Quality points per semester hour: B+, 3.3; B, 3.0; B-, 2.7)

- C The grade of C indicates minimally passing work for an individual course. Only one course with a grade of C+ or below may count toward graduation.  
(Quality points per semester hour: C+, 2.3; C, 2.0)
  
- E The grade of E, conditional failure, may be assigned to a student who fails a final examination or does not satisfactorily complete assigned work and where failure to achieve minimal objectives is sufficiently limited to warrant a reasonable expectation of success through re-examination or through completion of assigned work. The E counts as an F in computing the semester and cumulative quality point average until such time as it is removed. A student has until the end of the first two weeks of the following semester to remove a grade of E. If not removed within that time, an E automatically becomes an F.
  
- F The grade of F signifies that the student's work is below the minimum standard and that the student has failed to pass the course. In computing quality point averages, failed courses are counted as work undertaken, but no credit and no quality points are awarded.
  
- I Work incomplete. The grade will be assigned in a course only for reasons of illness or other unavoidable conditions acceptable to the instructor. A student will be granted a reasonable time, not later than the end of the semester immediately following (excluding summer session), in consultation with the instructor, to remove an Incomplete grade. Any I grades remaining at the end of that following semester will become F. "I" grades must be removed prior to graduation.
  
- IP In Progress. The grade of IP may be given in courses when an extension of time is justified. The student will be granted a reasonable time, not later than the end of the semester immediately following (excluding summer session), in consultation with the instructor, to remove an In Progress grade. The IP grade for the M.A. thesis (i.e., HIST 690, ENGL 699) must be replaced within one month of assignment. Any IP grades remaining at the end of that following semester will become F grades. IP grades must be removed prior to graduation.
  
- L Late Grade. The grade of L is given when a faculty member is unable to submit a grade to the Office of the Registrar during the designated time period.

- S/U Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. In certain designated courses in which regular letter grades are not appropriate (including the M.A. thesis and Ed.D. dissertation courses), grades of S and U may be given. No quality points are given for an S, but in computing quality point averages, a grade of U is counted as work undertaken and treated as an F.
- W Withdrew. The grade of W is given after the first three weeks and within the first ten weeks of a semester if a student drops a course with the written consent of the advisor, the instructor, and the vice president and dean for academic affairs or registrar. The course is not counted as work undertaken.

### GRADE REVIEW

The principle of academic freedom gives an instructor broad discretion in establishing goals for a course, the criteria by which student achievement is to be assessed, and making decisions about the student's accomplishment according to those criteria. Thus, except in unusual circumstances, an instructor's decision about a grade may not be overruled. A student may, of course, request that his or her instructor review a grade for any required work in a course.

A student who believes that a final grade is in error should first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student fails to persuade the instructor, the student may submit a written appeal within three weeks after the grade notifications are provided by the Office of the Registrar to the dean of the School in which the course is listed in the catalogue. The School dean, in turn, will designate a review committee. The committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the vice president and dean for academic affairs who will notify the instructor and the student, in writing, of the decision. Other than the course instructor, only the vice president and dean for academic affairs may change a grade. (Detailed procedures are available from School deans and the Office of the Dean of the College.)

### GRADUATION

All requirements for completion of a graduate degree or a graduate certificate program, including any courses accepted by transfer, must be completed within a period of six calendar years. All certificate program students must complete the online program survey prior to graduation.

**Application to graduate:** All students are required to complete an Application for Graduation form prior to registration for the final year (two semesters) of enrollment. This policy is intended to ensure that the student will complete requirements yet to be fulfilled.

January, May, and August degree candidates are eligible to participate in the May commencement exercises of the academic year in which they complete their degree requirements.

## INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Independent Study courses allow capable students an opportunity to pursue interests that are not available in courses for a given program. Special registration forms with the signature of the student, instructor, program director, and associate dean for academic affairs must be completed prior to beginning an independent study and by the end of the add period.

## INTERNSHIPS

Students enrolled in graduate programs that require field experiences must make application for internships. Applications for graduate internships must be submitted to the School of Education and Human Development office prior to February 1 for the fall semester and September 15 for the spring semester.

Internships for the DPT program are described in the DPT Student Handbook.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A student may obtain a leave of absence from the College for personal reasons such as work obligations, illness, to study abroad, or to complete an internship. To request a leave of absence for non-medical reasons, a student should speak with his/her academic advisor and submit a completed leave of absence form to the dean of graduate studies. To request a medical leave of absence, a student should follow the procedures described in the section below (“Medical Leave of Absence”).

If a leave of absence begins while a semester is in progress, grades will be assigned for that semester according to the normal policy governing withdrawal from courses. Refund of fees will be made in accordance with the refund policy.

Students granted a leave of absence need not apply for readmission to the College. To ensure that their enrollment is reactivated, students on leave should register for classes for the semester they plan to return to LC at the first opportunity made available by the Office of the Registrar. If the date of return needs to be changed, the student must submit a written request for an extension of leave to the dean of graduate studies.

Because the DPT program is based on a cohort model, students seeking a leave of absence would likely need to fall back into the next cohort (i.e., sit out for one year). Any instances necessitating a leave of absence will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be addressed by the student with the program director at his or her earliest opportunity.

**Medical leave of absence:** If a student needs to withdraw from the College for health reasons, he/she should contact the director of Health and Counseling Services at 434.544.8616 to request a medical leave of absence and to provide medical documentation supporting the request. If a medical leave of absence begins while a semester is in progress, grades will be assigned for that semester according to the normal policy governing withdrawal from courses. Refund of fees will be made in accordance with the refund policy. Students who are academically eligible to continue enrollment for the next semester do not have to apply for re-admission;

their enrollment is automatically activated for the semester they plan to return.

**Military leave of absence:** Students who are called to military service during the semester will be placed on Military Leave of Absence and receive 100 percent refund of the tuition for that semester.

Students will receive one of the following marks at the end of the semester, depending on their individual situations:

1. I (for incomplete);
2. a letter grade; or
3. W (for withdrawn)

Students will normally receive a grade of I and the ten-week withdrawal period will be suspended. Incomplete grades will be continued beyond one semester as conditions warrant and must be completed within one year after the student returns from service.

Faculty will submit these I grades to the registrar fully documenting the following:

- the individual and cumulative grades to date;
- the remaining requirements necessary for completion of the course; and
- possibilities for computation of a final grade.

A copy of this documentation should also be on file with the School dean.

For instances in which the major work of the course is completed at the time of deployment, the faculty member may provide an appropriate grade for the student. In the case of course withdrawals, the student will receive a grade of W.

## QUALITY POINT AVERAGES

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.

## REPETITION OF COURSES

If a student repeats a course at Lynchburg College, 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," and "CR." In the event the grade of F is received in 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.

Since credit is not given twice for the same course, out-of-residence repetition of a course originally passed at Lynchburg College has the effect of increasing the hours required for graduation by that number of hours.

The above policy does not apply to courses repeated after the degree has been granted.

## RETENTION IN THE PROGRAM: ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A quality point average of 3.0 (B) is required for graduation for all graduate programs. Only one course with a grade of C+ or below will count toward degree

requirements. Any master's degree student earning more than three hours with grades of C+ or below will be suspended from the program for a minimum of one semester. The same standards apply to students in the Ed.D. program (in terms of doctoral courses and cognate courses) and in the graduate certificate programs.

A student in counseling receiving a grade of C+ or below in any two courses will be dismissed from the program, with the option to appeal to the counseling faculty (per the ACA Code of Ethics Sections C.2.g and F.9.a-b and the CACREP accreditation Standard I.P.).

Retention in the DPT program requires that students maintain an acceptable grade point average of 3.0 or greater or be placed on Academic Probation. Academic Probation is a serious matter and must be corrected for a student to be eligible for graduation. For remedies involving Academic Probation and retention, please refer to the DPT Student Handbook.

**Appeal of suspension:** If a student believes that extenuating circumstances make suspension unwarranted, he/she may file a written appeal documenting those circumstances with the associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The appeal must provide evidence that supports the student's position, and it must reflect a plan developed in conjunction with the academic advisor for enhanced academic performance.

**Reapplication after suspension:** A student who has been suspended may apply for readmission to the College after one semester. In such cases, the student must demonstrate an improvement in achievement and/or motivation suggesting that he/she will be able to meet the academic standards of the graduate program at the College. A suspended student may not enroll at Lynchburg College without having been formally readmitted. All students seeking readmission must consult with the applicable program director. To apply, the student seeking readmission shall complete a new degree application, include any new transcripts from other institutions (if applicable), include a statement reflective of plans for improved performance, and request that a letter be submitted by the former program director reflecting on the decision to readmit. Additional letters from other faculty members are optional. Once the file is complete, it will be reviewed by the dean of graduate studies and the director and faculty representatives from the student's program. The student will be informed of the decision. After a second suspension, a student is not eligible for readmission.

## TRANSFER CREDIT

Lynchburg College will accept up to six semester hours of equivalent graduate work transferred from other institutions (i.e., out-of-residency credit) into a graduate degree program. Transfer credits are subject to the following conditions:

- Acceptance of credits will depend on the appropriateness and applicability of credits to the degree program and on the comparability of the credit earned.
- Courses must be comparable to Lynchburg College course requirements or be acceptable as appropriate for the student's program of study. The graduate student must make this request in writing to the faculty advisor.
- Courses must have been completed at a regionally accredited institution.

- Courses must be fully acceptable and applicable to comparable degree programs at the offering institutions; however, transfer credit is not allowed for a course counted within a completed graduate degree program at another institution.
- Courses must be reflected on an official transcript that indicates regular disciplinary prefixes, graduate-level course numbers, and titles. An official transcript of the transfer course and a copy of the course description from the appropriate academic year catalogue must be submitted with the student's written request to the faculty advisor.
- Continuing education, professional development, and in-service courses are not transferable unless the course(s) is (are) fully acceptable and applicable to a comparable degree program at the offering institution.
- No course with a grade of C+ or below will be considered for transfer credit into any graduate degree programs.
- Any courses proposed for transfer credit, whether taken before or after admission to Lynchburg College, must receive the approval of the student's advisor, the dean of the specific academic school, and the dean of graduate studies. (A special form is provided for this purpose.)
- No transfer credit will be accepted for the doctoral level courses in the Ed.D. in leadership studies program.
- The transfer of courses into the DPT program is addressed on a case-by-case basis. No courses can be transferred into the program unless they were completed at an accredited DPT program at another institution.

**Out-of-residence study:** Completion of the Transfer Credit Request form (available from the Office of Graduate Studies) is required in advance for out-of-residence study, and approval must be obtained from the advisor, the dean of the School offering the program toward which the out-of-residence course is to apply, and the dean of Graduate Studies. Credit will not be allowed for courses with a grade of C or below. Out-of-residence coursework does not affect academic probation. Upon completion of courses taken out of residence, the student must have the official transcript sent directly to the Office of Graduate Studies. Courses offered at Lynchburg College are not approved for out-of-residence study during the same term at any other institution.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLEGE

A student withdrawing from the College must notify the College in writing. If withdrawal occurs during the semester, a withdrawal form is available from the Office of the Registrar. Grades will be assigned according to the operating policy governing withdrawal from courses. Refund of fees will be made in accordance with the refund policy.