

Academic Regulations

Credits and Academic Load

The normal academic course load for students taking courses in the fall and spring semester is 15–17 credits. The minimum full-time load for the fall and spring semester is 12 credit hours and the maximum full-time load is 18 credits. Students wishing to carry an academic load of more than 18 credits in the fall or spring semester must obtain approval from the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar in the Admissions Office.

Exception: 18 credits plus one credit for orientation does not require approval.

The normal academic course load for students in the summer semester is 8–10 credits. The minimum full-time load in the summer semester is 8 credits and the maximum load is 12 credits. Students wishing to carry an academic load of more than 12 credits in the summer semester must obtain approval from the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar in the Admissions Office.

Exception: 12 credits plus one credit for orientation does not require approval.

Approval to take credit loads above the normal levels are generally approved under the following circumstances:

1. Students with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above may take 19–21 credits in the fall and spring semester and 13–16 credits in the summer semester;
2. Students may take in excess of 18 but never more than 21 credits in the fall and spring semester, and 13 but never more than 16 credits in the summer semester when recommended by a counselor if they have demonstrated the ability to handle this load and special circumstances exist;
3. Transient students may take up to 21 credits in the fall and spring semester and 16 credits in the summer semester when recommended by the host college or university.

Upon recommendation by an advisor/counselor, students may be required to take less than the minimum full-time academic load if:

1. Students are on academic warning or probation;
2. Student placement test scores are low and developmental courses are recommended;
3. High school graduates with a GPA of 2.0 or less.

Placement Testing

All incoming students must take the college placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students who have earned certain SAT or ACT scores within the past three years and/or who present evidence of satisfactory performance in postsecondary courses in English and math at another college or university may be exempt from placement testing.

Placement test results are used to help plan the best sequence of classes to ensure a student's success in college. Results of placement tests may indicate the need to enroll in one or more courses in preparation for college-level coursework. Should placement tests results indicate the need for preparatory work, students **must** enroll in the specified developmental English or mathematics courses. Under these circumstances, developmental courses are considered to be prerequisites for college-level, credit courses in English and math. The college reserves the right to withdraw students from classes when the appropriate prerequisite courses have not been completed.

Prerequisites

Some college courses require prerequisites or co-requisites. These are requirements that must be completed first to provide a foundation for understanding of course content and the potential to complete a course successfully. Prerequisites and co-requisites are identified in the Description of Courses section of the catalog. Students may not enroll in courses for which they do not meet the prerequisites at the time the course begins. The college reserves the right to administratively drop a student from any course for which they have not met the prerequisites.

DEVELOPMENTAL MATHEMATICS REDESIGN

During the spring semester of 2012, Virginia Western Community College will implement a redesigned developmental mathematics program. This change will impact many of the curriculum admissions requirements and the prerequisite statements listed in

this catalog. For updated information regarding these changes and their impact on your selected program of study, please visit: <http://virginiawestern.edu/catalog/>.

SDV – Orientation

All curricular students, except those in career studies certificate programs, shall participate in an SDV course designed primarily to foster student success. This course should be completed within the first 15 credit hours of enrollment at the community college, unless the student is not required to complete an SDV course because it is waived. The requirement may be waived for students who hold an Associate Degree or Bachelors Degree from a regionally accredited institution. Other requests for a waiver may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students must still successfully complete the required number of credits for their degree. Each college is encouraged to offer a pre-enrollment orientation experience to enhance student success.

Grading System

The quality of performance in any academic course is reported by a letter grade, the assignment of which is the responsibility of the instructor. These grades denote the character of study and are assigned quality points as follows:

A Excellent 4 grade points per credit

B Good 3 grade points per credit

C Average 2 grade points per credit

D Poor 1 grade point per credit

F Failure 0 grade points per credit

I Incomplete: grade point credit. The "I" grade is to be used only for verifiable, unavoidable reasons that a student is unable to complete a course within the normal course time. To be eligible to receive an "I" grade, the student must (1) have satisfactorily completed more than 50% of the course requirements, and (2) must request the faculty member to assign the "I" grade and indicate why it is warranted. The faculty member has the discretion to decide whether the "I" grade will be awarded. Since the "incomplete" extends enrollment in the course, requirements for satisfactory completion shall be established through consultation between the faculty member and the student. In assigning the "I" grade, the faculty member will complete documentation that (1) states the reason for assigning the grade; (2) specify the work to be

completed and indicate its percentage in relation to the total work of the course; (3) specify the date by which the work must be completed; and (4) identify the default grade based upon course work already completed. Completion dates may not be set beyond the subsequent semester (including the summer term) without the written approval of the chief academic officer of the campus, or his designee. An "I" grade will be changed to a "W" only under documented, mitigating circumstances which must be approved by the chief academic officer of the campus, or his designee. NOTE: If the work is not completed by the last day of class of the subsequent semester, the student will be awarded the "default" grade. The default grade will be final.

P Pass: Credit earned but not included in grade point average. Applies to non-developmental studies courses, noncredit courses, orientation, and specialized courses and seminars at the discretion of the college. Up to seven credit hours for which the "P" has been awarded may be applied toward completion of a program. A grade of "P" may be used as a grading option with the permission of the Academic Dean.

S Satisfactory: No grade point credit; used only for satisfactory completion of a developmental studies course (numbered 01–09).

R Re-enroll: No credit. The student is making progress but the course objectives have not been completed; to be used only for developmental studies courses (numbered 01–09). Re-enrollment for the completion of course objectives may be required.

U Unsatisfactory: No credit. The student has not made satisfactory progress. Applies only to developmental studies courses (numbered 01–09), noncredit courses, orientation, specialized courses, and seminars at the discretion of the college.

W Withdrawal: No credit. A grade of "W" is awarded to students who withdraw or are withdrawn from a course after the drop period but prior to the completion of 60 percent of the session. (Withdrawal deadlines are published in the General Catalog and each term in the Schedule of Classes.) Students who cease attendance prior to the withdrawal deadline for a class will be reported to the Admissions Office and withdrawn from the class. Students who are dropped or withdrawn by the instructor for non-attendance, non-participation will not be reinstated unless instructor error is determined. After the withdrawal deadline, students will receive a grade of "F" if they stop attending class, unless they request and are granted an administrative withdrawal because of mitigating

and appropriately documented circumstances. Such requests should be submitted to and approved by the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar in the Admissions Office (via an Administrative Withdrawal form) during the term in which the discontinuance of attendance occurs. In addition, the instructor must sign the form indicating that the student had been making satisfactory progress in the course at the time of withdrawal.

X Audit: Students desiring to attend a course without taking the examination or receiving credit for the course may do so by registering to audit through the usual registration process and paying the normal tuition. Permission of the academic dean or another appropriate academic administrator is required to audit a course. Audited courses carry no credit and do not count as part of the student's course load. Students desiring to change status in a course from audit to credit or from credit to audit must do so within the add/drop period for the course. Students who desire to earn credit for a previously audited course must re-enroll in the course for credit and pay normal tuition to earn a grade other than "X". Advanced standing credit should not be awarded for a previously audited course.

Grade-Point Average

The grade-point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) by the number of credits attempted. Grades of I, P, R, U, S, W, and X are not included in the calculation of GPA.

Grade Changes

Once a grade has been awarded, it is normally permanent. In situations where there are documented, mitigating circumstances or an uncontested error, grade changes must be requested within one year of the receipt of the grade in question. (Note: For a contested grade, the student must follow the time line and steps outlined in the "Final Grade Appeal Procedure" in the College's Student Handbook. The following guidelines do not apply to contested grade changes.)

In order to request a grade change for mitigating circumstances or uncontested error, the first point of contact for the student must always be the instructor. If the instructor agrees that a grade change is warranted, the change will be submitted to the Academic Dean and the Registrar for approval.

If the matter was not satisfactorily resolved with the instructor and the student wishes to pursue the grade change, the student must then contact the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will attempt to mediate the grade change request with the faculty member and will notify the student of the decision. If the Academic Dean denies the student's grade change request, the student may then contact the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar for a third appeal. At this point, the student must complete a "Request for a Grade Change – Uncontested Grade" which can be obtained in the college Admissions and Records Office. If the Registrar does not approve the grade change, the final option is for the student to appeal the grade change through the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. The decision of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs is final.

Repeating a Course

Students will be allowed to enroll for the third time in a course without having to obtain approval from the Academic Dean and the Dean of Student Services or the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar when:

1. The course is a developmental course and the last grade is either a "W" or an "R."
2. The first two attempts in the course include one or more "W" grades.
3. The course is a non-developmental course and the last grade earned is a "D."

Except under the conditions cited above, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a course more than two times without the approval of the Academic Dean and the Dean of Student Services or the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar.

"W" and "I" grades are included when counting the number of course attempts.

Should the student request to enroll in the same course more than twice, the need must be documented and approved by the Academic Dean and Dean of Student Services or the Admissions and Records Coordinator/ Registrar. Quarter credit courses are exempt from the course repeat policy.

Students should consult with a counselor or faculty advisor before repeating a course for credit. All grades earned for all courses taken one or more times are indicated on the student's permanent record card, but only the last grade earned is used in calculating

the student's cumulative grade point average and for satisfying curricular requirements. This policy applies only to courses taken since summer 1994, and also to courses taken since the conversion to the semester system (summer 1988) and repeated since fall 1996. For further information regarding this policy change and how it may affect students, contact the Records Office.

Student Responsibility to Avoid Tuition Obligation Related to Dropping a Course

Students who enroll for courses after the official last date to pay for the term must pay their tuition at the time of enrollment. Failure to pay tuition does not guarantee that the student will be automatically dropped from the course. It is the student's responsibility to officially drop all unpaid courses prior to the begin date of the course. Failure to do so may cause the student's record to be incorrectly flagged with an outstanding financial obligation. Outstanding financial obligations will prevent enrollment for future terms.

Grade Forgiveness — Academic Renewal Policy

A student who has been separated from the college (not enrolled) for a period of at least five years (minimum of 60 months), and who earns at least a 2.5 grade point average for the first twelve credits completed after re-enrollment, may petition for "Academic Renewal." Academic Renewal may be granted only one time. Once granted, it cannot be revoked. With the granting of Academic Renewal, all grades of "D" and "F" earned prior to re-enrollment will be excluded from the student's grade point average. Excluded grades will still be shown on the student's transcript, and the notation of "Academic Renewal" will be printed on the transcript. Academic Renewal petition forms may be obtained from the Records Office and must be approved by the Admissions and Records Coordinator/Registrar. Students should be aware that any grade that has been forgiven will not count toward graduation requirements.

Attendance

Registration in a course presupposes that students will attend scheduled classes and laboratory sessions. When absence from a class becomes necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor

prior to the absence. Frequent unexplained absences may jeopardize the student's grade or may result in dismissal from a course.

The student is responsible for making up all work due to absence. If a student cannot take a test or final examination at the scheduled time, (s)he should contact the instructor prior to the test period. If (s) he is unable to reach the instructor, the division office should be contacted.

The policy on attendance and make-up examinations is generally the prerogative of each instructor. Instructors will provide students with a statement of their attendance policy during the first class meeting. When the number of unexcused absences reaches a sum equivalent to 30 percent of the total instructional time (e.g., five weeks in a 15-week course), the instructor will drop the student from class. (See explanation under "Grading System.") There is no refund of tuition or reinstatement in the course when an instructor has dropped a student for nonattendance.

No-Show Policy

Students must either attend their face-to-face courses or demonstrate participation in their distance learning courses by the last date to drop for a refund or they will be reported to the Admissions Office and withdrawn as no-show students. In this case, there will be no refund of tuition in the course, and the student will not be allowed to attend/participate in the class or submit assignments. Failure to attend or participate in a course will adversely impact a student's financial aid award.

Withdrawal Policy

Students who violate the attendance or participation guidelines for the course as of the withdrawal deadline will be reported to the Admissions Office and withdrawn with a grade of "W." Students who stop attending or participating in a course after the withdrawal deadline will receive a grade of "F." There will be no refund of tuition or reinstatement in the course. Financial aid recipients who receive all "W" or "F" grades in their courses will incur an outstanding tuition debt to the college and will be blocked from future enrollment.

Final Examinations

All students are expected to take final examinations at the regularly scheduled times. No exceptions are made without prior approval of the instructor and the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

Grade Reports

Final grades can be accessed via MyVWCC at the Virginia Western web site (www.viriniawestern.edu) after the end of each semester. Final grades are a part of the student's record and are recorded on the student's permanent report. Students should report a conflict in grade to their instructor within six weeks of the end of the semester in which the grade was given.

Academic Honors

At the end of each semester, the Dean's List is prepared, recognizing all regular full-time students who earned a grade point average between 3.2 and 3.4. Regular full-time students who earned a grade point average of 3.5 or better are placed on the President's Honor Roll. The college is not responsible for newspaper publicity of these lists.

Students who earn an associate degree or certificate from Virginia Western are eligible for graduation honors. However, students who earn a Career Studies certificate are not eligible for graduation honors. Appropriate honors based on the overall academic achievement (cumulative grade point average) at Virginia Western Community College are as follows:

- 3.2 Cum laude (with honor)
- 3.5 Magna cum laude (with high honor)
- 3.8 Summa cum laude (with highest honor)

Honor Society

Phi Eta is Virginia Western's local chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society that recognizes and encourages scholarship among two-year college students. It provides opportunity for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence. Invitations to join are extended to full- and part-time associate degree students who display academic excellence. Full-time degree students who have completed 12 credits must have a grade point average of 3.5 or better and part-time degree students must have earned 12 or more credit hours and have a 3.5 average or better. Invitations are usually extended in January.

Academic Standing

Students are considered to be "in good academic standing" if they maintain a semester minimum GPA of 2.00, are eligible to re-enroll at the college, and are not

on academic suspension or dismissal status. Students on academic warning or academic probation who are eligible to re-enroll may be considered eligible to receive financial aid assistance or other benefits requiring a "good academic standing" status.

Academic Warning

Students who fail to attain a minimum GPA of 2.00 for any semester shall be placed on academic warning. Students on academic warning should be encouraged to consult with their advisor and take advantage of academic support services provided by the college.

Academic Probation

Students who fail to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 1.50 will be on academic probation until such time as their cumulative average is 1.75 or better. The statement "Academic Probation" will be placed on their permanent records. Generally, a student on probation is ineligible for appointive or elective office in student organizations unless the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or his designee grants special permission. Students usually will be required to carry fewer credits than normal the following semester. Students on academic probation are required to consult with their probation counselors. Students shall be placed on probation only after they have attempted 12 semester credit hours.

Academic Suspension

Students on academic probation who fail to attain a semester GPA of 1.50 or better shall be placed on suspension only after they have attempted 24 semester credits. Academic suspension shall be for one semester. The statement "Academic Suspension" shall be placed on the students' permanent records. Students who are placed on academic suspension and wish to appeal should follow the appeal process established by the college. Suspended students may be reinstated at the conclusion of the suspension period by following the process established by the college. Students who have been reinstated from academic suspension must achieve a 2.00 GPA for the semester of their reinstatement and must earn at least a 1.75 GPA in each subsequent semester of attendance. The statement "Subject to Dismissal" shall be placed in the student's permanent records. Students who have been reinstated from academic suspension will remain subject to dismissal until their cumulative GPA is raised to a minimum of 1.75. Reinstated students may be required to carry less than a normal course load the

following semester and are required to consult with their advisor/counselor.

Academic Dismissal

Students who do not attain at least a 2.00 GPA for the semester of reinstatement following academic suspension shall be academically dismissed. Students who achieve at least a 2.00 GPA for the semester of their reinstatement following academic suspension must earn at least a 1.75 GPA in each subsequent semester of enrollment. Failure to attain a 1.75 GPA in each subsequent semester until the cumulative GPA reaches 1.75 shall result in academic dismissal. The statement "Academic Dismissal" shall be placed on the Students' permanent records. Academic

dismissal is normally permanent. In exceptional circumstances, students may appeal and be reinstated following processes established by the college. Students who have been reinstated after academic dismissal will remain subject to dismissal until their cumulative GPA is raised to a minimum of 1.75. Reinstated student may be required to carry less than normal course load the following semester and are required to consult with their advisor/counselor.

Suspension for Lack of Progress

Two or more consecutive terms of withdrawal from all classes without successful completion of any credit courses may subject a student to academic probation and/or suspension.

Academic Advising

A counselor ordinarily does initial freshman advising; however, each student in a curriculum of study is assigned to a faculty advisor consistent with the student's program of study. The faculty advisor will assist the student in selecting proper courses, interpreting curriculum requirements, and assessing academic progress. Students are encouraged to confer with their advisors on a regular basis during office hours. Students may locate the name of their faculty advisor on the Virginia Western Web site ([http://www.viriniawestern.edu/student life/get advising/find your faculty advisor.html](http://www.viriniawestern.edu/student%20life/get%20advising/find%20your%20faculty%20advisor.html)).

COMPASS Testing Guidelines

Students are limited to three attempts in a calendar year to take the COMPASS placement test. Students currently enrolled in developmental courses must wait until the end of the semester in which they are enrolled before they can retake the placement test for that subject area.

Why community college students should complete their associate degree before transferring

Graduation...

Increases the probability of acceptance by a four-year college or university.

Many senior institutions give transfer admissions priority to students who have completed an AA or AS degree. Some institutions even guarantee admission to transfer graduates.

Reduces the possibility of having to take additional general education courses at the senior institution.

State senior institutions grant transfer graduates upper division (junior) class standing and accept the general education courses completed in the associate degree as a package, equivalent to the lower-division general education requirements at the senior institution. Students who transfer without graduating cannot be assured that they have satisfied all of the general education requirements of the senior institution.

Can improve the likelihood of success.

Assessment data provided by four-year institutions consistently show that most graduates have better success rates than non-graduates.

Increases opportunities for scholarships.

Graduation is an eligibility requirement for many scholarships.

Provides significant tuition savings.

The cost of tuition for a full-time student at Virginia Western is about \$2,000. Tuition at a public four-year college in Virginia costs (on average) \$5,000 per year. Tuition at private colleges is substantially higher.