

# Grades

All grades are determined by the instructor in charge of the course. Grades are reported as follows:

## Grading Scale

A	high honor (reserved for very distinguished work)
B	very good work of much more than average quality
C	work of good average quality
D	work of the lowest quality that will enable the student to meet the standards of McPherson College
I	work is incomplete. This mark will be given only when the reason for the incomplete has been unavoidable, as determined by the instructor and the vice president for academic affairs
F	work that does not meet the standards of McPherson College
PS	a passing grade on the pass/fail system
FL	a failing grade on the pass/fail system
CR	credit granted
NC	no credit granted
W	withdrawal from a course
IP	in progress
AU	auditing (class attendance with no credit given)
NR	not reported

## Incompletes

The grade of I should be given only when there are unavoidable reasons the student has been unable to complete the work by the end of the term. When instructors give a grade of Incomplete, they must also submit an Incomplete Grade Form with an alternate grade. If a Change of Grade Form is not submitted by midterm of the following semester, the alternate grade becomes the student's final grade for the course.

## Pass/Fail Option

A student may take only one course per semester on a pass/fail basis. Students must declare this intention by the end of the second week of class. General education courses and courses required for the major may not be audited or taken pass/fail.

## Grade Points

Grade points are earned as follows:

A	4 grade points for each hour of credit
B	3 grade points for each hour of credit
C	2 grade points for each hour of credit
D	1 grade point for each hour of credit
F	0 grade points earned

## Grading Periods

Faculty report grades at three points in the fall and spring semesters:

- Faculty report D's and F's only at the end of the first five weeks. This is a preliminary grade intended to alert students and advisors to poor academic performance while there is time to address issues and get the student the help needed to be successful. Students making all C's or better do not receive a five-week grade report.
- All grades are reported at midterm, or half way through the semester. Midterm grades are preliminary and in no way indicate or guarantee similar grade at the end of the semester.
- Final grades are reported at the end of each term. These grades become a permanent part of a student's transcript unless a course is retaken to replace the previously earned grade. Unless the instructor miscalculates the grade or submits the wrong grade by mistake, final grades cannot be changed except through the Grade Appeal Process located in the catalog.

Because they are condensed into an intensive three-week period, Interterm courses do not report five-week or midterm grades.

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# Final Examinations

Most courses require final examinations. A final examination period during which no regular classes meet (usually four days) is scheduled at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Final examinations or, in some cases, an alternative learning experience or evaluation activity will be given during this period according to a final examination schedule approved by the Educational Policies Committee. Final examinations for Interterm and May Session courses are given during the last scheduled class meeting of the term.

Students who have three or more final exams scheduled on the same day of the final exam period may speak with the vice president for academic affairs about arranging with the involved faculty an alternative time for one or more of the finals. Students should not ask faculty to take their exams at a time other than the time approved by EPC for any reason other than extraordinary, unavoidable circumstances. Faculty have no obligation to give exams at a time other than the time approved by EPC, and approval of the vice president for academic affairs is necessary for them to do so.

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## Course Repeat Policy

With the approval of the vice president for academic affairs, students may repeat a course. The last grade earned will be the grade used to compute the grade-point average. Courses taken at other institutions may not be used to repeat courses taken at McPherson College.

Some courses, such as choir, band, music ensembles, and private lessons, may be repeated multiple times.

After completing one year of intercollegiate athletic competition, students may enroll in intercollegiate competition (PE 211-21 and PE 311-21) for 1 credit hour, but a maximum of 2 credit hours for intercollegiate competition will count toward graduation. Students who transfer credits are limited to 2 credit hours for intercollegiate competition.

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## Grade Appeal Procedure

A student who receives a final course grade that he or she believes is biased, capricious, erroneous, or unfair must first discuss the evaluation personally with the instructor who assigned the grade. Unless the instructor is permanently absent or the vice president for academic affairs advises otherwise, no formal grade appeal may begin until that conversation has taken place.

If a student, after discussing the matter with the instructor, still believes the recorded grade is unfair, he or she should consult with the vice president for academic affairs, who may attempt to resolve the issue by conferring with the student and instructor separately and informally.

If no resolution is achieved through the intervention of the vice president for academic affairs, the student may, with the written permission of the VPAA, appeal to a review committee established as follows:

- A member of the faculty selected by the student,
- A member of the faculty selected by the instructor involved,
- A member of a faculty selected either by the VPAA or the president of the college. (This member of the committee may be from another institution than McPherson College.)

The committee will determine the legitimacy of the student's grievance. If the student's grievance is found to be valid, the committee will recommend an alternative grade for record. Decisions of the review committee are final and not subject to further appeal.

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## Academic Honors

### Honor Rolls

At the end of fall and spring semesters, grade-point averages for the term will be calculated and an Honor Roll and Honorable Mention Roll compiled and published. Full-time students earning a GPA of 3.55 or higher will be placed on the Honor Roll. Students earning a GPA of 3.25 to 3.54 will be placed on the Honorable Mention Roll.

Students with an Incomplete reported for the term are ineligible for the honor rolls. Grade points earned by examination will not be included in the GPA to determine whether a student is on an honor roll.

## Honor Graduates

Students who have consistently achieved a high level of scholarship during their study at McPherson College will be graduated with honors. Honors are determined by calculating both the overall cumulative GPA and the cumulative GPA in the major area of study. The lower of those two GPAs determines the appropriate honor, as follows:

- Students earning a minimum grade-point average of 3.55 to 3.74 will be graduated *cum laude*.
- Students earning a minimum grade-point average of 3.75 to 3.89 will be graduated *magna cum laude*.
- Students earning a minimum grade-point average of 3.90 to 4.0 will be graduated *summa cum laude*.

Transfer students will be considered for graduation honors based on their work at McPherson College. The only exception to this shall be for persons who have participated in a study abroad program. These grades shall not be used in the calculation of honors.

Graduation honors for students with Incompletes or outstanding classes will be calculated after all work is completed.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

To remain in good academic standing at McPherson College, all students must make satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Academic SAP, as measured by McPherson College’s academic affairs office, is similar to, but distinct from, a student’s financial aid standing. An undergraduate student on academic warning or academic probation may also be, but is not necessarily, ineligible for financial aid. (See Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.)

## Undergraduate SAP Standards

The academic standing of an undergraduate student at McPherson College is measured by the student’s progress toward a degree within an optimum amount of time. This includes a qualitative measure (cumulative grade point average) and a quantitative measure (credit hours earned as a percentage of credit hours attempted).

## Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension Policies

Students are placed on academic warning or academic probation on the basis of the table below. Attempted hours include all postsecondary coursework attempted after completion of the high school degree, including failed coursework, repeated coursework, and coursework graded as incomplete. The cumulative grade point average used to determine a student’s academic standing includes only courses taken at McPherson College.

Hours attempted	QUALITATIVE		QUANTITATIVE <i>Hrs earned as % of hrs attempted</i>	
	Warning cum GPA	Probation cum GPA	Warning	Probation
0 - 15	1.70	1.50	85%	50%
16 - 31	1.75	1.60	85%	60%
32 - 46	1.85	1.70	85%	62%
47 - 62	1.95	1.80	85%	67%
63 - 77	<=2.00	1.85	85%	67%
78 - 93	<=2.00	1.90	85%	69%
94 - 108	<=2.00	1.95	85%	71%
109 - 124	<=2.00	<=2.00	85%	74%
125 - 139	<=2.00	<=2.00	85%	77%
140 - 155	<=2.00	<=2.00	85%	83%
156 - 170	<=2.00	<=2.00	85%	83%
171 - 186	<=2.00	<=2.00	85%	83%

Determinations of satisfactory academic progress are made immediately after the conclusion of fall and spring semesters. In some circumstances, an

individual student's academic progress may be re-evaluated at the end of summer terms or the January Interterm. Students who exceed measures listed in the Warning column for both the qualitative and the quantitative measures are considered in good academic standing. Students who are placed on academic probation or who are academically suspended will be notified within 30 days after grades are due from the faculty.

### **Warning**

Students placed on academic warning receive a letter notifying them of their tenuous academic situation, but academic warning imposes no particular conditions upon a student. Students on academic warning should avail themselves of the support services provided by the Center for Academic Development.

### **Probation**

Students placed on academic probation have one semester in which to raise both quantitative and qualitative satisfactory academic progress indicators above the probationary levels identified for their respective hours attempted in the table above. Students on academic probation will receive letters from the vice president for academic affairs informing them of their standing and stipulating conditions that must be met during the coming semester. These conditions may include mandatory enrollment in College Study Skills or appointments with a staff member of the Center for Academic Development, a limit upon the number of hours that can be attempted in the coming semester, and/or class attendance monitoring.

### **Suspension**

Students who fall below the qualitative and/or quantitative probation indicators for their respective attempted hours will be reviewed by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee to determine their eligibility for continued enrollment. Students who are not permitted to continue their enrollment will be placed on academic suspension for one semester or one year.

After serving their term of suspension, suspended students must reapply for admission to McPherson College. To be readmitted, the student must present evidence that he or she is prepared to do better academic work. If readmitted, the student will re-enter the college on academic probation, with one semester to demonstrate an ability to make satisfactory academic progress.

Please note: Academic warning, probation, and suspension are different from financial aid warning, probation, and suspension. Students on academic warning or probation should check with the financial aid office to confirm their financial aid status.

### **Appealing Academic Suspension**

Students who wish to appeal a decision of academic suspension may appeal within 30 days after notification of their condition by submitting a written appeal to the vice president for academic affairs. The appeal clearly explain the circumstances or behaviors that have prevented the student from making satisfactory academic progress and persuasively argue that such matters will not hinder future academic achievement. The appeal should include a specific plan the student is committed to implementing in order to work his or her way back into good academic standing. An appeal template is available from the academic affairs office.

Although he or she may consult with the Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee, the vice president for academic affairs makes the final determination regarding student appeals of academic suspension. The VPAA's decision is not subject to further appeal.

A student who has been academically suspended has probably had his or her financial aid suspended as well, but appealing suspension is a separate process for each. The student must first appeal the academic suspension. If the vice president for academic affairs rescinds the academic suspension and allows the student to continue studies at McPherson College, the student who has also had financial aid suspended must follow the appeal procedures described in the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

## **Graduate SAP Standards**

The academic standing of a graduate student at McPherson College is measured by a qualitative measure (cumulative grade point average) and a quantitative measure (credit hours earned as a percentage of credit hours attempted). To maintain good academic standing, a graduate student must, at all times, maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA and complete no less than 67 percent of all hours attempted. Any student whose GPA falls below 3.0 or who completes fewer than 67 percent of all attempted hours will be placed on academic probation. The student remains on probation until a 3.0 GPA is achieved or the percentage of hours earned totals at least 67 percent of hours attempted.

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# **Graduation and Commencement**

## **Graduation Requirements**

In order to graduate, students must satisfactorily complete no fewer than 124 credit hours with a cumulative, grade-point average of 2.0 or higher, both overall and in the courses required for their major field of study. The grade-point average includes only courses taken at McPherson College and is

calculated by dividing the number of grade points earned by the number of graded hours.

For a complete list of graduation requirements, see Requirements for the Bachelor's Degree in the Degree Programs section and the Course Repeat Policy.

## Conferral Dates

McPherson College will post degrees five times a year – December, February, May, July, and August, for those students meeting all graduation requirements. Commencement exercises are held each May for graduating seniors who are members of that class and who have successfully completed the graduation requirements, including applying for graduation and a positive senior audit. Please see the Participation in Commencement section for more details.

## Graduation Checks

Students are highly encouraged to schedule two meetings with the registrar's office to confirm they are on track to graduate. The first should be performed sometime during the spring semester of the sophomore year or first semester of the junior year. The second graduation check should be scheduled for the spring semester before the senior year. All students should be cautious about changing registration during the year. Any change that brings a senior below the stated requirements for participation in Commencement results in the student not being able to participate.

## Candidacy for the Degree

In the fall, members of the senior class apply for candidacy for the degree to which their courses apply. Application is made through the registrar's office. Only those members of the senior class that have been accepted as candidates for a degree may participate in Commencement events. Seniors not filing this application risk being overlooked for a diploma and inclusion in the Commencement program.

## Participation in Commencement

Commencement exercises are held each May for graduating seniors who are members of that class and who have successfully completed the graduation requirements, including applying for graduation and a positive senior audit.

Only students who have successfully completed 118 credits out of the required 124 credits with a minimum 2.00 grade point average (both overall residential and in the major as figured by tentative senior grade due date) and do not have a balance with the college are eligible to be included in the Commencement program and participate in Commencement and its related activities without receiving a diploma. Students who participate in Commencement without actually graduating are referred to as "participants." The diploma is conferred and a complete transcript available following completion of all requirements.

Neither senior status, number of courses attempted, time spent in college, delays in submitting off-campus or transfer work, nor other circumstances or miscommunication eliminate the 118 credit requirement for participation in Commencement. The responsibility for understanding and meeting graduation requirements rests entirely with the student. *Please note:* Elementary education majors cannot participate in graduation until after student teaching has been successfully completed. Secondary education majors may walk as a participant if they already have 118 earned credit hours and have met all the requirements for their major. They will then graduate after successfully completing their student teaching experience.

## Diplomas

A diploma is issued to each member of the graduating class three to four weeks after Commencement under the following conditions:

1. All requirements for the Baccalaureate degree have been successfully completed. A diploma is not issued to participants.
2. The recipient has no outstanding financial obligations to the college.

The fee for replacing a diploma is \$25 (domestic) or \$35 (international).

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## Other Academic Policies

### Student Responsibility for Academic Progress

Although McPherson College provides a thorough advising program, the ultimate responsibility for fulfilling requirements for satisfactory academic progress and graduation belongs with the student. A student must satisfy the requirements of the catalog in effect at the time that the student is admitted and begins course work in a degree program; or the student may, with the consent of his/her advisor, graduate under a subsequent catalog, provided the student complies with all requirements of the later catalog.

Students are expected to be familiar with the information presented in their applicable catalog, and to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to their program of study. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because a student pleads ignorance of, or contends that

he/she was not informed of, the regulations or procedures. Students planning to graduate should be familiar with the deadline for application for graduation and other pertinent deadlines.

Students should schedule an official junior check with the registrar's office during the second semester of their sophomore year. A final check with the registrar's office is required during the first term of the senior year to assure that the student will meet all graduation requirements. Part-time students should complete the senior check during the term prior to the term in which they expect to graduate.

## Academic Integrity

As a community of scholars, we expect academic integrity from both students and professors. Faculty who violate standards of academic integrity are subject to discipline as provided in section 490 of the Faculty Handbook. This policy outlines the repercussions for students who behave in academically dishonest ways.

### Definitions

Academic dishonesty is any act of cheating, fabrication, or plagiarism.

- *Cheating* is using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids. Examples: copying homework, copying someone else's test, using an unauthorized "cheat sheet," etc.
- *Fabrication* is falsification or invention of any information or citation. Examples: making up a source, giving an incorrect citation, deliberately misquoting a source, etc.
- *Plagiarism* is representing the work of another (words, pictures, ideas, etc.) as one's own in the final submission of an academic assignment, not, as a rule, in drafts or preliminary versions.

(The examples above are not exhaustive; infractions may include actions not listed.)

### Procedures for Unintentional Violations of Academic Integrity

Instructors use their discretion in determining whether infractions of academic integrity are intentional or unintentional. When instructors determine an act of academic dishonesty is unintentional, they may use their professional judgment in determining the best way to remediate the student.

### Procedures for Intentional Violations of Academic Integrity

When instructors determine that an act of academic dishonesty is intentional, they shall

1. Complete and submit an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report form, including documentation of the incident, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. (The form is available on the college Intranet site or in the Academic Affairs office.)
2. Impose the sanction for academic dishonesty provided in their course syllabus, pending notification from the VPAA that their incident report is the first one filed against that student.

Students reported to the VPAA for the first time for an act of plagiarism shall submit documentation of their successful completion of a recommended plagiarism prevention program.

If a student has had one or more incident reports previously submitted to the VPAA, the following consequences shall ensue:

- *Second reported offense*: The student shall fail the course. At the request of the reporting faculty member, the student, the faculty member, and the VPAA can meet to determine the appropriateness of an F in the course for the behavior reported.
- *Third reported offense*: The student shall be suspended for the remainder of the term plus one additional full semester and fail the course in which the incident occurred. If the incident is reported prior to the last day to withdraw without a grade, the student will be withdrawn from all other courses in which he or she is enrolled. If the incident is reported after that date, the student shall receive final course grades calculated by adding zeroes for all remaining course assignments to grades received up to that point in the course. Suspended students must reapply for admission and are not guaranteed re-admittance.
- *Fourth reported offense*: Dismissal with no right to appeal.

The VPAA will notify the student, the student's advisor, and the director of academic development each time an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report is submitted. With the exception noted above for a student's fourth infraction, students have the right to appeal any charge of academic dishonesty following the same procedures described in the Grade Appeal Policy published in this catalog.

### Other Kinds of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty can also include dissimulation and aiding and abetting.

- *Dissimulation* is the act of disguising or altering one's actions so as to deceive another about the real nature of one's actions concerning an academic exercise, including (but not limited to) fabricating excuses for missing classes, postponing tests, handing in late papers, turning in a paper for one class that was originally written for another class (when original work is requested), taking inappropriate credit for group work, etc.
- *Aiding and abetting* is knowingly facilitating any act defined in this policy, including (but not limited to) students helping other students plagiarize and/or cheat by unauthorized sharing of lab work or coursework, not reporting others' cheating incidents, etc.

Faculty retain the right to deal with instances of dissimulation and aiding and abetting as they deem appropriate, including reporting such incidents to the VPAA.

## **Class Attendance**

Every professor has the autonomy to establish his or her own class attendance policy, which is explained in the course syllabus. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with each professor's policy. Instructors may lower final grades or fail students who do not comply with the attendance policy set forth in the syllabus. The vice president for academic affairs may withdraw chronically absent students from one or all their courses.

Unless the instructor's attendance policy specifies otherwise, students should notify instructors of necessary absences well in advance and arrange alternative means for completing class activities, if appropriate. When prior notification for absences is not possible, the student should explain each absence to the instructor at the next class meeting. The instructor will determine whether make-up work is allowable.

## **Classroom Conduct**

Faculty members have the responsibility to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning in their classrooms and labs. Therefore, when, in the judgment of the instructor, a student's behavior undermines the learning atmosphere, the instructor may remove that student from the classroom for the remainder of the class period.

Students who repeatedly undermine the learning environment, or whose disruptive behavior includes violence, threats, or harassment, may be subject to permanent ejection from a course. Unless the instructor specifies otherwise, ejected students fail the course. Students have the right to appeal an instructor's request for permanent removal from a course to the vice president for academic affairs.