Part 3 Academic Policies and Procedure Guidelines

General policies regulating admission, academic standing, graduation, grading, and the like are published in the Catalog. Faculty attention is directed particularly to the section headed "Academic Regulations" in which policies on repeated courses, probation, eligibility, withdrawal, class attendance, and final examinations are discussed. The following statements supplement the catalog material and are provided for information purposes. They are subject to change by Faculty Assembly policy adoptions or administrative procedural decisions.

3.1 Registration and Confirmation Procedures

The Associate Vice President for Academic Administration in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, school deans and department chairs, prepares the course schedule for each term. Registration and confirmation details and dissemination of appropriate forms are the responsibility of the University Registrar in conjunction with the Student Accounts Office. Confirmation is completed after making satisfactory financial arrangements in the Student Accounts Office. Faculty members are asked to prepare typical program guides leading to majors in their respective disciplines and to advise their advisees concerning the most effective preparation for the student's ultimate educational and vocational goals. Such conferences may be held at any time, but they are particularly pertinent prior to course registration periods. During announced registration periods faculty members should be available to advisees.

3.2 Changes in Registration

Necessary changes in registration are initiated by the student in the University Registrar's Office. No course may be entered after the end of the second week of classes in a term. Students should be advised to consider their registration realistically to minimize changes during the term. The form used to drop and add courses requires signatures of the instructor, faculty advisor, Associate Vice President for Academic Administration (as designated on the form), and a representative of the University Registrar's Office.

3.3 Changing Sections

Students are expected to attend the section for which they are registered. To change a section, the student must follow the regular change of registration procedure that is initiated in the University Registrar's Office.

3.4 Withdrawal from All Classes

An official withdrawal from all classes (even if only one) for which a student is registered in a given term begins in the University Registrar's Office. Additional signatures may be required depending on individual circumstances. Failure to withdraw officially will result in a permanent grade of "X" being recorded for each course in that term.

3.5 Prerequisites for Courses

It is expected that students will take courses in the proper sequence. If it is necessary to take a course out of sequence, the instructor may require the student to do extra background work without additional credit. Course prerequisites are printed in the Catalog and Course Schedule Book.
3.6 Student Class Attendance Policy

Each faculty member is responsible for keeping class attendance for his/her courses. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of the courses in which they are registered. In the event of absence, whatever its cause, the student remains responsible for the work that is missed.

Decisions about make-up work and any assessment of grade penalties because of excessive absences are at the discretion of the individual faculty member in each course. Any attendance policy thus enforced must be presented in writing to the class in the course syllabus.

Absences in the following categories will be given consideration by faculty when the Academic Affairs Office verifies an explanation to faculty at the student’s request (faculty, coaches, or advisors supply requests for category 1). A standard practice is that these be reported prior to the absence:

1. assignments with official University organizations and pre-arranged field trips;
2. emergencies or death in the immediate family;
3. legal responsibilities, and;
4. extended illness when an authorized medical official requires confinement to room, home, or hospital.

When such absences occur, the student must request the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration provide verification that the absence resulted from one of the causes named above. These explanations are to be reported to the faculty members with whom the student is taking courses. Standard practice is that such notifications be given prior to the absences.

Official University organizations include intercollegiate athletic teams, music ensembles and field trips. Other groups must receive approval, in advance, from the Vice President for Academic Affairs Office. For the organizations mentioned the faculty member in charge is asked to submit to the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration a roster of participating students and dates involved. Sponsors of these groups are further asked to arrange schedules in such a manner as to minimize class absences. Similarly, faculty members arranging field trips should check the University calendar and inquire of students’ responsibilities to minimize conflicts.

Faculty members should record class attendance on a regular and systematic basis. The record of absenteeism can assist in evaluating student work to both the student and parents. Absenteeism is often an initial clue about student attrition, and if reported early, University officials can exercise redemptive strategies.

All cases of excessive absences and unsatisfactory scholarship resulting from absences should be reported to the Student Success Coordinator promptly. Should absences exceed 20 percent of the class meetings, or some lesser maximum figure as dictated by the special nature of a course, the student may be advised by the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration or other University officials to withdraw from the course upon recommendation of the faculty member involved. Withdrawals, whatever their cause, must be processed through the normal channels and are the student’s responsibility to complete.

In general, it is not good academic policy to lower arbitrarily a student’s grade because of lack of class attendance if he/she has otherwise met course requirements. Clearly, the goal is to expect class attendance because of the benefit of such attendance to the student’s performance in a course and to student-faculty interaction.
3.7 Student Class Attendance and Residence Life Policy

Class attendance is expected for students living in campus housing. Any residential student who has at least 25% total absences (consecutive or nonconsecutive) in two or more for-credit courses in any term, without written permission from the Director of Residence Life, will not be allowed to remain as a resident in campus housing. (This policy does not apply to 1 semester hour credit courses or audited courses). When a student has at least 20% absences in two or more for credit courses, the student will be notified in writing and informed of the Residence Life policy by the Student Development Office. After this warning is issued, if a student reaches or exceeds the designated number of absences above, resulting in the requirement to move out of campus housing, the student will receive written notification of the action and be required to meet with the Director of Housing. The Director of Housing will provide an appropriate hearing. The student will be informed of the right to appeal the decision to move out of campus housing according to the guidelines in the Student Life Handbook. The parents of legal dependants will be notified if a student is required to move out of campus housing due to class absences, and the student may be subject to forfeit reimbursement of the room fee. (This policy was adopted by the Campus Life Committee in spring 2004.)

3.8 Faculty Absence from Campus

All absences from the campus which cause the faculty member to miss classes, examination periods, faculty meetings, or other important University duties must be reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, school dean, and department chair prior to the absence.

Whenever professional activity or personal business necessitates absence from class, this should be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, school dean, and department chair in advance, and satisfactory arrangements made for a substitute, when possible, or appropriate alternate forms of instruction (such as video-taping a lecture). In the case of illness and other emergencies, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, school dean, and department chair should be notified immediately so that the proper arrangements can be made for the classes involved. Canceling class should be the strategy of last resort.

3.9 Faculty Tardiness to Class

Class time is important. Therefore, classes should begin on time. If the instructor finds that he/she will not be on time for a particular class meeting, information should be relayed to the class so students will know the class will be meeting. Realizing that it is possible for an emergency to arise, the class should be informed at an early meeting how long it should wait in the absence of any message from the instructor. Ten minutes would be a reasonable length of time.

3.10 Opening Class Prayer

Class sessions are opened with prayer or other appropriate devotional material. Care should be taken that this does not become perfunctory or meaningless, or jeopardize the quality of subsequent instruction.
3.11 Mid-term Grades

Faculty are required to submit mid-term grades for all students in all courses through the web portal to the University Registrar’s Office at the mid-point of the fall and spring terms by the deadline indicated. It is not feasible to process the grades and release them to the students or other third parties until the reports have been received from the entire faculty.

It is important that these be submitted in a timely fashion, because students have only one week (5 class days) to withdraw from a course after the mid-term date. Care should be exercised to plan tests and major assignments so that the reports can be submitted when requested.

Mid-term warning letters indicating unsatisfactory performance (mid-term average below 2.00) are written by the University Registrar. Although mid-term grades are not part of the student’s permanent records, they are important, because the Student Academic Life Committee often mandates a mid-term review of probationary students. Since mid-term grades provide feedback to students or other campus officials, the use of neutral grades like IP and S are discouraged, as they provide no significant information on which to make decisions and recommendations. Best practices for grades are described in the “Meritorious Grading Practices” section below.

3.12 Term Work Due Date

During the fall and spring semesters, the Monday prior to the beginning of the final examination week is designated as “Term Work Due Date.” Major term work projects are due on or before that date. The rationale for such is to preserve the integrity of the final class week for unit examinations, so that the student is not under the “double jeopardy” of examinations and projects the same week. (This policy was adopted by Faculty in April 1980.)

Term work is due on or before the final class period during the January interim and summer school as provided by faculty in course syllabi.

3.13 Final Examinations

All classes are expected to meet during the scheduled final examination period, and all students are expected to take the final examinations at that same time. Final examinations will be comprehensive and administered during the final examination week in accordance with the schedule published in the Course Schedule Book. Students who are scheduled for more than two final, comprehensive examinations on the same day may petition to have the excess over two re-scheduled through the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration. The petition to re-schedule must be completed the week before final examinations.

Final examinations in the January interim and summer school are scheduled for the last day of class.

Deviations from the comprehensive nature of the examination or the published time must be requested by faculty annually and be approved in advance by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, school dean, and department chair in writing. (This final examination policy was adopted by Faculty on October 5, 1982, re-affirmed by Academic Council and Faculty vote in 1988 and amended by Academic Council on January 27, 1997.)

3.14 Final Grades

Final grades are reported by means of web grade reporting to the University Registrar’s Office, as soon as possible following the final examination for the course and no later than the due date established by the University Registrar. Final grade deadlines also pertain to directed and independent studies, internships, practica, and student teaching.
The timely submission of final grades is important, because it is not feasible to process the grades and release them to the students or other third parties until the reports have been received from the entire faculty. The Student Financial Aid and Student Academic Life committees also depend on timely submission of final grades to complete their assigned tasks.

The University’s grading system distinguishes between two types of failing grades (F and X), and two temporary grades for incomplete work (IP and I), as described below in the “System of Grading” section. Students must request permission to receive the I grade from the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration prior to the final examination period.

Final grades may be changed only because of the discovery of error in computing the grade; any change must be requested in writing by the instructor on a Change of Grade form provided by the University Registrar’s Office or by e-mail to the University Registrar. Allowing students to submit extra credit or other assignments after the final examination is not permitted.

### 3.15 System of Grading

The following are final, permanent grades. Only these should be used when final grades are requested by the University Registrar. Beginning in 2002, the +/- option can be recorded on the student’s transcript as a faculty member’s prerogative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A superior grade earned by work consistently exceeding high standards as judged by both internal and external criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>A good grade signifies accomplishment that is above average in quantity and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>A passing grade represents sufficient accomplishment to pass the course, but does not meet the average standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A satisfactory grade characterizes the performance of most studies as judged by both internal and external standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>A failure earned when the course was completed; no credit is earned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>A failure earned because the course (e.g., an assignment or examination, etc.) was not completed, or official withdrawal procedure was not completed; no credit is earned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory (pass-fail course only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Credit by examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Satisfactory (pass-fail course only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory (pass-fail course only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>A failure earned when the course was completed; no credit is earned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>A failure earned because the course (e.g., an assignment or examination, etc.) was not completed, or official withdrawal procedure was not completed; no credit is earned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>not computed</td>
<td>Unsfatisfactory (pass-fail course only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>not computed</td>
<td>Satisfaction (pass-fail course only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory (pass-fail course only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
W not computed withdrawn: applies to withdrawal within the specified date or after the specified date where special permission has been given by the Academic Affairs Office because of extenuating circumstances.

WF not computed withdrawal failing when a student withdraws from the University after the last day to withdraw from a course deadline.

WP not computed withdrawal passing when a student withdraws from the University after the last day to withdraw from a course deadline.

The following temporary grades may be used in special situations.

I not computed Incomplete: applies only to courses in which the student made an application to Academic Affairs Office to extend a course deadline. When such extensions are granted by the Academic Affairs Office, specific course completion deadlines are communicated in writing to the faculty member, student and University Registrar. The “I” grade will be changed to the permanent “X” grade in cases where the student did not complete the required work by the extension deadline. The usual extension is four weeks into the next academic term.

IP not computed In progress: applies only to courses in which the student has completed all required course work, but an evaluation (e.g., an agency evaluation for an intern, or cooperating teacher evaluation for a student teacher, etc.) beyond the student’s control has not been received by the faculty.

3.16 Meritorious Grading Practices

1. To maximize student learning, feedback from instructors should be as immediate as prudently possible. Instructors should exercise sufficient course planning to guarantee reasonably quick feedback of performance to students.

2. Course feedback to students should help the student assess how much has been learned, but also can be an effective learning tool itself. Appropriate positive and negative comments aid this instruction process.

3. To facilitate the student making a decision to drop a course, mid-term grades should be given. Furthermore, the grades given should be the instructor’s best judgment as to the student’s actual performance. (Neutral grades like S or IP provide little information to students.) The mid-term grades need to be submitted in compliance with grade submission deadlines provided by the University Registrar’s Office, because students have only one [1] week (5 class days) after mid-term to drop a course.

4. Evaluations should be multiple and spread across the term. Having assignments due only after mid-term effectively prevents the student from dropping a course.
5. Grading scales and criteria should be a routine part of course syllabi. They should appear in enough detail that the student understands clearly how he/she will be evaluated.

6. All courses must have a carefully developed course syllabus to [a] define course objectives and appropriate instructional activities, and [b] specify the evaluation mechanism and criteria to be used to assess the achievement of learning objectives. Syllabi should be developed for not only content courses, but courses where skills and participation are significant instructional activities. A well-developed syllabus is a good instructional tool, and an effective defense against potential litigation. Dates for the submission of assignments help keep the course on pace and assist students to manage their time during the semester prudently.

7. Upon the advice of legal counsel, posting of examination, mid-term, or final grades by ID number, Social Security number, initials or names is not permitted. Posting grades by name is a clear violation of the student’s right to privacy as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Obviously, sharing one student’s grade with another student violates the original student’s privacy. Since the confidentiality of ID numbers, Social Security numbers or initials cannot be reasonably guaranteed, those posting systems are only slightly better than posting by name.

8. Final grades can be changed only if there was an error in recording or calculating the grade by faculty. In these cases, the change should be reported quickly after its discovery on the appropriate grade change form from the University Registrar’s Office. It is not good academic practice to allow a student to submit work late after the final grade has been submitted or to allow the student to do extra work to raise a final grade.

3.17 Academic Probation

A list of students on academic probation is maintained in the University Registrar’s Office. These lists are not distributed to faculty because of confidentiality laws. Advisors receive copies of all communications with their advisees relating to probation so they will be able to give assistance to students working toward good standing. Students on academic probation are not eligible to participate in varsity athletics or in any other group officially representing the University; nor may a student on probation hold a major office in student government. Coaches, faculty sponsors and others directing such groups are responsible to check for eligibility before names are printed on ballots or lists of participants are released.

A student may be placed on academic probation when his/her cumulative grade point average falls below the satisfactory progress criteria listed in the Catalog. Only final grades are considered in computing averages. Therefore, a student on probation at the beginning of a term must remain so throughout that term and until the conditions for removal from probation have been met. Satisfactory progress is evaluated following each regular grading period.

A cumulative grade point average of 2.00 is required for good academic standing. Students are placed on academic probation when the cumulative grade point average falls below the standard associated with the terms of attendance:

- Semester 1: <1.70 cumulative grade point average
- Semester 2: <1.80 cumulative grade point average
- Semester 3: <1.90 cumulative grade point average
- Semester 4 and thereafter: <2.00 cumulative grade point average

Students who repeatedly fail to achieve at a satisfactory level will be subject to academic dismissal, with such dismissals extending over a period of at least one term.
3.18 Academic Integrity

Mount Vernon Nazarene University encourages personal integrity and maturity in its students. To that end the University adheres to the principle of unquestioned honesty in its expectations of students, faculty and staff. This standard should govern relationships and behavior in the residence halls, classroom, chapel, and other campus entities. As a Christian community, faculty, staff and students have a moral and ethical responsibility to uphold the principle of unquestioned honesty, and refrain from any activity or behavior that would suggest academic dishonesty and lack of personal integrity.

Dishonesty is defined as misrepresentation of facts with the motive to slant consequences in one's favor, minimize one's work load, or make untruthful claims to benefit oneself or others. Dishonesty may be unintentional and unconscious, stemming from insensitivity or immaturity. While the examples of dishonesty described in the following sections are related to academic integrity, they are by no means exhaustive. Failures in academic integrity may occur in attendance fraud, cheating, plagiarism, laboratory fraud, and fabrication.

Definitions and Examples

Attendance Fraud

The University strives to provide curricular and spiritual opportunities for students to develop and mature. In this process it is essential for the student to be in attendance and to report that attendance honestly. Attendance fraud is misrepresentation of one’s attendance at a required campus event. Specifically, attendance fraud includes:

1. Writing another student's name on an attendance sheet;
2. Asking or permitting another student to write one’s own name on an attendance sheet;
3. Writing one’s own name on an attendance sheet and leaving the activity before it is formally dismissed;
4. Making a false or misleading statement to an instructor as an excuse for missing class;
5. Altering or forging a document submitted to an instructor from a physician, nurse, or University official as an excuse for missing class; or
6. Providing false information about the amount of time worked on a time record.

Cheating

The student who cheats untruthfully represents his/her own legitimate effort on an assigned project, paper, assignment, test, etc. Cheating is the representation of someone else’s work as one’s own. Specifically, cheating includes:

1. Unauthorized entry to a faculty or secretarial office in search for examination-related material;
2. Unauthorized use of materials from a faculty or secretarial office to prepare for an examination;
3. Unauthorized use of a previously given examination to prepare for a present examination;
4. Discussing any part of an examination that has not yet been completed with any person who has already completed the examination;

5. Presenting a fraudulent excuse to seek permission to take an examination at a different time than the scheduled time;

6. Unauthorized possession of a copy of an examination;

7. Giving assistance to or receiving assistance from another student during an examination;

8. Looking at or attempting to look at another student’s paper during an examination.

9. Unauthorized use of published materials during an examination;

10. Unauthorized use of computing devices during an examination;

11. Unauthorized use of tape recorders or other electronic devices during an examination;

12. Unauthorized storage of information on an electronic calculator, computer or other media for use during an examination;

13. Unauthorized use of pre-programmed computers or calculators during an examination; or

14. Unauthorized collaborating with or consulting another person to complete a project or homework assignment.

The operating principle for students is this: When in doubt the student should assume that none of the activities are permitted unless the faculty explicitly approves them. It is the student’s responsibility to ask the faculty member which activities are authorized and permitted in each course.

Plagiarism

Academic integrity requires that one acknowledge ideas and expressions borrowed from others. Plagiarism is a special form of academic dishonesty in which writers [a] fail to acknowledge the source of ideas, or [b] portray someone else’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes:

1. Looking at or copying another student’s work on an assignment (e.g., daily written work, term paper, workbook, etc.);

2. Unauthorized accessing and/or copying another person’s computer file(s);

3. Submitting written work purchased from commercial sources (e.g., “mail order” term papers) or submitting work based upon information purchased from such sources;

4. Submitting written work prepared by another person whether for money or favor; or

5. Unacknowledged quotation of a published work.

In the academic community there is variation in how often and to what degree the sources of ideas need to be cited. Faculty members can provide guidelines within academic disciplines. When the work depends upon the contributions of others, the basic principle to be followed is to acknowledge one’s indebtedness to them.
Laboratory Fraud

Persons who misrepresent their own work on laboratory projects commit laboratory fraud. Examples include:

1. Submitting one’s laboratory project to an outside laboratory for analysis;
2. Submitting one’s laboratory project to another student for analysis;
3. Submitting a laboratory report of an experiment performed by other persons;
4. Misrepresenting the date or amount of time spent on an experiment or other laboratory activities;
5. Submitting a copy of another person’s computer program or project as one’s own work; or
6. Submitting a copy of a commercially available computer program as one’s own work.

Fabrication

Individuals who commit academic fraud fabricate fictitious data for experiments and report them as real. Other examples include:

1. Submitting a report on an experiment or project that was not actually performed;
2. Listing works which were not actually consulted in a bibliography; and
3. Listing fictitious works in a bibliography.

Institutional Response

The thrust of the academic integrity policy of Mount Vernon Nazarene University is twofold. The University endeavors to communicate clearly its positive expectations about the principle of academic integrity and to educate its members accordingly. The University also endeavors to discipline violations of academic integrity in a fair and consistent manner.

Policy

When violations of the academic integrity policy are discovered, the following policies are normative:

1. The penalty for a first offense shall be a zero (0) on that particular assignment, examination, or project. No makeup examination or extra credit project will be permitted. The zero may not count as the lowest grade to be dropped, if a faculty member uses a lowest grade dropped policy.
2. The penalty for the second offense during the entire college tenure of the student shall be failure for the course.
3. The penalty for the third offense during the entire college tenure of the student shall be immediate dismissal from the University.
4. More severe penalties may be levied when the integrity offense is an organized group action or when criminal actions result (e.g., unauthorized use of master key or breaking and entering). The University reserves the right to prosecute alleged criminal offenses.

Procedure

1. In alleged instances of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall investigate the report. The student should be notified promptly of the action taken and informed of the appeal process. If, in the discretionary judgment of the faculty member, the offense is a serious one, the Academic Affairs office will be notified of the alleged offense and the action initiated by the faculty member on a form supplied by Academic Affairs. The faculty member may consult the department chair, the school dean, and/or Vice President for Academic Affairs during the investigation and decision process.

2. The student has the right to appeal the faculty action to a faculty-student Academic Integrity Review Board. Appeals must be made within three class (3) days of the time he or she has been notified of the respective action. Final authority rests with the President.

3. In consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President will appoint a five (5) member Academic Integrity Review Board at the beginning of the fall semester. Three members will be full time teaching faculty and two members will be junior or senior students. The Associate Vice President for Academic Administration will be the ex officio chairperson of the board and will be a non-voting member. In the case that a faculty member on the committee is involved in the alleged situation, the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration will become a voting member on the board. The Student Government Association will nominate six junior or senior students; the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs will select two from those nominated by the Student Government Association.

4. In the case of dismissal, the dismissal will be no less than one full semester as in other academic dismissals for failure to perform. A student may petition for re-admission after the dismissal period by writing a letter to the Student Academic Life Committee and complete other necessary re-admission application forms. When re-admission is granted, the enrollment status for the first semester shall be academic probation. If no further incidences occur during the probationary semester, the status will be changed to that of good standing at the beginning of the next semester.

The rights of students as outlined in the Student Life Handbook will be upheld in matters related to alleged violations of the academic integrity code, with the exception that procedurally, integrity offenses shall be considered as academic offenses, given academic penalties, and administered by academic personnel. (This policy was adopted by the Faculty on October 3, 1989.)

3.19 Academic Grievance Policy

Students with grievances or problems with the way a particular course is conducted and how their grades are assigned should first seek a solution with the professor of the course. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached with the faculty member, the student may file a written appeal with the appropriate school dean. The appeal must be filed in writing within 10 days of the issuance of the grade report.

The school dean is expected to respond in writing to the appeal within ten (10) working days. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the school dean, he/she may appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Correspondence and evidence related to all previous actions and appeals must be submitted with the appeal to the Vice President, who will resolve the issue or refer the matter to the Undergraduate Academic Council for final resolution.
The appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs must be filed within 30 days of the issuance of the grade report.