

Academic Policies

Instructional Philosophy

ACC is committed to the belief that in a free and democratic society, all persons should have a continuing opportunity to develop skills and knowledge as well as to enhance their understanding of the responsibilities in that society. The college takes as its guiding educational principle the proposition that, insofar as available resources permit, instruction should be adapted to student needs. This principle requires both flexibility in instructional strategies and maintenance of high academic standards.

Academic Standards

Grading System, Semester-Credit

The following grading system is used at ACC:

Grade	Interpretation	Grade Points Per Semester Credit Hour
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Satisfactory	2
D	Minimum Passing	1
F	Failing	0
I	Incomplete	Not Computed
IP	In Progress	Not Computed
P/F	Pass/Fail	*
W	Withdrew	Not Computed
AU	Audit	Not Computed
CR	Credit Given for Non-Traditional Transfer Work	Not Computed

The grade point average is calculated by dividing the number of credit hours into the total grade points.

*Pass/Fail: A passing grade is defined as the equivalent of a C grade or better. A grade of P (passing) achieved in a course under a pass/fail option will not be used in calculating cumulative GPA. A grade of F (failing) received in a course taken under a pass/fail option will be used in calculating GPA.

Student Course Load, Semester-Credit Programs

A full-time student is defined as a student who:

- Registers for 12 or more credit hours in any combination of terms within the 16-week semester
- Registers for 12 credit hours within the 11-week or 9-week summer sessions
- Registers for six credit hours in one 5½-week summer session, or six credit hours in each 5½-week session

Students must obtain written permission from the campus dean of student services a designee before registering if they wish to:

- Register for more than 18 hours in any combination of terms within a 16-week semester
- Register for more than 12 hours in any combination of terms within the 11-week summer semester
- Register for more than six credit hours in a 5½-week summer session

Good Standing and Acceptable Academic Progress, Semester-Credit Programs, and Grade Point Average

Good Standing

Good standing is the maintenance of a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 or better (on the 4.00 scale used at ACC). A 2.00 GPA is the same as a C average. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or better in order to graduate from any degree or certificate program. In calculating a student's cumulative GPA, all coursework attempted at ACC for which a grade of A, B, C, D, or F was awarded will be considered. The student's permanent record shall reflect two grade point averages:

- All college work taken at ACC, including developmental courses, if the student took such courses
- College work taken at ACC, which excludes any developmental courses

Incomplete Grades

An instructor may award a grade of I (Incomplete) if a student was unable to complete all of the objectives for the passing grade in a course. An I cannot be carried beyond the established date in the following semester. The completion date is determined by the instructor but may not be later than two weeks before the end of the semester. The department chair will approve a change from I to a performance grade (A, B, C, or D) for the course before deadline.

Consideration should be given to course load, job, and family obligations when carrying an I into a new semester for completion. An I that is not resolved by the deadline will automatically be converted to an F.

In extreme cases, students may receive permission to carry an I for longer than the following semester or session deadline. Approval must come from the academic or workforce dean.

In Progress Grades

An IP (In Progress) grade is used for students in developmental education courses. An IP may be awarded to students who remain in the class, are attending and are progressing but not achieving the standards for earning a C or better in the course. An IP is a final grade for the term and counts toward the student's term hour load but carries no grade points or credit toward graduation. An IP does not mean successful fulfillment of the objectives of the course or completion of remediation. Students who earn an IP and continue at ACC must re-register in the same course for the next term that they enroll unless TSI requirements are otherwise met, in which case the IP becomes the final grade.

An IP grade is not to be used as an alternative to an I or an F. TSI-mandated students who have excessive absences do not qualify for an IP.

Students may earn an IP in the same course two times. On the third attempt, the student is not eligible for an IP and instead must earn an A, B, C, D, or F.

Repeating Courses

All grades for repeated courses appear on the transcript. An asterisk (*) by a course grade on the student's transcript indicates that the course has been repeated. In general, when non-Developmental Education courses are repeated, only the highest grade earned will be used in calculating the grade point average.

Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal

The college monitors academic standards of progress to identify those students experiencing academic difficulty and limits enrollment and course selection to increase the chances that students will succeed at ACC. Students are responsible for knowing whether they are on probation, suspension, or dismissal. Ineligible students who register for college credit classes are subject to dismissal with forfeiture of one-half of all tuition and fees.

1. Students who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 after earning six semester credit hours will enter the *Early Alert* system. Student Services will notify students of their *Early Alert* status and send them a list of college support services available to *Early Alerts* students.
2. Students who on or after the end of their second semester fail to earn a completion rate of 50 percent of the semester credit hours for which they have enrolled at ACC will enter the *Early Alert* system. Student Services will notify students of their *Early Alert* status and send them a list of college support services available to *Early Alert* students.
3. Students on *Early Alert* status who either fail to earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or fail to earn a cumulative completion rate of 50 percent will be placed on *Academic Probation*. The Admissions and Records Office will notify students of the probation status and refer them to the Counseling Center to develop a Performance Improvement Plan. When students raise their cumulative GPA to 2.0 and their cumulative college credit completion rate to 50 percent, the Admissions and Records Office will change their status from *Academic Probation* to *Academic Good Standing*.
4. Students on *Academic Probation* who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or cumulative completion rate of 50 percent will be placed on *Academic Suspension*. The Admissions and Records Office will place a registration hold on the records of students placed on *Academic Suspension*. The hold will be removed only after the student has been out of ACC for one full semester or has successfully appealed the suspension through a collegewide appeals process. Students readmitted after suspension or for whom an appeal is granted must develop a Performance Improvement Plan with a counselor and abide by any registration restrictions established as a condition of readmission.
5. Students readmitted after *Academic Suspension* who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or cumulative completion rate of 50 percent will be placed on *Academic Dismissal*. The Admissions and Records Office will place a registration hold on the records of students placed on *Academic Dismissal*. The hold will be removed only after the student has been out of ACC for one calendar year or has successfully appealed his/her dismissal through a collegewide appeals process. Students readmitted after *Academic Dismissal* or for whom an appeal is granted must develop a Performance Improvement Plan with a counselor and abide by any registration restrictions established as a condition of readmission.
6. Students readmitted after *Academic Dismissal* who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or cumulative completion rate of 50 percent will again be placed on *Academic Dismissal* for one calendar year. The same re-entry procedures as outlined above will apply to repeated periods of *Academic Dismissal*.
7. Students receiving financial aid also must comply with the *Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Recipients*. See the Financial Aid Handbook for more information.

Academic Policies

Grade Changes: Requesting the College to Review a Performance Grade

Review of Course Grading Guidelines

The instructor teaching the course shall assign grades. The instructor is expected to provide information to the students at the beginning of the semester regarding the course, including the guidelines for grading. If the student has questions about or objections to the grading policy in a course, those must be brought up during the semester. Such questions or objections should first be addressed to the instructor and then, if the student believes it is appropriate, to the instructor's supervisor. These questions are not relevant when determining whether an error occurred in assigning a performance grade.

Review of Course Grade Assignment

The very nature of teaching and learning demands that the instructor exercise professional judgment in the assignment of grades. The instructor also has an obligation to discuss the grade and the basis upon which it was assigned with the student, at the student's request. If a student believes that an error has been made in the assignment of a grade, he or she should bring it to the attention of the instructor within six months and ask for the error to be corrected. In almost all cases, the decision of the instructor about whether there was an error is final.

Occasionally, it is appropriate for someone other than the instructor to deal with the question of reviewing a possible error in a grade. This request should be made in writing to a committee of faculty members in the discipline appointed by the department chair, task force, or dean. The committee has the authority to change the grade to a different performance grade. This request is handled by the Procedure for Determination of Error of a Performance Grade, not by the Student Complaint Procedure.

Procedure for Determination of Error of a Performance Grade

1. The student presents the facts to the instructor who awarded the grade and requests a different performance grade. (If the instructor is not available, the student should contact the instructor's supervisor to determine when the instructor will be available. Between semesters, instructors are not expected to be available. Questions arising during that time must be postponed until the start of the next semester unless the instructor can be contacted and agrees to come in and address the questions.)
2. If no agreement is reached, the student may contact the instructor's supervisor. The supervisor shall discuss the situation with the student and advise the student of the process by which a review of the grade may be requested. The supervisor shall encourage the student to make an appointment with an ACC counselor to discuss the process before beginning to prepare his/her formal request. In order to begin this process, the student shall file a written request. The written request must be

presented to the supervisor of the instructor and state what error has occurred, and explain any relevant circumstances. The supervisor shall immediately forward the written request to his/her dean. Note: If the dean is the instructor who assigned the grade, the associate vice president of workforce education or associate vice president of academic programs, as applicable, shall act in place of the dean.

3. The student shall present the written request no later than six months after the grade was awarded. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, which, in the opinion of the dean, justify a delay, the dean may accept the request later than six months after the grade was awarded. The review process must be completed within three months from the time the student files the written request for a review.
4. The dean shall give the instructor a copy of the student's written request and ask the instructor to provide a written explanation of the grading procedure used and any other information he/she believes to be relevant. The dean shall then provide a copy of the instructor's written statement to the student. If the college no longer employs the instructor who awarded the grade, the dean shall make a diligent effort to locate the instructor to obtain a written statement. If the instructor is completely unavailable, the dean, in consultation with the department chair, shall provide the student with a written statement of the information available to them about the instructor's grading procedure and any other information they believe to be relevant.
5. During the process of writing and exchanging their statements, the instructor may choose to change the grade or the student may choose to stop the process. If neither of those happens, the dean shall appoint a three-member faculty committee to consider the request. The members of the committee shall be faculty members from the same discipline. The committee may include faculty members from other campuses. The committee shall include at least one adjunct faculty member, unless there are no adjunct faculty members in that discipline, and shall exclude any instructor who is a current instructor of the student. The decision of the committee is final.
6. If there are not three faculty members in the same discipline to form a review committee, the dean shall determine reasonable substitutions.
7. During the committee process, all parties may be questioned to clarify issues, all evidence and discussion must protect the confidentiality of student records, and only committee members shall be present during committee deliberations. If the committee's decision is to change the grade, the committee shall explain the rationale, in writing, to the instructor, the supervisor, and the dean, and communicate the result of the process, in writing, to the student. If the decision is not to change the grade, the committee shall explain the result and rationale, in writing, to the student. The dean shall fill out the appropriate form and state that this was the result of a committee decision.

Excessive Credits Earned Toward an ACC degree

Students who entered a Texas public college for the first time in the fall of 1999 or later are subject to Texas statute 76R SB345 that limits the number of courses they may take for which the state will pay. The limit for each community college student is 1.5 times the credits required for a two-year degree.

- The credits required for an ACC degree are determined by what is in the ACC Catalog
- Students who exceed the number of semester credit hours required for a degree by 50 percent may be charged additional fees
- Courses for which students receive a grade of W (withdrawal) are included in the total credit calculation.
- Developmental Education courses are not included in the total credit calculations

This rule also applies to university students and to community college students who transfer from ACC to Texas public colleges and universities.

Excessive Developmental Education Hours

A general academic teaching institution (university) may not receive funding for Developmental Education courses taken by a student in excess of 18 semester credit hours. A public community college district or technical college may not receive funding for Developmental Education courses taken by a student in excess of 27 semester credit hours or the equivalent. Students may not enroll in Developmental Education courses in excess of 27 semester credit hours.

Attendance Policy, Semester-Credit Courses

Students are expected to attend classes in order to progress satisfactorily toward completion of course objectives. Because objectives can vary from department to department and from course to course, the instructor shall inform students of specific course objectives at the first class meeting. Students who are not meeting course objectives may be withdrawn from the course at the discretion of the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to consult with instructors and seek support services when course objectives cannot be met. Students may appeal instructor-initiated withdrawals within 10 days.

Withdrawals from Semester-Credit Courses

When Withdrawals May Occur

Course withdrawals may occur at any time after the official reporting date of a semester and up to the established deadline for withdrawals in each semester. The established deadline is listed in the course schedule and on the web.

Initiation of Withdrawals

Withdrawals from a course result in a grade of W and may be affected through action taken by the student, the course instructor, or the instructor's immediate supervisor in the instructor's absence.

Students who wish to withdraw from specific courses should initiate withdrawal procedures with the Admissions and Records Office before the published deadline for withdrawals. Students who are not withdrawn as of the established deadline will receive a performance grade (A, B, C, D, or F). Students must present a picture ID to withdraw from the course.

Student Appeal of Instructor-Initiated Withdrawal

When the instructor withdraws a student, notice will be sent to the last address of the student in the student's permanent file, and shall constitute written notice. The student may appeal the withdrawal within 10 days after the written notification. A 10-day period for student appeal will commence five days after postmark of the college notice of withdrawal. The appeal shall be made to the course instructor.

Further appeal may be made to the appropriate campus administrator (department chair, assistant dean, academic or workforce dean), whose decision will be final. The student may continue to attend class until either the expiration of the 10-day period or until final disposition of the appeal.

Religious Holy Days

In compliance with Senate Bill 738, ACC permits students to be absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day. "Religious holy day" means a day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code.

ACC permits students to be absent, without penalty, from examinations or from completing assignments scheduled for that day. It is the student's responsibility to work with the course instructor when absent for a religious holy day in order to complete required assignments within two days following the absence. The instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination.

Academic Policies

Obligations to the College

Until all obligations to the college are met, students may be barred from future registration, not be allowed to graduate, and/or be administratively withdrawn from class. The college is authorized to place “holds” on student records under the following conditions, which include but are not limited to:

- Unpaid debt to the college
- Failure to make good a returned check
- Failure to make payment on a promissory note or financial aid overpayment
- Failure to return material or pay fines for issued, lost, damaged, or overdue materials from the ACC libraries or from any agency/institution with which ACC has a written agreement
- Ineligibility for aid for which student is registered; overdue loan; failure to complete files
- Failure to compensate for destruction of, or damage to, college property equipment or supplies
- Failure to file required documents; enrolling under false pretenses
- Failure to meet assessment requirement
- Charge back of tuition and fees which were charged to a credit card
- Address correction

Auditing Courses

Students who wish to audit a course (register for a course without receiving credit) must do so only on the last day of regular registration or the last day of the add/drop period for the semester in which they plan to attend (see official college calendar for dates). Registration is subject to availability of space. Admissions requirements (except TSI) as well as all other rules and regulations of the college apply to the auditing student. Tuition and fees for auditing are the same as those rates charged to students enrolled for credit. Early College Start students may not use the tuition and fee waiver to audit classes.

Graduation

ACC holds annual commencement exercises at the end of the spring semester. Students must satisfy 10 requirements in order to graduate:

1. Fulfill all obligations to the college, including the submission of official transcripts from each institution attended
2. Request an evaluation of transcripts and military credit before the semester in which they plan to graduate
3. Complete all courses listed in the official degree plan
4. Complete all core curriculum and general education requirements

5. Maintain a grade point average of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale for all coursework (both transfer and ACC) used to satisfy degree plan requirements
6. Complete at least 25 percent of the semester credit hours used in the degree plan in residence at ACC. Note: Residence hours are to be satisfied by attending classes; credit by exam or other nonattendance credit is excluded.
7. Students may not earn more than one Associate of Arts or more than one Associate of Science at ACC
8. Students may not receive an Associate of Arts in General Studies at the same time or after receiving another associate degree
9. Students may not receive a certificate at the same time or after receiving an Associate of Applied Science in the same program
10. TSI-obligated students must pass the certification form of the state-approved assessment to graduate from any associate degree program or any certificate program having at least 43 or more semester hours

Students who meet these requirements must complete the Graduation Application and submit it to the Admissions and Records Office before the deadline date set in the official college calendar. Applicants for graduation will be notified of their status by mail. Graduates are encouraged to participate in ACC’s annual commencement exercises held at the end of the spring semester. The diploma will be mailed to the address on file with the Graduation Office.

Catalog in Effect

Students may graduate under the terms of the catalog in effect when they entered ACC or any subsequent catalog under which they attended, provided: A) said catalog is not more than 5 years old, and B) the student’s particular degree or certificate plan has not been discontinued by the college. Students with majors that are discontinued will be allowed two years in which to complete such plans before the official deactivation of the affected instructional program. Students needing more information about this policy should contact an academic advisor or counselor.

Academic Honors

Scholastic Achievement Awards

The college recognizes students' scholastic achievement at the completion of each fall and spring semester. Notification of the achievement will appear on students' transcripts. Notation of the honor also will appear on students' diplomas if their cumulative GPA qualifies them for a scholastic achievement award. Note: Academic honors are awarded only for semesters in which the student has completed a minimum 12 semester credit hours. Students enrolled in only Developmental Education courses are not eligible.

Scholastic Leadership Roll – For students who have completed at least 12 semester credit hours at ACC and have achieved and maintained a grade point average between 3.50 and 3.75 (on a 4.00 scale)

Scholastic Excellence Roll – For student who have completed at least 12 semester credit hours at ACC and have achieved and maintained a grade point average higher than 3.75 but less than 4.00 (on the 4.00 scale)

President's Honor Roll – For students who have completed at least 12 semester credit hours at ACC and have achieved and maintained a grade point average of 4.00 (on the 4.00 scale used at ACC)

Honors Program

www.austincc.edu/honors

ACC is committed to providing its academically gifted students an enhanced and supportive learning climate that encourages community involvement, academic achievement, personal growth, and social awareness. Students must be accepted into the Honors Program in order to take the Honors courses. One or more of the following criteria are required to be admitted to the program:

- Graduate from high school in the top 10 percent of the class
- Have a cumulative high school grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4 point scale, an ACT score of 26 or higher, an SAT score of 1170 or higher, or a cumulative college grade point average of 3.25 or higher

Students who successfully complete the requirements for graduating from the ACC Honors Program will be awarded an Honors Program Graduation Certificate as a supplement to their diploma, a special notation to their academic transcript, and recognition at the commencement ceremony.

Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa has been the only nationally recognized International Honor Society of the Two-Year College since its founding in 1918. The Alpha Gamma Pi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa was chartered at ACC in October 1977. In accordance with the international organization's goals, the Alpha Gamma Pi chapter recognizes and promotes scholarship, the development of leadership and service, and the cultivation of fellowship among students at ACC. Students who meet chapter criteria receive invitations during the fall and spring semesters.

Transcripts

Official transcripts are issued at the Cypress Creek, Eastview, Northridge, Pinnacle, Rio Grande, and Riverside campus. A fee of \$5 per copy is due in advance. Checks should be made payable to ACC.

Transcript requests will be honored as quickly as possible on a first-come, first-served basis. During peak periods including commencement and registration, transcripts should be requested two weeks in advance. Student must make all requests in writing. Requests by persons other than the student will not be honored without the student's personal signature and a copy of a valid photo ID (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974).

The Social Security number of the student is required to properly identify the student's file. All financial and other obligations to the college must be cleared before transcripts can be released. Continuing Education students may obtain their transcripts and duplicate certificates from the Continuing Education Division, Fourth Floor, Highland Business Center, 5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, Texas 78752.

Policy and Procedures for Inclement Weather

Classes may be canceled due to inclement weather. If classes are not in session, notification is made through local radio and television stations, as well as ACC's Channel 19 and on the web at www.austincc.edu. These local media should be consulted regarding resumption of classes. In compliance with the Texas Education Code, the college may schedule makeup classes to satisfy contact hour requirements. In such cases, students will be notified through their campus manager. Continuing Education classes will be rescheduled.