

**03-02-00 Academic Standards and Retention**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum criteria for undergraduate academic retention standards at the college under the governance of the Tennessee Board of Regents.

**POLICY/GUIDELINE**

The following grading system is used at Nashville State Community College:

<b>Grade</b>		<b>Quality Points/Grade Points</b>
<b>Values per Semester Credit Hour</b>		
A	Superior	4
B	Excellent	3
C	Average	2
D	Passing, but below average	1
F	Failure	0
FA	Failure, Attendance-Related (unofficial withdrawal)	0
FN	Failure, Never Attended Class (unofficial withdrawal)	0
P	Pass	0
S	Satisfactory	0
U	Unsatisfactory	0

Other marks which may appear on the grade report and/or transcripts are as follows:

- W        Withdrawal – withdrawal from course initiated by the student.
- I        Incomplete – The “I” indicates that the student has not completed all of the course work due to such extenuating circumstances as personal illness, death in the family, or other justifiable reasons. If the “I” grade is not removed by the deadline, it will be automatically change to an “F”. The deadlines for removal are in the Records Office and listed on Academic Calendars found in the catalog and all printed schedules.

X Continuation – The “X” indicates the student attempted a remedial or developmental course, but progress was not sufficient to warrant a grade. It carries no connotation of failure. It indicates the student, upon the advice of the instructor, should register for the same course and takes more time to earn a grade. The “X” grade is restricted to use in the R/D courses.

An overall maximum of 15 semester hours of “X” is allowed. Veterans who are receiving educational benefits cannot be awarded an “X” grade in any course.

AU Audit No grade or credit awarded.

NR No grade reported. This grade is assigned when a grade is not issued by the instructor of the course.

Grades of “W”, “I”, “X”, “AU”, and “NR” have no grade point value and are not used in computing grade point average.

### **Grade Point Average**

The academic standing of a student is expressed in terms of a quality point average (QPA)/grade point average (GPA). When a course is completed, the number of grade points earned is determined by multiplying the credit hours earned for that course by the grade points assigned to the letter grade earned. Examples on calculating a GPA are found on the Records Office website: [www.nsc.edu/records](http://www.nsc.edu/records).

### **Dean’s List**

Degree- and certificate-seeking students who achieve a term QPA/GPA of at least 3.5 during any semester in which they are at least part-time (six hours) will be listed on the Dean’s List based on college-level course work.

### **President’s List**

Degree and certificate-seeking students who achieve a term QPA/GPA of at least 4.0 during any semester in which they are at least part-time (six hours) will be listed on the President’s List based on college-level course work.

### **Repeating Courses**

For the purpose of raising a grade point average, a student may only repeat a course in which the previous grade earned is “C” or lower. The Academic Dean of the discipline course must approve any exception to this before the student registers to repeat the course. When a course is repeated for the first time, the last grade earned is used in the calculation of the student’s quality/grade point average regardless of which grade is higher. The grade earned in the third and subsequent attempts will be used in calculating the QPA/GPA. The credit hours earned by repeating a course will be counted only one time in the cumulative total hours earned. In all instances, the last grade earned is used to determine whether the student meets graduation requirements.

Veterans repeating courses for which they have passing grades (D or higher) are advised to speak with the College's VA certifying official concerning eligibility for benefits since the VA typically does not pay to repeat a course that has been successfully completed.

### **Academic Fresh Start**

#### [TBR Policy 2.03.01.01](#)

1. "Academic Fresh Start" is a plan of academic forgiveness which allows undergraduate students who have experienced academic difficulty to make a clean start upon returning to college after an extended absence.
2. The Academic Fresh Start allows eligible students to resume study without being penalized for his/her past unsatisfactory scholarship and signals the initiation of a new QPA/GPA to be used for determining academic standing.

### **Institutional Terms of the Fresh Start**

1. The student must not have been enrolled at a higher education institution for a period of four years.
2. The student must have previously earned course credit with Nashville State Community College.
3. The student must not have earned a credential (degree, certificate, diploma, etc.) from another higher education institution previously.
4. Courses in which a grade of "F" (and "D" grades if they can't be used to count toward the degree) will be excluded from the students GPA and earned hours but will remain as part of the academic record.
5. Complete and submit the Academic Fresh Start form to the Director of Records and Registration in the Records Office. The form can be found on the Records website at the following address: [www.nsc.edu/records](http://www.nsc.edu/records). If approved, the student is only granted an Academic Fresh Start once.

### **Grade Appeals**

A student who believes that an error has been made in the grade assigned for a course may appeal his/her grade. The appeal must be initiated during the semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was posted (summer semester will be considered in determining the following semester). Grade appeals are allowed only when 1) the instructor has not used criteria stated in the course syllabus, 2) has applied criteria inequitably, or 3) has made errors in the calculation or recording of a grade. In all cases, the student will assume the burden of proof with respect to these issues. The Student Grade Appeal Form for documenting this step may be obtained from the division Dean, any satellite campus, or [www.nsc.edu](http://www.nsc.edu).

### Steps for an Appeal

1. The student must try to consult with the instructor to provide a satisfactory resolution to the appeal. The student must also document his/her contact, or attempts to contact, the instructor. The Student Grade Appeal Form for documenting this step may be obtained from the division Dean, any satellite campus, or [www.nsc.edu](http://www.nsc.edu). The only exception to this step in the process is in the case that the instructor is no longer employed at the college or is unavailable so that it is impossible to contact the instructor. In the event the student cannot contact the instructor, the student may contact the instructor's division Dean or Campus Director who will attempt to contact the instructor. If both parties are unable to contact the instructor, the Dean/Director may act on the instructor's behalf in reviewing the grade appeal.
2. If the appeal cannot be resolved between the student and the instructor, the student may appeal, in writing, to the appropriate faculty supervisor: division Dean for NSCC online courses or those on the Nashville campus, or the Campus Director for courses at a satellite campus. To continue the appeal, the student must present the completed Student Grade Appeal Form to the appropriate supervisor. The Dean/Director will attempt to resolve the appeal in consultation with the instructor and/or the student. This step must be completed during the semester following the semester in which the grade was earned and must be documented using the Student Grade Appeal Form. Both the student and the faculty member will be notified of the decision of the Dean/Director in writing, to include the grade appeal form.
3. Both the student and faculty member have 10 business days from the Dean's/Director's response to appeal the decision. If the course in question took place on a satellite campus, the next level of appeal is to the appropriate instructional Dean. In such a case, the appeal process will be the same as outlined in 2 above. To continue the appeal further, the student or faculty member must present a copy of the completed Student Grade Appeal Form which clearly explains the basis of the appeal, the evidence of the appeal, supporting documentation, and the signatures of the instructor and division Dean to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Vice President will utilize any resources available to resolve the grade conflict within 15 business days from the date submitted to the office.
4. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will notify the student, the instructor and the division Dean of their decision in writing, to include the grade appeal form. Both the student and faculty member have 10 business days from the Vice President's response to appeal the decision, in writing, through a hearing of an Academic Appeals Committee. To appeal, the student or faculty member must present a copy of the completed Student Grade Appeal Form which clearly explains the basis of the appeal, the evidence of the appeal, supporting documentation, and the signatures of the instructor, division Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Appeals should be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs will call a meeting of the Academic Appeal Committee with, at a minimum, faculty representation from all academic divisions. If necessary, the presence of a non-voting content specialist can be requested by the committee once

supporting documentation has been reviewed. The Academic Appeals Committee Chair shall notify the student, the instructor, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs of the time and location of the hearing in writing. The committee shall have the power to allow the assigned grade to stand or to be changed. Its decision must be formally announced to all parties in writing. The time schedule allowed for completion of the action of the Committee shall be 15 business days. The hearing committee procedures will provide due process as outlined in the Nashville State Student Code of Conduct. Pending resolution of the appeal, consequences of the contested grade will stand.

Appeal of decisions of the Academic Appeals Committee can be made in writing within 10 business days, by any party, to the President, whose decision will be final.

### **Retention Standards**

#### [TBR Policy 2.03.01.01](#)

1. The minimum quality point average required to achieve the associate degree is 2.0.
2. In addition, a student who fails during any term to attain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 for the credit hours attempted will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent term.
3. At the end of the next term of enrollment, a student on academic probation who has failed to attain a 2.0 GPA for that term will be suspended for a minimum of one term. The summer term may not be counted as the term of suspension, unless institutional policies provide for multiple term suspension.
4. The policies shall be based on factors of extenuating circumstances and hardship.

### **Academic Probation and Suspension**

1. Academic probation and suspension are based on the college's retention standards as described previously.
2. Probation: Once a student falls below the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0, they will be placed on a probationary status. While on probation, the student must attain a minimum term GPA of a 2.0. The student will remain on probation until the minimum required cumulative GPA is attained. However, if the student falls below a term GPA of 2.0 while on probation, the student will be placed on a one-term suspension. Note: If a student is placed on suspension during the spring term, the suspension is applied to both the following summer and fall terms and thus the student would not be eligible for re-enrollment until the spring term of the following year under a post-suspension probationary status.
3. Suspension: While on a probationary status, if a student fails to attain a 2.0 term GPA, they will be placed on a one-term suspension. When a student returns from a suspension, they will be placed on a post-suspension probationary status. The student will remain on a post-suspension probationary status as long as they attain a term GPA of 2.0 or get their cumulative GPA back up

to the minimum standard. If the student fails to attain a term GPA of a 2.0 while on a post-suspension probationary status, they will be placed on suspension for two-terms. Note: Once placed on suspension, if the student has pre-registered for any courses in the next term(s) of enrollment, all courses will be dropped.

4. Students will be notified in writing via an email to their NSCC email address at the end of the term if they have been placed on probation or suspension by the Records Office. However, academic standing is not contingent upon receipt of the notification. Students should check their academic standing via MyNSCC at the end of each term.

### **Academic Action Appeals**

1. A student may appeal an academic action if he/she believes extenuating circumstances or unusual hardship affected his or her ability to achieve the minimum academic standard. A suspension appeal form must be submitted to the Director of Records and Registration within 18 days from the end of the term that resulted in your suspension. The appeal must outline the reasons for the request in addition to submitting any supporting documentation. The Academic Appeals Committee will review and make a final determination regarding the action; notification will be sent to the student regarding the decision.
2. Students receiving Veterans Education benefits will not be certified to the Department of Veterans Affairs if enrollment is based on a second consecutive waiver of Academic Suspension.

### **Drop and Withdrawal Standards**

1. After the official registration period is over, students may make adjustments in their schedule through the process of adding and/or dropping courses. A student will be required to contact the Director of Student Success to drop the last class.
2. The last date for students to add or drop a course without a penalty is clearly indicated in the college academic calendar.
3. After the last day to add or drop a class without a penalty, and not later than two-thirds into the part-of-term, a student may officially drop a course(s) or withdraw from the institution and receive a "W" or other appropriate symbol/grade.
  - A. When calculating two-thirds, calendar days shall be used, not just class or working days.
4. In general, such symbol/grade counts as no hours attempted.
  - A. A student who is withdrawn after two-thirds of the part-of-term is complete will receive a "W" or other appropriate symbol in the course or courses passing.
  - B. However, the student will receive a failing grade (usually denoted by an "F") in the course or courses failing unless it can be clearly demonstrated that an unusual condition or hardship exists.

- C. The Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment management is responsible for determining specific types of conditions or hardships which will be considered as acceptable.
5. Students who desire to drop a course(s) or withdraw from the institution before the established deadline must do so according to the published procedure defined by the institution.
6. A student who does not officially drop or withdraw from a course, but receives a failing grade, will receive an "F" if their last day of attendance was not earlier than two-thirds into the part-of-term.
7. A student who does not officially drop or withdraw from a course, but receives a failing grade, will receive an "FA" if their last day of attendance was earlier than two-thirds into the part-of-term. The student will be considered as an unofficial withdrawal from the course.

**SOURCES**

- [T.C.A. § 49-8-203](#)

**RELATED POLICIES**

- [TBR Policy 2.03.01.01](#)

*Approved by NSCC Cabinet 7/12/21*