A&S Policies and Protocols—FAQs for Returning Students

This document is designed to complement “Revised Graduation Requirements for the College of Arts and Sciences,” which is available at http://tinyurl.com/OC-new-grad-reqts. It provides answers to questions about courses and co-curricular credits, winter term, transfer of credit, grading options, withdrawing from a course, and academic standing.

Courses, Co-Curriculars, Majors, and Winter Term

- What is a full course in the Arts and Sciences?
  - A full academic course (four credits) serves as the basic building block for the four-course load for students in the Arts and Sciences: (i.e., four courses x eight semesters = 32). Two half academic courses are the equivalent of one full course. Students in the Arts and Sciences are expected to take four full academic courses each semester.

- What is a co-curricular credit?
  - A co-curricular credit is distinct from a course, and can be earned primarily in .5- and one-credit classes that you can find in the schedule of classes, including athletics (ATHL), entrepreneurship (ENTR), learning skills (LRNS), and rhetoric and composition practica (RTCP). Classes in the Experimental College also count for one or two co-curricular credits. A student can apply up to eight co-curricular credits toward graduation. (See http://tinyurl.com/OC-cocurriculars for a list of co-curriculars, and for the limits on taking ATHL 600: Independent Fitness and RTCP 107: Practicum in Journalism multiple times for credit toward graduation.)

- Where can I find a list of majors and their requirements?
  - See the Arts and Sciences section in the Course Catalog, at http://tinyurl.com/OC-majors.

- What is winter term?
  - Oberlin provides a winter term of four weeks in January to encourage and enable students to discover the value of self-education. This term affords students the opportunity to devise and pursue programs of independent study or research and to undertake, individually or with a group, on- or off-campus, projects of educational value that the structured curriculum during the academic year cannot accommodate easily. Winter term provides an opportunity for experimentation and creativity, intellectual independence, and personal responsibility.

- What are the basic requirements for a full winter term project?
  - The commitment for a full project is five to six hours per weekday of the four-week winter term period in January. Three full winter-term projects must be registered for and completed in order to fulfill this requirement. For more information, see the winter term section of the Course Catalog, at http://tinyurl.com/oberlin-winterterm.

Transfer of Credit

- What are the transfer-of-credit limits at the college?
  - Maximum pre-matriculation credits, for first-time college students entering in fall 2013 and after. Transfer credit earned before matriculation (AP, IB, pre-matriculation college credits) is limited to 5 courses/20 credits. Advanced placement in courses on the basis of work completed prior to matriculation (AP and IB test scores, pre-matriculation college credit) is determined according to individual department and program policies.
    - Separate limits apply to returning students and transfer students, which you can find at http://tinyurl.com/OC-transfer-info.
Maximum post-matriculation credit. For all students enrolled as of fall 2013, transfer credit earned after matriculation (excluding credit earned on an approved academic leave of absence/study-away program and credit earned while enrolled-not-in-residence) is limited to 3 courses/12 credits. Post-matriculation credit earned prior to fall 2013 is subject to terms of the catalog during the academic year the credit was approved by the Registrar.

GRADING OPTIONS AND WITHDRAWING FROM A COURSE

- What are the grading options at the college?
  - Unless a course description indicates otherwise, two grading options are available: letter grades or pass/no pass (P/NP). Letter grades include the marks A+ to C-, D, and F, and are used to calculate a student’s grade point average (GPA). The grades of P and NP do not enter into the GPA calculation. (You can find the registrar’s GPA calculator at http://tinyurl.com/OC-gpa.)
  - For courses taken for P/NP, all passing work (A+ to C-) is given the uniform grade of pass (P). Work below C- is considered not passing, and is given a grade of no pass (NP).

- Can I change the grading option on a course once the semester is underway?
  - Yes. Students are responsible for following the deadlines each semester as outlined in the academic calendar, which is available at the registrar’s web page. The deadline for changing the grading option on a full-semester course (from a letter grade to P/NP, or vice versa) is the last day of the eighth week of the semester. For module courses, the deadline is the last day of the fourth week of the module.

- Is it possible to withdraw from a course?
  - A student may withdraw from a class between the end of the add/drop period and the last day of the eighth week of classes for a full-semester course, and the last day of the fourth week of the module for a module course. If a student withdraws from a class, the notation “W” (withdrawn; no indication of passing or failing) is entered on the student’s transcript. After the end of the eighth week of classes (fourth week for a module course), a letter grade or P/NP is to be awarded for all classes.
  - **Note:** a course from which a student withdraws still counts toward the maximum courses/credits allowed. If a student withdraws from a course and adds a course during the semester, both count toward the maximum of five courses/20 credits per semester, with permission, for students in the arts and sciences.

ACADEMIC STANDING

- What do I need to do in order to maintain good academic standing in the arts and sciences?
  - In their first semester, students must pass at least three full academic courses or the equivalent.
  - Students in each subsequent semester must pass no fewer than three and one half full courses per semester, of which three must be full academic courses or the equivalent. The remaining half course may be another academic course or the equivalent in co-curricular courses.

- Students are expected to progress toward graduation at a more or less constant rate. Given the requirement of 32 full courses, students should pass an average of four courses per semester to complete 32 courses in eight semesters.
  - AP, IB, or other courses/credits earned prior to or after matriculation at Oberlin cannot be used to make up for a failed course for the purpose of academic standing.
  - A minimum cumulative GPA of 1.67 is required to be in good academic standing.
  - The Academic Standing Committee reviews the records of students whose achievement in a given semester falls below the established minimum. More information about academic standing is available in the academic policies section of the Course Catalog, at http://tinyurl.com/OC-academic-standing.