

# Academic Policies

## *University Degree Requirements*

To be eligible for a baccalaureate degree from the University, a student must meet the following:

- I. college readiness requirements
- II. Core curriculum requirements
- III. school or college major requirements

The Core curriculum requirements apply to all students who entered the University beginning September 1982 and thereafter. Transfer students should refer to the section, "Transfer Students and the Core Curriculum."

### *College Readiness Requirements*

The University has defined measures of college readiness in writing and math. All students must demonstrate college readiness in these subjects. Some courses at other institutions may be used to meet the college readiness requirements in math or writing; please consult the Transfer Affairs office for specifics. These requirements can also be met through CLEP scores; consult the office of Prior Learning Assessment for an evaluation.

In math, students can demonstrate college readiness by any ONE of the following measures:

1. an SAT Quantitative score of 550 or above.
2. an ACT Math score of 22 or above.
3. a passing score on the mathematics placement examination.
4. a C minus or better in MAT 101B (4 credits)

In writing, students can demonstrate college readiness by any ONE of the following measures:

1. an SAT Writing score of 550 or above.
2. an ACT English score of 22 or above.

Students whose scores fall below these measures, or who do not have test scores, must fulfill their college writing requirement by taking ENG 104C, Enriched College Writing.

Students whose first language is not English can demonstrate college readiness by any ONE of the following measures:

1. an SAT Writing score of 550 or above.
2. a TOEFL score of 79 or above.

Non-native speakers of English whose writing falls below these measures must complete ESL 104A Reading, Writing & Vocabulary, with a C or better (and any prerequisite courses based on the ESOL Program's placement test). To complete their Core writing requirement, these students must then move on to ESL 100C College Writing.

## *Course Numbering*

For information regarding the Core curriculum, including a list of courses approved to satisfy the Core, please refer to the section on the Core curriculum.

001-049	No Degree Credit
050-099	Associate Degree Program Credit Only
100-199	Introductory Level
200-399	Intermediate Level
400-499	Senior Level, others by permission
500-599	Undergraduate and Graduate Students
600-799	Graduate and Professional Students Only

### *Note:*

1. All courses carrying number 050-099 carry credit and quality points only toward an associate degree.
2. All courses with number 100 or greater carry credit and quality points toward both an associate degree and a baccalaureate degree.
3. Matriculated baccalaureate students should not register for courses with numbers less than 100 unless meeting minimum proficiency requirements.
4. Associate degree students who wish to change their major to a baccalaureate program should complete a Change of Major form. Some programs require a minimum grade point average (GPA) for a major change into a baccalaureate

program. Credit and quality points for courses numbered 050-099 will be deducted from the appropriate academic totals when a student changes from an associate degree program to a baccalaureate program.

### ***Registrar***

The Office of the Registrar serves as the legal custodian of University academic records and is responsible for the appropriate recording, production, and disbursement of those records. The Office is also responsible for recording such critical functions as academic honors, sanctions, and dismissals. The Office of the Registrar is located in Gorham in Corthell Hall (780-5230). Registration services are available in the Student Billing Office in Portland at Payson Smith Hall (780-5233) and at Lewiston-Auburn College (753-6500).

### ***Registration***

The registration process is conducted by the Registrar, Business Office, and many academic departments. It includes selection of courses, completion of proper forms, and payment of University charges. Newly admitted students are notified by Advising Services of their schedule for orientation, advising, and registration. Advising Services coordinates the new student academic advising process and initiates the registration procedure by approving course schedules prior to processing by the Registrar and Business Office.

Continuing degree students may advance register in priority order, based on credits earned and class level. Advance registration is conducted near the end of each semester for the following semester. Non-matriculated (special) students may register only during the open registration period. Degree students must obtain advisor approval prior to registration. No student may register for more than 18 credits in one semester without the permission of his or her advisor and the dean.

### ***Enrollment Status***

Students are considered to be full-time if they are enrolled for 12 or more credits. Half-time enrollment requires an active enrollment of at least 6 credits.

### ***Grading System***

Grades at the University are given in terms of letters, with the option of a plus or minus designation, representing levels of achievement. The basis for determining a grade is the relative extent to which the student has achieved the objectives of the course. The student's work in each course is graded as follows:

- A High honors (A+ is not a valid grade.)
- B Honors
- C Satisfactory, successful meeting of the course objectives
- D Low-level work, below the average required for graduation for an undergraduate, and a failing grade for a graduate student. In addition, individual departments may limit the number of D grades accepted, as stated in the departmental sections of this catalog. The paragraphs on Minimum Grade and Academic Suspension and Repeated Courses should also be noted.
- F Failure to meet the course objectives
- P Pass: pass with a grade of C- or better in a pass-fail course
- H Honors performance in a pass/fail course
- LP Low Pass; pass with a grade of D-, D, or D+ in a pass/fail course
- I Incomplete; a temporary grade given when the student, because of extraordinary circumstances, has failed to complete the course requirements. Incomplete grades must be resolved by the end of each subsequent semester; the Registrar shall notify faculty members involved of students who have carried unresolved incompletes on their transcript for one semester. If the incomplete is not resolved by the instructor, an I grade will be converted to an F.
- INC Permanent Incomplete. When a temporary incomplete (I) grade is not resolved to a normal letter grade, a permanent incomplete may be assigned in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the instructor and the dean. In unusual circumstances wherein the faculty member is no longer available, the dean may exercise this function. The grade of INC has no impact on GPA; no credits awarded.
- L Stopped attending. The grade of L may be assigned to students who stopped attending a course without officially dropping the course. The grade of L will be computed as an F for purposes of the student's grade point average.

MG	Missing Grade: Occasionally, faculty may assign students invalid grades for a course, or may fail to submit a grade for a particular student in a course. In these cases, the Registrar's Office will note this act by designating a missing grade, or MG, instead of a grade for the course. Missing Grades must be resolved by the end of each semester. The Registrar shall notify faculty members involved, and their departmental chairperson, of students who have carried unresolved MGs on their transcript for one semester. If the missing grade is not resolved by the instructor, the MG will be converted to an F.
W	Withdrawal after the end of the add/drop period through 60% of a course. If a student has not officially withdrawn before 60% of the course has been completed, an F will be assigned. The W notation may be obtained after completion of 60% of the course under unusual circumstances if so determined by the instructor and the dean. A threat of failure is not considered to be an unusual circumstance. The grade of W has no impact on GPA.
DG	Satisfactory progress after one semester of a two-semester course; grade and credits to be given upon completion of second semester.
AU	Student attended courses on a noncredit basis.

### **Grade Point Averages**

The academic standing of each student is computed by the Registrar at the end of every semester. The following table represents the rating scale:

A	4.00 grade points per credit hour
A-	3.67 grade points per credit hour
B+	3.33 grade points per credit hour
B	3.00 grade points per credit hour
B-	2.67 grade points per credit hour
C+	2.33 grade points per credit hour
C	2.00 grade points per credit hour
C-	1.67 grade points per credit hour
D+	1.33 grade points per credit hour
D	1.00 grade points per credit hour
D-	0.67 grade points per credit hour
F	0.00 grade points per credit hour

To compute the grade point average for a semester, first multiply the grade points earned in each course by the number of credit hours assigned to that course. The resulting product is the number of quality points for that course. Then divide the total number of quality points earned during the semester by the total number of credits carried in that semester. The result is carried out to two decimal places to produce the grade point average for that semester.

To compute the cumulative grade point average, divide the total quality points earned by the total credits attempted in all semesters.

### **Dean's List**

At the end of each semester, full-time, undergraduate degree students (12 credit hours or more, with a minimum of 12 letter graded credits (A-F), and excluding developmental credits (course numbers less than 100)), with grade point average of 3.4 or above will be placed on the Dean's List. Students with incomplete or missing grades (I or MG) at the point when the Dean's List is produced (35 days after the end of a fall or spring semester) will not be eligible for the Dean's List. Those students on the Dean's List whose names appear in the public directory of the University will have their names released to the news media. Students who attend both the fall and the spring semesters as part-time degree students and who meet the above full-time Dean's List criteria when the fall and spring semesters are combined are eligible for the Dean's list at the end of the spring semester. A notation will be placed on the transcript of those who are placed on the Dean's List.

### **Minimum Grade and Academic Suspension**

Minimum cumulative grade point averages for all undergraduate programs at the University are as follows:

	<i>For Good Standing</i>	<i>For Probationary Standing</i>
<i>Associate Degree Students</i>		
0-15 credit hours	1.60	1.35
16-30 credit hours	1.80	1.60
31-45 credit hours	2.00	1.80

*Baccalaureate Degree Students and Non-Matriculated Students*

0-30 credit hours	1.70	1.50
31-60 credit hours	1.80	1.60
61-90 credit hours	1.90	1.70
91 or more credit hours	2.00	1.80

Students may be suspended from the University by the dean of the appropriate academic unit. Students who have two consecutive semesters of probationary standing may be suspended at the discretion of the dean. Ordinarily, a student may be suspended by the dean in consultation with the department chair or the student's advisor if the student's semester average falls below 1.0. While under suspension, students may not take coursework, either at the University of Southern Maine or at other institutions, to be applied for credit at the University of Southern Maine without permission of the dean of the suspending academic unit. Academic suspensions are imposed for a length of one academic semester. Other standards vary from college to college and are outlined in the letter of suspension directed to the student from the appropriate dean. For details concerning disciplinary suspension and dismissal, consult the Student Conduct Code.

Students with majors or minors in English, history, political science, or psychology in the baccalaureate program of the College of Arts and Sciences must achieve at least six credits with grades of B or better in their major or minor requirements. No grades of D will count toward fulfillment of the major or minor requirements in these programs.

Technology education majors must maintain a 2.5 cumulative index prior to and throughout the professional sequence, i.e., TCE 380, TCE 381, and EDU 324. No more than one D grade will be accepted in the technical and professional courses required of industrial technology majors.

***Re-enrollment after  
Academic Suspension***

Matriculated degree candidates are eligible for re-enrollment at the University in accordance with the stipulations outlined in their letter of suspension. Unless noted otherwise in the letter of suspension, the student has the right to re-enroll after one semester.

***Unsatisfactory  
Progress***

A student who is a degree candidate is expected to complete and pass the courses for which he or she is registered during a given semester. A student who fails or withdraws from more than two courses during a semester may be placed on academic probation or suspended by the dean of the college, school, or division.

***Academic Dismissal***

Students placed on academic suspension for a second time are dismissed from the University. In rare cases, students may be readmitted if they can provide evidence of significant academic improvement to the dean of their school or college. Such evidence would normally include high quality academic coursework at another institution. For details of disciplinary dismissal, consult the Student Conduct Code.

***Professional Licensure  
and Certification Notice***

Students who are pursuing degrees leading to application for professional licensure or certification, and/or who will be participating in clinical placements, internships, or practica through their USM program should be aware that their host facility may require a criminal background check, finger printing, or drug screening. In such situations, each student is responsible for obtaining and paying for the background check or other screening process and for delivering required documentation to the facility. Although the University will make reasonable efforts to place admitted students in field experiences and internships, it will be up to the host facility to determine whether a student will be allowed to work at that facility. Students should further be aware that a criminal record may jeopardize licensure by the state certification body. Students may consult the certification body corresponding to their intended occupation for more details. Successful completion of a program of study at USM does not guarantee licensure, certification, or employment in the relevant occupation.

***Non-Matriculated  
Students***

Non-matriculated students may register on a space-available basis for courses providing the student meets the prerequisites for the course. Non-matriculated students, while not required to apply for admission, should be aware that, in addition to meeting Departmental/school/college/University requirements, a minimum of 30 USM credits must be taken as a matriculated USM degree student in order to receive a baccalaureate degree.

## ***Class Membership***

A minimum of 120 credit hours is required for graduation in most baccalaureate-level programs and 60 credit hours in associate-level programs. To progress through the University in the traditional four years (two years for associate degree students), full-time students should earn at least 30 credits each year, carrying at least 15 credit hours each semester. Permission must be obtained from the advisor and the appropriate dean to carry more than 18 credit hours.

For standing as a sophomore, a student shall have completed at least 20 percent of the hours required for graduation, for junior standing 45 percent, and for senior standing 70 percent.

The required number of credit hours by classes are:

	<i>Sophomore</i>	<i>Junior</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Four-year programs	24	54	84
Two-year programs	24		

## ***Add/Drop***

Students may add courses during the first week of class with the signature of the instructor. Dropping a course does not require instructor signature. Drops processed during the first two weeks do not have financial penalty. A student dropping a course after the add/drop period through 60% of classes will receive the grade notation of W. A student dropping a course after the 60% period will receive an F. The W notation may be assigned after 60% of the course has been completed under unusual circumstances if so determined by the instructor and the dean. *All students who register for a course and neither complete the course objectives nor officially withdraw according to any one of the procedures described above will be graded F in that course and must assume all financial obligations associated with the course.*

Students who find that their names are not on the instructor's official list should check immediately with the Registrar's Office to make necessary corrections in the registration records.

## ***Pass-Fail Option***

The purpose of the pass-fail grade option is to encourage a student to broaden his or her educational experience with a reduced risk of lowering the overall grade point average. The instructor will assign pass grades of H (honors performance) or P (pass) when a letter grade of C- or better would have been assigned, a grade of LP (low pass) when the letter grade would have been D+, D, or D-. Note that F and L grades will be included in the grade point average calculation.

Unless otherwise specifically stated in this catalog, courses taken to satisfy Core curriculum, University Honors Program, major, or minor requirements may not be taken pass-fail. Undergraduate degree candidates may register for a maximum of six hours of pass-fail credits in any one semester, up to a maximum of 18 hours of the total credit hours required for graduation.

Students may independently exercise the pass-fail option up to the end of the add/drop period (currently two weeks in the fall or spring semester). Requests after this period must be made through the Dean's office of the school/college offering the course; in general, requests for reversal of the pass-fail option will only be granted if a grade is necessary to meet the student's particular degree requirements. Prior to exercising this option, students are encouraged to contact the instructor of the course.

## ***Repeated Courses***

When a student repeats a course and earns a grade of A, B, C, D, F, H, P, or LP, the initial grade remains on the transcript but only the later grade is used in computing the grade point average or for credit. No course in which one of the above grades has been earned may be repeated more than once without written permission of the dean or director of the appropriate school, college, or division. This policy does not apply to courses specifically designed to be repeated. Students should complete a Course Condition form each time they repeat a course. Courses intended to repeat University of Southern Maine courses may be taken at other institutions; such courses will be accepted in accordance with the University's transfer policy. The transferred course accepted as a USM equivalent will receive USM credit but will not be calculated in the GPA; the original USM course that was repeated will remain on the student's transcript but will be removed from both the credit and GPA calculations.

## ***Academic Forgiveness Policy***

Occasionally, a student's academic performance early in his or her career may not be reflective of academic performance at a later time. Academic forgiveness permits a student to remove credits and grades from one semester of attendance. All credits and grades in the forgiven semester are removed regardless of the grade received in

any given course. The forgiven semester's academic detail (including grades and attempted credits) will continue to be displayed on the transcript, but these grades and credits will not be included in the student's grade point average or total credits earned. Once academic forgiveness is granted, it is not reversible.

The following criteria must be met before academic forgiveness will be granted: 1) The semester to be forgiven must have been completed at least three years prior to the declaration and any earned credits from that semester must not have been applied to a previously awarded degree; 2) the student has taken at least 15 credits at USM for which a grade point average of at least 2.5 is earned subsequent to the declared semester; 3) the student is a matriculated, undergraduate degree candidate when the forgiven semester is declared; 4) forgiveness can only be provided for credits and grades earned at USM; and 5) academic forgiveness can be declared only once and for one complete semester. No tuition or fee refunds shall be made.

### ***Substitution of Program and Core Curriculum Requirements for Students with Disabilities***

If a documented disability precludes successful completion of a particular course required by a degree program or successful completion of Core curriculum requirements, a request for substitution of either the degree program, or most Core curriculum requirements can be initiated by a student. A student may not request that Core area A (writing proficiency), or Core area C (writing competence), be modified. Written communication is considered to be an integral part of the classroom experience and substitution of this requirement would substantially change the nature of the educational preparation and experience at USM. In all requests, the student has the responsibility to provide information supporting the need for a degree program or Core curriculum substitution based upon disability. A copy of the complete policy and procedures statement may be obtained from the Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities, 242 Luther Bonney Hall, Portland campus, 780-4706; TTY 780-5646.

### ***Auditing Courses***

Students who register to audit a course receive no credit for the course but will have an audit grade (AU) recorded on their transcripts. Audit courses must be declared by the end of the add/drop period. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Registrar's Office.

### ***Independent Study***

Independent study is intended to encourage supervised undergraduate research. With permission of the instructor, junior and senior students may elect independent study related to their major or minor. Normally, no more than four credits may be earned in a semester. No more than 12 credits of completed independent study shall be counted towards an undergraduate degree. The student submits an independent study application to the department chair which includes a detailed description of his or her proposed program of study. The independent study form must be filed with the Registrar before registration will be allowed.

### ***Variable Credit Courses***

A student should complete the necessary form during registration at the Registrar's Office. Variable credits may be obtained only for those courses so designated.

### ***Permanent Academic Record***

The permanent academic record, including transfer credit evaluation, is maintained by the Office of the Registrar for all students of the University. While grades may be reported unofficially to the student, academic dean, and advisor, the only true and valid documentation of academic work and student status is an official transcript of the academic record, stamped with the Registrar's signature and embossed with the seal of the University. The transcript is available only with the signature of the student and will be released to that student or a designee provided there are no outstanding charges against his or her account with the Business Office. Other types of transcripts are: Unofficial-Issued Directly to Student, available after grades are posted for that semester; Placement Transcript, provided for the student's placement folder.

### ***Academic Record Changes***

Considerable care is taken to ensure that course registration and grades entered on a student's permanent record are accurate. Any student who suspects an error has been made should contact the Registrar's Office immediately. Records are assumed to be correct if a student does not report to the Registrar's Office within one year of the completion of the course. At that time, the record becomes permanent and cannot be changed.

### ***Coursework at Other Institutions***

Matriculated students at the University are expected to secure written approval from the appropriate dean prior to taking coursework at another institution. Credit approved for courses taken at other institutions will count towards the total degree hours required but will not be computed in the student's cumulative grade point average. For further information, contact the Transfer Affairs Office.

### ***Graduation Requirements***

In addition to the minimum requirements of 120 credits for a baccalaureate degree and 60 credits for an associate's degree, a candidate must (a) receive passing grades in courses required by the University, the school or college, and the major department; (b) accumulate the number of credit hours required by the school or college in which the student is registered; (c) achieve an accumulative average of not less than 2.00; (d) meet the requirements of the major department; (e) complete an Application for Degree form with the Office of the Registrar at the beginning of the semester of graduation. Responsibility for successfully completing the requirements of the program resides with the student.

### ***Residence Requirement***

For all baccalaureate degrees at the University a minimum of 30 credits hours, including at least 9 hours in the major field, must be completed while matriculated in the school or college from which the degree is sought (15 credit hours for associate's degree programs). A student may earn no more than six of these 30 credit hours at another campus of the University of Maine System. In addition, the final 30 credits of a student's degree program must normally be completed at USM. Under extraordinary circumstances and with supporting documentation, students may request a waiver of the requirement to complete the final 30 credits at USM from the dean of the school or college from which the degree is sought. Waivers are not automatically granted, and shall not be granted until at least 30 credits hours, including at least 9 hours in the major field, have been completed while matriculated in the school or college from which the degree is sought (15 credit hours for associate's degree programs).

### ***Graduation Honors Policy***

Graduation with distinction is based on the student's GPA at the University of Southern Maine. Students must complete at least 60 credit hours (with a minimum of 45 credit hours graded A through F) at USM in order to qualify. Graduation with distinction categories are (a) at least 3.80 for summa cum laude; (b) at least 3.60 and less than 3.80 for magna cum laude; and (c) at least 3.40 and less than 3.60 for cum laude.

#### ***Honors Cords at Commencement***

In the event a student meets the graduation with distinction GPA requirement at USM, but fails to meet the 60 credit hour requirement, distinction will be determined by a calculation of the student's GPA for the last 60 credit hours wherever they were completed.

For purposes of wearing honor cords at Commencement: (gold cords, *summa cum laude*; blue cords, *magna cum laude*; white cords, *cum laude*) a student must meet the GPA requirements listed above, and be registered for enough credits to meet the 60 credit hours at USM requirement. Spring semester grades will not be calculated in the GPA for determining GPA for honors cords at Commencement.

### ***Post-Baccalaureate Study for Second Degree***

A second bachelor's degree may not be granted a student until he or she has completed an additional year of college work, as represented by a minimum of 30 semester hours beyond the requirements for the first degree. Such work must be completed in accordance with all other University regulations.

It is the responsibility of the Office of the Dean of the school or college in which the second degree is sought to provide the approval for undertaking the second degree and certifying the completion of all requirements prior to receipt of the second degree.

Students who have already earned one baccalaureate degree and are undertaking work for a second baccalaureate degree are not required to satisfy Core curriculum requirements.

### ***Withdrawal from the University***

To withdraw from the University, a student must notify the Registrar's Office in writing. Official withdrawal forms are available from the Registrar's Office and the Enrollment Services Center and require a signature. The date of withdrawal will nor-

mally be the postmark date of the withdrawal letter or the date the official form is signed.

If a student withdraws from the University during the add/drop period of the semester, there will be no courses or grades recorded. Students withdrawing after the add/drop period through 60% of the semester will receive a W grade for each course in which the student was enrolled. Students withdrawing after 60% of the semester will receive regular grade designations as determined by the instructors, normally an F grade. Under unusual circumstances, grades of W can be assigned after 60% of the semester if approved by both the instructor and the dean.

Students in good standing who have withdrawn from the University and who wish to return at a later date should follow the instructions given under Matriculation Status (Leave of Absence).

Information concerning financial obligations to the University relative to the withdrawal policy will be found in the Financial Information section of this catalog.

### ***Matriculation Status (Leave of Absence)***

Degree candidates maintain their matriculation status for ten calendar years from their first semester of attendance as matriculated students. If, for any reason other than dismissal from the University, a student does not register for any length of time during that ten-year period and then resumes registration, no readmission decision will be made. In such cases, the student should register for classes in accordance with current registration procedures. If, however, a student wishes to resume studies as a degree candidate after the ten-year period has elapsed and has not taken classes for two years, he or she needs to apply for readmission. Readmission applicants should contact the Office of Admission for the proper forms.

### ***Catalog Effective for Graduation Requirements***

Freshmen and new transfer students (including transfers from other campuses of the University of Maine System) must satisfy the graduation requirements set out in the catalog in effect for the first semester of their attendance as a matriculated student. Students whose matriculation at the University has expired (normally ten years) forfeit the right to pursue a degree according to the provisions of the original catalog and are bound instead by the catalog in effect for the first semester of attendance as a readmitted student.

At the student's choice, a later catalog may be selected for graduation requirements; but a student may not select an earlier catalog. In some cases, academic units have specific time limits for completion of graduation requirements. If so, that time limit will be noted in the appropriate school/college/division section of this catalog. Students must meet the requirements of a catalog issued within ten years of graduation.

The University is not bound by its previous catalog and maintains the right to control its course offerings. Where program/degree requirement changes have occurred that have resulted in changes to course offerings and/or availability, reasonable substitutions will be made to facilitate degree/program completion.

### ***Change of Major within a School or College***

Permission to change from one major to another is granted by the dean and head of the department in which the student expects to major. A form for the change may be obtained from the Registrar's Office. A change-of-major form must be filed with the Registrar's Office. Requests from undeclared students, and admitted-with-conditions students must be processed by Advising Services.

### ***Change of College or School***

Information on the procedure for change of college or school may be obtained from the Registrar's Office or Advising Services.

### ***Double Majors***

When a student completes the basic requirement for graduation from one of the schools or colleges and the course requirements for two majors, the student should notify the Registrar, who will record the double major on the student's transcript.

### ***Attendance Policy***

The attendance policy is left to the discretion of the faculty member. Each semester, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to inform the students in each class of the attendance requirements for that class.

### ***Student Academic Integrity Policy***

Everyone associated with the University of Southern Maine is expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity central to the academic function of the University. Any breach of academic integrity represents a serious offense. Each student has a responsibility to know the standards of conduct and expectations of academic integrity that apply to academic tasks. Violations of student academic integri-

ty include any actions that attempt to promote or enhance the academic standing of any student by dishonest means. Cheating on an examination, stealing the words or ideas of another (i.e., plagiarism), making statements known to be false or misleading, falsifying the results of one's research, improperly using library materials or computer files, or altering or forging academic records are examples of violations of this policy which are contrary to the academic purposes for which the University exists. Acts that violate academic integrity disrupt the educational process and are not acceptable.

Evidence of a violation of the academic integrity policy will normally result in disciplinary action. A copy of the complete policy may be obtained from the Office of Community Standards (780-5242).

### ***Examination Policy***

The examination policy states that it is the responsibility of the faculty member to inform the students in each class of the examination requirements for that class. Usually, two to four preliminary examinations are administered in each course and count heavily toward the final grade. Giving a final exam is not mandatory; however, in classes where they are given, the examinations must be scheduled within the specific final exam period. Take-home exams are also due within the final exam period. By action of the Faculty Senate, no test or examination may be scheduled during the last week of classes.

### ***Absence from a Final Examination***

A student who misses a final examination should immediately contact the instructor to apply for a special examination. Students who miss a final examination and are failing the course at the time will usually be given the grade of F instead of being marked I for the semester grade.

### ***Confidentiality Policy***

The University complies totally with the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (the Buckley Amendment). For the complete University Confidentiality Policy, consult the Office of the Registrar on either campus.

### ***Clinical Course Requirements***

Many divisions of study at the University require as a condition of graduation the completion of one or more training programs or courses in an outside clinical or professional setting, such as a hospital, clinic, professional office, or public classroom. These outside institutions sometimes impose additional requirements upon students as conditions of participation in their programs. Such requirements might include evidence of a recent medical examination, evidence of health, auto or other insurance, a written agreement to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of that institution, or the execution of an indemnity agreement or release. The University assumes there will be assent to and compliance with such requirements, rules, and regulations by each student upon his or her enrollment in those courses involving outside clinical study.

### ***Student Complaints***

To provide undergraduate students with assistance in resolving disagreements with University employees, the University has designated the Office of the Dean of Student Life (ODSL) to respond to student inquiries in these matters. The mission of ODSL in this regard is to provide impartial guidance to students in identifying whether the nature of the disagreement concerns an academic appeal or an administrative appeal, and the appropriate University policy or procedure that can be used to resolve it.

The academic appeals and administrative appeals policies described below are not applicable to student complaints about unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment. An ODSL representative can advise the student about other University policies and procedures used to address student complaints about unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment. All other serious student complaints should be referred to the University employee concerned or to that person's immediate supervisor or department head, who may then request a meeting between the parties.

### ***Student Academic Appeals Policy***

Public institutions of higher education function for the common good, not to further the interest of either the individual faculty member or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free expression. Academic freedom is essential for protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching, and the rights of the student to freedom in learning. Teachers must be accorded free-

dom of speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects. Controversy lies at the heart of free academic inquiry, and provocative teaching techniques are often effective. Rights carry corresponding duties; both faculty and students should exercise this freedom in a responsible manner.

A fundamental premise of academic freedom is that decisions concerning the quality of faculty scholarship, teaching, and service are best made by reference to standards of the academic profession, as interpreted and applied by the community of scholars who are qualified by academic expertise and professional training to establish them. Possible violations of professional standards are most appropriately remedied through supervision of faculty peers. This occurs during regular performance appraisals of faculty, in which adequate consideration of student teaching evaluations is required.

Academic appeals generally involve such matters as appeal of grades granted by individual members of the faculty, or instances of perceived unfair treatment which a student believes may have negatively impacted his or her grade. To be considered, an appeal of a grade must be initiated within 30 days after a final grade is posted.

In order to guarantee fair and equitable consideration of student academic appeals, a student must first reduce an appeal to writing and discuss it with the faculty member whose actions gave rise to the appeal, in a good faith attempt to resolve any misunderstanding. If, after such discussion, the student is not satisfied with the result, he or she may appeal to the department chair.

After receiving an academic appeal of a grade, the department chair shall interview the student, the faculty member, and any witnesses; review the course syllabus and all graded assignments; and ascertain the facts of each case. Because the faculty member who issued the grade is in the best position to evaluate the performance of students enrolled in a course, the academic judgment used to determine the merits of the grade awarded shall not be reviewable. A department chair may request a faculty member reconsider a student's grade. A faculty member may decline to reconsider a student's grade; reconsider a grade and change it; or reconsider a grade and decide not to change it. There must be compelling evidence of unfair treatment for a department chair to change a grade, and this may be done only after a vote supporting that decision by faculty peers within the department.

The department chair shall issue a decision in writing to the student and the faculty member within a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 days. Either the student or the faculty member may appeal that decision to the dean of the school or college and, if not satisfied with the result, to the vice president for Academic Affairs. Responses to these appeals shall be made in writing to the student and the faculty member within a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 days.

The individual receiving an academic appeal of a grade shall review the record compiled by the department chair and evaluate the manner in which the appeal was decided. Because faculty peers within the department are in the best position to evaluate teaching within their scholarly expertise, there must be compelling evidence of unfair treatment or violation of the academic appeals procedure for a grade to be changed. The individual receiving an academic appeal shall issue a decision in writing to the student, with copies to the faculty member and the department chair. A decision by the vice president for Academic Affairs shall be final and not subject to further review.

### *Student Administrative Appeals Policy*

Appeals of administrative decisions generally involve all matters affecting a student while at USM other than matters affecting grades. **An administrative decision is any final decision made in an official capacity by any employee or group of employees of the University, including academic matters other than those affecting grades governed by the Student Academic Appeals Policy and violations of the Student Conduct Code. Decisions by a departmental, college or University faculty group making or changing policies are not final administrative decisions.** Grading matters are appealed through the Student Academic Appeals Policy described above. To be considered, an administrative appeal must be initiated within 30 days after the decision is made.

In order to guarantee fair and equitable consideration of student administrative appeals, a student must first reduce an appeal to writing and meet and discuss it with

the University employee whose actions gave rise to the appeal, in a good faith attempt to resolve any misunderstanding. If, after such a meeting, the student is not satisfied with the result, he or she may appeal to the head of the academic department or administrative supervisor of the employee.

The head of the academic department or administrative supervisor of the University employee receiving an administrative appeal shall interview the student, the employee, and any witnesses; review relevant written materials; and ascertain the facts of each case. For the individual receiving an administrative appeal to change a decision there must be compelling evidence the University employee exceeded his or her authority or engaged in an arbitrary and capricious abuse of discretion unsupported by the record.

The individual deciding an administrative appeal shall issue a decision in writing to the student and the University employee within a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 days. Either the student or the University employee may appeal that decision to the head of the appropriate administrative division and, if not satisfied with the result, to the vice president for Academic Affairs or the appropriate vice president for the area involved. A decision by the vice president for Academic Affairs or the appropriate vice president for the area involved shall be final and not subject to further review.

No person shall present to any individual receiving a student academic appeal or student administrative appeal any oral or written communication not on the record relevant to the appeal. The substance of any prohibited communication shall be disregarded by the person receiving an appeal when making any official decision on that appeal.