

Graduate School General Policies

Policies

- Academic Bankruptcy Policy (p. 1)
- Academic Engagement (p. 2)
- Academic Integrity and Student Conduct (p. 2)
- Academic Programs and Curricula (p. 2)
- Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Plan (p. 2)
- Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities (p. 3)
- Activities Involving Animals (p. 3)
- AUETD Publication and Access Policy (p. 3)
- Calendar (p. 4)
- Class Attendance (p. 4)
- Classified or Proprietary Research (p. 5)
- Credit for Directed Studies (p. 5)
- Exceptions to Graduate School Policies (p. 5)
- General Regulations (p. 5)
- Grades (p. 5)
- Graduate Certificate Definition (p. 7)
- Graduate Curriculum Model Change (p. 8)
- Graduate Program Option Definition (p. 8)
- Graduate Study and University Employees (p. 8)
- Institutions with Special Affiliations (p. 8)
- Oak Ridge Associated Universities (p. 8)
- Points of Contact (p.)
- Research Involving Humans (p. 8)
- Second Graduate or Post-Baccalaureate Professional Degree (p. 9)
- Student Academic Grievance Policy (p. 9)
- Student Records (p. 9)
- Teaching Graduate Courses for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers Policy (p. 11)
- Two-Campus Studies (p. 12)
- Withdrawal Policy (p. 12)

Points of Contact

GEORGE T. FLOWERS, Dean

MARIA WITTE, Associate Dean

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Academic Bankruptcy Policy

Auburn University graduate students who have been suspended or expelled because of poor academic performance may petition the Graduate School for a declaration of academic bankruptcy. Academic bankruptcy allows the student to petition their program, department, and the Graduate School to restart their graduate program after a minimum of a one calendar year separation from Auburn University. For readmission, the student must submit a readmission request form and must be recommended for readmission by the graduate program to which the student is applying. If the graduate program recommends readmission, the student must, in coordination with the Graduate School and program Graduate Program Officer (GPO), identify the semester(s) for which they request academic

bankruptcy. If approved, the student forfeits all graduate courses and credits earned at Auburn University for those semesters. Auburn University will retain all forfeited courses on the student's transcript but will not include forfeited courses in the calculation of the Graduate Grade Point Average. Students may not declare academic bankruptcy more than once.

Academic Engagement

Any graduate student enrolled in a degree program culminating in a thesis or dissertation will directly engage in research and/or creative scholarship with the major professor, will have access to the tools needed for the research/scholarly activity, will be immersed in the culture of graduate education, will engage in the professional activities of the discipline, and will complete the research/scholarly activity in a reasonable period of time.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Graduate students at Auburn University are expected to adhere to established standards of academic integrity, personal conduct, and professional conduct. The primary code of conduct is detailed in the Auburn University Code of Student Conduct.

Academic units may also define and publish standards appropriate to their disciplines as well as describing the processes for resolving disputes and appealing decisions. Students found in violation of policies defining academic integrity, personal conduct, and professional conduct may be subject to dismissal from the Graduate School.

Academic Programs and Curricula

An **academic program** is an organized plan of study which, when successfully completed, is recognized by the awarding of a degree. It includes all courses and related activities required by the university and those required by a school, college, department or interdisciplinary program. **At Auburn University, the minimum number of hours in a doctoral program is 60 semester hours earned through instruction beyond the bachelor's degree, including 1) a minimum of 30 semester hours graded (e.g., A, B) graduate course work (6000-level and above); and 2) a minimum of 30 semester hours of additional graduate course work (6000-level and above) that may include ungraded courses 7990 and 8990 and must include at least 10 hours of 8990.** Some departments require more than 60 semester hours and requirements may vary according to a student's background and interest. **The minimum number of hours in a master's degree program is 30 semester hours of courses, 6000-level and above.**

A graduate program option is a formally approved variation of an academic program by the offering department which meets objectives that may be more specifically focused. These additional objectives are integrated with the basic program. A formal graduate program option must preserve the integrity of the academic program of which it is a variant. Specifically, the formal program option must 1) be in a recognized sub-field of the discipline; and 2) share at least half of the total credits of the degree program. Only formally approved graduate program options are designated on the transcript. Other less formal variants, which may carry the name of "track," "concentration," "emphasis," or similar terms, are not designated on the transcript; however, all academic programs and designated variations (whether called "options," "tracks," "concentrations," "emphases" or some similar term) must be approved by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE).

A graduate **minor** is an organized sequence or cluster of courses offered by a department or interdepartmental program. Not all departments or interdepartmental programs offer a minor. At Auburn University, the term graduate minor designates those sequences or clusters of courses that have been formally proposed as minors by departments or interdepartmental programs and approved by the Graduate Council. The minimum number of semester hours in a minor is nine, all of which must be in courses at the 6000-level or above and must be completed at Auburn University.

Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Plan

The Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program allows Auburn students in some academic programs to count up to nine approved hours in a 30–35 hour master's program or twelve approved hours in a 36 hour or greater master's program toward both a bachelor's and a master's degrees in the same program area. These hours must be at the graduate level.

Admission Criteria

To be considered for admission, students must have at least 45 hours of credit, with at least 24 hours completed at Auburn University, and must have a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher on all coursework completed at Auburn. Individual graduate programs may set higher standards or require additional criteria for admission to the accelerated degree program.

Students must earn the bachelor's degree and meet departmental admission criteria to be fully admitted into the graduate program.

Admission Procedures

Students must work with a graduate advisor in the degree-granting department to complete an Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program Application, available on the Graduate School website, including:

1. a list of the courses that count toward both the undergraduate and graduate degree and,
2. the projected dates for the completion of the bachelor's and master's degrees

Students in the Honors College remain eligible to graduate with Honors while participating and should consult with an Honors advisor.

Performance Expectations

Students earning a B or higher in a graduate course can apply the course credit toward the undergraduate and graduate degree (if admitted to the graduate program). A passing grade less than a B cannot count towards the graduate degree but may count toward the undergraduate degree if allowed by the degree program.

Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities

Auburn University is committed to providing its students with an accessible campus and equitable learning environment. If you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, access to assistive technology training, or support services, contact the Office of Accessibility for additional information: 1228 Haley Center; 334-844-2096 (Voice/TT) or visit the Office of Accessibility website at accessibility.auburn.edu (<https://accessibility.auburn.edu/>).

Activities Involving Animals

Auburn University's Animal Resources Program requires compliance with the Animal Welfare Assurance negotiated with the Office of Protection from Research Risks/National Institutes of Health (OPRR/NIH). A major part of that Assurance involves the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) that ensures compliance with the Assurance, the policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and all other federal, state and local regulations concerning care, treatment and use of animals. All activities, whether teaching, research, production or display of animals, and whether or not the activity is funded, must be approved in advance by the committee. The use of animals for any purpose that is not approved in advance by the IACUC may involve severe penalties for non-compliance with institutional policy and could jeopardize the university's Animal Welfare Assurance filed with the OPRR and the NIH. Information may be obtained through the Animal Care and Use Program (IACUC).

AUETD Publication and Access Policy

AUETD is an online database of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) submitted by Auburn University students in partial fulfillment of the university's graduate degree requirements. Its purpose is to make Auburn University's ETDs widely available to the public and easy to find online. The ETDs in the AUETD database are indexed by Google and other internet search engines and may appear in search results for those search engines. Graduate students who want to limit access temporarily to the full text of their ETD must choose one of the limited access options **during the ETD submission process** (see options below). Students who choose to limit access to their ETD should be aware that basic bibliographical information about their ETD (including the abstract) will appear in the AUETD database and that the full text of their ETD will become publicly available immediately upon the expiration of the time limit set for limited access. Students who have questions or concerns about this policy are encouraged to contact a Graduate School advisor at (334) 844-4700 **BEFORE** submitting their ETD to AUETD.

Limited Access Options

1. **Unlimited access:** Publication in AUETD with unlimited access is immediate and irreversible. Once a thesis/dissertation is published in AUETD, access via the world-wide-web may not be denied or reversed.
2. **Limited access:** Upon request, students may limit access to their thesis/dissertation only to users with a valid AU user id and password for a limited time period. Upon request, limited access is granted for a period of time not to exceed: i) six months; ii) one year; iii) two years; or iv) five years. Unless the student petitions to extend the period of limited access, the thesis/dissertation will be published with unlimited access immediately upon the expiration of the time period.
3. **Withheld access:** Upon request, students may withhold access to their thesis/dissertation to all users for a limited time period. This means that all users, including the students and their advisory committees are denied access to the thesis/dissertation in AUETD. Upon request, withheld access is granted for a period of time not to exceed: i) six months; ii) one year; iii) two years; or iv) five years. Unless the student petitions to extend the period of limited access, the thesis/dissertation will be published with unlimited access immediately upon the expiration of the time period.

4. **Copyright:** If students plan to copyright some of all of their thesis/dissertation, these plans should be discussed in advance with the major professor, especially if the thesis/dissertation includes shared data.

Calendar

The university operates on the semester system. The Graduate School calendar at the beginning of this *Bulletin* is also available at the Graduate School and contains the dates of various important deadlines. It should be followed carefully.

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend all their scheduled classes. College work requires regular class attendance as well as careful preparation. Specific policies regarding class attendance are the prerogative of individual faculty members. Faculty shall inform each class in writing at the beginning of the course regarding the effect of absences on the determination of grades.

The student is expected to carry out all assigned work and to take examinations at the class period designated by the instructor. Failure to carry out these assignments or to take examinations at the designated times may result in an appropriate reduction in grade, except as provided below.

Instructors shall determine the policy regarding grading which they feel is best for the course. This policy shall be presented to the class, in writing, at the beginning of the term and will govern the actions of the instructor in the course.

Arrangement to make up missed major examinations (e.g. hour exams, midterm exams) due to properly authorized excused absences (as defined by the Student Policy eHandbook) shall be initiated by the student within one week from the end of the period of the excused absence. Normally, a make-up exam shall occur within two weeks from the time that the student initiates arrangements for it. Instructors are encouraged to refrain from giving make-up examinations during the last three days prior to the first day of final examinations. The format of make-up exams and opportunities for students to make up work other than major examinations are at the discretion of the instructor whose make-up policies should be stated in writing at the beginning of the term. Instructors are expected to excuse absences for:

1. Illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family. The instructor may request appropriate verification.
2. The death of a member of the student's immediate family. The instructor may request appropriate verification.
3. Trips for members of the student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for university classes, and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to such absences, but in no case more than one week after the absence. Instructors may request formal notification from appropriate university personnel to document the student's participation in such trips.
4. Religious holidays. Students are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays.
5. Subpoena for court appearance.
6. Presentations at professional meetings or conferences.
7. Any other reason the instructor deems appropriate.

If the instructor does not appear within 20 minutes after the designated class hour, it may be assumed the class is canceled.

It is university policy that all classes will meet as scheduled on the last day before and the first day after holiday periods designated by the university.

Unresolved problems regarding class attendance or procedures should be referred to the University Student Academic Grievance Committee.

Examinations

Examinations are classified as (1) final examinations at the end of each term; (2) special examinations; and (3) other course examinations as determined by the instructor.

Announced tests in graduate courses will be administered at a regularly scheduled meeting of the course. Exceptions to this regulation may arise in specialized courses requiring performance or oral tests, and in multiple-sectioned laboratory classes requiring practical laboratory tests. Faculty having sound reasons for scheduling tests at times other than regularly scheduled meeting times are to obtain approval from the department head prior to the beginning of the term, and are to present a written schedule of these changes to the

class during the first few days of the term. Rescheduled tests are not to interfere with other scheduled academic endeavors of the students involved, and an appropriate reduction in regularly scheduled class time is to be given to compensate for the rescheduled test period.

Classified or Proprietary Research

No thesis or dissertation should be based exclusively on a proprietary or classified research project, nor should a thesis or dissertation include proprietary or classified information. Any graduate student and advisor engaged in such research should identify an alternative topic for the thesis or dissertation. Should a thesis or dissertation include such information, the document must be rewritten with offending material excised.

Credit for Directed Studies

The university policy on directed studies was approved effective August 2006. Auburn University offers directed readings courses, also referred to as special problems courses or independent studies, in accordance with established policy.

Directed readings courses allow in-depth study of a particular subject by a student who is well into her or his major and, in extraordinary circumstances, accommodate scheduling issues when no other remedy is available.

Directed readings courses should not normally be used as replacements for required courses or as a solution to routine scheduling problems.

Approval to Teach Course—A standard Approval for Independent Study/Directed Readings Form (https://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/forms/ind_study.pdf), available through the Office of the Provost website, will specify the necessary approvals and serve as the vehicle for obtaining them.

Exceptions to Graduate School Policies

Exceptions may be made to policies of the Graduate School under special circumstances. A person wishing to request an exception should write a letter to the dean of the Graduate School stating the nature of the request and the reasons for it. If a student is making the request, the letter should be submitted first to the major professor, who will write a letter of recommendation. Both letters go to the department head. If a member of the faculty is making the request, the letter goes to the department head, who will write a letter of recommendation. All letters go to the associated college/school dean for approval. Letters and comments then are forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School. A request for an extension of time to meet degree requirements must be justified. It must be accompanied by a proposed schedule for completion and assurance that the student is current in subjects included in the plan of study.

General Regulations

Regulations listed here represent the minimums of the Graduate School. However, individual departments may impose more stringent requirements and students will be governed by them.

Grades

Grade Definitions

Final passing grades are A, superior; B, good; C, acceptable; D, passing; and S, satisfactory. Final failing grades are F, failure; FA, failure for excessive absences; U, unsatisfactory; NR, no grade reported; and WF, officially dropped with permission of the student's dean but failing at time of withdrawal and is calculated into the GPA. (For the definition of W, see the following section on Grade Assignment for Class Withdrawal.)

A TD, thesis and dissertation research credit, is assigned to courses 7990 Research and Thesis and 8990 Research and Dissertation.

A grade of IP (In Progress) is used by professional programs, specifically Pharmacy and Veterinary Medicine, for those courses that extend beyond the end of the regular term. Students who are making progress toward completion of their work but have not completed all course requirements may receive the IP grade. The IP grade is not calculated in the GPA until the grade is cleared.

Grades of SA and SN may be assigned in certain specialized classes in which progress to the next level of a program depends on performance in the class. In such cases, a grade of SA in a particular course may be required for advancement. A grade of SN will give the student appropriate earned credit, but will not allow the student to advance in that program.

An NR is assigned systematically when the instructor does not assign a letter grade.

Faculty Policy on Assigning Grades of Incomplete (excludes distance education courses)

Effective Fall 2007, student (or appropriate representative) must contact the instructor in writing prior to the submission of final course grades to request a grade of Incomplete (IN) due to documented reason (illness/death in family/etc.).

If a student does not request an IN, the instructor should grade the student based upon the percentage of course work completed to date and using a 0 for any exams/ assignments not completed.

To be eligible for a grade of IN, the student must have completed (and have passed) more than half of all class assignments for the semester or summer term.

The instructor must fill out the Incomplete Grade-Memorandum of Understanding form, indicating:

- reason for the IN,
- percent of course work currently completed at the time of submission and the grade average on that work,
- detailed information about the additional work needed to complete the course,
- timeline to complete the work (6 months maximum; preferably sooner), and
- grade the student should be assigned if the additional work is NOT completed by the deadline set for the completion of the work; the missing work is calculated as a 0.

Grades of Incomplete automatically become the grade identified by the instructor, if not cleared within 6 months.

If the instructor assigning a grade of IN leaves Auburn University, the department head should make a reasonable attempt to contact the former instructor and then assign a grade based upon the work presented by the student and the information provided on the Incomplete Grade-Memorandum of Understanding form.

Once an IN has been changed to another grade it may not be changed, in the future, to a different grade without approval of the provost.

Documentation of class work must be maintained by the student; the Incomplete Grade-Memorandum of Understanding form must be maintained by the student, faculty and the Office of the Registrar. For instructors who submit the IN Grade forms to the Office of the Registrar prior to course grades being rolled to academic history, the IN will be reflected on the electronic grade roster; faculty will be unable to change that grade on the electronic grade roster.

Instructors should NOT enter a grade on the electronic course roster for those students who are to be assigned the IN grade but leave the grade blank. The system will automatically convert blanks to NR. Once the IN Grade form is received by the Office of the Registrar, that office will convert the NR to the IN grade.

It is the responsibility of the instructor to send a copy of the Incomplete Grade-Memorandum of Understanding form to the Office of the Registrar.

When the student has completed the outstanding work, it is the responsibility of the instructor to initiate the change of grade form and send it to the appropriate department/dean's office for additional signatures and transmittal to the Office of the Registrar.

These policies apply to all students in undergraduate and graduate courses.

Faculty Policy on Grade Changes (includes NR; Excludes IN)

Grades should be accurate when posted.

- Any change of letter grades (A, B, C, D, F, S, U, FA, and NR) should be made only in extraordinary situations.
- Any grade changes must be completed within 6 months of completion of the course.
- Any grade changes outside of this timeframe must also be approved by the provost.
- A final grade may be changed only by the written request of the instructor, with approval of the department head and dean, submitted to the registrar.
- A grade of F and additional penalties may be assigned for academic dishonesty. See the Student Academic Honesty Code section in the Tiger Cub for further information.

Grade Assignment For Class Withdrawals

A student who withdraws from a course prior to the 15th class day during a semester (or the fifth class day of summer term) will have no grade assignment; however, from the 15th class day during a semester (or the fifth class day of summer term) through the

withdrawal deadline published in the academic calendar a W (Withdrawn Passing) grade will be recorded for the course. A course may be dropped with a W after the withdrawal deadline only under unusual conditions and only with permission from the student's dean. When approval for dropping the course under such circumstances is granted, a W may be assigned only when the instructor indicates that the student is clearly passing the course. Otherwise, a grade of WF (Withdrawn Failing) is assigned. All failing grades are calculated into GPA as grades of F.

Grade Average and Quality Point Computation

A 4.0 grade scale is used. An A equals 4.0; B, 3.0; C, 2.0; D, 1.0; and F equals 0.0. Only course work attempted at Auburn University is used in determining the grade report average and continuation-in-residence requirements. S and U grades do not enter into grade-point computations.

S-U Grading

Grades of S (Satisfactory) and U (Unsatisfactory) may be assigned only to courses approved to be graded S-U, and courses elected under the S-U option.

A graduate student may enroll in undergraduate courses, except for 6000-level courses taken for graduate credit, under the S-U option on the major professor's recommendation.

Students are not permitted to change from S-U grading to conventional grading or vice versa after the fifteenth class day of the fall and spring terms or the fifth class day of any summer term.

Grade Reports

Grade information may be obtained through AU Access on Auburn University's website.

Graduate Certificate Definition

Graduate certificate programs constitute an integrated curriculum, but not necessarily one aligned with a specific academic program. They may exist within programs, bridge programs or offer content widely useable across programs. Graduate certificate programs consist of a minimum of 9 and maximum of 21 hours of graduate-level course work. The course work may be graded or non-graded. A minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained on all graded course work in the certificate program.

Graduate certificate programs pertain to graduate students, whether degree seeking or non-degree seeking. A graduate certificate is distinguished from graduate minors in two primary ways. First, graduate minors are intended exclusively for degree seeking graduate students. Graduate certificates may be directed to both degree seeking and non-degree seeking students. Second, there are limits to the number of course credits taken in pursuit of graduate minors that may be applied to a graduate degree (e.g., masters degrees require 21/30 hours to be in the major discipline). The limiting factor in the application of certificate course credits to graduate degrees is departmental policy or advisory committee recommendations. As an example, if a department developed a certificate program intended only for non-degree seeking students, that department could prevent those certificate courses from applying to a degree. However, in the absence of departmental policy, and with the approval of a student's advisory committee, both degree seeking and non-degree seeking students (if they later change status to degree seeking) may include all certificate-related courses toward degree requirements.

When new graduate certificates are proposed, they undergo the full process of curriculum review. This same process applies regardless of delivery method (i.e., on campus and distance). Special requirements for applicants may be negotiated between the certificate proposing program and the graduate school at the time the program is proposed. Consistent with Graduate School policy related to the Masters and Specialist degrees, all requirements for a graduate certificate must be accomplished within 6 years unless departmental criteria for the certificate necessitate a longer time. Certificate Programs that require an exception to this 6-year time limit must be approved by the Graduate Council. Not only must the content of the proposed certificate be appropriate, but the availability of a viable group of graduate faculty to teach the courses in the certificate must be documented. Proposals for graduate certificate programs must identify a specific person who will serve as coordinator. Certificates that bridge departments must have a home department to which all certificate applicants apply. But each affiliated department must also designate a coordinator. Students who fulfill all requirements for a graduate certificate should submit the certificate completion application through AU Access. The certificate will be noted on the transcript after successful completion of all certificate requirements and the certificate completion application has been approved.

Graduate certificates are to be differentiated from professional development certificates. No comprehensive definition of the latter is offered here, however, in brief, completion of a professional development certificate does not require admission to the Graduate School and is awarded based on participation in non-credit work. The definition of graduate certificate does not limit the ability of departments

or other units from defining, implementing, or awarding professional development certificates. Professional development certificates are not subject to the Auburn University curriculum process, nor are their achievement noted on Auburn University transcripts.

Graduate Curriculum Model Change

When a graduate curriculum model is changed, the changes apply only to students who matriculate after the approval of the changes and to currently enrolled students who voluntarily choose to complete the requirements of the new curriculum model. In no case, for students who are continuously enrolled, will the changed curriculum compel them to accumulate additional hours and grade points to graduate. Curriculum model changes are to be implemented at the beginning of the semester in which the largest number of new students typically enroll (fall semester for most programs). Graduate students who have not been enrolled at Auburn University for two or more semesters and who are returning to the same curriculum may be subject to different university, college, school or departmental requirements than those which existed when continuous enrollment ceased.

Graduate Program Option Definition

A graduate program option is a formally approved variation of an academic program by the offering department which meets objectives that may be more specifically focused. These additional objectives are integrated with the basic program. A formal graduate program option must preserve the integrity of the academic program of which it is a variant. Specifically, the formal program option must 1) be in a recognized sub-field of the discipline; and 2) share at least half of the total credits of the degree program. Only formally approved graduate program options are designated on the transcript. Other less formal variants, which may carry the name of “track,” “concentration,” “emphasis,” or similar terms, are not designated on the transcript; however, all academic programs and designated variations (whether called “options,” “tracks,” “concentrations,” “emphases” or some similar term) must be approved by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE).

Graduate Study and University Employees

The educational benefit plan provides tuition waiver benefits to eligible and qualified employees, enabling them to enroll in undergraduate and graduate course work while actively employed at Auburn University. An employee may pursue a graduate degree with the approval by the employee’s immediate supervisor indicating whether or not the requested course is relevant to the student’s current position assignment. The application approval process is through Self Service Banner and is needed for each class each semester. Inquiries should be made through the Human Resource Development, Employee Education Benefits office.

Institutions with Special Affiliations

By special arrangement with Florida A&M University, the Graduate School application fee is waived for students applying from this institution.

Oak Ridge Associated Universities

Auburn University has been a sponsoring institution of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) since 1946. ORAU is a private, not-for-profit consortium of over 145 colleges and universities and a management and operating contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) with principal offices located in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Founded in 1946, ORAU provides and develops capabilities critical to the nation’s technology infrastructure, particularly in energy, education, health and the environment. ORAU works with and for its member institutions to help faculty and students gain access to federal research facilities; to keep members informed about opportunities for fellowship, scholarship and research appointments; and to organize research alliances among our members in areas where their collective strengths can be focused on issues of national importance.

ORAU manages the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) for DOE. ORISE is responsible for national and international programs in science and engineering education, training and management systems, energy and environment systems and medical sciences. ORISE’s competitive programs bring students at all levels, K-12 through postgraduate, and university faculty members into federal and private laboratories. Other ORAU activities include the sponsorship of conferences and workshops, the Visiting Scholars program and the Junior Faculty Enhancement Awards. Contact the Office of Vice President for Research and Economic Development for more information about ORAU programs.

Research Involving Humans

Auburn University established the Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) to evaluate research for compliance with the guidelines and policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Public Health Service, the Food and Drug Administration and other federal, state and local regulations. All research using human subjects—whether it is conducted by faculty, staff or students—must be approved in advance by the IRB, regardless of the source of funding, lack of funding or any other

consideration. Research involving human subjects not approved in advance may be disallowed and may incur severe penalties for non-compliance with institutional policy. Information and review forms may be obtained through the Office of Human Research (IRB).

Second Graduate or Post-Baccalaureate Professional Degree

For a second graduate or post-baccalaureate professional degree, the student fulfills all requirements applicable to any other graduate or post-baccalaureate professional degree, including the thesis, if appropriate. The student may, on recommendation of the advisory committee, transfer a limited number of credit hours from the previous graduate or post-baccalaureate professional degree. At least 24 semester hours, or 50% of the total hours required for the degree, whichever is greater, must be unique to each degree and be taken at Auburn University.

Student Academic Grievance Policy

The Student Academic Grievance policy, which appears in full in the Student Policy eHandbook, is designed to resolve academic grievances of students which result from actions of faculty or administrators.

Student Records

Confidentiality of Student Records

The university recognizes that the maintenance of student information and educational records is necessary and vital to assist the student's education and development and to provide opportunities for university research and policy formulation. The university recognizes its obligation to exercise discretion in recording and disseminating information about students to ensure that their rights of privacy are maintained.

The university will furnish annual notification to students of their right to inspect and review their educational records; the right to request amendment of educational records considered by them to be inaccurate or misleading or that violate privacy or other rights; and of their right to a hearing should the university decline to amend such records. This annual notice will be published in the *Auburn University Bulletin* and an electronic notification is sent to each active Auburn student.

The following guidelines have been developed to ensure the privacy rights of students. For the purposes of this policy statement a student is defined as an individual who has been admitted and has been in attendance in a component unit of the university. Classification as a student in one component unit of the university (e.g., an undergraduate program) does not imply that the person has been accorded the rights outlined below in other component units (i.e., graduate school, professional schools, branch campus).

Student Access to Records

Auburn University's permanent student education record consists of one or more of the following: the official transcript of grades, competency evaluations, and any narrative evaluations. This is in accordance with guidelines established by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (<https://www.aacrao.org/>) and the State of Alabama policies on Retention of Records.

Students have the right to be provided a list of the type of educational records maintained by the university which are directly related to the student; the right to inspect and review the contents of these records; the right to obtain copies of these records; the right to a response from the university to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of these records; the right to an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of these records; and if any material or document in the educational record of a student includes information on more than one student, the right to inspect and review only the part of such material or document as relates to the student.

Students do not have access to financial records of their parents; confidential letters and statements of recommendation which were placed in the educational record prior to Jan. 1, 1975, provided such letters or statements were solicited or designated as confidential and are not used for purposes other than those for which they were specifically intended; confidential recommendations, if the student signed a waiver of the right of access, respecting admission, application for employment, and the receipt of an honor or honorary recognition.

Students do not have access to instructional, supervisory or administrative personnel records which are not accessible or revealed to any other individual except a substitute; Campus Security records which are maintained apart from educational records, which are used solely for law enforcement purposes, and which are not disclosed to individuals other than law enforcement officials of the same jurisdiction; employment records except when such employment requires that the person be a student; and the Alumni Office records.

Students do not have access to physical or mental health records created by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional acting in his or her capacity or to records created in connection with the treatment of the student under these conditions

which are not disclosed to anyone other than individuals providing treatment. A physician or appropriate professional of the student's choice may review these records.

Procedures for Access

The Office of the Registrar has a complete list of educational records maintained by the university which students may obtain. Students should contact the appropriate office to inspect and review their records. An office may require that a university official be present when a student inspects and reviews his or her educational records. Any questions concerning a student's access to records should be directed to the registrar.

Amending Educational Records

Students may request that any information contained in their educational records which they consider to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of their privacy or other rights be amended or deleted from the records. (A grade or other academic scores may not be amended, except that the accuracy of recording the information may be challenged.)

Students who request that information in their records be amended should first direct their request to the official with primary responsibility for the information on the record. If the matter is not resolved to their satisfaction, students should direct their requests to the official's dean or division head. If the matter is not resolved to their satisfaction, they may request a formal hearing.

Right to a Formal Hearing and Procedures for Decision

Students may request formal hearings to challenge information contained in their educational records. The hearing will be held in a reasonable time (not to exceed 45 days) and in a reasonable place. Students may be assisted or represented by persons of their choice, including an attorney, at the expense of the student, and shall be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issue(s).

Students or their representative should request the hearing in writing and should specifically identify the information they seek to have amended. The request should be directed to the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will conduct the hearing and render a decision within a reasonable period of time after the conclusion of the hearing and the decision shall be based solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing. The student shall be notified in writing of the reason(s) for the decision and given a summary of the evidence.

If the decision is that the information in the student's educational records is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of his rights and privacy, the statement(s) will be corrected or expunged from the student's records.

If the decision is that the information is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student and that the information or parts thereof are to remain in the student's educational records, the student shall be notified and given the right to enter a statement in the records setting forth any reason for disagreeing with the decision of the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. This statement shall be maintained in the records as long as the record or contested portion thereof is maintained, and if the contested educational record or contested portion thereof is disclosed by Auburn University to any party, the student's explanation shall also be disclosed to that party.

The U.S. secretary of education has established a review board to receive complaints regarding violation of student's rights. Students wishing to file a complaint directly to the review board should write to the Family Policy and Regulations Office, Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202. Detailed procedures for this complaint procedure are listed under section 99.63 of the regulations issued by the secretary and will be furnished upon request by the registrar, Auburn University.

This policy is adopted pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, (34 CFR Part 99), and is not intended to impose any restrictions or grant any rights not specifically required by this Act.

Release of Directory Information

The university may release directory information without the student's written consent. Directory information consists of student's complete name; local address and associated telephone number; place of birth; parent/spouse name, address and associated telephone number; mailing address and associated telephone number; E-mail address; photographs, video or other electronic image; participation in recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; enrollment time status (full or part time); degrees and awards received; and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

A student may deny the release of directory information by completing an Address Change/Information restriction request form available in the Office of the Registrar, Langdon Hall.

To deny the release of information regarding participation in recognized activities the student must notify the vice president for Student Affairs and the student's academic dean in writing. To deny the release of athletic information, the student must notify the director of Athletics in writing. A former student, one who is not in attendance, must contact the appropriate offices to deny the release of information.

Release of Educational Records

The university will release a student's educational record(s) upon the student's written request. The student must:

1. Specify the records to be disclosed.
2. Include the purpose or purposes of the disclosure.
3. State the party or parties and the address to whom the information is to be disclosed.

The student shall, upon request, receive a copy of the record that is to be disclosed. It is university policy to furnish single copies of a student's record at no charge.

The university may release student's educational records to the following without prior written consent:

1. University officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the records. University officials are defined as teachers, administrative personnel and other employees except personnel of the security or law enforcement unit of Auburn University, and other agents acting on behalf of the university. If university officials are required in the performance of their duties to review the educational records of a student, this will be considered to be a legitimate educational interest. Auburn University has designated the National Student Clearinghouse as a university official.
2. Officials of another school in which the student intends to enroll upon request of the transfer school.
3. Government representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary of Education, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, the Director of the National Institute of Education, the Assistant Secretary for Education, State educational authorities, and State officials to whom such information is specifically required to be reported or disclosed by State law adopted prior to Nov. 19, 1974.
4. Appropriate authorities in connection with financial aid with the understanding that only the necessary records will be released.
5. Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the university or its agencies for the purpose of developing, validating, or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, and improving instruction and student life provided that the studies will not permit the personal identification of students and their parents by individuals other than representatives of the organization and provided that the personally identifiable information furnished will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes for which the study was conducted.
6. Accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
7. Parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. University officials may release educational records to parents on the basis of a written documentation from the parent that the student is a dependent as defined under the Code and there is reasonable notification of the student regarding the request.
8. A court of law to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena with the understanding that the student will be notified in advance insofar as possible.
9. Appropriate parties to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals in emergencies with the understanding that only information essential to the emergency situation will be released, that information will be released only to a party who would be in a position to deal with the emergency, and that the student will be notified insofar as possible of the information released, the purpose for the release, and to whom the information was released.

No personal information on a student will be released without a statement from the university to the party receiving the information that no third party is to have access to such information without the written consent of the student.

Each office with educational records will maintain a record of each request and disclosure of personally identifiable information from the educational records of a student except for information requested in writing by the student, information released to the student or the student's parents, directory information, and information released to university officials and teachers who have a legitimate educational interest in the records. The student may inspect the record of requests, disclosures and the legitimate interests of parties requesting or obtaining information in the appropriate university office.

Teaching Graduate Courses for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers Policy

Lecturers and senior lecturers who otherwise meet graduate faculty criteria (level 1) for the department may be granted permission to teach graduate-level courses and/or serve on graduate student committees on an exceptions basis under the following conditions:

1. A lecturer/senior lecturer desiring to teach a graduate course or serve on a graduate student committee should make a written request to the department chair.
2. If this request is acceptable to the majority of the department's tenure and tenure track graduate faculty and chair, a memo requesting such authorization will be submitted to the graduate dean for review and approval.
3. Authorization may be requested for teaching only, committee service only, or both.
4. No more than one lecturer/senior lecturer may serve on a graduate student committee.
5. Authorization must be requested for each semester a graduate course is to be taught by a given lecturer/senior lecturer.
6. Authorization must be provided each time that a lecturer/senior lecturer serves on a graduate student committee.
7. The department will provide the faculty member with resources appropriate to the graduate service being provided. What constitutes appropriate support would vary by department, but the following points would generally apply:
 - a. Service on a graduate committee should not simply be added on top of current service if the lecturer is already performing at least 5% service and has an appointment that is supposed to be 95% teaching and 5% service. If a lecturer serves on a graduate committee, other forms of service should be reduced, or the lecturer should receive a higher percent of his or her appointment for service.
 - b. In most cases, teaching a graduate course requires being completely up-to-date with the most recent research in the field. Appropriate support might include a course release for a lecturer teaching the course for the first time.
 - c. A lecturer should not teach a graduate course as an overload class.

Two-Campus Studies

A student seeking a graduate degree at Auburn University, Auburn University at Montgomery, the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, or the University of Alabama at Huntsville may take up to half the course work at another of these institutions. The courses taken must be approved in advance by the student's Advisory Committee and the respective graduate deans. All credit must be earned at the two institutions in which the student is working, and none may be transferred from another institution. Students engaged in two-campus studies are required to meet the requirements of continuous enrollment at Auburn University.

Withdrawal Policy

A **partial withdrawal** refers to a student dropping one or more courses but remaining enrolled in at least one Auburn University credit-bearing course. A **full withdrawal** (sometimes referred to as a **resignation**) refers to a student dropping all courses and no longer being enrolled in any courses or credit hours at Auburn University.

Before withdrawing from any course(s), students are encouraged to contact their advisors or other relevant offices such as Auburn Cares, Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veterans Resource Center, International Programs, and Athletics due to possible impacts on tuition, graduation timing, financial aid, veteran's benefits, international student standing, eligibility for varsity athletics, etc.

Withdrawing by the Withdrawal Deadline

A student may withdraw from one or more courses anytime on or before the withdrawal deadline published in the Academic Calendar. Withdrawing on or before the census date (also published in the Academic Calendar) results in no course grade and no record of attempting the course on the transcript. Withdrawing after the census date but on or before the withdrawal deadline results in a course grade of W. Grades of W are not used in calculating the Auburn University term or cumulative GPA.

Students withdrawing before the deadline due to a documented serious physical and/or psychological condition or the death or serious illness of an immediate family member should consult with the Auburn Cares office before withdrawing.

Withdrawing After the Withdrawal Deadline

A student may request to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline only under specific conditions or circumstances. Because the conditions necessary for approval of withdrawals after the deadline usually impact all courses, these are normally approved only as full withdrawals. All withdrawals after the deadline require permission through the appropriate approval process. Most commonly, medical or family medical withdrawals begin with the Auburn Cares office and personal or military withdrawals begin with the student's Advising Office.

Medical or family medical withdrawal: A medical withdrawal may be requested when, by recommendation of a licensed health care provider, a student cannot continue enrollment because of a serious physical and/or psychological condition. A family medical withdrawal may be requested when a student cannot continue enrollment due to the death or serious illness of an immediate family member. These withdrawals are reviewed and approved by the Auburn Cares office.

Personal withdrawal: A personal withdrawal may be requested when a student cannot continue enrollment due to documentable, extraordinary personal circumstances. These withdrawals are reviewed and approved by the student's Associate Dean for Academics.

Military withdrawal: A military withdrawal may be requested when a student is called to active military duty prior to the end of the term. These withdrawals are reviewed and approved by the Office of the Registrar.

When a withdrawal after the deadline is approved, grades of W and WF are assigned to courses the student is passing and failing, respectively, as of the withdrawal date. Grades of W are not used in calculating the Auburn University term or cumulative GPA. Grades of WF are used and have the same impact as a grade of F. In situations where it can be clearly demonstrated that a failing grade was directly related to the medical or personal situation leading to a withdrawal, the withdrawal approver may also approve a course grade of W.

Retroactive Dating of Withdrawals

Retroactive dating refers to establishing an effective withdrawal date prior to the actual date of withdrawal. Retroactive dating is most frequently initiated when a student has documentation from a health professional verifying a medical condition that prevented the student from withdrawing on the effective date.

Requests for retroactive dating of withdrawals due to medical or immediate family medical reasons are reviewed and approved by Auburn Cares and should be initiated within one calendar year (for family medical withdrawals) or two calendar year (for medical withdrawals) from the end of the term in question. Retroactive dating of withdrawals due to extraordinary personal circumstances are reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean of the student's college and the Graduate School designee. Resignations/withdrawals should be initiated no later than the student's next term enrolled at the university. Requests initiated beyond these deadlines must also be approved by the Graduate School designee.