

Instructional Policies and Procedures

Academic policies and procedures in this section are periodically reviewed and updated; they may change during the course of an academic year. For further policy information or updates, see the Student Handbook or go to the Lamar State College-Port Arthur website (www.lamarpa.edu).

Semester Hour

The unit of measure for credit purposes is the semester hour. One hour of classroom lecture each week usually equals one semester hour. For each classroom hour, two hours of study are expected. Two or more hours of laboratory work usually are equal to one classroom hour. For laboratory work that requires reports to be written outside of class, two clock hours are usually counted as one semester hour.

Academic Courses: Course Numbering

The unit of instruction for credit purposes is the course. Most courses meet three hours each week and have a credit value of three semester hours for one semester or six hours for two semesters.

Each course has an individual alpha-numeric code (such as ENGL 1301). The alpha part indicates the subject area. Each number contains three or more figures; the first digit indicates the rank of the course: 0 denotes a developmental course; 1 means that it is freshman level, and 2 is sophomore level.

The second figure indicates the number of semester hours credit. The third figure (or figures) indicates the order in which the course normally is taken.

Texas Common Course Numbering System

Common Course numbers assist transfer students in the transition from one institution to another. Colleges participating in the Common Course Numbering System identify “common” courses taught on their campuses. All courses designed for transfer adhere to this numbering system.

Questions about courses transferability should be referred to the appropriate department at the institution to which a student wants to transfer. (See section on Transfer Dispute Resolution Guidelines)

Technical Courses:

Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) Courses

The rubrics assigned to WECM courses provide a common set of unique course designations. A common four-letter rubric (e.g., DFTG) identifies a cluster of skills and knowledge to be used in determining both course equivalence and degree applicability for transfer credit on a statewide basis. This common rubric also will help students link their portfolios of skill attainment more directly to the occupational needs of business and industry.

Following the rubric is a four-digit number representing the course level, the SCH value (if applicable), and the course sequence. For example, in AUMT 1309, the first digit identifies the course level. For both SCH and continuing education courses, the “1” denotes Introductory level; a “2” is Intermediate or Advanced level.

The second digit defines the SCH value. A “3” indicates a 3 SCH, and a “4” indicates a 4 SCH course. A “O” instead of the “3” or “4” would denote a continuing education course that is offered for no SCH.

The third and fourth digits establish the type of course and the course sequence.

Core Curriculum

In accordance with the Texas Education Code, Lamar State College-Port Arthur designed a core curriculum of academic courses encompassing communication, mathematics, the natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, the humanities and visual and performing arts. A student successfully completing the entire core curriculum at Lamar State College may transfer that block of courses to any other state-supported institution in Texas. The transferring student shall receive academic credit for each of the courses transferred and may not be required to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving institution.

Some LSC-PA students plan to transfer to another institution before completing the core curriculum. These students should follow the catalog and degree plan requirements of their receiving institutions carefully when scheduling courses.

Most universities have requirements or policies regarding certain courses and the core curriculum that are unique to that institution. Students who do not complete the core curriculum at Lamar State College-PA must satisfy the course requirements at their receiving institutions in order to receive degrees. Those requirements may vary significantly from those of the college. Students are urged to complete the core curriculum before transferring to eliminate the possibility of being required to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving institution.

New Courses

In order to meet changing educational requirements, Lamar State College-Port Arthur reserves the right to add any needed courses at any time without regard to the listing of such courses in the college bulletin. It is expected that a listing of these courses will appear in the next year's issue of the college bulletin.

Registration for Classes

Students can attend class only when the instructor has received evidence of proper registration. Registration dates and deadlines are listed in the official calendar.

Students may add courses, make section changes or drop courses only within the period specified in the calendar. A schedule of classes is prepared by the Office of Admission and Records well in advance of a given semester.

Maximum Course Loads

The normal course load in a regular semester is 15-18 semester hours; for a six-week summer term 6-8 semester hours. Overloads must be approved by the student's instructional dean.

Minimum Class Enrollment

The college reserves the right not to offer any course listed in this bulletin if fewer than 10 students register for the course.

Course Auditing by Senior Citizens

Senior citizens, 65 years of age or older, may audit courses on a space available basis without the payment of fees.

Class Attendance

Regular and punctual class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the college. Instructors formulate course attendance policies with departmental policies, but design the policies to suit the needs of particular courses. Each instructor's policy is explained in detail at the beginning of the semester and is enforced in a consistent and uniform manner. Determination of whether an absence is excused or approved is the responsibility of the instructor, except in the case of an approved absence for participation in a college-sponsored activity or a religious holy day. When absences, other than approved absences, seriously interfere with a student's performance, the instructor may recommend to his/her department chair that the student be dropped from the course.

Extended Class Absence

A student may submit a request to the Vice President for Student Services to notify faculty members prior to or during an extended absence due to personal or family illness, accident, hospitalization or other emergency circumstance. This notification does not constitute an “excused absence” from class. It does advise faculty members as to the reason a student is absent and the expected dates of his/her return.

Class Meetings Canceled Due to Inclement Weather

The semester calendar will not be lengthened if the college cancels class meetings because of weather or other circumstances. Final exams are administered as scheduled.

The method for including the subject matter that normally would have been covered in missed class meetings will be left to the discretion of each instructor, and may include, but is not limited to, additional class meetings, lengthened class meetings, additional assignments, library or laboratory activities, field trips and/or fewer or take-home exams in order to free more class time for demonstration, discussion and lecture.

Absence for “Religious Holy Day”

In accordance with Texas Education Code 51.911, all institutions of higher learning shall excuse a student from attending class or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this policy may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. Policies and procedures for absence due to religious holy days shall be consistent with (or no more arduous than) the instructor’s policies and procedures related to other excuse absences.

The Texas Education Code defines a “religious holy day” as a day observed by a religion in places of worship that are exempt from property taxes under Section 11.20 of the state tax code.

A student who will be absent to observe a “religious holy day” must notify the instructor for each class before the planned absence. If a student and instructor disagree about the nature of the absence, or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the President or his designee. The student and instructor shall abide by the decision of the President or his designee.

For more information, contact the Division of Student Services.

Make-up of Missed Examinations

Students must make arrangements with the course instructor for taking an examination outside of a regularly scheduled class meeting. Faculty members are not required to allow students to make-up exams missed for any reason other than an excused absence. Students who know in advance that they will be absent from class on an examination day should discuss the matter in advance with their instructor.

Students who miss an examination without prior notification should contact the instructor as soon as possible after the absence and prior to the next class meeting.

Physical Education Requirement for Academic Majors

All students pursuing an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree are required to complete one semester of Physical Education as part of the Core Curriculum.

The college will provide accommodation for students with disabilities, under the guidance of the Special Populations Coordinator.

Overloads

A dean must approve all overloads. In general, a student must demonstrate that he/she is capable of maintaining a high performance level in all classes.

Changing Schedules

All section changes, adds and drops must be approved by the department chair or dean of the student's major field. All changes are initiated by the completion of the proper form available in the Admission Advising Office. Usually, a course may not be added after the first week of the semester or first two days of a summer session.

Dropping Courses

Senate Bill 1231 passed by the 80th Texas Legislature provides that, except for specific instances of good cause, undergraduate students enrolling as first-time freshmen at a public institution of higher education in fall 2007 or later, are limited to a total of six (6) dropped courses during their entire undergraduate career. This affects all students enrolled in Texas public colleges and universities.

After consultation with their advisor and/or department head, students may drop a course and receive a grade of "Q" during the first six weeks of a regular semester and the first two weeks in a summer session.

For drops after this penalty-free period, grades are recorded as "Q" or "F" showing the student was passing or failing at the time of the drop. A grade of "Q" may not be assigned unless an official drop has been processed through the Office of Admission and Records. Refer to the academic calendar in this catalog for dates affecting drops.

Lamar State College-Port Arthur requires that a student who is deficient on one or more of the basic skills (reading, writing or mathematics) must participate continuously in a program of remediation until all deficiencies are removed. If a student drops a first-level developmental course, the co-requisite lab also must be dropped.

Reinstatement to Class

A student may be reinstated to class upon written approval on the official form by the major department chair, instructor of the course and Records Office verification.

Instructor Initiated Drop

When absences, other than approved absences, interfere seriously with study or performance, the instructor may recommend to the department head or dean that a student be dropped from the course. If this action is taken after the first six weeks of the Fall or Spring semester or the first two weeks of a Summer session, a grade of "F" may be recorded for the course. The student's major department will be notified that the student was dropped for excessive unexcused absences.

Withdrawals

Students wishing to withdraw during a regular semester or summer term must fill out a Withdrawal Petition in triplicate in the Admission Advising Office. Students must clear all financial obligations and return all uniforms, books, laboratory equipment and other materials to the point of original issue. Three copies of the withdrawal form signed by the Finance Office, Library Services and Student Services must be presented to the Office of Admission and Records, as well as the student ID card, to be final.

The withdrawal process is considered to begin when the completed form is turned into the Office of Admission and Records.

The Finance Office, on application before the end of a regular semester or summer term, will return such fees as are returnable according to the schedule in the "Fees" section of the current college catalog. If a withdrawal is made before the end of the sixth week, second week of a summer term or if the student is passing at the time of withdrawal after the sixth week, a grade of "W" is issued for each course affected. A grade of "F" is issued for all courses not being passed at the time of withdrawal after the penalty-free period.

Financial aid students who withdraw before completing 60 percent of a semester must reimburse unused aid to the Federal government and the college.

Recipients who withdraw before the 60 percent point in the semester will have returns calculated according to the Return of Federal Title IV Guidelines.

Refer to the academic calendar in this catalog for dates affecting withdrawals. A student who leaves without withdrawing officially will receive a grade of “F” in all courses and forfeit all returnable fees. (See Withdrawal & Student Financial Responsibility)

A student who leaves without officially withdrawing will receive a grade of “F” in all courses and forfeit all returnable fees.

Dropping courses via the college’s on-line registration system does not constitute an official withdrawal from the college.

Forced Withdrawal Due to Illness

The Vice President for Student Services, on the advice of competent medical personnel, may require withdrawal or deny admission of a student for health reasons (mental or physical).

Change of Major(s)

Students wishing to change their major(s) must complete a “Change of Major” form, which is available in the Admission Advising Office. The completed form must be submitted to the Records Office.

Transfer Credit for Correspondence Courses

Lamar State College-Port Arthur does not offer courses by correspondence. However, a maximum of nine (9) semester hours of correspondence work from an accredited institution may be applied toward an associate degree.

No correspondence course may be carried while a student is in residence without the permission of the student’s department chair. A permit signed by the department chair must be filed in the Office of Admission & Records before registration for the course. A student may not register for, carry or complete a correspondence course during the last semester of Summer Session before graduation except in the following circumstances: (a) a course required for graduation is not offered by LSC-PA; and/or (b) the student has a schedule conflict between required courses.

The statement of intent must be approved by the department chair and filed in the Office of Admission and Records no later than the last day to apply for graduation.

Graduates must file correspondence transcripts 14 days before graduation.

Classification of Students

Students are classified as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors or post-baccalaureate. For the purpose of determining eligibility to hold certain offices and for other reasons, officially enrolled students are classified as follows:

Freshman: met all entrance requirements but completed fewer than 30 semester hours

Sophomore: completed a minimum of 30 semester hours with 60 grade points

Junior: completed a minimum of 60 semester hours with 120 grade points

Senior: completed a minimum of 90 semester hours with 180 grade points

Post-baccalaureate: holds a bachelor’s degree, but not pursuing a degree program

Grading System

A – Excellent

B – Good

C – Satisfactory

D – Passing

F – Failure

I – Incomplete

W – Withdrawn

NG – No grade

Q – Course was dropped

S – Credit

U – Unsatisfactory; no credit

A grade of “W” or “Q” is given if the withdrawal or drop is made before the penalty date or if the student is passing at the time of withdrawal or drop.

Assigning a grade of “I” (Incomplete) requires prior approval of the department chair.

An “I” is assigned only when the deadline for dropping the course has passed, the student is passing the course, and course requirements, including the final examination, cannot be completed because of unavoidable circumstances. If incomplete work is not finished by the end of the next long semester, the “I” will become an “F” on the permanent record. The course then must be repeated if credit is desired.

One-semester extension requests will be honored by the Records Office if approved by the instructor and the department chair before the expiration of the normal deadline.

An "I" grade also automatically becomes an "F" if the student reregisters for the course prior to removing the deficiencies and receiving a grade change.

An instructor may record the grade of "F" for a student who is absent from the final examination and is not passing the course.

Semester grades are filed with the Office of Admission & Records. A grade may not be recorded for a student not officially enrolled in a course during the semester covered.

In most circumstances grades remain as recorded. When warranted, a grade change will be made using the official "Grade Change Form" available in the Registrar's Office. If the instructor is no longer employed by the college, the department chair and dean have the authority to change grades.

A student desiring to register for a course to receive a grade of "NG" must have the written approval on official form of the major department head, instructor and instructor's department head and Records Office verification. Student semester hours attempted will be reduced by appropriate number of hours.

Students are responsible for completing and filing the appropriate petition form with the Records Office. A student must petition for "No Grade" after the 12th class day for Fall and Spring semester and after the 4th class day of the Summer sessions and before the deadline for dropping or withdrawing from a course without penalty.

Grade-Point-Average Computation

Grade-point-average is a measure of a student's overall academic performance and is used to determine academic standing, rank in class, eligibility for graduation, etc.

To compute these averages, grade points are assigned to letter grades as follows: to the grade A, 4 points; to B, 3 points; to C, 2 points; to D, 1 point and to F, I, S, U, NG and W, 0 points.

The number of grade points earned in a course is obtained by multiplying the number of semester hours credit by the number of points assigned to the letter grade made in the course.

The grade point average is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of semester hours attempted in courses for which the grades A, B, C, D, F and I are assigned.

Thus, for grades S, U, NG, W, and Q, neither semester hours nor grade points are used in the computation of the grade point average. Hours attempted provide all work taken whether passed, failed or repeated.

Beginning with the fall 1994 semester, all four Lamar-named schools modified their procedure for grade point average computation. Each school now maintains an independent grade point average which reflects only the course work attempted on that campus. The old procedure of combining all course work into one comprehensive grade point average will continue to be used for any courses taken prior to fall 1994. For more information, contact the Registrar's Office on the respective campuses.

Course Repetition

Students have one opportunity to replace a grade earned in an academic or technical course. If a student repeats a course, the official grade will be the second grade earned – regardless of whether it is higher, lower or the same – although the first grade remains on the student’s official transcript. Repetition of a LSC-PA course at another institution will not replace the grade earned at the college in calculating a student’s cumulative grade point average, nor will a grade earned in a LSC-PA course replace a transcribed grade earned in the same course at another institution. Any grade earned by further repetition of a course (third and subsequent grades earned in the same course) will be included in the calculation of a student’s cumulative GPA. The college may charge additional fees to students who take a course multiple times.

Students receiving various forms of financial aid or VA benefits and who repeat a course may have complications regarding their financial aid awards. These students must consult the Financial Aid Office prior to repeating a course under the provisions of the program.

Honors will be determined on the basis of a cumulative grade point average that includes all grades earned, even those replaced according to this policy.

Final Grade Report

Final grades are electronically mailed to students’ (My.Lamarpa.edu) e-mail account at the end of each semester or summer term. These reports include the semester grades and the grade point average for the semester.

Deans’ List

At the end of each semester the Office of Admission and Records prepares a list of all full-time (those who complete 12 or more non-remedial semester credit hours at Lamar State College-Port Arthur) freshman and sophomore students who earned for that semester a grade point average of 3.60 or above. This list is the Deans’ List and is announced by the instructional dean of each division.

President’s List

At the end of each semester the Office of Admission and Records prepares a list of all full-time students (those who complete 12 or more non-remedial semester credit hours at Lamar State-PA) who earned a grade point average of 4.0 that semester.

These students then are listed on the President’s List which is published after each long semester.

Scholastic Probation and Suspension

Students are expected to make acceptable scholastic progress toward their degree objectives. A “C” is the minimum satisfactory grade and a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) constitutes satisfactory performance.

All students with a GPA reflecting “academic suspension” at the end of the fall or spring semesters shall be suspended. No first-time college students shall be suspended at the end of their first semester of attendance.

Academic Probation:

Students in these categories at the end of the fall or spring semesters are considered to be on “Academic Probation”:

- Freshman students (1-29 semester credit hours (SCH) work attempted) who have less than a 2.0 but greater than a 1.15 GPA;
- Sophomore students (30-59 SCH work attempted) who have less than a 2.0 but greater than a 1.58 GPA;
- Other students who have greater than 60 SCH work attempted and have less than a 2.0 but greater than a 1.72 GPA.

Academic Suspension:

Students in these categories at the end of the fall or spring semesters are considered to be on "Academic Suspension":

- Freshman students (1-29 SCH work attempted) who have less than a 1.15 GPA;
- Sophomore students (30-59 SCH work attempted) who have less than a 1.58 GPA;
- Other students who have greater than 60 SCH work attempted and have less than a 1.72 GPA.

Students suspended from fall and/or spring semesters by this action may attend the summer session on probation. Students who have not improved at least to the level of "academic probation" at the close of the summer session may register for the following fall semester, but will be charged with a suspension. Students returning from academic suspension must continue to improve their GPA every semester of enrollment until they achieve a minimum 2.0 GPA. If students fail to improve their GPA in any semester, they will be suspended, unless approved for probationary re-enrollment by the dean of their division.

Students enrolling for either a fall or spring semester, who passed fewer than 60 semesters hours, and who ended the previous two long semesters on scholastic probation, are required to enroll in EDUC 1300 Learning Framework, a course that helps students develop skills and techniques necessary for success in college, including memory development, note-taking, preparing for exams, study skills and time management. Students also learn about the importance of creativity, health, relationships and the effective use of resources for achieving collegiate success.

A grade of "C" or better must be earned in EDUC 1300 to satisfy the institutional requirement; otherwise, the course must be repeated. EDUC 1300 may count as elective credit toward a degree or certificate. Students who petition for readmission after being placed on scholastic suspension either at Lamar State College-Port Arthur or at another institution must enroll in and complete EDUC 1300 as a condition for readmission and retention in the college.

A department may set academic requirements for its majors in addition to the basic grade point standard, with the approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Students suspended under this provision may register in another college if they meet the prescribed standards and are accepted through a change of major.

Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices (such as cell phones, MP3 players and laptops) may not be used during tests unless specifically allowed by the instructor, or if the Special Populations Coordinator determines that a device is an acceptable accommodation for a physical or mental disability. Under any other circumstances, the use of an electronic device during a test is considered "academic dishonesty" and will result in appropriate sanctions as outlined in the Instructor's syllabus, the Faculty Handbook (Section IX-1) and the Student Handbook ("Academic Dishonesty").

Use of electronic devices during normal class hours distracts other students, disrupts the class and wastes valuable time. The syllabus for every LSC-PA course includes that instructor's policy regarding the use of electronic devices during class.

Academic Records and Transcripts

Academic records are in the permanent custody of the Admission & Records Office. Documents received by that office become the property of Lamar State College-Port Arthur and cannot be copied or returned. Transcripts of academic records may be secured by an individual personally or will be released on the student's written authorization.

A \$5 Transcript Fee is charged to every student at the beginning of each semester he or she attends the college. Upon official request, students will receive copies of their Lamar State College-Port Arthur transcript in the future at no charge.

Students who owe debts to the college will have their official transcripts withheld until the debt is paid.

Chapter 675, Acts of the 61st Legislature (1969 Regular Session) provides that "no person may buy, sell, create, duplicate, alter, give or obtain a diploma, certificate, academic record, certificate of enrollment or other instrument which purports to signify merit or achievement conferred by an institution of education in this state with the intent to use fraudulently such document or to allow fraudulent use of such document.

"A person who violates this Act or who aids another in violating this Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 and/or confinement in the county jail for a period not to exceed one year."

Academic Appeal Procedure

After an enrollment lapse of four or more years from Lamar State College-Port Arthur, and after completing successfully (2.2 GPA) 24 semester hours of work at the college, a student may petition to disregard a maximum of two entire successive semesters of work taken previously at the college. The petition must be filed with the department head and follow regular channels to the appropriate dean for a final decision.

Endorsements and/or recommendations shall be required at each academic level.

When approved by the registrar, disregarded work shall not count in determining the student's grade point average for academic progress or for graduation; however, it shall remain on the transcript with an appropriate notation, and it shall be used in determining honors. Once a degree has been conferred, a student may not use the academic appeals procedure for any courses used to award the degree or calculate the cumulative grade point average.

Educational Records and Students Rights

The following information concerning student records maintained by Lamar State College-Port Arthur is published in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 PL 93-380, which affords students certain rights regarding to their education records. They are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the college receives a request for access. Students should submit written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect to the registrar, dean, head of the academic department, or other appropriate official, who will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If the records are not maintained by the college official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the college amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the college decides not to amend the record as requested by a student, the college will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information about procedures will be provided to the student with the notification of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

A school official is a person employed by the college in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research or support staff position (including law enforcement personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the university has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agency); a person serving on the Board of Regents; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the college discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which the student seeks to enroll.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Access to educational records directly related to a student will be granted to him or her unless the type of record is exempted from the provision of the law.

The types, locations and names of custodians of educational records maintained by the college are available from the Vice President for Student Services.

Access to records by persons other than the student will be limited to persons and agencies specified in the statute. Records will be maintained of persons granted such access and the legitimate interest in each case.

Information released to the public without the consent of the student is limited to the categories of information designated by the college as directory information and are routinely released. The student may request that any or all of this information be withheld from the public by making written request to the Admission and Records Office. The request must be made by the last official day to register for a given semester and shall remain in effect until rescinded in writing to the Registrar's Office.

Directory information not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed includes, but is not limited to: name; current and permanent address; telephone listing; date and place of birth; field of study; semester hour load; classification; eligibility for and participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; photographs; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received, with dates; and name of most recent education agency or institution attended.

A student has the right to challenge records and information directly related to him or her if it is considered to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise inappropriate.

Issues may be resolved either through an informal hearing with the official immediately responsible or by requesting a formal hearing. The procedure to be followed in a formal hearing is available in the Office of Admission and Records.

The right of parental access to student records may be established by either of two methods: first, by the student filing a written consent statement and second, by the parent validating the student's dependency as defined by IRS.