

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS & POLICIES

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Initial academic advising is provided by the Welcome/Advising and Counseling Centers for first-time Palo Alto College students, both new and transfer students. During their second semester, all currently enrolled and former Palo Alto students who have a declared major will be advised by faculty advisors. Students must check with the appropriate department office to schedule an appointment with their advisor.

Currently enrolled and former students not having declared majors who will be registering for a full-time course load will be advised by counselors. Part-time students may be advised by advisors in the Welcome/Advising Center. Undeclared students are encouraged to participate in scheduled courses and career exploration seminars, and may take vocational interest inventories offered through the Counseling Center.

The expectation is that advising will be completed during regularly scheduled office hours and during selected hours in the evenings through individual or group advising sessions. It is important that students schedule advisement appointments early so that they receive information about college services, discuss their educational goals and timelines, and develop degree plans. Students have the ultimate responsibility to select and register for courses meeting graduation requirements. Transient students from other colleges who have no intention of completing a degree at Palo Alto College will be advised by the Counseling Center.

NOTE: Once students accumulate fifteen hours, the transient status no longer applies.

Students with declared majors are encouraged to see faculty advisors any time they encounter academic problems or contemplate a change in educational goals. They are especially encouraged to consult with their advisors early in the year in which they expect to graduate in order to determine their graduation eligibility. Each student is responsible for verifying the transferability of credit with the receiving institution.

Please follow the Advising Process Steps usually found near the front of the Palo Alto College Bulletin Schedule of Classes or in the Welcome/Advising Center.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance in classes and laboratories is required. A student absent for any reason may be allowed to make up work at the discretion of the instructor. In all cases, the student will be held responsible for completion of requirements. Excused absences are given only to students representing the school in an official capacity. The appropriate instructional division chair and dean must approve such absences.

While many Continuing Education courses have special attendance requirements, 80 percent attendance is the general requirement for Continuing Education if the individual is to receive a Certificate of Completion from the College. Students should take note of attendance requirements upon beginning a course of instruction since requirements are announced at the beginning of every course.

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DROPPING/ADDING COURSES

If a student decides to drop a course, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Office of Admissions and Records or the Continuing Education Department (if the student is a CE student) in a timely manner. The student must either complete the proper forms in person at the above offices or submit the request in writing. To simply stop attending class may result in the student being assigned the grade of or "F."

EXCESSIVE ABSENCE POLICY

Student absences are recorded from the official date of enrollment. A student absent the equivalent of two weeks of instruction may be dropped by the instructor. Instructors are encouraged to drop students who are excessively absent, are not doing well in class, and do not attempt to contact the instructor about the absences and/or academic problems. Absences do not have to be consecutive. A student dropped from a class for excessive absences may be given a grade of "W". See the section above on Adding and Dropping Courses for the proper procedure for dropping a course.

GRADUATE GUARANTEE POLICY

Guarantee for Job Competency for Occupational-Technical Students.

Palo Alto College makes certain guarantees to its Associate of Applied Science graduates or Certificate completers, whose course work began in the Fall 1993 semester or after. If the graduate or completer is judged by an employer to be lacking in technical job skills identified as exit competencies for their specific degree or certificate program, the graduate/completer will receive up to nine (9) tuition-free hours of additional skill training by the college.

The guarantee does not imply that the graduate or completer will pass any licensing or qualifying examination for a particular career.

Conditions which apply to the guarantee are as follows:

1. The graduate/completer must have earned the A.A.S. degree or certificate in a technical program published in the college's catalog (or its addenda); and
2. The graduate/completer must have completed the A.A.S. degree or certificate with a majority (75%) of the credits being earned at Palo Alto College within a four-year time span from initial enrollment. The last fifteen (15) semester hours of credit **must** be completed at Palo Alto College; and
3. Graduates must be employed full-time in an area directly related to the area of program concentration as certified by the President of the college or designee; and
4. The graduate/completer must begin employment within six (6) months of graduation/completion; and
5. The employer must certify in writing that the employee is lacking entry-level skills which were identified by Palo Alto College as the program exit competencies as approved by the program advisory committee. The employer must specify the areas of deficiency within ninety (90) days of the graduate/completer's initial employment.

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GRADUATE GUARANTEE POLICY (cont'd)

RETRAINING PROCEDURES

6. The employer, graduate/completer, and representatives of the college will develop a written educational plan for retraining.
7. Retraining will be limited to nine (9) credit hours related to the identified skill indicated by the retraining plan.
8. All retraining must be completed within a calendar year from the time agreed upon for the educational plan.
9. The graduate/completer and/or employer is responsible for the cost of books, insurance, uniforms, fees, and/or other course-related expenses.
10. The student's sole remedy against the college and its employees for skill deficiencies shall be limited to nine credit hours of tuition-free education under conditions described above.
11. The program can be initiated through a written contract with the Office of the College President.

Palo Alto's pledge for students in Arts and Sciences who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university:

Palo Alto College pledges to its Associate of Arts and Associate of Science graduates and other students who have met the requirements of a 60 credit-hour transfer plan the transferability of course credits to those programs or majors at other four-year institutions which have articulation agreements or joint admission agreements with Palo Alto College.

This pledge is designed specifically for those Palo Alto College students whose course work began in the Fall of 1993 or after and who have made firm decisions about their major and the institution to which they plan to transfer.

Conditions which apply to the pledge are as follows:

1. Transferability is the acceptance of credits toward a specific major and degree. Courses must be identified by the receiving university as transferable and applicable according to the articulation or joint admission agreement;
2. Limitations of total number of credits accepted in transfer, grades required, relevant grade point average and duration of transferability apply as determined and stated by the receiving institution; and
3. The student must take the responsibility to meet with a Palo Alto College counselor and a receiving institution counselor to ascertain the requirements of the specific articulation or joint admission agreement and follow the agreement course plan while attending Palo Alto College.

Then, you have our pledge that courses will transfer to the cooperating four-year institution. If they do not, you may take the additional required courses at Palo Alto College – up to nine (9) hours tuition free.

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HONOR LISTS

Outstanding academic achievement is recognized as follows:

President's Honors List: Must be enrolled in 12 or more semester hours and earn a 4.0 grade point average.

President's Part-Time Honors List: Must be enrolled in 6-11 semester hours and earn a 4.0 grade point average.

Dean's Honors List: Must be enrolled in 12 or more semester hours and earn a 3.5 or higher grade point average.

Dean's Part-Time Honors List: Must be enrolled in 6-11 semester hours and earn a 3.5 or higher grade point average.

The appropriate notation appears on the permanent record.

An Honors Convocation is held each Fall to recognize achievements from the previous Fall and Spring semesters. Letters are sent to students to notify them of the ceremony with instructions on how to receive a certificate.

READMISSION TO CLASS

A student dropped for excessive absences may be readmitted to class only if circumstances justify reinstatement. The decision to reinstate the student is left to the discretion of the instructor.

SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Palo Alto College is aware of a student's need to successfully complete a program of study. To insure that the student progresses satisfactorily through the course work, the following standards will govern satisfactory academic progress.

I. Grading System

A. Letter Grades

Permanent grades are recorded at the end of the semester/session. Students may obtain grades through the College's automated voice response system at (210)301-2520 or the Internet at www.accd.edu. Grades are not mailed.

The grades regularly used are:

"A" (excellent/exceptional performance beyond mastery)

"B" (above average/beyond basic mastery)

"C" (average/mastery)

"D" (below average)

"F" (failure)

"I" (incomplete)

"W" (withdrew)

"IP" (in progress)

"NC" (non-credit)

"CR" (non-traditional credit only).

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS & POLICIES

SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS (cont'd)

"P" (Pass) may be assigned by the instructors for students in the English, reading, and mathematics developmental laboratories.

The conditional grade of "I" may be issued to a student having a passing average on all completed work, but for a justified reason (such as illness or death in the family), has failed to take the final examination or to complete other required work. The "I" becomes an "F" in 120 calendar days unless the student either completes the work with a grade of "D" or higher or re-registers for the course within those 120 calendar days after the end of the term.

In certain courses, the grade of "D" will not be assigned. In these courses, it is deemed essential to have completed the course with at least a basic mastery. To have learned less indicates that the student is not prepared to progress to the next level. Course syllabi will indicate the courses in which this policy is to be adhered to.

A grade of "W" will be assigned students being withdrawn for excessive absences.

The "IP" grade may be assigned to a student not adequately mastering the course content during a given semester or term. In the instructor's judgment, however, the student has the potential to successfully complete the course. A student receiving an "IP" must re-register for the course and earn a passing grade to receive credit for the course. "IP" grades are assigned only in developmental and certain skills-building courses.

A student has a maximum of two years from the end of the semester to request a review of the grade or petition for a change of grade. (See the section on Student Rights and Responsibilities, Student Grade Appeals.)

B. Grade Point Average (GPA)

Grade point averages are computed by assigning values to each grade as follows:

A	4 points per semester hour
B	3 points per semester hour
C	2 points per semester hour
D	1 point per semester hour
F	0 points
I	0 points
IP, NC, P, W, CR	Not used in grade point average calculation.

The average is found by dividing the total number of points by the total number of semester hours for which grades have been received. The average is based on all semester and term coursework.

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SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS (cont'd)

C. Calculating the G.P.A.:

1. Multiply the number of semester hours each course is worth by the quality points earned.
2. Add these values.
3. Divide this sum by the number of semester hours attempted.

Course	Semester Hours		Quality Points		Grade Points
BIOL 1406	4	x	3(B)	=	12
ENGL 1301	3	x	2(C)	=	6
GOVT 2305	3	x	4(A)	=	12
SDEV 0170	1	x	4(A)	=	4
KINE 1173	1	x	4(A)	=	4
Total =	12				38

G.P.A. = 38 (grade points) divided by 12 (semester hours) = 3.16

II. Scholastic Standards

The following standards will govern satisfactory progress:

A. Minimum Academic Standards

A student is expected to maintain a level of scholastic achievement which will allow him/her to meet the minimum graduation grade point requirements. A student must have earned a 2.0 ("C") cumulative grade point average to remain in good academic standing. A student's record will be evaluated for academic standing only after enrollment in, or accumulation of twelve (12) or more semester hours.

B. Scholastic Probation

Scholastic Probation indicates the student's grade point average has fallen below a 2.0 and that the quality of the student's overall academic work is unacceptable. A student beginning any semester or term in good academic standing but failing to maintain the College's minimum academic standards will be placed on Scholastic Probation. Scholastic Probation status is removed by attaining minimum academic standards the next semester or session. (See Minimum Academic Standards.)

C. Continued Scholastic Probation

After the first semester following a probation status, a student may re-enroll at Palo Alto College on a Continued Scholastic Probation status provided a 2.0 or higher semester grade point average is earned each semester/session.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS & POLICIES

SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS (cont'd)

The student's status is evaluated after each twelve-semester hour segment of work attempted or accumulated. The Scholastic Probation status is removed when a student has earned a cumulative 2.0 grade point average.

D. Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal

1. A student on Scholastic Probation will be placed on Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal if he/she fails to earn a 2.0 grade point average in any semester/session when twelve semester hours of credit is attempted or accumulated.
2. A student on Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal will not be allowed to enroll in any classes during the next semester/session.
3. The first and second withdrawal will be for one (1) semester/session.
4. The third withdrawal will be one (1) calendar year.

E. Petition for Re-admission

1. A student on Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal for the first or second time wanting to continue in the next semester/session may:
 - a. Enroll in the next summer session and attempt at least six (6) hours. If the student earns a 2.5 GPA, the student will be allowed to register the next fall semester.
 - b. Petition **at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester to the Director of Enrollment Management for special permission to register. The petitioning process begins in the Counseling Center.**
2. A student on Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal must agree to follow the recommended academic prescription for achieving success as specified by a counselor.

F. A student on Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal for a third time or more will not be permitted to enroll in the College for on calendar year. After that year, the student may petition as follows:

1. Petition **at least 3 weeks prior to the start of the semester to the Director of Enrollment Management** for special permission to register.
2. Meet with an Enforced Scholastic Withdrawal Review Committee and must agree to follow the prescribed academic prescription.

STUDENT CLASS LOAD

Fall and Spring Semesters: A Full-Time Student is enrolled in 12 or more semester hours. A Part-Time Student is enrolled in fewer than 12 semester hours. No student may enroll for more than 18 semester hours except by written authorization of the Vice President of Student Affairs or a designee.

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STUDENT CLASS LOAD (cont'd)

Maymester: No student may enroll for more than 4 semester hours except by written authorization of Department Chairpersons, Counselors or Vice President of Student Affairs.

Summer Session: A Full-Time Student is enrolled 6 or more credit hours. A Part-Time Student is enrolled in fewer than 6 semester credit hours. Hours in excess of fulltime must be approved by the Vice President of Student Affairs.

STUDENT'S PERMANENT RECORD

The Student's Permanent Record contains personal data, test scores, transfer and admissions information, Palo Alto courses attempted, grades and academic status. This information becomes part of the College's permanent files.

The name appearing on the official record is the name under which the student initially registered, unless a "Change of Name" form has been processed through the Office of Admissions and Records. Except upon marriage, name changes are made only when appropriate legal documentation accompanies the request. Public or Directory Information inquiries should be addressed to the Office of Admissions and Records.

SYLLABUS

A course syllabus is a formal agreement between the instructor and the student. For every course that the college offers, there is a departmental syllabus. The syllabus contains a description of the content to be taught in the course and the expectations of the student. Instructors are required to distribute a departmentally approved syllabus to each student in their classes at the beginning of the course.

TRANSCRIPTS

An official copy of your Palo Alto College transcript may be requested from the Admissions & Records Office. Allow five (5) working days for the processing of your transcript request. All transcripts are issued free of charge.

TRANSFER CURRICULA AND RESOLUTION OF TRANSFER DISPUTES

In cases where a public institution of higher education does not accept a course or courses for transfer,* the following procedure shall be followed in the resolution of transfer disputes.

- (1) If an institution of higher education does not accept course credit earned by a student at another institution of higher education, that institution shall give written notice to the student and the other institution that the transfer of the course credit is denied.
- (2) The two institutions and the student shall attempt to resolve the transfer of the course credit in accordance with the Coordinating Board rules and/or guidelines.

*Developmental courses excluded.

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TRANSFER CURRICULA AND RESOLUTION OF TRANSFER DISPUTES (cont'd)

- (3) If the transfer dispute is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student or the sending institution within 45 days after the date the student received written notice of denial, the institution whose credit is denied for transfer shall notify the Commissioner of the denial.
- (4) The Commissioner of Higher Education or the Commissioner's designee shall make the final determination about a dispute concerning the transfer of course credit and give written notice of the determination to the involved student and institutions.

Both the A.A. and A.S. degrees have been developed to accommodate transfer to senior colleges. All of the required curricular courses are equivalent to courses found in the current edition of the "Community College General Academic Course Guide" manual, and are approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

TUITION/FEES

Palo Alto College reserves the right to change its tuition and fees in keeping with the acts of the Texas Legislature and official interpretations thereof. Consult the latest edition of the Palo Alto College Bulletin (the class schedule or the college catalog) for a listing of all the tuition and fees.

TUITION THIRD-REPEAT FEE

Recent legislature has prompted ACCD to initiate an additional surcharge for courses taken by students who have attempted a course for a third time (e.g., 3rd repeat). Effective fall 2005, students who have attempted a course twice and elect to repeat the same course for a third time will be charged an additional \$160 per credit hour for that course. W grades after census date are counted as an attempt.

Some courses are exempt from the surcharge. However, it is important that students understand the implications of the "3rd attempt rule" including the effects on academic progress and tuition. Any questions on the tuition bill should be addressed to the bursar's office. Questions about the class should be addressed to your advisor.

TUITION REFUNDS

Consult the latest edition of the Palo Alto College Bulletin for specific refunds of tuition and fees for Fall, Spring, and Summer items. **Not all fees are refundable.**

WITHDRAWALS

A student wishing to withdraw from the College must follow the procedure listed below:

1. Resolve all financial obligations.
2. Obtain an official "Notice of Change" form from the Office of Admissions and Records for each class.

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WITHDRAWALS (cont'd)

3. Complete and leave the form and student I.D. Card with the Office of Admissions and Records.

A student may also withdraw from the College by writing to the Office of Admissions and Records. However, no drops or withdrawals will be accepted by phone.

WITHDRAWAL FOR MILITARY SERVICE

ACCD Policy FBB

If a student withdraws because he or she is called to active military service, the College, at the student's option, shall:

1. Grant a student who is eligible under the District's guidelines an incomplete grade in all courses by designating "withdrawn-military" on the student's transcript, or
2. As determined by the instructor, assign an appropriate final grade or credit to a student who has satisfactorily completed a substantial amount of coursework and demonstrated sufficient mastery of the course material.

WITHDRAWAL GRADES

A student dropping classes or withdrawing from the College prior to the census date will not have grades recorded for those classes. Following the census date, grades will be recorded for any classes dropped or for withdrawal from the College. The grade that will be assigned is a "W."

During the fall and spring semesters "W's" are assigned within a period following the census date that extends from the 13th day of the semester to the end of the 14th week of classes. An instructor may also assign a "W" during this period if the student is dropped for excessive absences. Following the 14th week, performance grades ("A," "B," "C," "D," "F," "I," "IP," or "P") are assigned by the instructors.

Summer terms and Flex Sessions of eight weeks have differing census dates. The census dates and last days during which a student may drop or withdraw and receive a "W" are listed in the academic calendars appearing in the College catalog or in the academic schedule of classes.