

# Academic Affairs

## Office of Academic Affairs

The Office of Academic Affairs is dedicated to helping students achieve their academic goals within the established academic policies and procedures of the University. The three main responsibilities of this office are:

- administering the academic advising program;
- maintaining the registration and student records systems; and
- monitoring student academic standing and compliance with academic policies.

The Office of Academic Affairs endeavors to ensure that students follow their degree program, register for required courses in the degree, and fulfill their graduation requirements in time for their expected graduation date. Nevertheless, students have the responsibility to be aware of their degree requirements and to monitor their own progress through their degree program.

## The University's Email System

The University email system is the official channel of communication. Students must attend an orientation session to activate a University email account. Once active, it should be checked for important messages at least three to five times per week. Students either log on via a University computer or access through the web at <http://webmail.richmond.ac.uk>. Students may also configure the University email system to automatically forward email to their private email accounts.

## Orientation

The orientation program, which takes place during the week prior to the beginning of classes each semester, includes a number of activities especially designed to ease the transition of new students into the Richmond academic program. All new students take English and mathematics placements tests, unless they have received exemption from the Dean of Academic Affairs. They learn about the academic policies and procedures of the University, have information technology and library sessions, and meet with a full-time faculty member to register for the courses they will take in their first semester. (See page 15 for more information about orientation.)

## Academic Advising

At their initial registration, students are advised by a full-

time faculty member in the area of their declared major, or by a faculty member skilled in general advising if no major has been declared. After the initial registration, each student is assigned a member of the full-time faculty as an academic adviser. Students who have declared a major will normally be assigned an adviser who will remain their adviser throughout the student's time at the University. For students who have not decided on a major, a special adviser is assigned to assist in developing an academic plan until a major has been chosen. Students meet with their advisers to review their academic progress, choose courses for the following semester, and plan their course of study. Advisers welcome the opportunity to help students to gain the maximum benefit from their educational experience.

A specific group of faculty members experienced in advising study abroad students is available at specified times during the orientation period.

## Registration

### Registration for new students

New students register for classes during the orientation period preceding their first semester of attendance. If for reasons acceptable to the Admissions and Academic Affairs Offices a new student must arrive late, the last day to register is the Friday of the first week of classes; fees must be paid, placement tests taken, and registration for classes completed by 5:00 PM on that day.

### Registration for transfer students

Transfer students register for classes during the orientation period preceding their first semester of attendance. All documents required for the evaluation of transfer credit must be presented to the Admissions Office prior to registration. If for reasons acceptable to the Admissions and Academic Affairs Offices a new student must arrive late, the last day to register is the Friday of the first week of classes; fees must be paid, placement tests taken, and registration for classes completed by 5:00 PM on that day.

### Registration for study abroad students

Study abroad students are registered as their course selections are received by the Registrar, beginning the seventh week of the semester before the intended semester of study. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the courses submitted to the Registrar have been approved by the home institution.

### Registration for continuing students

Continuing students are those in current attendance who

plan to study in the next semester. Priority registration for continuing students takes place during the sixth week of the semester for the semester following. (See the Academic Calendar for dates.) Students are advised to register at this time to ensure they are accepted into the courses needed for graduation. A late registration fee will be charged for registration after the Priority Registration period. Failure to pay tuition fees by the deadline date will result in the cancellation of registration. Late payment of fees, including applicable penalties, will restore registration to courses originally chosen provided spaces are available.

### Registration for returning students

Returning students are those on an approved leave of absence who wish to resume their studies prior to the expiration of their leave. Returning students may register for the semester in which they plan to return during the Priority Registration period of the previous semester by contacting their adviser or the Office of Academic Affairs.

### Registration for readmitted students

Students who have left the University without being granted a leave of absence, or who have been away from the University past the expiration date of their leave of absence, must apply to the Office of Academic Affairs for readmission. Applications for readmission must be received no later than six weeks before the first day of classes of the semester for which readmission is sought. Readmitted students may register with the assistance of the Office of Academic Affairs at any time after readmission, provided this is after the Priority Registration period.

## Student Status

A **full-time student** is one taking at least nine credits in a semester.

A **part-time student** is one taking fewer than nine credits in a semester.

A **study abroad student** is a student matriculated for a degree in another college or university. This classification may be held for a maximum of one calendar year. It is assumed that study abroad students have the approval of their home institutions to take the courses they are registered for at Richmond. A study abroad student who wishes to transfer to Richmond as a degree-seeking student must apply for admission through the Office of Admissions. Study abroad students who are at Richmond through the American Institute for Foreign Study are not eligible to apply for admission as a degree-seeking student until they have entered their second semester as a study abroad student.

An applicant may be admitted as a **non-degree student** through the normal admissions process, and must take the appropriate placement tests in English and mathematics unless granted an exemption by the Dean of Academic Affairs. A non-degree student may take a maximum of two courses per semester, and may accumulate a maximum of 15 semester credits.

A **freshman** is a student who has earned fewer than 30 credits.

A **sophomore** has earned between 30 and 59 credits.

A **junior** has earned between 60 and 89 credits.

A **senior** has earned 90 or more credits.

## Academic Policies

### Academic Standards Committee

The Academic Standards Committee, chaired by the Coordinator of Academic Advising, considers and acts upon cases of academic dishonesty, rules on student petitions for exceptions to academic policy, and monitors the academic standing of students.

### Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is fundamental to the integrity of the University community. Students who are academically dishonest will receive a failing grade on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor. When academic dishonesty is the cause of a failing grade for a course, the student may not subsequently withdraw from the course; however, the normal policy for repeating a course applies. (This policy replaces the F on the transcript by NC (F), indicating that the failure is no longer calculated in the student's GPA.) A second confirmed case of academic dishonesty will normally result in dismissal from the University.

Academic dishonesty is defined as:

*Any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual or artistic work of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise.*

It includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- receiving or giving assistance in tests and examinations;
- intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others;

- submitting another person's work as your own, or providing work for this purpose;
- submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing an editing service for others;
- submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference;
- paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation;
- submitting substantially the same piece in more than one course; and
- assisting other students in any of the above acts.

The University's Academic Honesty Policy is spelled out in detail on the web site:

[http://www.richmond.ac.uk/studying/procedures/academic\\_honesty.html](http://www.richmond.ac.uk/studying/procedures/academic_honesty.html).

### Attendance Policy

Successful progress towards a degree depends on the full cooperation of both students and faculty members. Most courses at Richmond utilize lectures and classroom discussions, which means that regular attendance and active participation in classes are essential parts of the educational process. No excuse for absence will exempt a student from the completion of all required work in a course. The student is responsible for requesting assistance from faculty members for making up missed work.

### Lower Division

Attendance is required in all courses. In any lower division course, students who accumulate more than the permitted number of absences, regardless of the reason, will receive an attendance failure (grade of F) unless they withdraw from the course.

In courses which meet twice per week, students may not have more than four absences.

In courses that meet once per week, students may not have more than two absences.

In summer sessions, due to the intensive nature of the classes, students may not have more than two absences.

Students in the Foundations Program who miss more than three classes may be administratively withdrawn from all three courses in the Program.

*Note: During the first week of classes, if a student misses both sessions of a course that meets twice per week or the one session of a course that meets once per week, the instructor has the right to ask the Registrar to drop the student from the course.*

### Upper Division

Attendance in classes is required in the upper division. The course syllabus for each upper division course will indicate clearly the attendance policy for that course (i.e., the number of absences allowed before the student receives an attendance failure). Faculty members may not apply an attendance policy that is more stringent than the lower division attendance policy.

*Note: During the first week of classes, if a student misses both sessions of a course that meets twice per week or the one session of a course that meets once per week, the instructor has the right to ask the Registrar to drop the student from the course.*

### Academic Probation and Dismissal

If at the end of any semester a full-time degree student attains a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of less than 2.0, the student will be informed of this by the Academic Standards Committee and placed on academic probation. Students are limited to at most four courses per semester while on academic probation. If the GPA is still below 2.0 at the end of the next semester of attendance, the student may be dismissed from the University, or may be allowed to continue on academic probation provided significant academic improvement has been made. Failure to raise the GPA to at least 2.0 by the end of a second semester on academic probation will normally result in dismissal from the University.

The Academic Standards Committee will inform students of the following:

- The student is in academic jeopardy and may be dismissed if her or his GPA is below 2.0 for two consecutive semesters;
- The student will be restricted to at most four courses per semester until she or he is no longer on academic probation;
- The student will remain on academic probation until her or his GPA reaches 2.0 or is dismissed;
- The student on academic probation must report regularly to her or his academic adviser or to the Coordinator of Academic Advising;

Students admitted to the University on academic probation are treated according to the above policy as if their first semester of attendance is their first semester on academic probation.

Students in the Foundations Program may be dismissed from the University by the Academic Standards Committee if they have not reached the level of English proficiency required for promotion to Principles of Writing after two semesters.

In cases of dismissal, students have the right to appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs on two grounds only: evidence of material administrative error in the dismissal procedure, or documentary evidence that was not available at the time the dismissal decision was made.

### Courses

**Course Load.** Most courses offered by the University carry three credits. The normal course load for a full-time student is five courses (15 credits) per semester. The minimum course load for a full-time student is three courses (at least nine credits). The maximum course load is six courses; however, only students with a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher are permitted to take six courses.

**Adding or Dropping a Course.** Students may add or drop courses on a space available basis during the official add/drop period of each academic term (the first five days of fall and spring semesters). Classes missed during this process are counted as absences for the purposes of the attendance policy. Students must add or drop courses through their academic advisers, either online or using a Course Change Form signed by their adviser and submitted to the Registrar.

**Changing Sections of a Course.** Students may change sections of a course on a space available basis following the same procedure as for adding or dropping a course.

**Withdrawing from a Course.** After the official add/drop period and until the last day to drop (see academic calendar), students may withdraw from a course by presenting a Course Withdrawal Form, signed by their adviser, to the Registrar.

***Note:** In cases where a grade of F is assigned because of academic dishonesty, the student may not withdraw from the course. However, the normal policy for repeating a course applies.*

**Repeating a Course.** A student may repeat a course for which a grade of F has been awarded. The failing grade will remain on the student's transcript even if the course is repeated and passed. If the course is repeated and passed, the passing grade will be recorded on the transcript and only this grade (not the original F) will be used in computing the cumulative GPA. A notation of NC, indicating "no credit", will be entered on the transcript next to the original grade of F. In exceptional cases, and only with the permission of the Academic Standards Committee, a student may repeat a course for which a passing grade has been earned. Such a repeat may occur only once, and only the second grade earned is used for the GPA.

**Auditing a Course.** A student may choose to register for a course on an audit basis. The student is normally expected to attend and to participate in all class activities, assignments, and assessments, except for the final examination, which is optional. As an auditor, the student will not receive a final grade for the course. Her or his record will show a grade of AU for audit. The following regulations apply to registering for a course as an auditor.

- A student must obtain her or his adviser's approval in order to audit a course;
- A student may change her or his status in a course between audit and credit no later than the end of the add/drop period;
- A student taking a course for audit will be subject to the same course fees as those taking the course for credit (including tuition and laboratory or materials fees or the cost of theatre tickets);
- A student taking a course for audit will be subject to the usual course load policies, with the audited course counting towards the total maximum allowed number of courses; or
- If a course becomes oversubscribed, students registered as auditors may be subject to deregistration.
- Audited courses may not be used to satisfy prerequisite, major, degree, or Masters Degree exemption requirements.

**Incomplete Courses.** In cases where students believe they have a legitimate reason for missing a final examination or failing to complete course work, they may petition the Academic Standards Committee for a re-sit examination or an extension to course work deadlines. If the petition is approved, an interim grade of I (Incomplete) is assigned and the final grade for the course is then revised by the instructor upon completion of the course requirements. Incomplete work for a fall semester must be submitted by the last day of classes of the following spring semester; incomplete work for a spring semester or summer session must be submitted by the last day of classes of the following fall semester. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in the I grade reverting to the original grade submitted by the instructor, or to an F grade if no grade was submitted. If a graduating senior is awarded a grade of I in a spring semester course, she or he will not receive a diploma dated that May. The diploma will be awarded the following May provided the work is completed by the last day of classes of the following fall semester.

**Independent Study.** Independent study is an individual research, laboratory, or creative arts project, taken under the direct supervision of a full-time faculty member. Independent study requires in-depth academic work on a specialized topic, and this involves research, reading,

writing, and where appropriate, experimentation. Students wishing to pursue independent study must have at least 60 credits and a GPA of at least 3.0. Independent study is not available to study abroad students.

To arrange for an independent study course, the student must find a full-time faculty supervisor, define the project, and obtain the approval of the topic before the end of the preceding semester. The faculty member and Department Chair or Program Director must approve the project in order for the student to register for the course. Approval will be based on a written application using forms available from department secretaries or the Office of the Registrar. It will require evidence of:

- the academic merit of the study;
- the availability of resource material; and
- the student's own capacity to undertake and the work.

Students who need assistance may discuss their proposal with the appropriate Department Chair or Program Director. Once approved, a student normally meets with her or his supervisor once each week for a minimum of two hours, although in some cases the nature of the subject matter may dictate less frequent meetings of longer duration. However, the minimum number of tutorial hours in any given semester must be 15. The course is graded and carries one, two, or three credits.

**Courses at Other Institutions.** Degree candidates wishing to take courses at other institutions at any time must obtain the approval of the Dean of Academic Affairs of both the institution and the intended courses via a Course Approval Form. If approval is granted, transfer credit will be awarded for the courses taken provided the grades earned are (the equivalent of) C or better. To ensure acceptance of transfer credits, a candidate must:

- Provide the institution's catalog and exact course descriptions (a catalog can be obtained from the institution; course descriptions may be available on its website).
- Consult the Department Chair or the Dean of Academic Affairs for permission to take the course.
- Ensure that a Course Approval Form has been signed by the Dean of Academic Affairs. This will be placed in the student's file. Failure to provide the signed approval form may result in the credits not being awarded towards the Richmond and OUVS degree.

**Cancellation of Courses.** The University reserves the right to cancel or replace courses for which there is insufficient enrollment. Degree students should work with their advisers to ensure that they enroll in classes in the proper sequence to ensure they meet their graduation

requirements. Study abroad students are advised to indicate at least ten course preferences on their application forms (five first choices and five alternatives) in case they are unable to take one of their first choices due to scheduling conflicts or full or cancelled courses.

### **Declaring a Major**

When applying for admission, students are given the opportunity to indicate an area of interest for study by choosing one of the undergraduate degree programs offered at Richmond. Students who indicate one of these will be registered in that major upon entry. Students not declaring a major upon application will be categorized as undeclared majors. Following entry, students may declare or change their majors at any point. A completed Declaration of Major/Change of Major Form must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs. At this time, if necessary, a new academic adviser will be assigned. Students who have not declared a major will be asked to declare one upon completion of 60 credits. Students will normally follow the major requirements in effect at the time they declare or change their major.

### **Double Majors**

A student may complete the requirements of two majors and receive one degree with those two majors. If one of the majors is for a Bachelor of Arts degree and the other is for a Bachelor of Science degree, the student may choose which degree to receive. The student's transcript will indicate one degree conferred with two majors, and the student will receive one diploma. Only one of the majors will be validated by the Open University Validation Services. Students completing two majors may require more than 120 credits.

### **Leave of Absence**

Students wishing to withdraw from the University may apply to the Dean of Academic Affairs for a leave of absence for up to one calendar year. Normally, students applying for a leave of absence must be in good academic, social, and financial standing. Approved leaves of absence provide students with the right to return to the University and to register for a future semester or summer session without applying for readmission. On returning from an approved leave of absence, students continue under the same graduation requirements that were in force when they began their leave. Those granted a leave of absence for medical reasons may be required to provide confirmation from their health-care provider that they are medically fit to resume their studies. Students failing to return from a leave of absence within one calendar year must apply for readmission. If they are readmitted, they

will be governed by the graduation requirements in effect at the time of readmission.

*Note: For purposes of leaves of absence only, "good academic standing" may include academic probation. However, if a student on academic probation applies for a Leave of Absence, the Academic Standards Committee may need to determine whether that student is a candidate for dismissal. Academic dismissal takes precedence over leave of absence.*

### **Midsemester Warning**

A warning is issued at midsemester to students doing unsatisfactory work (below C) in two or more courses, as reported by their instructors to the Office of Academic Affairs. A copy of the warning is also sent to the student's academic adviser.

### **Minors**

Students have the option of adding a second field of specialization, called a minor, to their major degree programs. (See page 54 of this catalog.)

### **Students Completing Graduation Requirements Elsewhere**

Students are normally expected to complete their graduation requirements at Richmond. However, in exceptional circumstances, a student may apply to the Dean of Academic Affairs for permission to complete graduation requirements elsewhere under an official Leave of Absence. As with all courses taken elsewhere after matriculation at Richmond, the student must obtain the prior approval of the Dean of Academic Affairs of both the institution and the courses to be taken.

If official transcripts confirming completion of the approved courses with grades of C or better are received by the Richmond Registrar's Office prior to the expiration of the Leave of Absence, the student's diploma will be awarded at the next Richmond graduation ceremony following actual completion of the degree requirements, with OU validation of the degree.

If official transcripts confirming completion of the approved courses with grades of C or better are not received by the Richmond Registrar's Office prior to the expiration of the Leave of Absence, the student's OU registration will lapse with no possibility of renewal.

The student may also make arrangements to return to Richmond to complete degree requirements, provided the arrangements are finalized before the Leave of Absence expires.

After expiration of the Leave of Absence, the student may apply for re-admission to Richmond. If the application is successful, the student will be re-admitted under the graduation requirements in effect at the time of re-admission (which may be substantially different than those under which the student was originally admitted). If the student subsequently satisfies the degree requirements, a Richmond diploma will be awarded at the next Richmond graduation ceremony following actual completion of the degree requirements. Since the student's OU registration will have lapsed, this degree will not be OU validated.

### **Summer Sessions**

The academic calendar normally includes two five-week intensive summer sessions. Students may enroll in at most two courses (maximum of seven credits) in each session. Classes meet for at least 95 minutes per day, Monday through Friday. Due to the intensive nature of the summer sessions, students may not miss more than two class meetings.

### **Academic Standing**

To be in good academic standing, students must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (C) and have earned at least 18 credits over the most recent academic year.

### **Grades**

Grades are assigned by instructors at the conclusion of every term (semester or summer session). Each letter grade is assigned a numerical equivalent on the following scale:

- A 4.0 Excellent work
- A- 3.7 Excellent work
- B+ 3.3 Above satisfactory work
- B 3.0 Above satisfactory work
- B- 2.7 Above satisfactory work
- C+ 2.3 Satisfactory work
- C 2.0 Satisfactory work
- C- 1.7 Below satisfactory work
- D+ 1.3 Below satisfactory work
- D 1.0 Below satisfactory work
- D- 0.7 Below satisfactory work
- F 0.0 Fail

Additional grades that do not have a numerical equivalent and are not used in GPA calculations are:

- AU Audit
- I Incomplete
- P Pass (non-credit courses only)
- W Withdrawn

Grades reported to the Registrar are considered final. If an instructor discovers that an error has been made in calculating or recording a grade, she or he must report this in writing to the appropriate Department Chair or Program Director, who will inform the Registrar of the grade change.

A student who wishes to appeal a grade must first ask the instructor to explain how the grade was calculated. If the student is unsatisfied with the explanation, she or he may appeal to the Department Chair or Program Director, whose decision is final.

Under no circumstances will a change of grade be considered after one year from the time the grade was issued.

#### **Grade Point Average**

A grade point average (GPA) is calculated each term and recorded on the student's transcript. A cumulative GPA, including all courses taken at Richmond, is also calculated. The numerical equivalent for the grade (see above) of each course is multiplied by the number of credits for that course to give the number of quality points for that course. The GPA is then the sum of the quality points for all

courses divided by the total number of credits of all courses attempted. Transfer credit is not included in this calculation. A separate GPA is calculated for a student taking a masters degree following a bachelors degree.

#### **Grade Reports**

Grade reports are issued to students at the end of each term, after the Registrar has recorded all grades.

#### **Dean's List**

Any degree or study abroad student who achieves a 3.4 GPA in any one semester while taking three or more courses (9 or more credits) will be placed on the Dean's List for that semester. This recognition of academic achievement will be noted on the student's transcript.

#### **Graduation Honors**

Graduating students whose cumulative GPA is at least 3.4 may graduate with honors: *cum laude* if their major GPA is at least 3.5, *magna cum laude* if their major GPA is at least 3.6, or *summa cum laude* if their major GPA is at least 3.7. This recognition requires outstanding overall performance over the four-year degree program while placing somewhat greater emphasis on performance in the major. The GPA in the major is the GPA for all lower and upper division major requirements, as listed in the section of this catalog on BA and BS degree requirements. In cases where there is a choice of courses that satisfy the major, the higher grade will be used in calculating the GPA.



*Richmond's riverfront*

### **Transcripts**

Official transcripts may be requested in writing via the Transcript Request Form. The student's signature on the form is required.

### **Confidentiality**

The University complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (USA) and the Data Protection Act 1998 (UK). Academic information concerning a current or former student can not be released to third parties without the student's written consent.

### **Graduation Ceremony**

The University holds one commencement ceremony per year at the end of the spring semester. Only those students who have completed their graduation requirements (as certified by the Registrar) and who have met all financial obligations to the University (as certified by the Finance Office) are permitted to take part in the ceremony. Further details on graduation certification, forms, and deadlines are available from the Office of Academic Affairs and on the University website.

### **Forms for Academic Procedures**

These forms are all available on the University web site at <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/resources/registrar/index.html>, as well as in the Registrar's Office on either Campus.

#### **Academic Standards Committee Form**

Used to petition the Academic Standards Committee for an exception to academic policy. To be returned to the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### **Application for a Degree**

This form must be completed no later than the beginning of the last semester of attendance to ensure the student

receives information about the Commencement. To be returned to the Registrar's Office.

#### **Course Approval Form**

Used for approval to take courses at other institutions. Must be completed beforehand and returned to the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### **Course Change Form (Add/Drop or Change Sections)**

Used for adding or dropping courses or changing sections during the add/drop period. To be returned to the Registrar's Office.

#### **Course Withdrawal Form**

Used for withdrawing from a course after the add/drop period up to the last day to withdraw. To be returned to the Registrar's Office.

#### **Declaration of Major Form**

Used to declare or change major. To be returned to the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### **Degree Planning Document**

To be used throughout the degree program in consultation with the student's academic adviser. Must be signed and submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs the semester before degree requirements are completed. Further details about deadlines are available from the Office of Academic Affairs and on the University website.

#### **Florence or Rome Study Center Application Form**

To be completed by students planning to go to one of Richmond's Study Centers. To be returned to the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### **Transcript Request Form**

Used to request an official transcript to be sent elsewhere or for personal use. To be returned to the Registrar's Office.