UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACADEMIC STANDING

Understanding what your academic standing letter means can sometimes be confusing. In order to help you with this process, we have created a comprehensive outline to help explain each scenario and its associated outcome. Please take the time to read through this information carefully. References to specific sections in the U of A Calendar have been made for your convenience: www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar

How is the GPA Calculated?

The GPA (Grade Point Average) for academic standing is calculated on your Fall/Winter academic coursework if a minimum of *9 are attempted (see Calendar 42.6.1). Courses completed in Spring and Summer terms, as well as courses from previous years, are not factored into your GPA calculation used for determining your academic standing. If you are not registered in Winter term, academic standing is calculated after your Fall term Grades become available as long as you have attempted *9.

Categories of Academic Standing (see Calendar Section 42.6)

Satisfactory
Marginal
Unsatisfactory
First Class Standing

Satisfactory Standing

A GPA of at least 2.0 on your Fall/Winter term courses is required to achieve Satisfactory Standing.

Students in Satisfactory Academic Standing are eligible to continue in their studies full-time. Students in programs other than the BA may be subject to higher GPA requirements to continue in the program. For example, students in the Bachelor of Design program must maintain a 2.7 GPA on a minimum of *24. See the Academic Performance Requirements for specialized programs in Section 43 of the Calendar.

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***The Calendar is the official reference for academic regulations and programs. If this or any other handout conflicts with the Calendar, the Calendar will be taken as correct
Marginal Standing (Academic Warning)

A GPA between 1.7 to 1.9 will result in an assessment of Marginal Standing (or academic warning). Students with a first assessment of Marginal standing will be eligible to continue in full-time studies in the following year (including Summer term) with a maximum course load of *12 in each of the Fall and Winter terms. However, your grades need to improve significantly and your GPA must be at least 2.0 by the time your next academic standing is calculated (for most students, that will be after the next Winter term, but it does depend on your registration status). Students who receive a second assessment of Marginal Standing, even if not in a year immediately following the first assessment, will be required to withdraw.

Unsatisfactory Standing (Required to Withdraw)

A GPA of 1.6 and below, or a second assessment of Marginal Standing, normally results in receiving a decision that you are Required to Withdraw (RTW). This means that you are no longer eligible to take courses in the Faculty of Arts past Spring term and will remain ineligible to register for at least one full calendar year and will have to re-apply to the Faculty for re-admission. If your academic standing is calculated after winter term and if you are registered in a Spring course, you will be permitted to complete your Spring course, but no registrations in Summer term will be permitted.

What Happens if I am Required to Withdraw?

If you are required to withdraw, you will be notified of options specific to your situation. If you have been required to withdraw only once, your options may include the following:

Take a Year Off

As a general rule, all students who have been Required to Withdraw for the first time are required to take one year off and then reapply to the Faculty of Arts to start again (a year later) in September. You are not required to attend another postsecondary institution or complete a specific number of credits with a particular GPA. You are expected to take a year away from your academic studies without completing any academic credit during this year off. When you reapply next year (to start in September) you will be re-admitted to the Faculty of Arts as long as you have taken the necessary time away and have not attempted or completed any academic credit during this time. The deadline to reapply for admission will be March 1; however, you are encouraged to apply much earlier than the deadline. You are not prevented from taking courses while on your year off, but, if you do, you must achieve an average of at least 2.0 on any courses attempted.

This decision has been made in your best interests as it has been found that students who have been Required to Withdraw often need some time to reflect on the past year and re-focus themselves before engaging in studies again. In order to change your habits and academic performance, you will need to make important changes to your approach to your studies, which takes time to figure out.

International Students: If you are in Canada on a Study Permit and have been required to withdraw, please contact the International Centre (www.iss.ualberta.ca/ContactUs) immediately to discuss your situation with one of their advisors.
Academic Studies during the Year Away

Some students choose to attempt academic studies during the year away (i.e. completing coursework at another institution or through Open Studies). If you choose to do so, you must reapply for admission (deadline March 1) and meet the competitive admission GPA requirements for the September term based on all academic credit you have attempted and/or completed since you were Required to Withdraw. This includes UofA courses taken during Spring term which began before this assessment was completed.

International Students: If you are in Canada on a Study Permit and plan to take classes through Open Studies or another institution next year, please contact the U of A International Centre to ensure that your documentation will allow you to do this.

Fresh Start Program

Fresh Start Program Eligibility: Students who are in Year 1 or 2 of their program, have taken less than 60 credits, and have a Fall/Winter GPA from 1.3 to 1.6 may be eligible for a special program called Fresh Start (admission not guaranteed). This program is offered through Open Studies (not part of the Faculty of Arts) and makes it possible to remain on campus for your year away from the Faculty of Arts while studying full-time and attempting to re-establish satisfactory standing. The Fresh Start program is designed to help students who are struggling with academics and, as such, they have mandatory academic support requirements designed to help students improve their academic performance. After a year in the Fresh Start program and achieving Satisfactory Academic Standing, students can reapply to the Faculty of Arts (deadline: March 1) and the credit completed while in Fresh Start will be considered for transfer credit towards your BA program.

If you are eligible to apply to the Fresh Start program, your Academic Standing letter from the Faculty of Arts will indicate this as an option. Please follow all instructions carefully and meet the required deadlines to be considered for admission to this program. Complete details on eligibility for the Fresh Start program can be found in the U of A Calendar (Section 220.5).

If the Academic Standing letter you receive does not indicate the Fresh Start program as an option for you, you are not eligible for the program. The criteria for eligibility for this program is not appealable.