

# GRADUATE EDUCATION ACADEMIC POLICIES

## Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

A college is a community of students and faculty interested in the search for knowledge and understanding. Essential to that search is a commitment to honesty and integrity. Honesty on the part of every college student has and always shall be an integral part of the plan of higher education at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Acts of dishonesty conflict with the work and purpose of the entire College and are not merely a private matter between student and instructor.

Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to:

- plagiarism (as defined below)
- submitting the work of others as one's own
- communication during an examination
- using crib notes in an exam, except as allowed by the instructor
- obtaining prior knowledge of examination questions
- substitution of another student in an examination
- altering College academic records
- knowingly using false statements for academic benefit
- collaborating on material after being directed not to collaborate
- forging a signature of a College official or faculty member
- soliciting an official signature under false pretense

## Plagiarism

The academic departments of the College have varying requirements for reporting the use of sources, but certain fundamental principles for the acknowledgment of sources apply to all fields and levels of work. The use of source materials of any kind and the preparation of essays or laboratory reports must be fully and properly acknowledged. In papers or laboratory reports, students are expected to acknowledge any expression or idea that is not their own. Students submitting papers are implying that the form and content of the essays or reports, in whole and in part, represent their own work, except where clear and specific reference is made to other sources. Even if there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment may constitute plagiarism.

Any quotation - even of a phrase - must be placed in quotation marks and the precise source stated in a note or in the text; any material that is paraphrased or summarized and any ideas that are borrowed must be specifically acknowledged. A thorough reordering or rearrangement of an author's text does not release the student from these responsibilities. All sources that have been consulted in the preparation of the essay or report should be listed in the bibliography.

Upon an occurrence of alleged academic dishonesty instructors may exercise their discretion in imposing a sanction. Instructors may further file charges with the Graduate Education Council against students if they believe that additional sanctions would be appropriate. Instructors shall notify the Registrar in writing of any occurrence of academic dishonesty whenever they have imposed sanctions. Such notification shall include the student's name, course title, date of occurrence, type of dishonesty, sanction(s) being imposed, and any further action requested.

This notification shall be effected within fourteen (14) days after discovery of the incident. A copy of said notice shall be sent to the

student involved, including the charges made against the student and the grounds, if proven, that would justify failure or other academic sanction. If the student involved wishes to appeal the sanction imposed by the instructor, the student must initiate an appeal within two weeks after receipt of this notification. The Graduate Education Council shall consider as a basis for a hearing that:

- a. the student claims not to have been academically dishonest;
- b. the student claims the instructor imposed an inappropriate sanction;
- c. the nature of the offense merits further action.

In academic dishonesty cases the Council may receive requests for hearings from students, from individual faculty and staff members, and from the Registrar. The Graduate Education Council reserves the right not to hear any appeal in any case where data are not sufficient, the necessary steps have not been followed, and/or when the Council jurisdiction is not clear.

Further information regarding instructor and student rights and responsibilities and appropriate procedures to be followed in applying this policy may be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs or the Registrar (<https://www.mcla.edu/administration/registrar/records-and-registration-forms.php>).

## Academic Standards

Graduate education degree candidates shall be required to maintain a grade average of B (3.0) or better. A student who receives more than two grades below a "B" (3.0) will be dismissed from the program. All graduate candidates for teacher licensure at MCLA must maintain grades of "B" or better in all Education courses required for licensure in order to be admitted to the practicum. A graduate education student who has been denied permission for further study may petition the Education Department Graduate Curriculum Committee for reinstatement. If the student wishes further appeal, the student should submit their petition along with reasons for such request to the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education. If the decision of the Dean is not satisfactory to the student, they may submit an appeal to the Graduate Education Council.

## Admission

Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Official transcripts of all undergraduate study and graduate study completed must be sent directly from the College or University to MCLA at the time of application. A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 is required for admission. If the GPA is below 3.0, applicants may be admitted on a provisional basis and are required to successfully complete two core M.Ed. courses with grades of B (3.0) or better before enrolling in any other courses. Additional documentation and submissions will be required according to current application. Each application will be reviewed once complete. Before acceptance, applicants must agree on Plan of Study with a member of the Education Department.

## Add-Drop, Repeat, and Audit Procedures

### Add/Drop Procedures

Registration deadlines for fall and spring weekly courses follow published add/drop dates. Registration in summer and weekend graduate education courses must be completed prior to commencement of the first class. Graduate education students have up to two class meetings to drop from a full semester course with no academic penalty and no notation that they were enrolled in the course on their records. Courses that do not meet synchronously will follow the published dates for add/drop. Graduate education students who withdraw between the third

class meeting and the two-thirds mark of a regular semester will incur no penalty as far as the grade point average is concerned but will have a notation of "W" on their permanent records. No student may withdraw from a course during a regular semester after the two-thirds mark. Any schedule adjustment after the published add/drop period must be made by contacting the Registrar's Office. The add/drop process is the responsibility of the student. Any student not attending a course and not officially withdrawing will be issued a grade based on their completed coursework. That grade will be used in computing the student's grade point average.

### Repeat

A graduate education course may be repeated. If the course is required and the student earned a C or lower, the course must be repeated. The grade earned in a repeated course replaces the original grade in the student's grade point average even if the repeated grade is lower. (The grade earned each time the student took the course remains on the student's transcript, but the course is marked "Repeated," and the originally attempted credit is not calculated into the grade point average.) Students can only earn credits once per course unless the course is designated as repeatable. Students must complete a Repeat Course Form for each course they repeat. This form is available from the Registrar's Office.

### Audit

A graduate education student may audit a course with the approval of the chairperson of the department and the consent of the instructor. Auditors are subject to any conditions established by the department or the instructor. No credit is awarded for audited courses. Such courses are officially reported on the student's transcript with the notation "AU" (Audit- No Credit) when all course conditions are met. Auditor status cannot be changed.

Students register for audit during the first week of the course. Students are responsible for all course fees when auditing a course. Students who have registered for a grade have enrollment preference over auditing students.

**Note: Any changes to a student's schedule may have financial aid implications, and it is the responsibility of the student to check with the Office of Student Financial Services on their financial aid status.**

### Attendance

Students are expected to attend all of their classes. They must also be aware of course requirements. In the event of planned absences, students must notify instructors in advance. In the case of unplanned absences, students should notify their instructors as soon as possible.

#### A. Excused Absences

##### A.1 Definition of Excused Absence

Any student who is unable, because of the reasons identified in sections A.2.1 through A.2.4 of this policy, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement on that day. The student shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement, which they may have missed because of such absence on any particular day, if such makeup examination or work shall not be deemed unreasonable by the faculty or the College. To take advantage of the opportunity to make up a missed examination, study or work requirement, the student must contact their professor/faculty member to initiate this process.

When a student misses a major course assessment or assignment (including, but not limited to, lecture exams, laboratory sessions & exams, class performances, presentations, etc.) due to absence because of the reasons listed in section A.2.1 through A.2.4 of this policy, such makeup assignments may be unreasonable for the faculty member. It is within the discretion of the faculty member to determine what is deemed unreasonable in these situations.

No fees of any kind shall be charged by the College for making available to the student the opportunity to make up work resulting from an excused absence. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of availing themselves of the provisions of this policy.

#### A.2 Acceptable Excuses

Excused absences shall be granted for the following:

1. General student well-being, which may include health, mental health, disability-related absences, and/or absence resulting from other extenuating circumstances. Students must inform the faculty member of their absence and request the opportunity to make up missed work according to the excused absence definition listed in section A.1. If absences total more than the following limits, it will be up to the discretion of the faculty member to allow the absence to be excused.

- For classes meeting three times per week, a student may miss up to three class sessions during the semester.
- For classes meeting two times per week, a student may miss up to two class sessions during the semester.
- For classes meeting one time per week, a student may miss up to one class session during the semester.
- If a class meets less than once per week, it will be at the discretion of the faculty member whether the student may be granted an excused absence.

Students with documented disabilities who request additional time for absence should also contact the Disability Resources Office for help notifying their instructors. If an instructor has concerns or feels unqualified to make a judgment about a student's absence, the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education will make a determination in consultation with student support leadership.

2. Participation as a representative of the College in a scheduled intercollegiate club competition or professional/academic conferences, travel courses, or field trips scheduled as part of a course.

3. Any student of the College who is unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement shall be granted an excused absence, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up missed work, provided that it shall not create an unreasonable burden upon the College. This requirement comes from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151C, Section 2B.

### Core Course

M.Ed. students in all concentrations are required to complete all of the following Core Courses at MCLA:

Code	Title	Hours
EDUC 702	Ethics and the Foundations of Schooling	3
EDUC 717	Curriculum Theory and Democratic Practice	3
EDUC 719	Discourses of Difference	3

EDUC 783	Philosophies and Methodologies of Inquiry	3
EDUC 784	Capstone Seminar	3

Total Hours: 15

## Grade Appeals

In cases involving grade appeals, a student is allowed 21 days after release of grades by the Registrar's Office to initiate an appeal concerning grades earned in any academic semester. No grade appeals can be made after the above deadline. The student initiates the appeal by obtaining a Graduate Grade Appeal Form (<https://www.mcla.edu/administration/registrar/records-and-registration-forms.php>) from the Registrar's Office (<https://www.mcla.edu/administration/registrar/records-and-registration-forms.php>) and follows the procedure and timelines outlined on that form.

## Grade Requirements for Teacher Licensure

All graduate candidates for teacher licensure at MCLA must maintain grades of "B" or better in all EDUC courses required for licensure in order to be admitted to the practicum.

## Graduate Education Independent Study Policy

A graduate independent study in education supplements the Department of Education's regular course offerings by allowing students to work one-on-one with an education department faculty or other MCLA faculty member to complete an in-depth examination on education and education-related topics unavailable through the regular education curriculum.

An independent study requires advanced planning and must be in accordance with the following deadlines.

### Approval

A student's interest, motivation, and commitment to responsible and accountable social and academic inquiry are required and expected for independent study.

Students considering an independent study in the Department of Education must closely review and be familiar with the Graduate Education Independent Study Description, Timeline, and Proposal Guidelines and they should speak with their education advisor for guidance.

An independent study proposal must be submitted and approved the semester before the study commences. The study is not considered approved for the following semester until the instructor agrees to sponsor the study in writing and the proposal is submitted on the Independent Study Form and signed by the student, instructor, education advisor, and Chair.

### Credits

The number of independent study credits is proposed by the student and determined by the instructor at the time the proposal is approved and may vary from one to six credits, as judged by the instructor.

### Grading

Independent studies are graded either pass/fail (P/F) or letter grade. The number of credits may not be changed at the end of the study period because a student failed to meet all objectives in the proposal,

but a failing grade may be registered if the instructor determines the semester's work has earned an F.

### Request

Students initiate a request for an Independent Study by reviewing the requirements, meeting with their education advisor to discuss their plan, and completing the Independent Study form.

## Graduate Student Status

The College describes graduate student status as follows:

- **Full-Time Student:** A student registered for 9 or more credit hours that semester.
- **Part-Time Student:** A student registered for fewer than 9 credit hours that semester.

A student registered for fewer than five (5) credit hours is less than half-time and would be ineligible for financial aid.

## Incomplete

An incomplete (INC) is recorded in the student's record when a portion of the assigned work, as clearly indicated in the course outline, syllabus, or project proposal, has not been completed because of the necessary absence of the student or for other reasons equally satisfactory to the instructor, and then only when the instructor judges the work already done by the student to be of passing quality.

The course work must be completed by a date specified by the instructor. This date cannot exceed six (6) weeks after the start of the following semester. The INC is then changed to a permanent letter grade. The obligation rests with the student to ask the instructor what work must be completed and what conditions, if any, must be met. The instructor and the student will sign a standardized contract specifying the nature of the coursework to be completed. If the course work is not completed before the deadline specified in the contract, the INC will be changed to an "F".

## Individualized Plan of Study - MEd

This policy is for M.Ed. candidates pursuing a non-licensure degree pathway. Students pursuing an Individualized Plan of Study must create a plan that includes a rationale, objectives, and selected courses. It is required that the student meet with their faculty advisor to review and discuss the format and substance of this important document. The Plan of Study guides the student's program and helps to provide a rationale for the selection of courses. Courses carrying an "INSV" prefix and/or the course number "690" will **not** be accepted toward any degree or licensure program.

## Leave and Withdrawal

A student whose circumstances require a temporary interruption of graduate study may apply for a leave of absence for up to four years; by completing the Leave of Absence form. A student who does not return after a leave of four years, or by the return date listed on the Leave of Absence form, will be withdrawn from their program. If a student does not register for courses or arrange a leave of absence by the end of the add/drop period, they will be withdrawn from their program.

The college does not offer a leave of absence under the Title IV federal student aid program definitions, and therefore, any leave of absence under this policy will be treated as a withdrawal for federal financial aid purposes.

Students must meet with an education advisor when they return from a leave of absence.

## MTEL Requirements for all Teaching and Administrative Licenses

Prior to enrolling in a practicum, all candidates for teaching or administrative licenses will be required to receive passing scores on the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) appropriate to the license they are seeking.

## Return and Readmission

Students returning from a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal of less than seven years do not need to apply for readmission.

Students returning from a Withdrawal must initiate the Return to MCLA process through the Registrar's Office.

Students returning from a Leave of Absence before their anticipated return date must notify the Registrar's Office in writing.

Students returning after seven or more years since their last active semester will need to apply for readmission to the program. Their application will be evaluated based on the current admission standards at the time of the request for readmission.

Upon return, students must meet with their education advisor before registering for courses.

## Transcripts Request

To request a copy of a student's transcript please visit [www.mcla.edu/registrar](http://www.mcla.edu/registrar) (<http://www.mcla.edu/registrar/>) or call (413) 662-5216.

## Transfer Credit

Matriculated students seeking to enroll in course work at other accredited institutions concurrent with their enrollment at MCLA or during semesters they may be away from the College may request these credits transfer to MCLA. All such enrollments must be approved in advance by the Education department and the Registrar using the Request for Off-Campus Study Approval form ([https://www.mcla.edu/\\_pdfs/administration/registrar/OffCampusStudyForm2020.pdf](https://www.mcla.edu/_pdfs/administration/registrar/OffCampusStudyForm2020.pdf)). An official transcript must be sent to the Registrar's Office upon completion of the course.

Graduate education students who have completed graduate work at another recognized institution may transfer it to MCLA to apply toward the completion of a graduate program under the following provisions:

- The credits must be from an accredited graduate program, be of graduate level at the school where taken and have a minimum grade of "B."
- The credits must have been earned within five years prior to the time of the student's admission to this institution as a graduate student.
- Not more than six (6) credits may be accepted at time of matriculation and no more than 12 semester hours of credit altogether may be accepted in transfer.
- The Graduate Curriculum Committee of the Education Department reserves the right to approve or reject any request for transfer credits. Students will be notified in writing whether credit has been accepted.
- The credits must fit into the student's Plan of Study. That is, the courses must be consistent with the expressed rationale and

objectives that the student has written for their area of concentration and overall program of study.

## Waiver Process

The Massachusetts regulations for Educator Licensure allows the waiver of components for a student who can demonstrate that they have acquired the competency in courses or other experiences completed outside the state approved program. Students who wish to participate in this process should meet with a member of the Education Department for an unofficial review of previous courses and/or experiences to determine whether a request for a waiver would be appropriate.

Upon determination of the advisor to proceed, the student must complete the waiver form plus one individual review sheet for each course/pre-practicum experience for which a waiver is requested. Students are required to provide official transcripts, letters from employers, course descriptions, syllabi, course products and a narrative description of the course/experience that document how the competencies usually met through coursework have been fulfilled.

A waiver of a course does not reduce the number of credits a student needs for the M.Ed. program, nor does it award any credits. However, it can reduce the number of courses/pre-practicum experiences required for Licensure.