



The American University of Kurdistan Policy of Graduate Degree Academic Standards

Policy Number AS047

Effective Date: December 3, 2024

- 1. Policy:** This policy defines the standards, criteria, and academic standards governing graduate students at the American University of Kurdistan (AUK). The University is committed to fostering student success, timely degree completion, and balanced academic engagement to ensure student success at the graduate level. The policy will be communicated openly to the University community, published on the AUK website, and reviewed periodically to ensure continued relevance, academic integrity, and alignment with AUK's mission, institutional objectives, and curricular frameworks. All members of the AUK community are required to comply fully with policies approved by the AUK Board of Trustees (BoT). The academic calendar at AUK consists of a fall semester, a spring semester, and an optional summer session. The fall and spring semesters are considered required semesters for full-time enrollment, and students must maintain continuous enrollment during these terms to retain full-time status. This policy covers the topics of course load, course withdrawal, and probation and dismissal.

 - a. Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish policies specific to master's students distinct from those that apply to undergraduate students.
 - b. Scope:** This policy applies to students matriculated in AUK master's programs.
- 2. Definition of Terms:**

Academic Probation 1: If a student's CGPA drops below 3.0 in any regular semester or summer session, he/she will be placed on Academic Probation 1 at the end of that semester/session.

Academic Probation 2: If a student on Academic Probation 1 has failed to raise his/her CGPA to 3.0 or higher at the end of the next semester/session, then he/she will be placed on Academic Probation 2.

Credit Hour: A unit of measurement equating to 750 minutes of faculty-led instruction per semester, the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction and a minimum of 2 hours of out-of-class per week over the entire term.

Cumulative GPA (CGPA): The overall grade point average across all courses taken at an institution.

Grade Point Average: The average of grade points earned in a given semester, calculated by dividing total grade points by credit hours attempted. Grades such as W, I, P, and IP are excluded from the calculation.

Scholarship: Tuition assistance based on merit or financial need.

Semester: A semester is defined by 2,250 minutes of instructional time for each 3-credit course. The total duration typically spans 16-18 weeks, depending on holidays, weather-related closures, or other scheduling adjustments.

Student Performance Review Committee: Members are appointed by the University President.

Summer Session: The summer session is offered between the spring and fall semesters. It is typically shorter than those semesters, lasting approximately eight weeks, but courses are also required to meet for the U.S. Standards guideline of 2,250 minutes.

3. Responsibilities:

a. Issuing Unit: The Office of Provost holds primary responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, ensuring compliance with established procedures, maintaining relevant records, and taking necessary actions in cases of noncompliance.

b. Other Stakeholders: Admissions and Registration Department (ARD), Department Chairs, College Deans and Graduate Programs.

4. Procedures:

a. Grading and Evaluation: The assignment of grades based on the evaluation of required student work is central to academic integrity in student learning and the assessment of student learning.

- The University grants authority and responsibility for assigning grades to only the faculty of record in a course. If, for some reason the faculty becomes unavailable, the policy provides for another qualified faculty member, the Department Chair, or the Dean of the College to assign grades.
- The grading of a student’s work is based on the learning objectives/outcomes and the methods and criteria of evaluation stated in the course syllabus. A grade for a course is a final, summative evaluation of the student’s work in the course.
- If a student feels that an erroneous or wrongful grade has been assigned to their work in a course, the student is eligible to file a grade grievance as outlined in the Policy of Student Grievance (See Section 6: Related Documents).
- It is required that the incomplete coursework can reasonably be completed within the established timeframe and does not involve retaking any component of the course. All incomplete work must be completed within one semester of the grade being assigned. If the work is not completed within one year, or before graduation (whichever occurs first), the Incomplete (“I”) grade will automatically be converted to an “F” and calculated in the GPA.

b. Grading System: AUK uses the following individual letter and numerical grading system for graduate courses. Grade point averages are computed on the following scale with points calculated for each hour of credit attempted:

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	Grade Point
A	90-100	4.00
A-	87-89	3.67
B+	84-86	3.33
B	80-83	3.00
B-	77-79	2.67

C+	74-76	2.33
C	70-73 (Minimum Passing Grade)	2.00
C-	67-69	1.67
D	60-66	1.00
F	0-59	0
"I"	Incomplete (no effect on GPA)	
"IP"	In Progress (no effect on GPA)	
"W"	Withdrawal (no effect on GPA)	
"TR"	Transfer (credit counted – no effect on GPA)	
"P"	Pass (credit counted – no effect on GPA)	

c. Course Withdrawal: Students are expected to complete the courses for which they are registered unless exceptional circumstances necessitate withdrawal. A student seeking to withdraw from a graduate course must obtain approval from both the course instructor and the Department Chair. The Department Chair will discuss all implications of the withdrawal on degree completion and their future re-entry to the University with the student.

- Course withdrawals are permitted until the end of the twelfth week of the regular semester or the sixth week of the summer term. A grade of "W" will be recorded on the student's transcript and will not affect the CGPA. Students are responsible for any additional costs associated with repeating a course due to withdrawal or failure. Additionally, no tuition refund will be provided for withdrawn courses.
- Course withdrawals are permitted until the end of the twelfth week of the regular semester or the sixth week of the summer term. A grade of "W" will be recorded on the student's transcript and will not affect the CGPA. Students are responsible for any additional costs associated with repeating a course due to withdrawal or failure, and no tuition refund will be provided for withdrawn courses. When a course is repeated, the most recent grade earned shall replace the earlier grade in the calculation of the CGPA, in accordance with University grading regulations.
- The grade of "WF" for a course indicates that the student has withdrawn beyond the twelfth week of the regular semester or the sixth week of the summer term. WF has the same impact as an "F" grade in the calculation of the GPA.

d. Course Withdrawal Procedures:

- The student must complete and sign the Course Withdrawal Form (See Section 6: Related Documents)
- The student must get the form signed by the instructor who must record the appropriate grade of W/WF when completing the final grade roster.
- The student must submit the signed form to the ARD for processing.

- The student must check his/her schedule to ensure that the withdrawn course has been removed.
- e. **Credit Hours:** A credit comprises faculty-led instruction and student preparation outside the classroom, equating to approximately three hours of total work per week per credit during the fall and spring semesters. The specific time commitment per credit is as follows:
- One academic hour equals 50 minutes of class time; and
 - Each credit requires as student time commitment of approximately 3 hours per week. The specific time commitment per credit hour is as follows:
 - 1 credit equals 750 minutes of faculty-led instruction per semester (class time only), plus at least 1500 minutes of out-of-class work.
 - 2 credits equal 1500 minutes of faculty-led instruction per semester (class time only), plus at least 3000 minutes of out-of-class work;
 - 3 credits equal 2250 minutes of faculty-led instruction per semester (class time only), plus at least 4500 minutes of out-of-class work;
 - 4 credits equal 3000 minutes of faculty-led instruction per semester (class time only), plus at least 6000 minutes of out-of-class work;

The time commitments above also apply to summer sessions. However, given the shorter duration of 8 weeks, the number of minutes per week per course will increase to meet the required total instructional time. Students must consider this adjustment when registering for summer sessions, as it significantly impacts workload and course load.

- f. **Academic Probation and Dismissal:** Students are required to maintain a minimum CGPA of 3.0/4.0 to remain in good academic standing. Graduate students who receive an "F" in any semester or term will be subject to academic dismissal from the University.
- If a graduate student's CGPA falls below 3.0 in a semester, they will be placed on probation and remain on probation until the CGPA reaches/exceeds the 3.00 threshold. A student only has two semesters to reach the 3.00 threshold. Failure to achieve a CGPA of 3.0 or higher by the end of the probationary semester will result in academic dismissal. While on probation, students are limited to a maximum of 6 credit hours in the regular semester and 6 credit hours in the summer term. In exceptional cases, the Department Chair may approve additional enrollment when a student's CGPA is close to the minimum threshold, provided the student has received academic advising and appropriate documentation is submitted.
 - Students have the right to appeal their dismissal to the Student Performance Review Committee by providing evidence of extenuating circumstances that affected their academic performance and presenting a detailed plan to achieve good academic standing if granted an additional semester.
 - The Committee may recommend one of the following actions: allowing the student to continue in their program if they can mathematically achieve a CGPA of 3.0 within one semester, possibly through course repeats; or dismissing the

student from the University if achieving a CGPA of 3.0 is not mathematically possible or if the student has not demonstrated the ability to succeed academically at AUK.

- When dismissing students from the University, AUK may allow students to reapply for admission after the passage of at least one academic year. Additionally, students on Academic Probation 1 or Academic Probation 2 are restricted to enrolling in a maximum of 6 credits per regular semester and 6 credits during the summer term. Failure to maintain a CGPA of 3.0 may result in the loss of scholarship.

g. Academic Probation Procedures:

- At the end of each semester/term, the ARD will identify cases of non-compliance with the academic standards and generate the list of students who are placed under academic probation or are to be dismissed.
- ARD informs the students officially about their academic probationary status via AUK's official email.
- ARD provides the Department Chairs and Deans with the list of students who are under Academic Probation 1 and Academic Probation 2.
- Department Chairs are responsible for providing proper advising for these continuing students regarding personal challenges and future course selections to ensure their best chance for academic success.
- Students being dismissed will be given the opportunity to provide a narrative and supporting documentation regarding their poor academic performance. Students must submit the narrative and documentation by the deadline stated in the email from ARD. Students who fail to submit the letter and documentation will not have their cases reviewed by the Student Performance Review Committee.
- ARD provides the Student Performance Review Committee with the list of students who failed to raise their CGPA to 3.0 or higher at the end of the Academic Probation 2, along with any appeal documents to make a final decision about their dismissal.
- The Committee will meet and determine the recommendations for each case.
- Students will be informed officially about the final decision regarding their dismissal status and recommendations by the Committee. The decisions of the Committee are final and not subject to further appeal.

h. Appeal Procedures: Students wishing to appeal a dismissal decision must submit an appeal letter addressed to the Student Performance Review Committee, submitted to the ARD. The appeal letter, along with the pertinent documentation, can be hand delivered and/or sent electronically by the date and time cited in the dismissal letter. Electronic documents (appeal letter and supporting documents) must be in proper format: (.doc, .docx, .pdf). A complete appeal should include:

- A cover letter that demonstrates that the poor academic performance has resulted directly from serious physical, emotional or other personal problems; these are the only standards that will be considered.
- Documentation/verification of the existence of the problems underlying the grounds for the appeal must demonstrate that the problems described have been addressed and there is reason to believe that these problems will no longer impact the student's academic; this is extremely important as members of the committee will not accept an appeal if they do not receive assurance that appropriate steps have been taken and academic progress can be made.
- An action plan to be implemented for the next semester and beyond that will ensure improved academic achievement and the maintenance of good academic standing.

i. Graduation Requirements: To earn the Master of Science Degree at AUK, students must:

- Complete a minimum of 30 credit hours.
- Successfully complete a capstone project or research thesis.
- Present the results of their capstone or thesis in a public defense or presentation.
- Achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.0 by the time of degree completion.
- Successfully complete all courses outlined in the approved study plan with the requisite course grades.
- Resolve any "I" (Incomplete) or "IP" (In Progress) grades.
- Settle all financial obligations with the University.
- Students must consult with their Department Chair regarding applicable completion timelines, eligibility for extensions, required approvals, and any academic or administrative consequences associated with delayed degree completion.

5. Timeline and Communication/Implementation Plan

Activity	Responsible Party	Timeline	Communication Channels	Details
Policy Revision Announcement	Office of Provost	February – March, 2026	University website, email	Announce the revision of the policy, assessment metrics & objectives
Feedback Collection	Office of Provost	July – August, 2026	Surveys, suggestion boxes, email	Gather feedback from UAK community on the policy's effectiveness, challenges & areas for improvement

Periodic Reviews and Updates	OIEP, University Leadership	As necessary	Website, email, staff meetings	Review the policy & its enforcement mechanisms & procedures annually or as necessary to ensure continued relevance & compliance
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6. Related Documents:

- [Policy of Probation & Dismissal](#)
- [Policy of Student Grievance](#)
- [Course Withdrawal Form](#)
- [Application Form for Incomplete Grades](#)
- [Policy of Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Policy of Academic Integrity](#)

7. Ways to Measure Success:

- There are strong indications that students understand the system and procedures, without any areas of confusion
- Each of the procedures is fully functional without ambiguity or a lack of clarity

8. Policy History:

- a. Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- b. Adopted:** December 3, 2024
- c. Revised:** January 18, 2026