

	<i>Policy Level:</i>	Academic Senate ▾
	<i>Responsible Department:</i>	Academic Affairs ▾
	<i>Effective Date:</i>	05/04/2026
Academic Progress Standards: Graduate Students		

PURPOSE:

To set the criteria for satisfactory academic progress in graduate programs and detail the actions resulting in academic warning or dismissal. To ensure students are notified when they do not meet the criteria for satisfactory academic progress in their graduate-level program, and to provide them with a process for appeal.

SCOPE:

All students enrolled in graduate programs, faculty, academic advisors, program coordinators, and deans.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

1. **Good Standing:** Students are considered to be in good academic standing as long as they have met all of the requirements to continue in the program, have not been placed on academic warning and are permitted by their Dean to remain in a graduate degree program. Students who do not maintain good standing are subject to this policy.
2. **University Working Day:** Any weekday when the offices of the university are open for business.

MAIN PROVISIONS:

I. Criteria for Academic Advancement

To advance in their programs of study, graduate students must:

- Maintain an overall Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) of not less than 3.0.
- Successfully complete all coursework.
- Maintain the grade requirements, professional and ethical standards for their program of study, the profession, the College, and applicable accrediting agencies.

II. Actions Resulting in Warning or Dismissal

- **Academic Warning (GPA):** If a student's GPA falls below 3.0 after an attempt of nine (9) graduate credit hours or each semester depending on the program, they are placed on Academic Warning.
- **Academic Warning (Coursework):** Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) final grades below a B-. A third grade below a B- results in Academic Warning.

Externally accredited programs (e.g. Nursing) may require a minimum of a B in all courses.

- **Academic Dismissal:** Failure to raise the overall GPA to 3.0 within the next nine (9) attempted credit hours, or at the soonest opportunity, or failure to resolve grades below a B- (or B, depending on the program) within the next nine (9) credit hours, or at the soonest opportunity, will result in Academic Dismissal.

III. General Student Guidelines

- A. While students may seek assistance in preparing their written appeal materials, the student must remain the sole point of contact and must personally submit all appeals. No third party (including parents, peers, or legal counsel) is authorized to formally contest a dismissal or appear in the student's place during the review process. Exceptions for students with documented disabilities requiring specific communicative accommodations will be coordinated through the Office of Accessibility Services;
- B. To demonstrate adherence to deadlines, students are required to make requisite submission via official Niagara University email accounts.

IV. Oversight of the Academic Progress Standards: Graduate Students Policy

If any situation occurs that is not covered in the procedure of this policy, the Provost, or Provost's designee, will issue guidance consistent with the overall fair and collaborative spirit of the policy. The decision regarding the procedure will be final.

V. Grievances Excluded from this Process

Complaints and grievances related to Academic Integrity, Grade Appeal, Student Code of Conduct, or Discrimination (Title IX) must be resolved via their specific respective policies and are exempt from this policy (see referenced section below).

PROCEDURES:

I. Identification and Notification

- A. **Reporting:** The Registrar will disseminate a report of students at risk to the Deans of each college within three (3) University Working Days of grades being due.
- B. **Initial Action:** The Deans will share the reports with the Program Coordinators, so that a determination can be made about the appropriate course of action (Warning or Dismissal).
- C. **Official Notice:** All letters regarding Warnings and Dismissals will be sent from the director of the student's graduate program via official university email within seven (7) University Working Days of grades being due to the Registrar.

II. Appeal Process (Internal to College)

To ensure program-specific expertise while maintaining fairness, the following internal college process applies:

- A. **Submission:** To appeal a dismissal, the student must submit an explanatory cover letter and supporting materials to the Dean of the college within five (5) University Working Days of the notice of dismissal; If the student is in an accelerated program, a request for an expedited process can be requested.
- B. **Review:** The Dean (or the Dean's designee) will review the appeal to determine if due process was followed or if new mitigating information exists.
- C. **Final Decision:** The Dean will issue a decision within five (5) University Working Days from the time the appeal submission is complete.
- D. **Finality:** The decision of the Dean is final and not subject to further appeal.

III. Final Recording

Registrar Notification: If no appeal is requested within the required timelines, or if a dismissal is upheld, the Dean's office will notify the Registrar.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

None

REFERENCED POLICIES:

- [Course Repeat](#)
- [Grade Appeal](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Non-Academic Student Grievance](#)
- [Title IX Grievance](#)

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS:

None

POLICY HISTORY:

- Originated: 09/01/2018
- Current Effective Date: 05/04/2026
- Next Review Date: 05/04/2029
- Revision/Renewal Log:
 - 05/04/2026 - Renamed, rewritten, replaces "Satisfactory Academic Progress: Graduate Students"
 - 03/07/2025 - Reviewed by the Academic Policy Committee, no substantive revisions necessary
 - 01/10/2024 - Reviewed by the Academic Policy Committee, no substantive revisions necessary
 - Replaces "University Policy on Satisfactory Graduate Program Progression"