

GRADUATE DISMISSAL & READMISSION POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set the minimum standards for dismissal and readmission in programs leading to master's, specialist's or doctoral-level degrees and certificates at Valdosta State University. Graduate programs may establish stricter or additional standards based on curricular needs, accreditation requirements, or professional standards.

PROCESS

Graduate programs decide whether to dismiss and readmit students in their respective programs. The Graduate School facilitates the dismissal and/or readmission process by providing official communication to the student and the Registrar.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

A graduate student may be dismissed from their program for any one of the following academic reasons:

1. The student earns 3 deficiency points. Earning a grade below a "B" in a graduate course results in deficiency points. A grade of "C", while it can be credited toward the degree, equals one deficiency point. A grade of "D", "F", or "WF" equals two deficiency points and is not credited toward the degree. Warning letters are emailed to students at the end of each semester the student earns a deficiency point/s. Should a student earn 3 deficiency points (or the requisite number of deficiency points in their program), a letter of dismissal will be provided to the student by email. Find each program's [retention guidelines](#) for dismissal based on deficiency points at this link.
2. The student submits work in the program that is confirmed to be an [Academic Integrity Violation](#).
3. [Research misconduct](#).
4. Failure to pass comprehensive examinations, capstone course, thesis, or dissertation required by the program.
5. Unsatisfactory academic progress* e.g. the student's graduate level GPA falls below program standards and is unable to make satisfactory progress toward the minimum 3.0 GPA requirement; the student repeatedly withdrawals from a cohort-based program, etc.

***Expectations for Satisfactory Graduate-Level Student Performance**

Graduate students are expected to earn grades of at least "B" in most of their course work and a Satisfactory grade in their thesis or dissertation courses if required for their degree. For graduation, a graduate student must have earned a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in all graduate course work at Valdosta State University. Throughout their program, student's performance must be acceptable on a continuing basis. If their GPA falls below a 3.0, students must maintain an overall GPA of no less than 2.5. No grade below "C" will be credited toward a graduate degree. All grades received for graduate courses taken at or transferred to VSU after admission to the Graduate School, will be used to calculate the graduate cumulative grade point average. Courses may be retaken, if desired or required, but all graduate grades received will affect this average. (See the [Graduate Course Grade Replacement Policy](#) in which the student may be permitted to retake up to two courses to replace course grades.)

NON-ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

A graduate student may be dismissed from their program if any one of the following occurs:

1. Failure to adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct pertaining to Student Misconduct; Sexual Misconduct; & Miscellaneous](#).
2. [Research misconduct](#).
3. Violation of ethical standards as outlined in the program's handbook or the professional guidelines e.g. professional code of ethics, professional code of conduct.

APPEALING A DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Graduate students have the right to appeal a dismissal from their graduate program. The appeal must be submitted within **thirty calendar days** from the email notice to the student of the dismissal. Students wishing to appeal a dismissal need to first discuss the desire to appeal the dismissal with their advisor or program coordinator and complete the [Appealing a Dismissal](#) form and include any supporting documentation. The student's advisor or program coordinator will assist the student in uploading the appeal in DocuSign and route in this order: their program's graduate program coordinator, department head, college dean, and then the Associate Provost of the Graduate School.

It is recommended that students email the Graduate School that they are beginning the dismissal appeal process at gradschool@valdosta.edu.

[Grade appeals](#) are a different appeals process that is handled at the departmental and college levels. Students should contact their advisor or department head for information about the appeals process and forms.

READMISSION

If a student is dismissed by a program and did not appeal the dismissal or the appeal was not successful, the student may reapply to the same graduate program or a different degree-granting program after sitting out based on the program specific criteria. To be readmitted, the student will need to be current in any outstanding obligations to VSU.

A student will not be readmitted if the dismissal was triggered by any of the following:

1. Failure to adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct pertaining to Student Misconduct; Sexual Misconduct; & Miscellaneous](#).
2. [Research misconduct](#).
3. Violation of ethical standards as outlined in the program's handbook or the professional guidelines e.g. professional code of ethics, professional code of conduct.

Application for readmission may be initiated during the second semester. Readmission is not guaranteed, and prior academic performance and student conduct or disposition in the program will be considered. The academic program reserves the right to place specific conditions and contingencies on any offer of readmission.

NOTE:

Students receiving dismissal letters have the following options:

1. Students may appeal a grade by submitting a grade appeal form with supporting documents. The appeal form must be routed through the a) instructor, b) department head, and c) college dean.
2. Students may appeal the dismissal from the graduate program by submitting a dismissal appeal form. Supporting documentation must accompany the form. The routing path is: a) program

- coordinator, b) department head, c) college dean, d) graduate school.
3. Students not wishing to appeal grades or dismissals, or were unsuccessful in their appeal/s, will have to “sit out” two semesters and then petition for readmission during the second semester they are not enrolled. Readmission is not guaranteed. We recommend that a student submit a letter of petition explaining their circumstances along with their re-application.
 4. A student may apply for either a medical withdrawal or hardship withdrawal. If approved, the student would be withdrawn from all of their classes for that semester, not just the ones with failing grades. These petitions are handled through the Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students. If the deadline to apply for such withdrawals was the last day of class, then this option may not be available to the student.
 5. Students may also consider applying to a different graduate program/s. Please be aware that other graduate programs may look at previous graduate work when rendering a decision.

Deficiency point letters and warning letters are emailed to the student after grades are posted and transcripts are evaluated. Students registered for subsequent semesters and receiving dismissal letters will be dropped from their courses. If a student has a graduate assistantship and is dismissed from their program, the assistantship will be withdrawn.