

What do all these new terms mean?

Here is a glossary of commonly used terms at Western and what they mean.

Academic advisor

A faculty or professional staff member trained to help students select courses and plan programs.

Academic dismissal

Dismissal from a college or program for not maintaining the required grade point average (GPA). Dismissal indicates that a student is no longer a member of the University community.

Advanced placement

Credit granted for examination programs or for transfer work.

Audit

Registering for and attending class (es) regularly without being held responsible for the work required for credit. Not eligible to sit for examinations. No credit hours are earned, and full tuition must be paid. The grade "AU" appears on the record.

Baccalaureate-level writing requirement

An upper-division requirement for all students. Each academic department designates courses to fulfill this requirement.

Baccalaureate-level writing courses in the School of Communication are:

Com 3350
Com 3500
Com 3580
Com 3590
Com 3700
Com 3720
Com 4410
Com 4500
Com 4480
JRN 4100

Bachelor's degree

A degree granted after completing a specified amount of academic study beyond the completion of high school and fulfilling all graduation requirements.

Board

A term used for the meal plan (as in, room and board) at the University.

Class or credit hour load

The number of credit hours carried by a student each semester or session. A first semester freshman may not enroll for more than eighteen hours of work except by special permission, which is seldom granted unless the curriculum demands it. This regulation applies to total credit

for work taken by extension or in some other institution, in addition to credit earned in residence at Western. The normal maximum load for the Summer I or Summer II session is nine hours.

Class standing

A classification based on the number of credit hours earned which indicates the level of a student:

- **Freshman** A student credited with 0–25 hours inclusive.
- **Sophomore** A student credited with 26–55 hours inclusive.
- **Junior** A student credited with 56–87 hours inclusive.
- **Senior** A student credited with 88 or more hours.

Cognate

A course, or courses, related in some way to courses in a major. Cognates may be, and often are, courses outside the department of the degree program.

College

An administrative division of the University housing one or more academic departments or schools.

College-level writing requirement

A lower-division writing requirement for all students. On the basis of test scores a basic writing course may be required as a prerequisite.

Coordinate major

A major—often interdisciplinary—that must be taken in conjunction with another major.

Co-requisite

A course that must be taken at the same time as another course

Course numbering system

The course numbering system is limited to four digits. Undergraduate courses are numbered from 1000 through 4999. Graduate courses are numbered 6000 through 7999. Courses numbered 5000 through 5999 are for graduate and advanced undergraduate students.

Numbers Levels

0000–0089 Non-credit courses

0090–0099 Terminal course credit that may not be applied toward degree programs

1000–1999 Courses primarily for first-year students

2000–2999 Courses primarily for sophomores

3000–3999 Courses primarily for juniors and seniors

4000–4999 Courses primarily for seniors

5000–5999 Courses for graduate students and advanced undergraduate students

6000–6999 Courses for graduate students only

7000–7999 Graduate seminars, theses, independent research, etc

Credit/No Credit

A method used to evaluate performance in courses which is separate from the grade point system.

Courses graded "credit/no credit" does not affect GPA. "Credit" is earned for grades of "C" or better; grades of "DC" or below earn "No Credit."

Students may elect for Credit/No Credit any course approved for General Education or General Physical Education credit, as well as other courses not counting toward their major or specified in their curriculum as defined in this undergraduate catalog.

Credit hour

A unit of academic credit measured in semester hours or quarter hours. One credit hour usually represents one hour of class time per week. See also "semester hour." The total number of credits for which a student registers during a semester or session is the credit load.

Curriculum

A complete program of studies, as defined by a college, leading to a baccalaureate (undergraduate) degree.

Dean's list

A public announcement at the end of fall and spring semesters, and the summer sessions, listing students who have achieved a grade point average of 3.50 in at least twelve semester hours of course work during fall and spring semesters, and at least six semester hours of work during Summer I or Summer II.

Distribution requirement

A General Education requirement. Each undergraduate candidate must complete at least one course in each of eight (8) distribution areas:

1. Fine Arts
2. Humanities
3. United States: Cultures and Issues
4. Other Cultures and Civilizations
5. Social and Behavioral Sciences
6. Natural Science with Lab
7. Natural Science and Technology
8. Health and Well-Being

Drop

An official procedure for withdrawing from individual classes without removing registration from all classes. The deadline for the last day to drop a course without academic penalty (grade of "W" is on the transcript) is noted each semester or session in the Registration Information booklet.

Students who do not follow the official procedure when dropping a class will earn the grade of "X" for that course; the "X" grade carries no honor points and affects the GPA in the same manner as an "E" or failing grade. See also "late drop."

Elective

A course which will count as credit toward a degree but is not a specific program requirement

Full-time student

An undergraduate student who enrolls for twelve credit hours during fall or spring or for six credit hours during Summer I or Summer II. The University does allow full-time status to some co-op and intern classes, when it is the only class allowed a student during a semester or session.

University Housing has its own regulations on the definition of hours needed to be eligible for housing contracts. Students should contact the University Housing Office for this information.

The above definitions are Western Michigan University regulations and may or may not be accepted by other agencies.

Good standing

A designation that signifies that a student is eligible to continue, to return, or to transfer elsewhere. It implies good academic standing; that is, an overall GPA of 2.00 or better.

Grade point

The numerical value given to letter grades. For example an "A" is equivalent to 4 points per semester hour, a "BA" to 3.5 points, a "B" to 3 points and so on. No points are earned for an "E" grade. Also referred to as "honor points."

Grade point average (GPA)

A student's scholastic average computed by dividing total grade or honor points by total credit hours attempted.

Graduation audit

A formal, required evaluation of the student's academic record and program of study to determine the student's eligibility for graduation. The audit, initiated by a student's application for graduation, determines whether all University, degree, and program requirements have been met satisfactorily.

Deadlines for all degree recipients to apply for graduation are:

August 1 for December graduation,

December 1 for April graduation

February 1 for June graduation

February 1 for August graduation

Students who change a graduation date need to complete a new application for graduation. No fee for the change is required. The Registrar's Office will not change a student's graduation date unless the student submits this new application for graduation.

Guest student

A degree student from another college who is taking courses at Western Michigan University for one semester

The credits earned are usually transferred back to the student's home institution.

A guest student may also wish to enroll in WMU courses for reasons other than seeking a degree.

Guest student status does not constitute admission to a degree or certificate program.

Hold

A barrier placed on a student's ability to register for classes as a result of an unfulfilled monetary obligation or other action by the University.

Honors

Designation indicated on the college degree and transcript to reflect outstanding scholarship. Honors are conferred upon graduating students who have displayed a high level of performance during their university career. Recipients of honors receive their degrees:

- **Cum laude**—when their grade point average is 3.50 to 3.69, inclusive
- **Magna cum laude**—when their grade point average is 3.70 to 3.89, inclusive
- **Summa cum laude**—when their grade point average is 3.90 to 4.00, inclusive

To be eligible for honors, students must have earned at least fifty-six semester hours of credits at WMU, fifty of which, must be graded by a letter grade and computed into the final cumulative grade point average.

Honors College (Lee Honors College)

An academic administrative unit of the University whose mission is to design and foster curricular and co-curricular programs for the academically-talented student.

Honors courses

Special courses offered by Western's Lee Honors College designed to pose intellectual challenge and give personal attention to particularly able students.

Incomplete

A temporary course grade ("I") granted only if a student is temporarily unable to complete course requirements because of unusual circumstances beyond the control of the student.

Independent studies or readings courses

Independent studies or readings courses are courses in which a contract is developed between a faculty member and a student to complete research in, or readings on, a specific topic. The student is responsible for proposing the topic and contacting the appropriate faculty member.

Intellectual skills requirements

The requirement that all students demonstrate entry-level competency in reading, writing, and Mathematics by test or course.

Interdisciplinary

Designating a combination of subject matter from two or more disciplines within a course or program.

Internship

Work in a firm or agency related to a student's major program and/or career plans. Usually involves earning college credit and may involve receiving payment.

Late drop

An official procedure for withdrawing from individual classes without removing registration from all classes that takes place after the last day to drop a course without academic penalty.

Lower division

Courses at the 1000–2000 level; freshman or sophomore standing.

Major

A concentration of related courses generally consisting of thirty to fifty semester hours of credit.

Minor

A concentration of courses generally consisting of a minimum of twenty semester hours of credit.

Multi-topics or "umbrella" course

A variable topic, variable credit course that focuses on a current or a special interest in a specific field or academic area. The course may be repeated for credit with different topics.

Part-time student

An undergraduate student who takes fewer than twelve hours during a semester or fewer than six hours during a session.

Prerequisite

A requirement, usually the completion of another course, which must be met before a student may register for a course.

Proficiency

A General Education requirement. Each undergraduate candidate must show proficiency in four (4) Areas:

1. college-level writing
2. baccalaureate-level writing
3. college level mathematics or quantitative reasoning
4. enhanced proficiency (one of six options).

Readmission

An appeal procedure for a student who has been dismissed or suspended. Consult your college advising office to begin the procedure. Readmission must be sought in the area of intended study.

Registration

The process of enrolling in and paying tuition and fees for courses each semester or session.

Residence requirement

The requirement that a minimum of 30 semester hour of course work for the bachelor's degree be completed at Western Michigan University. In addition, 10 of the last 30 credits must be completed at WMU.

Scholarship

Financial assistance to students awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Financial need may or may not be a factor.

Semester

A unit of time, 15 weeks long, in the academic calendar.

Session

A unit of time, 7-1/2: weeks long, in the academic calendar.

Teachable major/minor

A state-approved major/minor program for teacher certification at the secondary and/or elementary level.

Transcript

A copy of a student's permanent academic record at a particular institution.

Transfer credit

Credit earned at another accredited institution and accepted towards a Western Michigan University degree. Grades earned at another institution do not transfer and hence do not affect the WMU GPA.

Transfer credit evaluation

An official statement which indicates the number and type of transfer credits awarded.

Tuition

The amount of money which must be paid for courses based on the number of credits for which the student registers.

Upper division

Classification of students with 56 or more semester hours of credit earned towards a bachelor's degree; courses at the 3000, 4000, and 5000 levels.

Withdrawal

An official procedure for withdrawing from the University for at least the remainder of the current semester or longer. The deadline for the last day to withdraw from all courses without academic penalty (grade of "W" is on the transcript) is noted each semester or session in the Registration Information booklet. Students who do not follow the official procedure when withdrawing from the University will earn the grade of "X" for all courses; the "X" grade carries no honor points and affects the GPA in the same manner as an "E" or failing grade.