

# ACADEMIC POLICIES

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended [commonly called FERPA or the Buckley Amendment] is designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the rights of students to inspect and review their records, and to provide a means of correcting inaccurate or misleading data. “Educational records” include any records in the possession of an employee which are shared with or accessible to another individual. Certain “student records” are not included among educational records under the Buckley Amendment. Among these student records are records held by educational personnel (such as faculty) that are not accessible to or revealed to any other person. Cottey College makes every effort to comply fully with this legislation.

FERPA regulations make clear that, in the case of students who are dependents of their parents for Internal Revenue Service purposes, information from the educational records of the student may be disclosed to the parents without the student’s prior consent. It is the policy of Cottey College to notify both the student and her parent(s) or legal guardian in writing of certain academic warnings from the Office of Academic Affairs, grade reports, probationary status, and dismissal. Any student who is not a dependent of her parent(s), as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, must notify the registrar of the College in writing, with supporting evidence satisfactory to the College, by October 1, of each academic year. In the absence of such notice and supporting evidence, the College will assume that a student is a dependent of her parent(s). If the dependency status changes after October 1, the student shall notify the registrar in writing.

In communications with parents concerning campus life and academic matters other than those listed in the preceding paragraph, it is normally college policy to respect the privacy of the student and not to disclose information from student records without the prior consent of the student. At the student’s request, such information will be provided to parents and guardians.

Certain information is considered public and is released by the College at its discretion. A student must formally request that the registrar withhold disclosure of “directory” information, except to College officials with legitimate educational interests and certain others as specified in the regulations. Directory information includes:

- student’s full name
- campus address
- permanent address
- date and place of birth
- assigned student e-mail address
- campus phone listing
- permanent phone listing
- dates of attendance
- enrollment status
- expected date of completion of degree requirements and graduation
- degrees and awards received
- classification
- previous educational institution attended
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- weight and height of members of athletic teams
- photographic, video or electronic images
- class roster (only released to students in the class)

Transcripts of academic records and statements of academic status are released to third parties only with written authorization from the student. A student has the right of access to her academic records. A student has the right to challenge and request the correction of any contents of her educational records that are considered to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. Such a challenge should be directed to the registrar.

## REGISTRATION AND CHANGES IN REGISTRATION

Students register on campus for the next semester during academic advising periods scheduled by the registrar. After developing a plan of study with her academic advisor, a student must finalize her course schedule by submitting a signed copy of her registration to the Office of Academic Records.

After the official registration period, a student may add or drop courses. The registrar publishes class schedules, academic advising and registration periods, and add and drop dates.

A student may add courses during the first six days of instruction if facilities, equipment and enrollment permit. Both the academic advisor’s signature and the course instructor’s consent are required. Students may appeal a denial of consent to the division chair and the vice president for academic affairs. After the sixth day of instruction, a student may not add a course unless her academic advisor agrees, the instructor consents, and the vice president for academic affairs approves.

A student may drop courses during the first six days of instruction without penalties or charges. These courses do not appear on the transcript.

The seventh day of instruction through the tenth week of instruction, a student withdrawing from a course must pay a \$15 per course withdrawal fee. A grade of W will be recorded on her transcript.

After the tenth week of instruction and until the last day of instruction, a withdrawal fee of \$15 per course is charged, and a grade of WP or WF will be recorded on the student's transcript to indicate whether she was passing or failing at the time of withdrawal.

## COURSE LOAD

A full-time student load is defined as 12-18 credit hours with the typical student load being 15-16 credit hours each semester. To register for more than 18 credit hours, students must obtain approval from the vice president for academic affairs. The maximum is 18 credits for a student's first semester at Cottey and 21 credit hours per semester thereafter. To maintain residential status, Cottey students must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester, unless that requirement is waived by the vice president of student life.

## TRANSFER CREDIT

Transfer students are welcome at Cottey College, and the College will make every effort to see that all transferable credit is accepted. Final determination of transfer credits to be accepted is made by the registrar, subject to approval by the vice president for academic affairs in consultation with the appropriate faculty. Transfer work from other institutions will not be officially credited to the Cottey College record until the student has enrolled at Cottey College. Official transcripts must be received directly from all colleges and universities attended. Credits may be accepted for transfer if these criteria are met:

- 1) The institution at which the credits were earned is accredited by a regional accrediting association.
- 2) Credit hours taken at another institution may be transferred to Cottey only if the grade earned is a C or above.
- 3) Credits earned while enrolled in high school (dual enrollment) may be accepted in transfer and may be used for fulfilling degree requirements. However, a student who wishes to transfer English Composition courses must meet the following guidelines:
  - a. To receive transfer equivalency for Cottey's ENG101 English Composition I, a student must also present a score of 25 or higher on the ACT English Test or a score of 570 or higher on the Writing portion of the SAT Reasoning Test.
  - b. To receive transfer equivalency for Cottey's ENG102 English Composition II, a student must document that the course was completed after completion of the high school diploma or on a college campus. This requires an official letter from the college or university confirming that the course was taught on its campus.
  - c. To appeal transfer of English composition courses, complete petition request and submit the syllabus and all graded writing assignments to the Academic Records Office by October 1.

Transfer credits accepted by Cottey College are not calculated in the student's Cottey College grade point average (GPA). Cottey College awards credits in semester credit hours. Quarter hours will be converted into semester credit hours at the rate of two-thirds of a semester credit hour per quarter hour.

## ACADEMIC CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS

First-Year Students . . . . . 0-23 credit hours earned  
Second-Year Students . . . . . 24-62 credit hours earned

## COURSE PLACEMENT

Placement in computer science, foreign languages, English composition, laboratory science, mathematics and music is determined by the student's past level of achievement and/or scores on auditions or tests administered at Cottey. Credit is not given for the lower-level courses not taken due to placement in an advanced course.

## AUDITING

In order to audit a course, a student must obtain permission from the instructor. Permission is contingent upon whether, in the instructor's judgment, the course is suitable for an audit and whether space is available. The instructor determines what requirements the student must fulfill. Audits do not earn credit hours or grade points and do not appear on the transcript. If by auditing a course a student exceeds the normal course load, she must obtain permission from the vice president for academic affairs. Changes from audit to credit, or credit to audit, must be made in accordance with the schedule change policy.

## CLASS SIZE

Enrollments in Cottey courses typically range from 5 to 30 students. The average class size ranges from 10 to 15. The College reserves the right to cancel any course for which fewer than five students register.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is expected. Each instructor determines his or her own policy and provides this information in the course syllabus. When absent from class, the student is responsible for the work and announcements made during the missed class.

## EARLY WARNING OF ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

Cottey College believes that its admission criteria are sufficient to assure the success of each matriculant. Recognizing that the new student's adjustment to the college environment varies with each student, the College has developed an early warning system to provide feedback to the student, the academic advisor, the academic support staff, and the student life support staff that a student is having difficulty.

Cottey's early warning system includes:

- notification by an instructor of his/her concern about a student's academic performance at any time during the semester,
- mid-term down grade notification by an instructor for each C- or lower grade,
- special warning by the vice president for academic affairs if a student receives three or more faculty concern notices, and

- special warning by the vice president for academic affairs if a student receives three or more mid-term down grade notifications. (This warning requires that the student meet with each instructor, her advisor, and her academic advisement coordinator to secure their advice and signatures on the warning letter; and that she return the signed letter to the vice president for academic affairs.)

A copy of each warning is sent to the student, her academic advisor and the academic advisement coordinator for her class.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLEGE

In order to withdraw from the College any time during the semester and avoid punitive grades, a student must obtain a withdrawal form from the Office of Student Life and obtain the required signatures. No refund will be given (if applicable) until this form is processed.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

When a financial, medical or other problem makes it impossible or unwise for a student to continue at Cottey, she may apply for a leave of absence. A leave of absence permits the student to return to Cottey without reapplying for admission, to register as a continuing student, to be guaranteed campus housing, and to complete her degree under the degree requirements of the catalog in effect when she matriculated. Leaves may be approved for a period of up to one year. A petition for leave of absence should normally be submitted before the end of the semester preceding the semester for which the leave is requested. The vice president for academic affairs will not approve such petitions unless the student has a cumulative grade point average which would allow her to return in good standing.

## TRANSCRIPTS

An academic record (transcript) is permanently maintained for each student who enrolls at Cottey. This record includes a list of courses in which the student has enrolled as well as the credits and grades earned in those courses. Transcripts are issued by the Office of Academic Records upon written request of the student and payment of the transcript fee.

## GRADE REPORTS

In lieu of a grade report, an unofficial transcript is sent each semester to the student and to the student's parent(s) or legal guardian unless the student has satisfactorily demonstrated to the registrar that she is not a dependent of her parent(s).

## GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

A student's GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of attempted credit hours into the total grade points received. The following table explains the assignment of grade points per credit hour:

A	4.00 grade points	C	2.00 grade points
A-	3.70 grade points	C-	1.70 grade points
B+	3.30 grade points	D+	1.30 grade points
B	3.00 grade points	D	1.00 grade points
B-	2.70 grade points	D-	0.70 grade points
C+	2.30 grade points	F	0.00 grade points
P	Pass		0 grade points
AU	Audit		0 grade points
I	Incomplete		
W	Withdrawal without penalty		0 grade points
WF	Late withdrawal, failing		0 grade points
WP	Late withdrawal, passing		0 grade points

## INCOMPLETE

A student, who has done satisfactory work for at least 12 weeks but because of illness or other circumstances beyond her control is unable to complete all course requirements, may request a grade of Incomplete. The instructor, not the student, makes the decision to grant an Incomplete. Incompletes must be completed by the end of the subsequent semester and summer or the grade will be changed to F.

## REPEATING AND BACKTRACKING

A student may attempt to improve her grade by repeating a course for which she received a C- or lower. A higher grade will replace her earlier grade. The lower grade will be eliminated from GPA calculations, credit hours attempted and earned will remain the same, and the higher grade earned at Cottey will be used to calculate her cumulative GPA.

If the course is repeated at another college or university, and a grade of C or better is earned, the repetition is handled as if it were a credit transfer. Credit hours earned for the course will transfer to Cottey, but the grade will not. Even though the grade earned elsewhere does not replace the Cottey grade, a repetition elsewhere will nevertheless improve a student's cumulative GPA, because both the original C- or lower Cottey grade and the credit hours attempted at Cottey will be ignored in GPA calculations.

Regardless of whether she failed or passed (with a low grade) in a previous attempt, a student can get a better grade and improve her GPA by repeating a course, but "passed" courses count toward graduation only once. Students who repeat and pass a course they have failed will then receive credit for that course, but they do not earn any additional credit hours by repeating courses they have passed before.

A student may not take for credit a course that is a prerequisite for a course she has already completed satisfactorily. Exceptions will be permitted only when senior institutions use specific courses as admission requirements, which would adversely affect Cottey graduates seeking to transfer there.

## RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT/LATE GRADUATION

Thirty-two credit hours must be earned at Cottey. Late graduation or exceptions must have the recommendation of the Academic Committee and the approval of the vice president for academic affairs. Students who receive approval and have a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or higher may participate in Commencement.

## GRADE RE-EVALUATION: APPEALS AND RECORD CORRECTIONS

In some circumstances and under certain conditions, a student may petition the vice president for academic affairs to change her final grade for a course or to amend her academic record. Students are encouraged to discuss the grading of all assignments with their professors, but the grading of a specific assignment within a course may not be appealed beyond the course instructor. After a student has discussed her final grade with her instructor and asked for a re-evaluation of her grade for the course, she may then file a Grade Appeal and Academic Record Correction petition.

Such appeals must be based either on clerical or bookkeeping errors or on allegations of capricious, illogical, unjust or unprofessional grading. Those formally reviewing a student's petition will never allow their own subjective judgment to supplant a faculty member's professional judgment in evaluating the quality of a student's performance in a course, because grades must be consistent with the professional standards of the relevant academic discipline.

Acting as a Grade Appeals and Academic Records Correction Board, the Academic Committee will consider student petitions, gather whatever additional pertinent information is needed, and recommend appropriate resolution. The Academic Committee will also act in academic dishonesty cases (as defined in the Student Handbook) by reviewing Judicial Board findings for grade changes as sanctions when the instructor concerned does not concur with the sanctions recommended, considering student appeals of grade change sanctions, and reviewing other academic dishonesty cases brought to their attention by faculty or students. In every case the Academic Committee will inform the faculty member whose grading is being appealed and will invite her/him to respond to the student's petition. To prevent conflicts of interest, a faculty member whose grading is being appealed will neither sit as a member of the Academic Committee during its review of the petition nor participate in its deliberations. After the Academic Committee has considered the petition and at the direction of the vice president for academic affairs, the registrar will make whatever academic record corrections are necessary and inform all those concerned of the actions taken. The Academic Committee will also act on Judicial Board recommendations for grade changes as sanctions in cases of academic dishonesty as defined in the Student Handbook. (Such sanctions must be approved by the instructor and the Academic Committee.) The Academic Committee may review the findings or sanctions in any academic dishonesty case. Students appeal Judicial Board findings and sanctions in academic dishonesty cases to the Academic Committee.

All petitions and requests for grade changes or academic record corrections must be initiated before the end of the semester following the semester in which the course in question was taken.

## SATISFACTORY PROGRESS AND GOOD STANDING

Each student is expected to make satisfactory progress toward the associate degree. To be in good academic standing, a student must have at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA. Satisfactory academic progress requires the completion of at least 12 credit hours per semester for full-time students, with a progressive minimum cumulative GPA and a progressive minimum earned credit hours that would not subject her to academic dismissal.

## PROBATION

A student whose GPA for a semester falls below 2.00 or a full-time student whose earned credits for a semester fall below 9 credit hours is notified by the vice president for academic affairs that she is on academic probation. College policies require that limitations be placed upon the activities of students who are on probation. The purpose for these limitations is to enable students who are experiencing academic difficulty to focus time and energy upon course work and to take advantage of help available from instructors, advisors, the Academic Assistance Center, the Counseling Office and other resources of the College.

Failure to make satisfactory academic progress or to fulfill College policies regarding the terms of probation may result in dismissal. When her semester and cumulative GPA equals or exceeds the 2.00 required and/or when her semester and cumulative credits equals or exceeds the requirement, the student is released from academic probation during the subsequent semester.

## DISMISSAL

A student failing to have a 1.00 GPA at the end of her first semester will be dismissed. A student failing to have a 1.50 cumulative GPA at the end of her second semester may be dismissed. A student failing to have a 1.80 cumulative GPA at the end of her third semester may be dismissed.

A full-time student failing to earn 6 credit hours in her first semester will be dismissed. A full-time student failing to earn 9 credit hours in her second semester will be dismissed. A full-time student failing to earn 9 credit hours in her third semester will be dismissed.

## ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF THE HONOR CODE

The following items are considered examples of academic dishonesty.

1. Dishonest preparation of course work. In the preparation of assignments, intellectual honesty demands that a student not copy from another student's work. When writing a paper, it is proper to acknowledge all sources of information.
2. Dishonest examination behavior. The unauthorized giving or receiving of information during examinations or quizzes (this applies to all types, such as written, oral, lab or take-home) is dishonest examination behavior. Unauthorized use of books, notes, papers, etc. is not acceptable.
3. Papers borrowed or purchased. It shall be considered an act of dishonesty for a student to submit to a teacher any paper which has been borrowed or purchased from any source whatsoever. Such a work is not the true work of the student who submits the paper, and such action is as reprehensible as copying from another paper during a test.
4. Excessive help. It shall also be considered an act of dishonesty for a student to receive excessive help from another student with the preparation or writing of any paper which is to be submitted to an instructor. Such excessive help shall be held to exist when it exceeds the general discussion of ideas. In short, excessive help is that in which the helper rewrites all or any portion of the paper. The individual instructor will define the parameters of legitimate help.
5. Plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of stealing in which another person's ideas or even his/her very words are borrowed without acknowledgement or credit being given. Plagiarism may go all the way from directly copying an entire paper from a single source to a merging together of quotations from many sources; it exists when these sources are not properly identified and when quoted material is not put in quotation marks or indented. Even when the student paraphrases the ideas of another writer, she is obligated to credit that writer.
6. Aiding and Abetting. Aiding and abetting, that is participating in any way in cheating, is considered academic dishonesty and shall be treated with the same consequences.
7. Unauthorized Collaboration. A test or assignment is given to the individual with the expectation that it be completed independently without assistance from another student or outside sources of information unless collaboration with others or use of resource materials is specified by the instructor.

The above-mentioned items are not the only violations to be considered. The Cottey College community maintains that any violation of the spirit of the Honor Code is a violation. If a student is in doubt about some practice, she should consult her advisor and/or instructor.

### **Disciplinary Action for Honor Code Violations Including Academic Dishonesty**

Students who violate the Honor Code are subject to a grievance being filed against them. The grievance will be reviewed by the Judicial Board of the College. The exception is the case of academic dishonesty.

With respect to academic dishonesty, faculty members of Cottey College are responsible for determining if a situation has risen to the level of academic dishonesty (cheating) and for the discipline of students whom they believe to be guilty of academic dishonesty in their classrooms.

The consequence of academic dishonesty at Cottey College will depend on whether the violation is a single incident in a class or is the result of multiple violations that occur in one or more than one class. The result of a single violation in a class may be either no credit on whatever work is involved in the violation, with no possibility of redoing the work, or a course grade of F and expulsion from the course. The faculty member teaching the class in which the academic dishonesty occurred will decide which of these consequences to enforce, in accordance with the guidelines set forth above.

Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will be reported by the faculty member to the vice president for academic affairs. If it is determined by a member(s) of the faculty that a student is responsible for academic dishonesty more than once during her enrollment at Cottey, the vice president, in his or her discretion, will determine, in consultation with the faculty members in whose

classes the academic dishonesty occurred, whether the consequences for the dishonesty will exceed those for the individual class or classes. Depending on the severity of the violations, the vice president for academic affairs, in his or her discretion, reserves the right to expel the student committing the offenses from the College.

Any student who has had sanctions imposed by a faculty member and/or the vice president for academic affairs may appeal her case before an Academic Appeals Board to be appointed by the President each academic year. The President will appoint two students from the Student Academic Committee, and two faculty members from the Faculty Academic Committee to serve on the Board. The Academic Appeals Board will be chaired by the Chair of the Faculty Senate, who will serve in a nonvoting capacity except in cases of a tie vote. If the Chair of the Faculty Senate, other faculty member, or student member is involved in the case, the President will appoint an alternate member(s) to serve from the Faculty Senate and Student Academic Committee, respectively. The student appeal must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Faculty Senate within three school days of the date that the sanction was imposed. A hearing will take place within three school days of the submitted appeal. The decision of the Academic Appeals Board will be final.

Students are ethically responsible under the terms of the Honor Code for reporting occurrences of academic dishonesty to the faculty member in whose classes the alleged cheating may have occurred.

## GENERAL POLICY ON EXCEPTIONS AND WAIVERS

Requests for exceptions to, deviations from and waivers of these academic policies will be addressed to the vice president for academic affairs and referred to the Academic Committee for consideration.

## STUDENT RIGHT TO KNOW

Student Right to Know (SRTK) refers to a Federally-mandated public disclosure of a college's Completion Rate and Transfer Rate. The intent of SRTK is to provide to the consumer a statistic of comparable effectiveness that they can use in the determination of college choice. All colleges nationwide are effectively required to participate in the disclosure of rates.

SRTK is a "cohort" study; that is, a group of students who are first-time freshmen who are enrolled full-time and are degree-seeking as identified in a fall term and their outcomes are measured over a period of time. The outcomes that the two SRTK rates measure are Completion (the total number of students in the cohort who earn a degree) and Transfer (the total number of cohort non-completers who were identified as having enrolled in another institution). The tracking period of the cohorts is three (3) years, at which time the SRTK rates are calculated and made public.

SRTK has its merits in that it attempts to provide a standardized measure of college effectiveness nationwide. However, in order to fully understand what SRTK rates mean for a college, one should also know its limitations. There can be data collection issues involved in the acquisition of valid numbers used in deriving SRTK rates; since there is no central nationwide "clearinghouse" of transfer data, it is impossible to generate accurate transfer-out rates.

In compliance with the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, Cottey College makes available its completion and transfer rates to all current and prospective students.

The graduation rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who entered Fall 2004 was 66%.