



## Selected Policies and Good Things to Know

RIT as well as the Department of Computer Science set policies or specify procedures that apply to numerous situations. It would be unusual for one student to encounter every one of the following, but it's not unreasonable to expect that every student will deal with a few of them. ***When in doubt*** about how to proceed or what your options are, be sure to ***check with your academic advisor***.

### **Academic Accommodations**

RIT fully supports providing each and every student with an environment that is conducive to helping students achieve academic success. RIT Policy C12.0 (Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information) provides a link for students who seek to request course accommodations, such as extended test taking time. The link effectively takes students to the RIT Disability Services Office (DSO) web site.

### **Academic Actions (Probation and Suspension)**

In order for undergraduate students to remain in good academic standing, they must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher. In order to warn students who may be experiencing academic difficulty in a timely fashion, RIT departments conduct a review of student academic achievement at the end of fall and spring semesters as well as the end of summer session(s). This review involves looking at both term and cumulative GPAs, leading to ***academic actions*** in which students may be placed on probation or even suspended from RIT. RIT Policy D05.1 (Academic Actions and Recognitions) provides more details. The department makes every reasonable effort to contact students who are affected by these actions through phone calls, email, and/or letters. Students ***will want to respond promptly*** when contacted and ***with a sense of urgency*** to the recommendations provided by the department, especially when suspension is indicated.

### **Academic Alert (and Student Success)**

RIT and most instructors want students to succeed and they are willing to reach out to students when they notice indicators that suggest otherwise (for example, when students miss a number of classes, fail to participate in class discussions, or do poorly on exams). Some instructors will reach out to students via email about such matters and others will try to speak to students just before or after class. RIT also provides instructors with a software system known as Starfish Early Alert and ***some instructors may*** make use of this software to notify students of concerns and to try and recommend positive steps that students can take to improve. While RIT encourages instructors to make use of the Starfish Early Alert system, its use by instructors is voluntary. Some instructors may also use this system to let students know when they are doing particularly well. These messages are frequently also copied to a student's academic advisor who in turn may then reach out to a student. ***Academic alert messages*** may be sent at any time throughout a term, although there are several standard time periods throughout a term (referred to as progress surveys) in which instructors are specifically asked to review all students in their classes and to inform those students who seem to be struggling in the class or perhaps in need of additional help. Note, while messages from this system were previously known as "early alert" messages, a set of enhancements were made to the system beginning with fall semester in 2015 and messages are now referred to as "academic alert" messages.

## **Academic Calendar**

The Office of the Registrar maintains the official RIT academic calendar. The academic calendar for the current academic year may be found at <http://www.rit.edu/calendar/>. As noted elsewhere, RIT operates under a semester calendar consisting of two 14-week semesters and a 12-week summer session which began in 2017.

## **Change of Program**

A student can initiate a request to change from their current program to a different program by completing a *Change of Program/Plan Form* available from the Registrar and submitting the form to their home department. Before doing so, a student should discuss their situation with their academic advisor and should strongly consider meeting with a representative from the program they are attempting to change into. There is **no** RIT requirement that a department or program must accept a student who requests to change into that program. Each program at RIT makes these decisions independently and may apply their own criteria for whether they decide to accept or reject a student. These criteria can take into account student grades and also reflect current resources or conditions within the program.

A “special” case consists of students who may have been previously suspended. These students may have left RIT for a period of time or in some cases, may have been referred to and enrolled in the College Restoration Program (or CRP). CRP describes itself as “an intensive one-semester only, academic intervention program for students facing academic suspension of probation.” After students complete one semester at RIT in the CRP program, they must be accepted into a degree-granting program in order to remain at RIT. Students previously suspended by Computer Science who seek to come back to Computer Science will be evaluated on a case by case basis. For those suspended students who did complete the CRP program, the decision as to whether or not to accept the student back into Computer Science is determined by the reentry criteria established when the student was first referred to CRP. Students previously suspended by a program other than Computer Science who seek to enter Computer Science will also be evaluated on a case by case basis.

## **Course Evaluations**

RIT currently uses an online system known as SmartEvals for course evaluations. Most faculty value constructive comments made by students and such comments go a long way toward helping them make courses more effective. Each term students are invited to complete a short survey for each course in which they are registered. These announcements are sent to students via email and the evaluation period typically occurs toward the latter part of the term. The system will send several reminders to students over the evaluation period, but once students complete an evaluation for a specific course, no further reminders for that course will be sent. Students should complete course evaluations honestly and thoughtfully and need to understand that results from course evaluations are not made available to faculty until after a term ends and course grades have been posted.

## **Course Withdrawal**

At the beginning of each term, RIT permits students to add and drop classes from their schedule. Once add/drop period ends, it is an instructor’s responsibility to assign a grade to each student who is officially enrolled in their section (see RIT Policy D05.0 (Grades)). The official RIT academic calendar identifies the last date within a term by which a student may make an online request using the student information system to be withdrawn from a class

(this option may not be used to avoid charges of academic dishonesty). The withdrawal period for summer session(s) varies depending on which summer session is involved – consult the official RIT academic calendar for specifics. While a student can choose to take this action completely on their own, before doing so, we highly encourage students to speak with both their instructor as well as their academic advisor. We want students to make sure they accurately understand their status in the class and also to understand any implications this action may have for them. If a student does withdraw from a course, then the course does not count toward a student’s residency requirement nor does it affect the GPA calculation for the student. A notation of ‘W’ will appear next to the course on the student’s transcript.

After the official date for student requested course withdrawal through the last official class day of a term, a student may request a course withdrawal in writing. **Approval of such requests is not automatically granted.** The student must sign and complete a form and specify a reason or reasons for the request. The form must also be signed by the course instructor, the student’s home department head (or designee), and the student’s home college dean (or designee). If any one of these individuals opposes the request or declines to sign the form, the request will not be accepted. Students should consult their academic advisor for more details.

### **COVID-19**

Several policies were implemented specifically regarding Spring 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic. These include policies related to grading, probation and suspension, and transfer credit. Students can access the RIT Registrar web site for more information. More information generally regarding RIT’s response to the coronavirus pandemic can also be found online. Students should look online for the most up-to-date information.

### **Degree Audit (and Certification)**

RIT continues to develop and enhance an advising tool known as **degree audit**. This tool is available or will be available to all groups of students as well as academic advisors, faculty members, and RIT administrators. Degree audit serves multiple purposes, but its primary purpose for students is to help them track their progress toward degree completion. Given the number of variables to consider when mapping any individual student’s record to their specific degree requirements as well as the overall complexity associated with a project of this scope and magnitude, it is not surprising that some information reported via degree audit may not be completely accurate for a given student! Students are warned **not** to view degree audit reports as equivalent to official transcripts. While students should regularly review their own degree audit report as well as their unofficial transcript, they should also regularly consult with their academic advisor to confirm their understanding of what degree requirements they have completed and what degree requirements they still have remaining. Certification, the official process used at RIT to confirm that a student has completed their degree requirements at RIT is a complex process conducted by the Office of the Registrar and multiple academic departments throughout the academic year.

### **Final Exam Policy**

While RIT endeavors each term to produce a conflict-free final exam schedule, situations do arise in which a student has two finals scheduled at the same time. In addition, students may elect not to take three or more final exams in one day if that’s what their schedule shows. While RIT Policy D11.0 (Final Examination Policies) describes how to address various

situations, students who find themselves with these kinds of problems should notify their instructors as well as their academic advisor early in a term so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

## Grades

Students will find that RIT computes and maintains two forms of grade point average (GPA) calculation. Each term the university computes the **term GPA** which reflects the average for all courses attempted during that term. In addition, there will be a **cumulative GPA** that **reflects all courses taken at RIT**. Much more information regarding grades, how they are used at RIT, and various special cases (such as *grade exclusion* when students change programs or *repeating courses* to raise low grades) may be found in RIT Policy D05.0 (Grades).

Starting with fall semester in 2014 (term 2141), RIT instructors began using a **Refined Grading System** (RGS) (“also known as the Plus/Minus Grading System”) to assess student performance in their classes. Under the former grading system, instructors could assign one of five possible grades; under the RGS, instructors can assign one of ten possible grades, as shown in the following table. As with any new system, students should expect that it will take a bit of time before instructors are entirely comfortable using the RGS. In addition, **some** faculty or departments may opt to **make use of only a portion** of the capability provided by the RGS. Finally, individual faculty determine for themselves how numeric grades map into letter grades. Thus, it is important for students at the start of a term to make sure they fully understand, in each course they take, how the instructor plans to assign grades.

Old Grading System			RGS (New Grading System)		
Grade	Description	Quality Points	Grade	Description	Quality Points
A	Excellent	4.00	A	Excellent	4.00
			A-		3.67
			B+		3.33
B	Above Average	3.00	B	Above Average	3.00
			B-		2.67
			C+		2.33
C	Satisfactory	2.00	C	Satisfactory	2.00
			C-		1.67
D	Minimum Passing Grade	1.00	D	Minimum Passing Grade	1.00
F	Failure	0.00	F	Failure	0.00

## Graduation Requirements

RIT Policy D12.0 (Graduation Requirements) details all of the graduation requirements and policies that affect undergraduates. Students typically must meet degree requirements in effect during the catalog year (often known as the requirement term) in which they entered the program whose degree they are completing. One key element is that students will not be certified for their degree unless their cumulative GPA is 2.00 (a “C” average) or higher, even if they have completed all degree requirements. Were a student to actually complete all of their courses and find that their cumulative GPA was below 2.00, they would have to take one or more additional courses in order to raise their cumulative GPA. It would be up to the student as to whether they took courses they had never taken before or whether they took courses

previously taken (see RIT Policy 5.0 (Grades), Section VI (Repeating Courses to Raise Low Grades)).

### **Honor Code**

The RIT Honor Code (RIT Policy P3.0) is really an umbrella term that encompasses not only specific policies (such as RIT Policy D8.0 (Student Academic Integrity Policy)), but also a variety of other matters that deal with character and behavior. Taken collectively, the policies and procedures referred to under the honor code apply not only to students, but faculty, staff, and administrators as well.

### **Independent Study**

The department encourages students to consider working on independent study projects. Such projects typically involve work that is different from, or an extension of, existing course offerings. Independent study projects require a faculty member who serves as a sponsor and who assigns a grade (and academic credit) for the completed work. More details are contained on the independent study form available through the CS web site.

Undergraduate students may consider doing independent study projects in areas other than Computer Science. The department has established a policy that permits Computer Science majors to apply ***no more than 12 semester units earned through independent study*** (from courses taken in all categories (i.e., Computer Science, General Education, Free Electives, etc.)) ***to their B.S. degree requirements.***

### **Leave of Absence/Return from Leave of Absence/University Withdrawal**

RIT recently approved changes to RIT Policy D02.1 (Leave of Absence and University Withdrawal Policy) and is in the process of implementing new procedures consistent with this policy change. Some students do completely withdraw from RIT (perhaps to transfer to another institution). There are also situations that can occur in which a student voluntarily seeks to leave RIT for a specified period of time and still retain their active student status because they intend to return. A leave of absence may not exceed three consecutive terms (fall and spring semesters, as well as summer session, is included in this definition). If a student shows no registration activity for three consecutive terms, they will lose their active status and they will be withdrawn from RIT. Finally, there can also be situations in which the university imposes an involuntary leave of absence on a student.

There are numerous implications associated with both university withdrawal and leave of absence and both actions are further complicated due to numerous federal regulations. In addition to possible financial adjustments, both actions may also affect financial aid, access to University services, a student's ability to attend further classes or to continue living in University housing. ***Students considering taking either a leave of absence or university withdrawal are strongly advised to contact their academic advisor.*** In addition to reviewing implications for both actions, academic advisors can also assist students in understanding other options that might be available or feasible. If students do decide to withdraw from the university or take a leave of absence, academic advisors can assist students in completing the appropriate form. The academic unit ***can either approve or deny*** a student's request for a leave of absence. If the leave of absence is approved, the student's academic advisor will assist the student in developing a re-entry plan.

## **Study Abroad**

RIT continues to expand and promote global education opportunities. The RIT Global web site is the starting place for information on resources available to students and provides answers to many of the typical questions posed by students considering this option. As pointed out on the RIT Global web site, specific study abroad programs typically fall into one of five different categories, such as RIT programs (in which students directly enroll in one of RIT's international campuses), Exchange programs, or Affiliate programs, for example. For each category of program, there may be a different process to follow or there may be slightly different rules in place regarding how credits may be earned or applied to a student's degree program at RIT. The Department of Computer Science also has historically supported several study abroad opportunities specifically oriented toward Computer Science. Further information about these programs may be found on the Department of Computer Science web site.

## **Transfer Credits and Residency**

Students who attend other colleges or universities have their prior work evaluated for transfer credit by the College of Liberal Arts and the academic unit that houses the program to which the student applies. Completed courses with grades of 'C' or higher may be considered for possible transfer credit, subject to applicability of specific courses to individual degree program requirements. ***Recipients of two-year associate's degrees from another institution may receive no more than two years' transfer credit for the degree*** (see RIT Policy D02.0 (Admission)). RIT is implementing an automated process to evaluate courses for transfer credit. Students should contact their academic advisor to see if a course of interest has already been evaluated. If not, a request can be made through the Registrar's office to have the course evaluated.

All students must meet residency requirements as detailed in RIT Policy D12.0 (Graduation Requirements). As stated in this policy, a minimum of 25% of the total semester credit hours required for the degree shall consist of successfully completed RIT courses. The degree-granting program shall decide which specific courses shall count to satisfy this requirement.