

ACADEMIC RULES OF THE ROAD

Academic Life

- **Your Academic Advisor**

Arrange an introductory meeting with your assigned advisor in September - *before advisement* begins later in the semester. You will find the name of your Faculty Advisor in myRWU. Instructions for finding different information in myRWU are included in this *GPS*. Make an appointment, or even just stop by, to introduce yourself and ask your advisor for suggestions on how to prepare for advisement later in the fall. Your relationship with your faculty advisor is a critical component of academic success. He or she is there to guide you in course selection, help you to understand the curriculum in your major, and to offer help as you begin to explore career options in your field. Ultimately, though, it is your responsibility for making sure that you are on track with your program of study. Your advisor can also help you to plan for study abroad. We strongly encourage all students to consider completing a semester abroad.

- **The Advising Center**

Professional academic advisors at the Advising Center work with any students who have not yet decided on a major. In collaboration with faculty in every major, the staff of the Advising Center will help you to carefully explore your interests and talents. Choosing a major is perhaps the most important decision any college student makes. If you are uncertain of what to pursue, the staff of the Advising Center can help you make a careful and informed decision about what to study over the next four years. The Career Center and your faculty are also valuable resources - make use of them!

- **Course Syllabus**

A course syllabus has three basic goals.

- It serves as a contract between the professor and student - it states what material will be studied, and what you can expect to have learned.
- It clearly states what materials you must purchase for the class, at the University Book Store.
- It is a permanent record of all the class "rules": policies on absence, tardiness, disrupting class, use of electronics during class and other classroom management issues are often addressed in a syllabus.

- It is a learning tool. The syllabus reminds you of what is coming next, when papers are due, when exams or quizzes will be held.

- **Classroom Expectations**

Your professor and the students around you should be treated with respect. You will be held accountable for your actions - both good and bad. Be on time for class, and stay for the entire class. Part of being in college is learning the skills of critical thinking and civil discourse. Civil discourse can be described as conversation, debate and discussion intended to enhancement understanding and appreciation of different points of view. Practice these skills as they are demonstrated and used in class. Be a worker. Always have pen and paper with you. Turn off all your electronics when you are in class. Participate. Do the reading. Listen and participate in discussions. Form study groups. You are expected to read all assignments, complete all assignments on time, and be in class every day. Homework is not necessarily collected and corrected - it is often assigned as a learning tool. Ignoring it could come back to haunt you on a final exam. Develop the practice of contemplation and thoughtfulness. You will get a lot more out of each class if you do so.

- **Habits of Successful College Students**

- Be prepared. Do the homework. Always have a notebook and pen/pencil with you. Your full time job is as a college student. These are some of the basic tools of learning.
- Form study groups - the most successful students study together
- Keep a daily planner and use it. You have only 15 hours of each week scheduled - the 5 classes you are registered for. Use the rest of the time wisely for study; library research; social time; clubs and organizations; friends and family.
- When you communicate with a faculty member or a member of the professional staff through email, don't use the language of IM or Text Messaging. This is a formal communication; use appropriate and correct language. You can expect at least 24 hours to pass before you get a response.
- Communicate with faculty staff in a respectful and timely manner.

The Core Curriculum

All Roger Williams University undergraduates are required to complete the Core Curriculum. The chart on the next page describes the Core Curriculum. It is through study in the Core Curriculum that you can explore academic disciplines you are interested in. The Core Curriculum is offered as a *"model for living, learning and working into the century"*. It is rooted in a liberal arts foundation, but contemporary in that it *"celebrates not only the tradition of the individual disciplines, but also the inexhaustible knowledge that we gain when we compare, integrate, and reflect on these subjects"* (University Catalog).

- **Academic Regulations**

All colleges and universities have minimum performance requirements for their students. At Roger Williams, the faculty and staff hope you will strive to exceed the minimum, and explore your own possibilities for excellence and achievement. However, to maintain good academic standing, every student must meet what is known as **Scale for Satisfactory Academic Standing**. This is defined by a minimum GPA for each semester and a minimum number of credits completed each semester. The chart below details the University Rate of Progress requirements.

Semesters Completed	Minimum GPA	Credit Hours Completed
End of 1st Semester	1.70*	12
End of 2nd Semester	1.80	24
End of 3rd Semester	1.90	36
End of 4th Semester	2.00	48
End of 5th Semester	2.00	60
End of 6th Semester	2.00	72
End of 7th Semester	2.00	84
End of 8th Semester	2.00	96
End of 9th Semester	2.00	108
End of 10th Semester	2.00	120

**Does not include semesters when a student has withdrawn for medical reasons.*

**Transfer students will be considered to have completed one semester of full-time study for every 12 credits of posted transfer credit. For example, a student who transfers 24 credits must have a GPA of 1.9 at the end of their first semester at the University to achieve Academic Good Standing. While part-time students do not have a rate of progress requirement they must meet the GPA*

requirement for full-time students based on the number of credit hours they have completed. For example, a part-time student who has completed between 24 and 35 credits would be expected to have a GPA of 1.80. A part-time student who has completed 48 credits would be expected to have a GPA of 2.0.

Dean's List

If you maintain a high GPA, the University celebrates that by naming you to the Dean's List. This traditional academic honor is awarded to full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher. (Any grade of F, I, NP or NS will negate the Dean's List honor's designation).

Mid-Semester Warning Grades

Any freshman who receives a grade of C- or less will receive notification in the middle of the first semester. Faculty issue warning grades as a way to alert you to the fact that you may be failing a course. If you get a warning grade, you should meet with your professor. He or she wants you to succeed in the class. But they cannot help you if you don't seek them out. You can also get support and assistance from your Student Advocate and Tutoring Services in the Center for Academic Development.

Academic Sanctions

If you don't meet the minimum requirements for either rate of progress or GPA you will be placed on probation for the next semester. Probation is a formal warning that you need to become more involved with your academic work and take responsibility for enlisting whatever support services you need to improve your grades. If you are placed on probation, you may not serve as an officer in any club or organization, or participate in intercollegiate athletic competitions without the written permission of your academic dean. Academic probation may continue for more than one semester. However, you should appreciate how serious this sanction is, and understand that students who do not make adequate progress in improving their academic performance are subject to suspension or even dismissal. No one wants to see that happen - so take your classes seriously, and if you feel lost, get help early!!

- **Attendance Policy**

You are expected in class each day. The policy in each class may vary, but you are expected to adhere to what is expected in each course. If you fail to comply with a professor's attendance policy, as stated in the course syllabus, you may be administratively withdrawn from the course. This action could negatively impact your financial aid status.

There is, however, much more to attendance policies in college than just merely showing up. You are expected to be on time, and prepared. If reading or writing assignments are due, you should have them to turn in, on time. Unlike in high school, "extra credit" is not generally available as a way of making up for missed classes or late assignments. The standards in a college classroom are different than in high school. You will get more out of your classroom experience if you understand these differences and accept these differences.

- **Degree Requirements**

Understanding your degree requirements is your responsibility. Your Advisor is available to guide you in course selection, and discuss your overall academic plan. However, you are expected to maintain current and accurate records of your progress, and to clearly understand what you must complete in order to graduate in your chosen major. The University Catalog and the program outline or plan your advisor gives you as a planning tool will help you to keep on track. Dropping or adding courses without the advice of your Advisor is not recommended.