

Educational Policies

Attendance Policy

Mesalands Community College holds to the philosophy that students who attend class regularly are better prepared to learn. If a student stops attending class, it is his/her responsibility to officially withdraw from the course.

Directed Studies

Directed Study is permitted under the following conditions:

1. A required class cannot be taken due to a scheduling conflict which is no fault of the student; or
2. A student wishes to pursue a project for elective credit which is related to his/her program of study, but not part of the content of an existing class.

Students wishing to take a class as a Directed Study must have completed at least 30 credits, with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Directed Study must be approved by the instructor as well as the Dean of Instructional Services. No more than one class per semester may be done as Directed Study, nor more than a total of 7 credits for the duration of the student's educational experience at Mesalands Community College. The student will be responsible for the same fees and tuition as for a traditional class.

Challenge Exams

Students may receive credit for certain general education courses at Mesalands Community College by attaining qualifying scores on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). A maximum of 15 hours of credit by examination will be allowed toward the student's Plan of Study. Students who are awarded credit for CLEP must pay the current tuition rate for the number of credits awarded to be posted to their transcript and applied toward degree requirements. (The CLEP can be taken at Mesalands Community College and is offered through the Educational Services Center.) Contact the Office of Enrollment Management for more information.

Advanced Placement Credit

Credit is awarded for those who have attained qualifying scores on Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. Credit will be awarded only upon receipt of an official AP score report from the College Board. For more information or complete Advanced Placement policy, see the Office of Enrollment Management.

Changes in Enrollment

ADD/DROP

Students desiring to add or drop a course may do so only during the time specified in the College calendar. Students cannot add courses after the late enrollment deadline without the consent of the instructor and the Coordinator of Institutional and Enrollment Data.

WITHDRAWAL

Students are allowed to withdraw from a course without academic penalty up to the published withdrawal date, which is established in the College calendar. In addition, students may completely withdraw from Mesalands Community College at any time prior to the date established in the College calendar as the last day to withdraw from courses without academic penalty.

Students who are forced by emergencies or circumstances beyond their control to leave the College without officially withdrawing should notify the Office of Enrollment Management and request an administrative withdrawal.

Fulfillment of Prerequisites

A number of courses at Mesalands Community College are dependent upon knowledge gained in preceding classes. It is required that students receive at least a grade of "C" in all prerequisite courses prior to proceeding in the course sequence. Prerequisite courses are not normally waived.

Academic Load

Full-time students are students who are enrolled in 15 or more credit hours during a regular semester and 6 or more hours during the summer semester. Part-time students are students who are taking fewer than 15 credit hours during a regular semester and fewer than 6 credit hours during the summer semester.

Normally a student may not enroll in more than 18 credits for a regular semester or 9 for a summer semester unless he/she had a GPA of 3.0 or higher the previous semester and has completed at least 12 credits. First time freshmen and high school concurrently enrolled students cannot enroll in more than 18 credits. Students meeting the above criteria wishing to enroll for 22 credits or more in a fall or spring semester (or 10 credits or more in the summer), must have the approval of the Dean of Instructional Services or the Dean of Student Services.

Grading System

FINAL GRADES

Final grades are based on the quality of work done in courses offered for credit. They appear on a student's transcript and are used to calculate the grade point average (GPA). Letter grades are defined as follows:

Letter Grade	Descriptions	Grade Points per Unit of Credit
A	Excellent work	4
B	Better-than-Average work	3
C	Average work	2
D	Below-average work	1
F	Failing work	0
I	Incomplete	0
W	Withdrawal	0
AU	Audit	0
P	Passing	0

INCOMPLETE

An "I" is issued when unforeseeable circumstances beyond the student's control prevent the student from completing course requirements by the end of the semester. Incomplete grades will not be authorized when the student has failed to complete course requirements or has failing grades due to personal negligence. To apply for a grade of "I," the student must complete an Incomplete Grade Form with the instructor. A student may only apply for an incomplete grade after the deadline for withdrawing and before the last week of class. If an emergency arises prior to the withdraw deadline that will prevent a student from completing, he/she should withdraw from the class; an incomplete will not be awarded.

A student applying for an incomplete grade must have attended class up until the time of applying for the incomplete, or up until the time a legitimate, documented emergency occurred. Those in distance education courses must have been making progress in the class and maintaining contact with the instructor.

A student must have maintained a passing grade in the course up until the time of applying for an incomplete grade. A grade of incomplete cannot be replaced by repeating the course; if a student takes an incomplete,

then repeats the course the following semester, he/she will still be expected to complete the requirements of the incomplete course or an appropriate grade will be issued.

WITHDRAWAL

Students are allowed to withdraw from a course without academic penalty up to the established withdrawal date, which is established in the institutional calendar and published in the class schedule, the student handbook, and the College catalog. A drop/add/withdrawal fee will be assessed.

The withdraw deadline for short courses and courses which do not meet according to the regular semester schedule is pro-rated accordingly. See the Office of Enrollment Management for withdraw deadlines for such courses.

AUDIT

Auditing a course gives a student an opportunity to attend a class as a non-graded, non-credit participant. Auditing is usually done by students for reviewing a subject area, as a refresher or for general interest. Students must register for audited courses in the same manner as for regular courses. Standard tuition and fees apply to all audited courses, and are due and payable at the time of enrollment.

Audited courses are recorded on the College transcript as an "AU" and cannot be changed to a credit course or grade at a later date. Students who desire to do so may repeat the course for credit at a later date.

PASS/FAIL GRADING

At the direction of the Dean of Instructional Services, courses which are not prescribed in a specified plan of study may be offered on a Pass/Fail grading basis. Also, students may opt to take courses on an individual Pass/Fail basis. However, a maximum total of 7 credits of Pass/Fail may be used toward their educational plan of study at Mesalands Community College. Students must maintain a 75 % average to receive a grade of "P." Any lower average will be recorded as an "F."

CHANGE OF GRADING STATUS

Students may elect to change from conventional grading to "Audit" or "Pass/Fail," or vice versa, at any time during the drop/add period by notifying the Office of Enrollment Management. A drop/add fee will be assessed.

GRADE APPEAL

Any student who feels his or her grade is incorrect may appeal for a grade change with the following steps:

Discuss the grade with the instructor involved,

And

If unable to reach an agreement, make an appointment with the Associate Dean of Instructional Services and present all the evidence relating to the grade. The final appeal will be made with the Dean of Instructional Services, whose decision is final.

Repeating Courses

Courses may be repeated only once to improve a grade. Students who wish to take advantage of this policy should notify the Office of Enrollment Management and complete an "Application to Repeat" form. Grades in both classes will appear on the transcript, but only the last grade earned will be used to calculate the cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

Transferring Credit

Institutions of higher education across the United States have the option of transferring (accepting) course credits from other institutions of higher education. Students are encouraged to work with Student Services personnel to develop and/or review their plan of study to assure ease in transferring from one institution to another. Currently, all public institutions of higher education in the State of New Mexico recognize the General Education Common Core of Courses (35 credits) as coordinated by the New Mexico Higher Education Department, that will transfer to all public colleges and universities in the State of New Mexico.

Only credit which is applicable toward a student's signed Educational Plan of Study shall be considered for transfer credit. Students desiring credit for past college work must have an official transcript from each previous college mailed directly to Mesalands Community College and must complete a Request for Transcript Evaluation Form. Only courses for which a grade of "C" or better, or "P" or "S" will be considered for transfer.

Any course accepted on transfer must be equivalent to the Mesalands Community College course for which it is substituted on the plan of study. If the course being transferred to Mesalands is for less credit than the Mesalands course, the student must acquire additional credit relevant to his/her plan of study to make up the difference. Courses accepted in transfer will not be included in the CGPA.

Transfer credit for military training will be allowed in accordance with the above, provided the student provides official documentation of course completion, including the course's American Council on Education ID number. The Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences

COMPUTING GRADE POINT AVERAGE

The grade point average (GPA) is calculated as follows, where A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0: multiply the number of credits for a course by the points assigned to the letter grade for each class (e.g., "A" = 4 grade points x 3 credits = 12; "B" = 3 grade points x 3 credits = 9), add the total points (e.g., 12 + 9 = 21), and divide by the total number of credits (e.g., 21/6 = 3.5 = "B" average).

Grade Point Average

The following is an example of how to determine the GPA after a student takes the courses below and receives the grades as shown:

Course	Final Grade	Grade Points		Credits	Quality Points
ENG 102	A	4	x	3 =	12
MATH 101	B	3	x	3 =	9
BIO 113	C	2	x	4 =	8
SOC 101	D	1	x	3 =	3
ART 101	F	0	x	3 =	0

Total Credits = 16 Total Quality Points = 32
Quality Points divided by Credits = Grade Point Average
(32 divided by 16=2.00)

in the Armed Services shall be used in evaluating the course's equivalency to Mesalands courses.

Problems regarding the transfer of credit to Mesalands Community College from other colleges or universities should first be directed to the Office of Enrollment Management. Complaints not resolved at this level should be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards and Issues Committee. Students who are attempting to transfer credit from Mesalands to other institutions and experience difficulty are encouraged to contact the Office of Enrollment Management for advice and/or assistance.

Issues regarding transfer credit between New Mexico institutions which cannot be resolved by the above processes can be directed to the New Mexico Higher Education Department, 1068 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

Credit for Experiential Learning

It is recognized that not all learning takes place within the confines of a college classroom. Learning which is equivalent to that acquired in a classroom may occur in a variety of settings. This learning is referred to as experiential learning. Experiential learning may transpire in non-collegiate settings such as the following:

- Employment, particularly where increasing levels of responsibility have occurred
- Military experience
- Specialized training, continuing education
- Technical or vocational training
- Trade school
- Correspondence studies
- Apprenticeships, Internships
- On-the-job training
- Reading of professional publications and journals

Other accomplishments or activities, while not specifically learning activities in themselves, may be evidence of experience and/or advanced knowledge in a particular discipline. This could include the following:

- Professional Licenses/Certificates
- Experience as lecturer, instructor, mentor, supervisor
- Personal writings, publications
- Authoring of strategic plans, business plans
- Development of a company or organizational budget
- Authoring of operational manuals, personnel handbooks, etc.
- Competency test results
- Awards, citations
- Participation in career-related organizations or trade associations
- Leadership role in civic, fraternal, political or religious organizations

It is important to note that simply sitting in a classroom does not guarantee learning takes place. Likewise, neither does experience or involvement in any of the above automatically result in the learning equivalent to that which could be experienced in a collegiate classroom. Even involvement in a job or other activity for extended periods of time does not necessarily mean collegiate-equivalent learning is experienced.

Recognizing that adult learners may have experiences outside the college classroom that have led to the acquisition of knowledge and skills equivalent to that which would have been obtained in a traditional course, Mesalands Community College provides a mechanism for awarding college credit based upon the documentation of collegiate-equivalent learning.

Students with appropriate life experiences may petition for college credit by developing and submitting an Experiential Learning Portfolio. Up to 18 college credits may be awarded toward the Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies or the Associate of Applied Science Degree in General Studies (see Plans of Study). Credit will be awarded only if appropriate experiential learning has occurred and is documented as specified in this document and the Experiential Learning Portfolio Handbook.

Students who are awarded credit for experiential learning must pay the current tuition rate for the number of credits awarded to be posted to their transcript and applied toward degree requirements.

Contact the Office of Enrollment Management for more information.

Dean's List

At the end of the fall and spring semesters, the Dean's List is announced as the official recognition of outstanding academic accomplishments. Qualifications are as follows:

Students must maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for courses taken at Mesalands Community College (excluding pre-collegiate courses). Students must successfully complete 15 or more credit hours and not have a grade listed below a "C" in the given semester. Students must not have an outstanding grade of "I" during the given year.

President's Citation

At the end of the spring semester, the President's Citation is announced as official recognition of exceptional academic achievement. Qualifications are as follows: maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.75 or better (excluding pre-collegiate courses), successfully complete 30 or more credits in the fall/spring semesters, have no grade below a "C" in the given year, and no outstanding grade of "I" during the given year.

Academic Integrity

The integrity of an academic program rests on the principle that the grades awarded to students reflect only their own individual efforts and achievement. Students are required to perform the work specified by the instructor and are responsible for the content of work submitted, such as papers, reports, and examinations.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Honesty in academic work is a central element of the learning environment. The presentation of another individual's work as one's own, or the act of seeking unfair academic advantage through cheating, are violations. The general descriptions below emphasize those boundaries of academic conduct which are essential to the learning environment.

The following acts of academic dishonesty are among those which may lead to College disciplinary action or possible dismissal:

Cheating

Cheating is defined as submitting assignments, examinations, or other work which is based upon sources or activities forbidden by the instructor. Cheating includes the furnishing of materials to another person for purposes of aiding that person to cheat. When an unfair academic advantage is gained by a person through deception or other means, that action is defined as cheating.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as submitting assignments, examinations, or other academic work which is not entirely the work of the student. This can include, but is not limited to, such practices as 1) quoting without giving proper credit to a source, 2) expanding someone else's work without giving proper credit, 3) adopting as one's own an actual document (including the copying of computer or other electronic media), and 4) directly using someone else's ideas rather than words without giving proper credit.

Violation of Copyright

The unauthorized copying of copyrighted material, whether print or computer media, is illegal and is considered an act of academic dishonesty; moreover, such practice makes the violator subject to legal penalty.

PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The following penalties may be applied in instances of academic dishonesty:

A student caught in the act of academic dishonesty on an assignment or exam shall, at the discretion of the instructor, be assigned a grade of "F" for that assignment or exam, or for the entire class.

A student found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty may be dismissed from Mesalands Community College. The length of the dismissal will depend upon the nature of the offense and may include a permanent dismissal of the student.

Probation & Academic Suspension

ACADEMIC STANDING

In order to be in good academic standing, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 ("C" average). Students not meeting these standards will be placed on academic probation.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Any student whose Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) drops below 2.0 will be placed on academic

probation. The student must bring the CGPA up to at least 2.0 during the following semester in order to avoid being placed on academic suspension.

ACADEMIC SUSPENSION

Students on the first semester of academic suspension are not allowed to enroll in classes, except for pre-collegiate courses or to repeat one or more courses with unsatisfactory grades in order to improve the cumulative grade point average.

If a student completes such limited enrollment under academic suspension with a GPA of less than 2.0 for that semester, the student will not be allowed to enroll in any courses the following semester. If the GPA for that semester is 2.0 or higher, but the cumulative GPA is still below 2.0, the student may continue on limited enrollment while under academic suspension. If the cumulative GPA becomes 2.0 or higher, the student is released from probation and suspension.

Students who are placed on complete academic suspension for a second time are not automatically readmitted after one semester. Instead, after one semester of suspension, the student must submit a written petition to the Academic Standards and Issues Committee requesting readmission. The committee can grant readmission at this time or may choose to require a suspension of a full year or longer or may deny any future readmission altogether.

Students readmitted after suspension may also be required to follow additional stipulations such as periodic meetings with an adviser or counselor, tutoring, attendance requirements, or GPA requirements. Students readmitted after suspension not following such stipulations are subject to immediate dismissal from the College.

Student Appeals

Students wishing to appeal academic probation or suspension must do so in writing to the Dean of Instructional Services, prior to the first day of regular registration for the following semester.

Student College Success Course

All students pursuing a degree are required to take ACS 100 Student College Success within the first 12 credit hours of enrollment. This three-hour course is designed to assist students in obtaining skills necessary to reach their educational, career, and personal goals.

Course topics include decision making, time management, test taking, career planning, library skills, study techniques, communication skills, and personal topics facing college students.

Success Assessment/Placement Testing

The Success Assessment/Placement Test, which is administered through the Educational Services Center in Building A, is used to place students in appropriate math, English and reading classes to help ensure their success while enrolled at Mesalands Community College.

All students pursuing a degree and any student enrolling in core math or English classes must complete the assessment prior to enrollment. Students must enroll in the level of math and English prescribed by the assessment and, if indicated, in pre-collegiate reading. Students scoring below prescribed levels on the Success Assessment/Placement Test will be placed in Adult Basic Education courses prior to enrolling in collegiate level courses.

Students desiring to retake the assessment within the same semester, must first complete 12 contact hours of subject review in the Educational Services Center before they can pay to retest.

Assessment of Student Learning

Mesalands Community College is committed to providing its students with a productive learning environment. The College has broadly endorsed the core principles of

student learning. This involves measuring how well students are actually learning. Are grades a good measure of learning? The answer is only partly yes; we have all heard of students who graduated from high school but couldn't read. Mesalands has embedded assessment measures, that are independent of grades, in all aspects of the College - in the classroom using Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), in each program by way of the measurable objectives that are included in this catalog, and at the institutional level by a pre-test/post-test (COMPASS and CAAP) - and at different stages of the student's academic career from before initial registration to after graduation. Mesalands Community College has pledged to help students learn. Assessment of student learning is the check that exists to ensure that the College fulfills this function.

Students who plan to graduate with an associate degree or who will have completed 60 credits by the end of a given semester must take the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) and participate in general education assessment when it is scheduled that semester. Students who do not complete assessment will not be allowed to graduate, nor will transcripts be released.

The graduate assessment is completed at the same time for students that are graduating in either the fall or spring. The graduate assessment is a series of projects which the students are required to complete on a specified day to provide faculty with feedback in the areas of communication, critical thinking, science and math. Graduate assessment is scored using rubrics.

