

It is each student's responsibility to know or seek out as needed the regulations and pertinent procedures from admission to degree completion.

Academic Policies

All graduate students must maintain a minimum standard of 3.0 on a 4.0 system (see requirements for candidacy). The student must not accumulate more than six semester hours of credit below B (3.0). Academic records reflecting more than two 'Cs' have to be addressed and the student must retake the appropriate course(s) in order to be in compliance with this academic requirement to satisfy progression to graduation. The student cannot graduate with a letter grade of D or lower. Students receiving a letter grade of D or lower must re-enroll in the course and make a higher grade. If these conditions are not met, either of the above will result in the removal of the student from graduate degree candidacy status.

A student will be placed on probation at the close of any term in which the student's cumulative GPA fall below a 3.0. A student is subject to dismissal from the program if the minimum GPA is not obtained in the subsequent 9 semester hours of course work. Students may apply for readmission after one semester, except graduate nursing students who if dismissed for academic failure may not apply for readmission at any time. The School of Nursing has special guidelines to govern academic performance and progression of students. See the information on the Graduate Nursing Program on their webpage in the published version of the School of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook at: <http://www.alcorn.edu/academics/schools/son/index.aspx> for policies and procedures regarding course grades and GPA requirements applying to progression and dismissal in the Graduate Nursing Program.

Academic Probation and Suspension

PROBATIONARY STATUS

Academic Performance

Academic performance of all currently enrolled graduate students is monitored each semester by the Office of Graduate Studies staff.

A graduate student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 system at Alcorn State University to remain in good academic standing. The student must not accumulate more than six semester hours of credit below B (3.0).

A graduate student will be allowed to repeat a maximum of two courses in which the student has been assigned a grade of C or F. A given course may be repeated once.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on probation at the close of any term in which the cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 is achieved. The student has one semester following notification of academic probation to bring his/her GPA to 3.0.

A student is subject to dismissal from the graduate program if the minimum GPA is not obtained in the subsequent 9 semester hours of course work. Students may apply for readmission after one semester except graduate nursing students who if dismissed for academic failure may not apply for readmission at any time.

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 must be provided with a written explanation of performance expectations and a timetable for correction of deficiencies. A student may be placed on probation at any time of the year, but it would normally occur following either the fall semester (with a letter mailed in January) or the spring semester (with A letter mailed in May). Students' progress must be monitored to determine if the deficiency GPA has been improved.

In addition to sending academic probation notification to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies, a notification is also sent to the student's academic advisor/academic unit chair.

A copy of the academic notification and/or dismissal to the student becomes a part of the student's permanent record.

An academic hold is placed on the student's account in Banner as well as a "Graduate Warning" is designated by the Registrar's Office. The **Hold** is removed the ensuing semester to allow the student to register in an attempt to improve his/her GPA. Once the student registers, the Hold is reinstated until the end of the term to monitor the student's progress toward attaining the 3.0.

Following review of the student's semester grades and GPA, a determination is made to remove the Hold (student has achieved the required 3.0 GPA) to allow the student to continue or notification of termination from the Office of Graduate Studies is communicated in writing to the student.

A prospective graduate whose GPA falls below the 3.0 will not be issued a diploma until he/she has satisfied the required 3.0 to graduate.

Students on academic probation may continue to hold a graduate assistantship or receive financial aid.

Termination

Graduate students will be terminated from their program of study if they have not satisfied the GPA requirement of 3.0 or other just cause.

In cases of program termination, no further registration in a graduate program at Alcorn State University will be permitted.

A termination letter will be sent to the student informing him/her of this determination. The student is no longer eligible to enroll in Graduate School unless an appeal is submitted and approved to allow reentry.

When review of a student's performance and progress result in a determination that it has been unsatisfactory, the name of the student and recommendation for action--dismissal--must be communicated to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies.

The Office of Graduate Studies performs duties as required by U.S. federal regulations regarding international students not eligible to continue study at Alcorn State University based on termination for failure to maintain good academic standing.

Notification of termination will be sent to the appropriate academic unit.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PROBATIONARY STUDENTS

Repeating grades of "D+" or lower is usually a good idea. However, (a) a student is limited to 6 hours of repeats; (b) a student may repeat a course ONLY ONCE; and (c) the SECOND grade replaces the original grade, even if the second grade is LOWER.

Outstanding grades of Incomplete should not be ignored; students should speak with their adviser about how to handle "I" grades based on the university and Office of Graduate Studies policies. Incompletes will lapse to "F" is not removed within the specified time limit.

A graduate student who fails to remove an incomplete grade will have a hold placed on his/her account after the expiration date (60 days for currently enrolled students and 13 months for non-enrolled students) to have the grade changed to a passing grade. The 'graduate hold' will remain until the student has satisfied the tenets of this policy. "A hold" will prevent a student from registering for the desired semester.

The incomplete grade will remain on the student's transcript until an assigned grade change form is submitted to the Registrar's Office.

Appeals

Graduate students are afforded due process opportunities to resolve academic issues related to dismissal from graduate school, issues with good academic standing, and time limits to degree completion. This procedure is not available to appeal denial of admission to any program or grades. Students can take advantage of two appeal options if terminated from graduate school or expiration of the six-year time limit to degree completion. Students may submit a Level 1 Graduate Studies appeal for the reasons stated above. If the decision is upheld by the appeals committee at the graduate level, students can submit a final appeal to Level 2 Academic Affairs. If the decision of the appeals committee at Level 1 is upheld, students will have exhausted all options available in the due process options. Official appeal forms must be completed and submitted at each level digitally on the Graduate Studies website. This process requires students to upload any supporting documentation to augment the personal statement on the appeal form. Time limits are published to submit an appeal following notification of academic standing. An appeal notification must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies within 10 days following an academic probationary notification. Six-year time limits must be filed within the same 10 days' timeframe after communication with the Graduate Office. Upon review and rendering a decision, the student will be notified of the decision of the appeals committee. If a student's appeal is denied, the student is no longer eligible to attend graduate school.

Change in Program

Students requesting a program change should complete a new application for the respective program. All applications are accessible on the Graduate Studies webpage by clicking the link Apply Online. If previous application documents are on file, are current, and meet required documents for change in program, they will be added to the applicant's new admission packet. The student will receive notification of additional documents needed to complete his/her admission file for the change in program. The application packet will be submitted to the appropriate department for an admission decision. A student's record is updated in Banner if admitted to the new program.

If a student is on academic probation, he or she must improve the cumulative grade point average in the current program to be in good academic standing before applying for a new program. Once the academic probation is satisfied, the application packet will be submitted to the department for an admission decision.

The department will make an admission decision to admit or deny the student. The Office of Graduate Studies will notify the student in writing of the admission decision.

Continuity of Program

Students pursuing a degree at the graduate level must enroll each semester to be considered a continuously enrolled graduate student. No break in enrollment must occur. If a graduate student does not attend the university for a semester or more and later wants to return to pursue his/her program of study, he/she must be readmitted. The student must meet the academic requirements in effect as a readmitted student. Graduate programs reserve the right to change course requirements for the degree as long as sufficient notice has been given.

Course Load

When a student enrolls in courses for credit, a credit load of nine to twelve (9-12) hours is considered full-time for either the fall or spring semester. The maximum load for either Summer I or Summer II session shall be six semester hours credit. Graduate students employed by the university are allowed to enroll in a maximum of 6 semester hours per term. A Remission of Fee form must be completed, signed by the employee's supervisor and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval. Following approval, the Remission of Fee Form must be submitted to the Business Office with an attached course schedule for the respective semester/term. An official copy is also maintained on file in the Office of Graduate Studies with the student's attached course schedule.

Courses at Other Institutions

Students in attendance in graduate school at Alcorn State University who wish to take courses at another accredited institution may do so providing they have obtained permission from the academic advisor, the chair of the appropriate department or the school dean. Any course taken elsewhere will be considered as part of the total credits allowable for that semester at Alcorn State University. Students must earn a B or better on the course work.

Credits Toward a Graduate Degree

A schedule of classes is published each term by the Office of Student Records. Graduate students should plan schedules with their academic advisor prior to registration, based on the courses listed on the Program of Study sheet. Graduate degree credits must be earned through instruction provided by Alcorn State University graduate faculty. Credit hours range from a minimum of 30 semester hours to 60 hours for a master's degree and 39 hours must be earned for the specialist degree.

Typically, courses with the designation of 500 are master's level courses and courses 600 level or higher are usually Specialist level courses. No undergraduate level courses are approved for credit at the graduate level. Students planning to take undergraduate courses must transition to be admitted through Undergraduate Admissions.

Degree Plan

The graduate go.alcorn.edu is the official platform for monitoring of a student's curriculum. Advisers are responsible for assigning this plan within the student's first semester of enrollment. Newly admitted students can self-assign their degree plan initially but are advised to check with their advisor to ensure the correct plan is assigned. If the incorrect degree plan is assigned, the adviser must Unassign and Assign the correct degree plan. Ongoing monitoring by the student and adviser will ensure continuity in progression towards degree completion.

It is the responsibility of the adviser to request appropriate transfer courses in go.alcorn that will be reviewed for approval according to the hierarchy levels.

Distance Learning

All students who register for an online course (main campus, Natchez and Vicksburg campuses) must be the same student who participates in and completes the course or program. Some online instruction may require students to come to campus periodically. Students should check with the online instructor to be sure of the attendance and participation schedule. The identification of students participating in class or coursework is verified, at the discretion of the institution, by such methods as an assigned secure login. This login is also used to access instructional resources. Students who register for distance learning courses must adhere to the attendance policy as set forth by the university.

Resources are provided online and face-to-face to ensure students have many opportunities to acquire technical support for using various distance learning tools and technologies. Students are trained, as well as given technical assistance, to ascertain the technological expertise needed to support their learning efforts by utilizing academic technology staff, the Help Desk and online resources in order to be successful in completing their distance education courses. Special technical assistance sessions are provided to students who require additional time to learn how to use Blackboard and Elluminate for the distance learning environment.

International Students, Distance, Online & Hybrid Course Policy

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued important regulations particularly as to international students with F-1 visa status and their participation in registered classes. Alcorn must ensure compliance with the federal requirements, as well as applicable IHL and university policies (See the NAFSA and CFR below). The Provost of the Office for Academic Affairs provides best practices and guidelines to assist valued faculty in the instruction and advising of international students with respect to (i) enrolling/registering in the correct course load

requirements; (ii) maintaining international student's good-standing visa status; (iii) ensuring sufficient and adequate "physical presence" in the classroom; and, (v) facilitating timely progress towards degree completion.

3.20.7 Distance education limits (NAFSA manual)

No more than the equivalent of one on-line/distance education class or 3 credits per session may count towards the "full course of study" requirement, if the course "does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class." If the student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be counted toward the full course of study requirement.

8 C.F.R. § 214.2(j)(6)(i)(G)

For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted if taken on-Line or through distance education in a course that does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward classroom hours or credit.

Distance Learning/On-Line Courses

A distance learning or on-line course is one that does not require a/n (international) student's physical presence for classes, exams and/or other purposes integral to course completion. At Alcorn, International students may take online classes, but only a maximum of three-credit hours of these may apply to the international student's full-time status each semester. This means only one 3 credit online course per semester may count towards the student's full-time status. Therefore, undergraduate students who are enrolled in twelve credits must take nine of those credits in regular classroom-taught classes and graduate students who are enrolled in nine credits must take six of those credits in traditional classroom-based classes. Hybrid courses are exempt from this classification.

Hybrid Courses

A hybrid course is one that blends online and traditional instruction and requires international students to maintain "physical presence in the classroom," at least partially. At Alcorn, instructors may evidence that international students are meeting the "physical presence" threshold by (I) requiring in-class attendance (a) in the first and last classroom sessions, (b) during classroom examinations, and/or (c) in other specifically-designated classroom sessions, such as a major projects or presentations; or (II) physically monitoring or assigning an approved Alcorn employee to proctor the hybrid class while international students are in the classroom. Hybrid classes where students have the option to either participate online or in-class will be considered 100% online classes if students chose not to be physically present in the classroom.

Summary

- F-1 students are required to take the minimum credit requirements of full-time hours each semester, except in the final semester.
- An international student's lawful F-1 status will be terminated if s/he:
 - *maintains a course load that falls below 12 undergraduate or 9 graduate credit hours;
 - *fails to register for all class sessions during the first registration period;
 - *fail to attend a registered class for which the student receives a UW grade; or,
 - *withdraws from a semester.

- Grades which count towards satisfying the full-time enrollment requirement are A, B, C, D, F, P (Pass), and I(Incomplete* so long as completed within the Catalog-specified limitation period).
- Grades which do not count towards satisfying the "full-time enrollment requirement" are W, UW, audit, and an incomplete (I) grade which becomes an F.
- Failure to comply with the regulation [8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)] violates a student's F-1 status.

Major Take-Away: Registration and Completion is Key

International students must not only pay full-time tuition & fees and enroll in a full course of study at the beginning of each semester, but must also complete a full course of study at the end of each semester.

Alcorn State University offers distance-, on-line-, and hybrid-mediated courses to overcome time and geographical constraints while meeting the access, convenience, flexibility, and time demands of our ever-diversifying community of evening, weekend, working, (non)traditional, digitally-oriented, rural, first-generation, disadvantaged, and international students.

Evaluating and Awarding Academic Credit

Course credits Transcribed outside the university follow a prescribed process for reviewing before academic credit is awarded. Up to six semester hours of graduate courses may be taken at other institutions and may be transferred with the approval of the academic advisor to Alcorn State University. The grades must be A or B to be accepted for the transfer. The methods for assigning credit hours for the type of course offerings enrolled at other institutions is determined based on semester and contact hours. A credit hour represents approximately three hours of work per week. Application for transfer must be made by the student by completing the Transfer of Course Form which is approved by the advisor and chair of the department. This request is submitted to the Graduate School Administrator for approval before they are credited to the student's official transcript. The advisor and graduate studies administrator ensure academic quality of course credits are consistent with the university's procedures in awarding academic credits by evaluating the course description(s). The course content must mirror the syllabus of the ASU course and will be evaluated for its credit hours and content before accepting as graduate transfer credits. Academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements.

Grade Point Average

Grade point averages are used to evaluate the success of a student during the entirety of his/her degree program. A graduate student must maintain a minimum average of 'B' (3.0) while enrolled at Alcorn State University. Graduation guidelines also specify that a student cannot graduate with less than a 3.0 GPA. Maintaining a high GPA is desirable in the event a student's performance slips in a given semester.

Grading System

Credits are expressed in terms of semester hours with alphabetical grades and numerical grade-points to indicate the quality of the work. These grades cover the work of the entire semester and are based upon the average of daily work, the final examination, and other written work. Characterization of letter grades by plus and minus signs is not authorized.

A	Excellent	4 grade-points per semester hour
B	Good	3 grade-points per semester hour
C	Average	2 grade-points per semester hour
D	Poor but passing	1 grade-point per semester hour
F	Failure	0 grade-points per semester hour
I	Incomplete (unfinished work)	
*WP	Withdrawal while passing	
*WF	Withdrawal while failing	

P Pass (Semester hours are awarded, but no quality points are given)

*If the student is passing when the withdrawal occurs, such action will not affect his/her grade point average; if he/she is failing, the same semester hours involved will be considered his/her grade point average, i.e., will cause the grade point average to be lowered.

The term "Incomplete" is used when a student is absent from examination because of sickness, emergency absence due to death in the family, or away from campus a great deal for justifiable reasons. Otherwise, the instructor is required to assign for each student a definite grade based upon the work actually accomplished, irrespective of the circumstances that may have contributed to the results achieved.

A student whose work has been marked "Incomplete" must remove the mark within 60 days after the beginning date of the student's next enrollment in residence. An incomplete grade must be removed within 13 months after the grade is recorded even if the student fails to enroll.

If the "Incomplete" is not removed within this period, the student will receive a grade of "F." A grade other than an incomplete may be changed only if an error of calculation or recording as verified by the official roll book. The department chairperson, school dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs must approve all changes of grades.

Change of Grade Appeal:

A grade other than an incomplete may be changed only if there is an error of calculation or recording as verified by the official roll/grade book. The professor of the course submits the grade change form to the department chair. The department chair, Dean, and the Provost/Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs approve all change of grades. Course grades may be appealed by submitting the appeal in writing prior to the beginning of the next scheduled term. Following the steps of the Grievance Procedure is required.

Graduate Advising

All graduate students pursuing a degree are assigned an advisor within the area of endorsement. Each student must meet with his/her academic advisor upon initial admission and at least once a semester thereafter, to discuss his/her program. The student is ultimately responsible for his/her program; however, meeting with an advisor will help to avoid errors in program planning. If no advisor has been assigned, the chairperson or designee will be responsible for the advising. Academic advisement is encouraged for all students, especially prior to registration. Graduate students should consult with their advisor on a regular basis to ensure ongoing monitoring of academic progress, to review the program of study sheet for guidance on a continuous basis. The Graduate Studies Administrator serves as the advisor for non-degree students.

Graduate Curriculum

The master's degree programs and specialist degree prepare students for advanced work in their respective programs of interest. The composition of graduate programs includes learning content that enhances students' knowledge of their discipline and requires them to engage in meaningful academic research. Coursework is current and engaging and gives students lots of experiences in reading discipline-specific content. The broad range of activities and research experiences provide exposure to numerous literature resources. All degree programs require at least one research course to engage students in the various components of academic inquiry.

The average curriculum is a two-year program. All graduate programs include core, required, and elective courses.

Incomplete Grades

A graduate student who fails to remove an incomplete grade will have a hold placed on his/her account after the expiration date (60 days for currently enrolled students and 13 months for non-enrolled students) to have the grade changed to a passing grade. The 'graduate hold' will remain until the student has satisfied the tenets of this policy. "A hold" will prevent a student from registering for the desired semester.

The incomplete grade will remain on the student's transcript until an assigned grade change form is submitted to the Registrar's Office.

The Office of Graduate Studies has adopted the following policy guidelines concerning the awarding of a grade of *Incomplete* in a graduate level course. Students must make every effort to clear all *incomplete* grades within the specified timelines.

The term 'incomplete' is used when a student does not complete class assignments as a result of being absent from examination because of sickness, emergency absence due to death in the family, or away from campus a great deal for justifiable reasons, thus giving the instructor no other alternative but to issue the student an 'incomplete' grade. Assignment of an incomplete grade is at the discretion of the course instructor. Students should not request an incomplete grade unless they are unable to complete the work because of sudden illness, personal emergency, or other good cause. An incomplete grade is not to be regarded as the solution to poor performance in a course.

ENROLLED STUDENTS - A student whose work has been marked "Incomplete" must remove the mark within 60 days after the beginning date of the student's next enrollment in residence.

NON-ENROLLED STUDENTS - An incomplete grade must be removed within 13 months after the grade is recorded even if the student fails to enroll.

If the "Incomplete" is not removed within this period, the student will receive a grade of "F." It is the student's responsibility to communicate with his/her professor to get an "I" removed by the established timeline. Failure to act on the student's part will result in the failure grade being posted to the student's transcript. After the student has satisfied the incomplete work in question, the instructor must complete a "Change in Grade Form" following approval by Academic Affairs and submit it to the Registrar's Office before expiration of the 60 days (enrolled students) and or 13 months (non-enrolled students).

A grade other than an incomplete may be changed only if an error of calculation or recording as verified by the official roll book. The department chairperson, school dean, and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs must approve all changes of grades.

A graduate student who fails to follow the required process to remove an incomplete grade will have a hold placed on his/her account after the expiration date (60 days for currently enrolled students and 13 months for non-enrolled students) to have the grade changed to a passing grade. This 'graduate hold' will remain until the student has satisfied the tenets of this policy. "A hold" will prevent a student from registering for the desired semester.

The 'Incomplete' grade will remain on the student's transcript until an assigned grade change form is submitted to the Registrar's Office within the required time period.

Institutional Credits for Graduate Degree

The majority of course credits in a degree program must be earned at Alcorn State University. Students, with the approval of his/her advisor, may be allowed to enroll in courses at another institution to fulfill credit hours for the degree program. In a 33 hours program, a student must earn at least 27 hours in residence. All Master's degree programs require that the majority of credits toward the degree are earned through instruction offered at Alcorn State University. A maximum of six graduate credit hours with a grade of 'B' or higher may be transferred from another accredited institution of higher learning. Transfer of credit requests are reviewed by the graduate office designated personnel for approval. The request must include the appropriate approval form, copy of the official transcript documenting the course and university, and course descriptions from both schools.

Plagiarism

Honesty requires that any ideas or materials taken from another for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas thus taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs, to entire articles copied from books, periodicals,

speeches, or the writings of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgement also is considered **plagiarism**. **Any student who fails to give credit for ideas or materials that he takes from another is guilty of plagiarism.**

Post-Baccalaureate Program Rigor

Alcorn State University Office of Graduate Studies has a long history of providing quality degree programs for the adult learner on campus, off campus and through distance learning. These program offerings are progressively more advanced in academic content than programs at the undergraduate level. The Office of Graduate Studies is responsible for oversight of post-baccalaureate degree programs and has been instrumental in establishing best practices at the academic level which positively impact the learning path of its students. All graduate degree programs are designed to provide advanced training in specified fields of study. The specific objectives are:

1. To provide a well-developed and coordinated graduate program for qualified students at the Master's degree level;
2. To provide opportunities to increase and improve research capabilities through training and research experiences;
3. To develop competencies in graduate students that are essential to the successful performance of quality services in their chosen profession;
4. To upgrade the professional certification of elementary, secondary, and community/junior college teachers, and related workers; and
5. To encourage and promote scholarship and scholarly research among the students and faculty members in the university community

There are three components consistent in all graduate coursework: Writing, Research and Rigor. The ability to write is critical at the graduate level and specific safeguards are in place in each academic unit to ensure students develop good writing skills. Research is also an important component of all graduate programs to help students develop and polish best practices in research techniques and methodology. Rigor in graduate courses provide students with opportunities to investigate content with a greater depth than at the baccalaureate level and to use critical reading and higher order cognitive skills in their pursuit of knowledge of the literature in their specific disciplines. This rigor is also evident in the requirements for continuing in good standing, completing comprehensive examinations, and thesis. In order to continue in good standing academically, students must main.

Thus, the central purpose of the Graduate School is to provide advanced training of men and women, and the promotion of research that will contribute to knowledge in an atmosphere of freedom and inquiry. Students in graduate school may work toward the Master of Science in Education, Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Science in Agriculture, Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Biology, Master of Science in Biotechnology, Master of Science in Computer and Information Science, Master of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Workforce Education Leadership, and the Education Specialist degree in Elementary Education.

Considering advanced level course requirements in specific disciplines, learning experiences that require higher order cognitive skills, comprehensive culminating activities, extensive reading assignments, and independent learning, graduate programs at Alcorn State University are demonstrably more advanced than undergraduate programs.

Program Coordination

Student learning is essential to the mission of the Graduate School and Alcorn State University in educational degree attainment. The oversight of educational programs is the direct responsibility of the academic unit in coordinating all curricular components. Appropriate content and currency must be maintained by the department chair, faculty and department curriculum committee. The review of curriculum is an ongoing process and is reviewed annually. The coordination of curricular components must be conducted by qualified faculty in the appropriate curricular content and degree level. Each discipline is chaired by an appointed coordinator to orchestrate degree and endorsement requirements, admissions, advisement, and degree completion. Quality of educational programs is a main focus of course offerings.

Program Length

Master degree programs in the Graduate School require a minimum length of 30 semester credits as core requirements for degree completion. Based on the degree, some programs range from 33 to 60 semester hours. Higher degrees, such as the Education Specialist in Elementary Education, requires more hours than the minimum Core Requirement. Standard practices only allow the pursuit of one degree at a time and does not permit double-counting of credit hours to earn a second master's. No dual degree offerings are available in the Graduate School. Program length is established by each academic unit and monitored by each department through its annual curriculum review. The Graduate School also monitors academic programs and program length.

Statute of Limitations: Maximum Time Limit to Complete Degree

All requirements for the Master degree or Specialist degree, including transfer credits, must be completed within six years from the beginning of the first term in which credit was earned toward the degree. Students approaching or exceeding this timeline may submit a request for an exception consideration to the Graduate Studies Administrator. Students whose time limit to degree completion is excessive are in jeopardy of consideration of a time extension.

Statute of Limitations Time Limit Extensions

Extenuating circumstances may arise to prevent a graduate student from completing his/her program of study within the six-year time limit. If this occurs, a student may petition the Graduate Studies Administrator to consider granting an exception. Sufficient evidence or reasons must be communicated in this request outlining the reason the program of study was not completed within the specified time limit. The Graduate Studies Administrator will request a review of the student's academic record and a recommendation. This information sharing will be considered by the Graduate Studies Administrator before making a final decision. Consideration will be given whether courses previously taken will count toward the fulfillment of the degree requirements. Approval of an appeal is not an automatic affirmative decision. If an exception is granted, the extension is granted for a period of one year only. If the appeal is granted, a detailed action plan is crafted to specify conditions that must be met. Readmission is required when a student has exceeded the six-year time limit and given approval to reenter graduate school.

Student Financial Obligation

Students are expected to pay, in full, all costs for a given term before or during the time of registration. Any students or former students who are indebted to the university may not register at the university, graduate from the university nor will their transcript be released until the debt is paid.

Substitution of Courses

Students are required to complete all courses published on their Degree Plan to meet degree requirements. On occasion, a required course may not be offered to complete the original course requirements. Therefore, a course substitution may be required to complete the coursework. Substitutions are exceptions to the degree requirements and should only be used in extraordinary circumstances. Advisors should adhere to the Substitution Policy as an alternative means of meeting a program requirement in which the course(s) must have similar objectives and content as the original course. The acceptable grade must be an A or B to approve a substitution. A maximum of nine credits hours are allowed for substitutions for 30-36 hour programs and a maximum of 12 hours for degree programs exceeding 36 credit hours. The total hours approved may not exceed the required limits for combined transfer and substitution courses.

Transcripts

Students are required to submit an official copy of their transcript(s) in their application for admission and upon application of degree for graduation. Students are allowed one free transcript at the posting of the student's degree following graduation which is included in tuition.

Transcripts will not be released to a student who has a financial debt to Alcorn State University.

Transfer of Credit

Regardless of the degree option selected by the student, a minimum of 27 semester hours for the master's degree and 33 semester hours for the specialist degree must be earned in residence at Alcorn State University.

The unconditionally admitted student is allowed to transfer a maximum of six semester hours of graduate credit from an accredited institution in which grades of 'B' or better are earned. These courses must have been taken at an accredited graduate degree-granting institution. All credits to be transferred should be approved by the student's academic advisor, department chairperson and the administrator of the Office of Graduate Studies. Official transcripts of transfer credits must be on file at the university prior to acceptance of the transfer credits for approval. The student's advisor must submit the appropriate Transfer of Credits for and official transcript from the transfer university to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval. Following, the approved courses will be posted to the student's transcript.

Courses are not allowable for transfer to Alcorn to replace deficient grades received in the student's program of study.

Graduate nursing students are allowed to transfer a maximum of 12 semester hours of graduate credit in which grades of 'B' or better are earned. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis.