

Online Academic Policies

Academics

The information, Online academic policies, and procedures outlined below are designed to guide USciences Online students during their studies. They do not constitute a binding contract and may be changed at any time. For assistance with these policies and procedures, speak with your Student Success Coach or Director of Academics.

Please note that some academic programs have additional requirements that are delineated in the *University Catalog*.

Catalog Year for Degree Requirements

Catalog Year is a term that refers to a set of degree requirements as they apply to individual students in their progress toward earning a degree from USciences. Catalog Year starts with the summer term of each academic year. For example, the 2019 Catalog Year starts with the 2019 summer semester (19/SU). For USciences Online courses, each semester contains two terms (A&B).

Generally, students are responsible for the degree requirements in force for their major at the time when the student initially enrolls as a first-year (U1) student. Catalog Year is used by the Degree Audit system to evaluate a student's progress toward meeting the degree requirements that apply to them in their current major. Certain circumstances listed below have special rules governing Catalog Year.

- **Transfer Students**—Catalog Year for Undergraduate Online transfer students will be backdated to the Catalog Year when they would have started attending the University as a first-year student. Students entering with a prior bachelor's degree are considered to have met the requirements of General Education and do not have to satisfy the specific requirements of General Education.
- **Change of Major**—If a student changes his/her major, his/her Catalog Year will remain the same as his/her original entering year.
- **Leave of Absence**—Students who return from an official Leave of Absence retain their original Catalog Year, which is based on their original entrance to USciences.
- **Readmitted Students**—Students who are readmitted after having been separated from the University should have the same Catalog Year as a normally progressing student in the Class Level into which the student is readmitted. This is the same as a transfer student.
- **Readmitted Students (Academic Fresh Start)**—Students who are readmitted under the Academic Fresh Start program are treated as new first-year admissions. They will have the Catalog Year appropriate for a

first-year (U1) student entering USciences in the semester in which they reenter the University.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy

Access to Education Records

Annual Notice to Students

University of the Sciences fully complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended. This law is sometimes referred to as the Buckley Amendment.

The act grants students specific rights and protections with regard to their education records. It governs access to, release of, and corrections to the records kept by the University on current and former students. These rights do not extend to individuals who never actually attend the University.

Students wishing to review or correct their education records should submit a written request to the Registrar indicating which records they wish to review or what corrections they believe are necessary. If the records in question are not in the control of the Registrar, the request will be forwarded to the appropriate University official. While prompt attention is given to all such requests, the University reserves the right to respond no later than 45 days after receiving a request.

Education records are available to University officials and agents with legitimate educational interest. Such interest exists when access to the records is necessary for the official or agent to perform his/her professional duties. An agent may include a person or company (including contractors and consultants) with whom the University has contracted to provide a service that the University would otherwise perform and may include a communication and data service, an attorney, an auditor, a collection agent, etc. This also may include officials at other educational institutions with which USciences has a partnership agreement for student enrollment. Personally identifiable information from students' education records is only released, other than to University officials and agents, upon a specific written and dated request from the student or as provided for by federal or state law.

As of January 3, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's FERPA regulations expand the circumstances under which a student's education records and personally identifiable information (private information) contained in such records—including Social Security number, grades, or other private information—may be accessed without the student's consent. First, the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local education authorities ("Federal and State Authorities") may

allow access to a student's records and private information without the student's consent to any third party designated by a Federal or State Authority to evaluate a federal- or state-supported education program. The evaluation may relate to any program that is "principally engaged in the provision of education," such as early childhood education and job training, as well as any program that is administered by an education agency or institution. Second, Federal and State Authorities may allow access to a student's education records and private information without the student's consent to researchers performing certain types of studies, in certain cases even when the University objects to or does not request such research. Federal and State Authorities must obtain certain use-restriction and data security promises from the entities that they authorize to receive a student's personally identifiable information, but the Authorities need not maintain direct control over such entities. In addition, in connection with Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, State Authorities may collect, compile, permanently retain, and share without the student's consent private information from education records, and they may track a student's participation in education and other programs by linking such private information to other personal information about the student that they obtain from other federal or state data sources, including workforce development, unemployment insurance, child welfare, juvenile justice, military service, and migrant student records systems.

The following information related to a student is considered "Directory Information" and under FERPA, the University may release the following without a student's prior consent: the student's name, USciences ID number, address, e-mail address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, enrollment status, degrees and awards received, photograph, class level, undergraduate/graduate status.

The University reserves the right to disclose directory information to anyone inquiring without the student's written consent and will limit information made public to these categories. Students can request that any or all such information not be released by informing the Registrar's Office, in writing before the end of drop/add each semester.

A copy of the University's policy in compliance with FERPA can be obtained upon request from the Registrar's Office. All questions regarding FERPA should be directed to the Registrar. Information is also available from, and students have a right to file a complaint regarding compliance with, the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920.

Taking and Completing Courses

Attendance Regulations

There are certain kinds of information and certain intangible values gained by attendance/participation in classes that are not capable of being measured by examinations and which a student will lack as a result of excessive absence. Accordingly, attendance in all classes is strongly encouraged. University-wide attendance regulations for Online students are listed below; additional requirements for attendance are determined by course instructors and will be included in the course syllabus.

All Online students are required to academically participate in their course no later than 11:59 PM EST on the 7th calendar day of class within the session. Academic participation will be determined by completion of the required activities as assigned by your professor in the course. Those students who do not demonstrate any academic participation may be administratively dropped from their course(s) by the Office of the Registrar, with a full reversal of tuition and fees. Students who are dropped from course(s) due to lack of participation will not be eligible to receive disbursements of federal financial aid.

Absence Due to Religious Observations

The University of the Sciences appreciates the religious and spiritual diversity of our campus community, and recognizes that upon specific occasions, reasonable efforts should be made to accommodate the religious observances of faculty, students, and staff.

University policy grants students excused absences from class(es) for observance of religious holy days, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship for the instructor. Faculty are asked to be responsive to requests when students contact them IN ADVANCE to request such an excused absence. Students are responsible for completing assignments and assessments due during their absence.

Once a student has registered for a class, the student is expected to examine the course syllabus for potential conflicts with holy days and to notify the instructor (by the end of the first week of classes for assignments and assessments during the 8 weeks of instruction and by the end of the fourth week of instruction for final exams) of any conflicts that may require an absence (including any required additional preparation/travel time). The student is also expected to remind the faculty member in advance of the missed class(es) or assessments, and to make arrangements in advance (with the faculty member) to make up any missed assignments or assessments within a reasonable amount of time.

Faculty should keep in mind that religion is a deeply personal and private matter and should make every attempt to respect the privacy of the student when making accommodations.

If a student and course instructor cannot agree on an accommodation, the student may bring the matter to the Director of Academics for a decision prior to the missed class.

Absence from and Makeup of Examinations

- Each instructor must include his/her makeup examination policy in his/her course syllabus. It is the discretion of the instructor to decide which makeup reasons are valid and when the makeup examination or assessment will take place.
- Post-semester makeup examination policy: As during final examinations, students with more than 3 post-semester makeup examinations scheduled within a 24-hour time period who desire a different time and date for one or more than one of the makeup examinations must contact the faculty administering the examination(s) at least one week prior to the makeup examination date to request an alternative date and time.
- Incomplete grades must still be finalized within 21 calendar days of the end of the term.

Rules Governing Examinations and Graded Assessments

Rules governing the administration of examinations and graded assessments, as well as policies related thereto, are determined by course instructors and will be included in the course syllabus. For the purposes of this policy the term "graded assessment" includes examinations and other activities where students are assessed.

- **Course Materials:**

Graded assessments that are not returned to students will be available from the instructor, course coordinator, or Director of Academics for student review for 45 calendar days following the final date for that course.

Academic Standards and Academic Progress

Definition of Full-time Status for Academic Purposes

Full-time status for undergraduate students for academic purposes is defined as 12 or more credits of registered coursework at the end of the drop/add period.

Full-time Master's students are expected to complete all the requirements for their degree in two academic years. All students pursuing Master's degrees must complete their degree requirements within a five-year time period.

Full-time Enrollment: USciences Online MS and Graduate Certificates students, the minimum credit load for full-time status is 6 graduate credit hours per semester (fall, spring, or summer). Students in these programs who enroll in at least 3 semester hours of graduate study are considered to be half-time students.

General Information

The information in this section presents only *university-wide* academic standards.

Students in graduate degree programs (MS, MBA, MPH, PhD) and those in graduate level-certificate programs should consult with their Program Director for any information relevant to their discipline or the profession.

It is also important to note that many major programs have specific academic standards for academic standing, progression, graduation, etc. Please refer to the individual program sections of the *University Catalog* (catalog.usciences.edu) for information related to these standards.

Student Comments and Complaints

See Student Grievance Policy included with Orientation documents.

Grade Change Policy

Course grade changes shall only be made by the instructor of record in the student information system currently employed by the University for up to two months after the end of the term in which the student was registered for the course. Changes in course grades originally assigned by an instructor who is no longer an employee of the University may be made by the Program Director who has responsibility for teaching the course for up to two months after the end of the term in which the student was registered for the course. After two months, all grade changes must be approved by the instructor of record (if still employed by the University), and the Director of Academics.

Students requesting changes in course grades must present to the instructor of record (or to the Program Director if the instructor of record is no longer employed by the University) a copy of the course syllabus or other documents describing how final grades are determined, copies of all available graded

materials, and a record of all communications between the student and the instructor regarding the course grade.

Transcripts

Student transcripts are maintained by the Registrar's Office and are covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended. Students may request that an official copy of their transcript be sent to a third party (e.g., another college/university or an employer); an unofficial copy may be requested for the student's personal use. An official transcript carries an authorized signature as well as the seal of University of the Sciences.

All requests for transcripts must be made in writing and signed by the student. There is a charge for each official transcript (\$6 as of 2019), which is subject to change. Unofficial transcripts are free to students. University of the Sciences does not release transcripts unless tuition, fees, and other obligations due the University have been satisfied. More information regarding transcript requests is available on the University website at <https://www.usciences.edu/academics/academic-resources/registrar/transcripts-enrollment-verification.html>

When a course is repeated/replaced, both courses will appear on the transcript. Replaced Courses are marked with the asterisk (*) symbol indicating the higher of the two grades has been used in the calculation of the GPA . Repeated Courses are marked with a pound or hashtag (#) symbol indicating all grades are included in the calculation of the GPA.

Students may view their official course grades and GPA information for each term online through WebAdvisor after faculty members have submitted grades for the term. Grades are not mailed to students.

Requirements for Graduation

To fulfill its obligation to the precepts of higher education, University of the Sciences has established standards of achievement that must be met before any student is recommended for graduation by the faculty. Every person upon whom a degree shall be conferred must have successfully completed the assigned curriculum and must have met the specific graduation requirements pertaining to the degree to be conferred.

A student must complete all graduation requirements by:

- The end of the fall B, spring B, or summer B term, or
- The 1st day of the month of July or November.

Any student not meeting these deadlines will be delayed until the next graduation date.

To qualify for an earned degree, students must:

- Fulfill all of the requirements of the respective curriculum, including achieving at least the minimum academic requirements and passing all proficiencies required by the University and the major, as outlined in this Catalog and in the policies of the individual academic programs.
- Be in good academic standing, having satisfied all academic and program requirements, and be free of all conduct holds at the conclusion of the final semester of enrollment.
- File a Petition for Graduation at the start of the final semester of matriculation. To participate in the May Commencement Ceremony, the Petition for Graduation must be submitted by the end of the drop/add period of the spring semester, term A.

Only those students who have fulfilled all requirements for graduation by the end of the spring semester (term A or B) will be permitted to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Students with financial and/or conduct holds will not receive a diploma and will not be able to obtain a copy of their transcript until the hold(s) is/are released. If a financial or conduct hold is in place, the University will not respond to requests for verification of graduation status on the graduate's behalf.

Separation from the University

Dropped from the Rolls

Students will be dropped from the rolls if they:

- Complete any three semesters (six terms), whether full-time or part-time, with an academic record resulting in academic probation; or
- Fail the same course twice. This regulation applies whether the course is taken in regular sessions or in summer school, whether at the University or at another institution.

Students who do not meet the criteria for progression in their curriculum may be subject to being dropped from the rolls (refer to section on Academic Standards and Academic Progress).

Students who are dropped from programs for exceeding program probations will be dropped from the University rolls if they are not admitted to a program by the end of the drop/add period following the term they were dropped from their program.

The Director of Academics will officially notify the student of this action and notify pertinent University offices of the change in status. A student who is dropped from the rolls is not eligible to attend any courses at the University. (Refer to sections on Readmission to the University and Fresh Start Readmission for readmission policies.)

Leave of Absence

Short-Term Leave of Absence Policy (No more than 10 business days)

In the event of an immediate and significant health or family emergency* a student may request from his/her Director of Academics, a Short-Term Leave of Absence (Short term LOA). A Short-Term Leave of Absence is intended to provide the student an opportunity to address the issue and then resume his/her academic course of study. If the student cannot resume his/her studies after 10 business days, the student may apply for a LOA for a longer period of time.

For any impact on fixed tuition rates, please reference the tuition policy.

*Examples of a *significant health or family emergency* include accident, injury, or illness requiring hospitalization; or health and/or safety concern (i.e., risk to self or to others), or death of a parent, sibling, or significant other. A Short-Term LOA does not negate or preclude the administration of the conduct policy or the administrative withdrawal policy.

To request a Short-Term LOA, the student should first contact his/her Director of Academics. The student may be asked to provide documentation to verify the circumstances. Upon approval of a Short-Term LOA, the Director of Academics will notify the applicable Program Director, course instructors, Student Success Coach, and Student Affairs. Upon return to the academic program, the student is responsible for working with the instructors to complete the course requirements as specified in the course syllabus.

Personal Leave of Absence and Medical Leave of Absence

There are two additional types of leaves of absence, a Personal Leave of Absence and a Medical Leave of Absence.

A leave of absence affords students the opportunity to remain in academic standing with their program and not have to reapply for admission. A leave of absence form must be requested from the Student Success Coach, completed and submitted to the student's Director of Academics and Student Success Coach.

The leave of absence may have financial aid implications and the student should meet with Financial Aid prior to the leave of absence and at the time they return from the leave. To be in compliance with Title IV Financial Aid Programs,

USciences reports the student as "Withdrawn" from USciences to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) on the date the leave begins.

Reasons a student may be granted a personal leave of absence include but are not limited to personal or financial problems or military service. To be considered for a personal LOA, the student must:

- Submit a written request for the leave to his/her Director of Academics and provide documentation to verify the circumstances cited in the request for the leave.
- Speak with his/her Director of Academics, or designee, to review the request, including the precipitating circumstances and submitted documentation.

A medical leave of absence may be requested when a student's medical or psychological condition significantly impairs his/her ability to function successfully or safely in the academic environment. Requests for a medical leave of absence are coordinated through the Dean of Students' office.

To be considered for a medical leave of absence, the student must take the following steps:

- Have a major mental or physical health issue that cannot be mitigated in a short period of time, such as an incident involving a major accident, injury, or significant illness requiring hospitalization or extended treatment.
- Meet with the Dean of Students or his/her designee to review the precipitating health concerns.
- Provide documentation from a licensed health professional. The documentation must be typed and submitted on official letterhead and must include the name, address, office telephone number, license number, and signature of the health professional. The documentation should specify the length of time needed for the leave and the reason for the leave.

The Office of the Dean of Students will make the final determination if a personal or medical leave of absence will be granted and will notify the student in writing.

Upon approval of a personal or medical leave of absence, the Director of Academics will notify the Program Director, course instructors, Student Success Coach, Student Affairs, Financial Aid and other pertinent USciences offices.

The Director of Academics will also determine the status of the student's current coursework and whether or not the student should be withdrawn from courses. A grade of "W" may be assigned by the Director of Academics to all registered coursework based on the effective date for the personal or medical leave of absence. The instructor for each course will have 10 working days from receipt of notice to reassign a course grade if appropriate.

If a medical leave of absence is granted, the Dean of Students will monitor the treatment with the student and licensed health professional. The Dean of Students may require additional documentation including medical evaluation, treatment plans, and evidence of compliance with treatment.

To return from a medical leave of absence, the student must submit medical documentation to the Dean of Students from a licensed health professional regarding his/her health status and ability to return to his/her studies. After reviewing the medical documentation, the Dean of Students will notify the Director of Academics whether the student is permitted to return to resume his/her academic course of study.

To return from a personal or medical leave of absence, the student must communicate with his/her Director of Academics by the return date specified on the leave of absence form. The Director of Academics will then notify the pertinent USciences offices that the student has been placed on "active" status. If the student does not return by the return date specified on the leave of absence, the student will be administratively withdrawn from USciences by the student's Director of Academics.

Bereavement Policy

The University recognizes that students may suffer greatly from the loss of a loved one. Students suffering from bereavement should refer to the policies on Short-Term Leave of Absence, Leave of Absences, and Course Withdrawal for information on means to address this issue.

Advised to Withdraw

A student may be advised to withdraw from the University either on the grounds of conduct or academic standing.

Voluntary Withdrawals from the University

An official withdrawal from the University must be authorized by the Director of Academics responsible for the student's degree program. A student will be officially withdrawn from the University once the student contacts the office of the Director of Academics responsible for the student's degree program and provides notification of intent to withdraw either verbally or in writing. This notification must include the student's name, current address, phone number, and student identification number or other acceptable information that establishes the identity of the student. The date the student notifies the Director of Academics of his/her withdrawal from the University will be the official effective date of withdrawal. If a student cannot directly contact the Director of Academics due to illness, accident, grievous personal loss, or other such circumstances beyond the student's control, another individual, acting on the student's behalf, can provide the notice of intent to withdraw. Once the Director of Academics verifies that the individual is authorized to act on the student's behalf, the date of withdrawal is effective as of the date of the initial notification.

A student who contacts the Director of Academics and only requests information on aspects of the withdrawal process, such as the potential consequences of the withdrawal, would not be considered to be withdrawn. However, if the student indicates that he/she is requesting this information because he/she will cease to attend USciences, the student would be considered to have provided official notification of his/her withdrawal.

The Director of Academics may request that the student submit the withdrawal request in writing or have an interview with the Director of Academics, but this is strictly voluntary and not required for withdrawal. The student must not attend any academic function or classes after notifying the Director of Academics that he/she is withdrawing from the University. The Director of Academics will notify the student and the pertinent University offices of the withdrawal.

When a withdrawal from the University is authorized by the Director of Academics, a "W" grade will be assigned for all courses in which the student is currently registered, unless the student withdraws during the drop/add period or after the conclusion of a term. The instructor for each course will be notified by the Director of Academics of the student's withdrawal and will have 10 working days from receipt of notice to reassign a course grade.

Administrative Withdrawal

A student may be withdrawn from the University for major violations of University policy or for nonattendance. A typical reason for an administrative withdrawal includes noncompliance with University policy (e.g., nonpayment of debt or exceeding program time limits).

If a student who has ceased to attend the University did not begin the voluntary withdrawal process by contacting the Director of Academics responsible for the student's degree program, the Director of Academics will administratively withdraw the student. The date that the Director of Academics learns of the student's nonattendance will be the official effective date of withdrawal.

An administrative unit may initiate the administrative withdrawal action, but authority to withdraw a student for administrative reasons rests with the student's Director of Academics. The student will be informed in writing by the Director of Academics of the action to withdraw and the criteria for readmission. The Director of Academics will also notify pertinent University offices.

Admission to an Academic Program after being Dropped from a Program

There is no guarantee of admission to a particular program after a student has been dropped from his/her academic program(s) based on program academic standards. The faculty reserves the right to readmit a student to his/her previous program or to admit a student to a different program based on individual program policies, and in this matter the faculty shall be the sole judge. Students should

review the academic standards of specific programs and any program-specific application deadlines found in the University Catalog.

Readmission to the University

There is no guarantee of readmission following a separation from the University. The faculty reserves the right to readmit a student, and in this matter the faculty shall be the sole judge.

Students who voluntarily withdrew from the University or were dropped from the rolls of the University may file an application for consideration of readmission with the Online Director of Academics of the program in which they seek to re-enroll. To be considered for readmission, applications must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the start of a term.

Students who were dropped from the rolls of the University for either three semesters with an academic record resulting in academic probation or conduct expulsion will not be granted readmission for at least one calendar year from the date of separation from the University. Students who were dropped from the rolls of the University for failing the same course twice may immediately apply for readmission to a program in the University.

The application for readmission must provide evidence of the student's ability to complete his/her degree program. The application must be accompanied by any official transcripts of all course(s) taken at other accredited colleges or universities during the period of separation from University of the Sciences.

Readmission of Military Service Members

In accordance with the federal Higher Education Opportunity Act, students who leave the University to perform military service will be readmitted with their previous academic status intact, for an absence of up to five years in length. Students must provide advance notice of their intent to perform military service and must also provide notification of intent to re-enroll. This readmission policy, as well as the requirements for advance notice and notification to re-enroll, is subject to exceptions as noted in the law.

Fresh Start Readmission

A student may apply for readmission under the Fresh Start policy under the following circumstances: 1) the student has left the University after failing to achieve good academic standing, and 2) the student will have been absent from the University for at least one year between the date of withdrawal and the start date of the semester for which readmission is sought.

If a student is readmitted under the Fresh Start policy, his/her transcript will note all credits attempted and grades earned at University of the Sciences prior to readmission. However, grades previously earned will not contribute to the current

grade point average calculations, and courses previously attempted will not be accepted toward fulfillment of the student's current degree requirements.

Acceptance of transfer credits from other institutions will be granted in accordance with current University policy.

After Fresh Start readmission, the student must comply with all current academic regulations required by the University and his/her degree program. No student will be readmitted under this policy more than one time. Once a student is re-enrolled under the Fresh Start policy, the decision to treat the academic record as described above is irrevocable.

Students will be informed of the Fresh Start policy upon exiting the University and upon application for readmission in accordance with current University policy.

The final decision regarding readmission, including readmission under this Fresh Start policy, rests with the University's faculty. The possible effect of the Fresh Start policy will be only one of the factors used in considering application for readmission.

USciences Online Graduate Students

All graduate students are expected to abide by all University policies including the Student Code of Conduct outlined in the *Student Handbook*.

Student Success Coach for Graduate Students

All graduate students are assigned a Student Success Coach on entering the program. The Student Success Coach(s) will act as the student's guide to navigate course selection and aid the student in getting started in their degree program.

The responsibilities of the Student Success Coach are to:

- Be knowledgeable about the graduate policies and procedures and those of the program
- Serve as the principal liaison between the student and the Director of Academics
- Authorize course selection for the purpose of registration and assist the student in completing the registration process
- Monitor the student's academic progress

Students are encouraged to stay in close contact with their Student Success Coach. Should a student experience any difficulty, they should contact the Student Success Coach. Should the Student Success Coach become

incapacitated or leave the institution, the Director of Academics will assign a new Student Success Coach.

Grading and Point System

The following grading system is used to indicate the quality of academic performance of graduate students at USciences:

Grade	Points	Description	Grade	Points	Description
A and A+	4	Exceptional	C	2.0	
A-	3.7		C-	1.7	
B+	3.3	Very Good	D+	1.3	
B	3.0		D	1.0	
B-	2.7	Minimum expectation	D-	0.7	
C+	2.3	Below expectations	F	0	Failure

Only courses in which the graduate student earns a grade of C+ or better can be applied toward meeting the minimum requirements of the USciences Online graduate degrees.

For courses taken on a pass/fail basis, the final course grade will be either 'P' pass (no point value and not included in the calculation of a grade point average) or 'F' failure (value of 0 and included in the calculation of the GPA).

Grade Requirements – Academic Standards

A USciences Online graduate student is expected to complete each didactic course with a minimum grade of C+. Only courses in which a student earns a grade of C+ or higher can be credited toward their graduate degree requirements. While the graduate student may be required or may elect to take courses that are numbered below 700, only courses numbered 700 or above carry graduate credit.

The cumulative grade point average is computed using every course for which a letter grade has been received while as matriculated or non-matriculated graduate student at USciences.

A graduate student who fails to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.70 or higher or receives an unsatisfactory rating in research from the Research Advisory Committee will be placed on academic probation.

Academic Probation Requirements:

1. Must achieve a 2.70 cumulative GPA at the end of three successive terms following the term in which the student was placed on probation *and*
2. Must maintain at least a 2.70 semester GPA in any term in which student is on probation

Failure to meet either of these requirements will result in dismissal from the graduate program.

Graduate students, who initially register only for courses which do not earn a regular letter grade, e.g., research credit or audit, and thus have no cumulative grade point, are exempt from the rule requiring a cumulative grade point average of 2.70 each term. Graduate students who receive an incomplete grade may be placed on academic probation retroactively once the grade is converted to a final grade.

A graduate student placed on academic probation because of an unsatisfactory rating in research for two consecutive terms or for any three terms will also be dismissed from the graduate program.

The student may appeal a dismissal by writing a letter to the Director of Academics within one week of receiving written notification of dismissal, outlining the reasons why he/she should not be dismissed.

Repetition of a Course

A graduate student must receive a C+ or better to earn graduate credit. If a grade of less than a "C+" is earned for a required course, the course must be repeated. A graduate student may be required by the program to repeat an elective course in which a grade less than C+ was received. If the course is repeated at USciences, both courses will appear on the student's academic record and will be used in calculating the cumulative grade point average.

When a course is repeated successfully, at another accredited institution, with a C+ or higher grade, credit may be granted. However, the passing grade is not computed in the cumulative grade point average. The original grade remains on the academic record and is used in calculating the cumulative grade point average.

Grade Replacement

If a student is placed on probation for not having a cumulative GPA of 2.700, the student will be given three semesters to raise her/his cumulative GPA to at least 2.700. During this time on probation, the student must earn a semester GPA of at least 2.700 each semester while on probation. If either of these conditions is not met, the student will be dismissed from the graduate program.

To assist a graduate student who is on probation in overcoming this GPA deficit, up to three graduate-level courses (one for graduate certificate programs) in which the student did not receive a grade of at least a B- may be repeated. The courses must be identified by the student and agreed to by the student's Director of Academics at the beginning of the probationary period. At the discretion of the Director of Academics, in the case of elective courses, a suitable replacement course may be identified instead of repeating the original course. Upon completion of the replacement course, the previous grade of the course being replaced, while noted on the student's transcript, will not be counted in the student's cumulative GPA. Courses in which the student was found to be guilty of a conduct issue (e.g., such as cheating, plagiarism, etc.) cannot have grades replaced by this mechanism.

Withdrawal from a Course

To withdraw officially from a course, the student must submit a completed Course Withdrawal form to the Registrar's Office, which includes the signature of the course instructor and the Director of Academics. The designation W (Withdrew -- no point value -- not included in calculation of the GPA) will be assigned after completion of the official withdrawal from a course. In such cases, the student will be financially liable for the course. An Online student can request course withdrawal via their Student Success Coach.

A student who fails to complete the course withdrawal will not be considered to be withdrawn from the course and will receive an appropriate letter grade at the end of the term.

Late withdrawals may be granted by the Director of Academics only under extremely extenuating circumstances such as a major illness, extreme change in job responsibilities that make it impossible to fulfill academic responsibilities, or major health issue/death of an immediate family member.

Type of Course

Online Courses (8 weeks)

Deadline – end of:

5th week of course

Students withdrawing from a course are financially responsible for the tuition charges. Students who remain active with the University, but drop one or more classes prior to the end of each term’s drop-add period may receive a refund of charges for those classes under certain circumstances. Graduate students billed at a per-credit rate, will be refunded as follows when drops occur:

Segment of Semester Refund for 8 week USciences

Online courses

Before first day of class	100%
During the first week of class	100%
During the second week of class	50%
Beyond the second week of class	No Refund

Incomplete Grades/Courses

An incomplete is a privilege, not a right, to be determined by the course instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to request an incomplete from the course instructor. It is the faculty member’s prerogative to approve or refuse the request.

Students not fulfilling course requirements at the completion of the term may be assigned an “In Progress” designation on their transcript. The instructor is required to replace this “In Progress” designation with a final grade as soon as possible, but no later than 21 calendar days from the end of the term or the end of the Drop/Add period of the next term, whichever comes first. If the instructor has not entered a final grade within the prescribed time limit, the Registrar will automatically enter a grade of ‘F’ and inform the instructor. Extension beyond 21

calendar days may be granted by the course instructor in consultation with the Program Director in exceptional cases.

Students will sign an Incomplete Contract for each course for which an extension is approved. The instructor will determine what the student must do (e.g., take one or more examinations, perform laboratory work, turn in reports, turn in notebooks, perform library assignments, etc.) in order to meet contract requirements. Information regarding requirements to complete the course will be supplied to the student directly by the instructor. The student is responsible for completing the work in the time allotted..

Audit

Graduate students may audit a course with the approval of the course instructor and Director of Academics. Students who audit a course do not take examinations and do not receive a grade for the course. Students should advise their Student Success Coach of their intent to Audit a course. The audit symbol AU is entered for the registered course on the student's record. Students cannot convert from audit to credit status or the reverse after the designated drop/add period.

Note: Audited course will not count toward meeting the minimum degree requirements and cost 1/2 of the normal tuition charge for the course. Students receiving a tuition scholarship may not use these funds to pay for an audited course.

Pass/Fail Option

An instructor may designate an elective course as a pass/fail elective for some or all students taking the course.

A student who wishes to take on a pass/fail basis a course which has been designated as a pass/fail election must make all necessary arrangements with the instructor prior to the end of the drop/add period. After the drop/add period the election is irrevocable. A student may make only one pass/fail election per term.

All pass/fail courses will appear on a student's transcript. However, credit for courses taken on a pass/fail election is not included in the minimum number of credit hours required for a degree.

Registration

All matriculated USciences Online graduate students are required to register, each term, for a minimum of one didactic or research credit, or *in absentia* with the permission of the Director of Academics.

The course selection in a particular term depends on the course requirements established by the Director of Academics. The Student Success Coach will assist the student in the appropriate course selection. For USciences Online students, the Student Success Coach will register the student for courses.

Students wishing to change their roster of courses may only do so during the designated drop/add period. Online students should contact their Student Success Coach for information on completing course drop/add.

Students who will not enroll in any didactic or research credits in a given term must register *in absentia* (course AB800) and will not receive any financial aid; however, the student's academic record will remain active. Students who are receiving extramural financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office to determine the impact of being *in absentia* on their financial aid before electing this option. Time spent in *absentia* will count toward the maximum time allowed to complete degree requirements.

Matriculated students who do not properly register for classes at USciences or do not register *in absentia* by the end of the drop/add period in each semester will be administratively withdrawn and will be required to reapply for admission to their program of study. Upon reapplication for admission all applicable fees and charges are assessed. Such students will not be eligible to appear on class lists, attend classes/labs, receive grades, or earn credit.

Students may not register *in absentia* for two consecutive terms without the written approval of their Director of Academics. Students considering a longer absence from their graduate studies should apply for a leave of absence.

Usually, all matriculated graduate students are required to register for a minimum of one credit during their terminal term. The terminal term is defined as *the term in which the student completes all degree requirements* -- not the term in which the student is to graduate (i.e., when the student receives the diploma).

An exception to this policy would be for the case in which a student has one or more outstanding grades of incompletes from the previous term in the *final didactic courses* (not including research courses) needed to complete the degree requirements; in this case, with the permission of the Director of Academics, the student may complete the degree requirements by converting the incomplete grade during the term without registering for additional credits. Students in the research phase of their degree must register for one credit each term until they have successfully completed their thesis/dissertation.

The completion of degree requirements means that the student must have completed all didactic, laboratory and project requirements of the program, including the minimum number of course requirements, and all research requirements, including journal papers, successful defense and submission to the Director of Academics of an approved, final copy of the M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation.

Student Hold

Students who have a hold on their academic record are not eligible to register for classes and will not be officially enrolled even if they have submitted the proper registration documents. If a hold has been placed on a student's record, the Registrar will confirm this for the student. The student must then contact the appropriate office(s) and take the necessary steps to clear the hold. If the hold is not cleared prior to the end of the drop/add period, the student will not be allowed to register for or attend classes, receive grades or earn credit during that term and will be administratively withdrawn. The student will be required to reapply for admission to the program of study. All applicable fees and charges will be assessed upon reapplication for admission. **Such students will not be eligible to appear on class lists, attend classes, receive grades, or earn credit.**

Leave of Absence

While graduate students are required to enroll for didactic and/or research credits or *in absentia* each term, circumstances may necessitate that a student be absent from the University.

Graduate students may request a leave of absence for up to three consecutive terms by completing a Notification of Student Separation form indicating the effective date, expected return term, and rationale for the request. This Separation form can be requested from the student's Student Success Coach. If the request is approved by the student's Student Success Coach and Director of Academics the leave is granted and the student will be notified. A leave of absence due to medical reasons must be coordinated through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Time during a leave of absence will not count toward the maximum time allowed to complete degree requirements. All financial aid ceases during the leave of absence and there is no guarantee that financial aid will resume upon the student's return.

If the leave of absence occurs after the drop/add period but before completion of the fourth week of the term, the student will be withdrawn from the rolls of each class and will be assigned a grade of W. Students who withdraw after the drop/add period will receive no tuition refund and are responsible for 100% of the tuition for the courses they are to withdraw from.

In extremely unusual and highly extenuating circumstances, such as extreme illness, death in the family, etc. the Director of Academics may allow the student to withdraw after the normal withdrawal period. If the leave of absence occurs after the normal withdrawal period, the student will receive a grade determined by the course instructor of each course. Again, there is no tuition refund after the end of the drop/add period.

If the student cannot return by the expiration date of the leave of absence, he/she should notify the Director of Academics in writing at least two weeks prior to the expiration date. Normally the Director of Academics will recommend that the student officially withdraw from the graduate program until the student is able to return to his/her studies. However, under extremely unusual circumstances, the Director of Academics may recommend that the student request an extension of the leave of absence.

If the student is not granted an extension or does not officially withdraw from the University and fails to check in with the Director of Academics by the expiration date of the leave of absence, the student will be automatically administratively withdrawn from the graduate program as of the date of last attendance.

Withdrawal

A student may be withdrawn from the University for academic, disciplinary or administrative reasons.

Voluntary Withdrawal:

A student may voluntarily withdraw officially from USciences Online by notifying the Director of Academics. A student will be officially withdrawn from the University once the student contacts the Director of Academics responsible for the student's degree program and provides notification of intent to withdraw either verbally or in writing. If feasible, the Director of Academics may ask the student to complete a check-out process. The student's record becomes inactive on the effective date of withdrawal and any applicable fees must be paid in full.

Administrative Withdrawal:

Any student who does not follow the official withdraw procedure will be administratively withdrawn, inactivating his/ her record. As stated in the University handbook, "a student may be withdrawn from the University for major violations of University policy or for nonattendance. A typical reason for an administrative withdrawal includes noncompliance with University policy (e.g., nonpayment of debt or exceeding program time limits)". The student will have up to the maximum time allowed to complete the degree requirements, which will include all periods of matriculated enrollment in the college and the time elapsed since the administrative withdrawal.

Dropped from the Rolls:

Students will be dropped from the rolls if they:

- Complete any three semesters, whether full-time or part-time, with an academic record resulting in academic probation.
- Fail the same course twice with a grade of "F"; this regulation applies whether the course is taken in regular sessions at the University or at another institution.
- Students who do not meet the criteria for progression in their curriculum may be subject to being dropped from the rolls.

The Director of Academics responsible for the student's major will officially notify the student of this action and notify pertinent University offices of the change in status. A student who is dropped from the rolls is not eligible to attend any courses at the University

Should the student petition for readmission to his/her program of study and the petition is granted, the student will have the maximum time allowed (minus any previous time periods of matriculated enrollment) to complete degree requirements. All applicable fees and charges will be assessed upon reapplication for admission.

Readmission

There may be times in which a graduate student withdraws from a graduate program of his/her own volition, is academically withdrawn from the program or is dropped from the rolls for various reasons. In such cases, the student may reapply to the same or different academic program after the situations that caused her/him to leave the University have changed and there is a reasonable expectation of academic success.

If a former student wishes to apply to a different academic program they must go through the normal application process, except that s/he must clearly indicate in a letter to the Director of Academics why s/he wishes to return to their graduate studies at USciences Online and what circumstances/situations have changed to help insure their academic success.

Depending on the circumstances, the student may wish to reenter the University in the same or a different graduate degree track program than the one in which s/he had been previously matriculated. Frequently in such cases, the student may have left the institution due to academic difficulties. Often in such cases, even if the faculty and Director of Academics reasonably believe that the student is capable of success in their graduate studies, the cumulative grade point average may be so poor as to be difficult to overcome in a reasonable timeframe.

When a graduate student applies for and is granted readmission into an USciences Online graduate program after leaving the institution, a notation will be entered on the student's transcript indicating the date of reacceptance into a graduate program. The Director of Academics will assess the student's academic background and may recommend that up to 12 credits of specific course work previously taken at USciences, for which the student received a grade of "C+" or

better, may be applied to the student's graduate program upon readmission. Such courses must be directly applicable to the degree track of the program to which the student has been admitted. In such cases, the Director of Academics may authorize the Registrar's Office not to count such coursework in the overall grade point average of the graduate student in the new program. If the student has taken any research credits (XX799 or XX899 coursework) none of these formerly earned research credits will be allowed to count toward meeting the minimum degree requirements.

Degree Requirements

The following is an outline of typical University requirements. Each student should refer to their program's specific requirements.

Masters Requirements

Students in a master's level degree program are required to be enrolled as a matriculated student a minimum of two semesters (four terms) and satisfy all of the degree requirements within five calendar years from the date of matriculation.

If a student does not complete all of the requirements in the maximum allotted time (five years for masters degrees), they will be withdrawn from the graduate program without a degree.

However, at least two months prior to the deadline the student may petition the Director of Academics for an extension to their degree program.

Didactic Requirements

At the discretion of the Director of Academics and in recognition that the content in particular academic fields may change over the span of several years, a graduate student may be required to retake courses used to satisfy degree requirements if more than eight years has elapsed prior to completion of the degree.

A minimum of 30 credits of didactic course work is required for any master's level degree and must be composed of the following:

- Minimum of three credits at the 800 level. A maximum of two credits of seminar courses may be used toward this minimum.
- Maximum of six credits at the 300 or 400 level

- Remainder must be at the 700 or 800 level

The individual program may have requirements which exceed these minimum requirements.

The Director of Academics and/or Student Success Coach will determine the necessary didactic course work for each graduate student.

Degree Track Review

An applicant is admitted to a specific program for a particular degree track. At a time designated by the Director of Academics, the master's student will be evaluated by the faculty and one of the following recommendations made:

- The student has demonstrated the ability to continue working in the degree track to which he/she was originally accepted.
- The student has demonstrated superior ability and should be advised to bypass the Master of Science Degree and transfer to the Doctor of Philosophy degree track.
- The student has not demonstrated the ability to pursue a graduate degree at USciences and should be dismissed from the graduate program.

The Director of Academics will report the results of the degree track review to the student.

If the student is recommended for dismissal from the program the Director of Academics must provide written rationale for the action to the student.

The student may appeal the action in writing to the Director of Academics outlining the reasons why his/her appeal should be granted. Students should refer to the appeals process for additional information.