

## Academic Information Directory

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## **Academic Information**

The administration of the Alvernia University community is provided for by the policies stated in this catalog. Attendance at Alvernia is a privilege and not a right. By registering, the student concedes to the university the right to require his/her withdrawal. Request for withdrawal can be made at any time it is deemed necessary to safeguard the ideals of character and scholarship and to secure compliance with regulations.

The university reserves the right to change its admission, registration, graduation or financial requirements as necessary. Every effort is made to provide advance information regarding such changes.

### **Student Academic Responsibility**

Students are solely responsible for assuring that their academic program complies with the policies of the university. Advisors are provided to assist students in planning their academic program and they assist with course selection and registration. Advisors are not authorized to change established policy of the university.

### **Bachelor's Degree Requirements**

To receive a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree at Alvernia, a student must successfully complete a minimum of 123 semester credits. The total may vary according to the major program. Students must achieve a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) in all completed courses. Please note that specific majors may carry higher GPA requirements. Further, all required courses must be passed. See program descriptions and courses of study in this catalog for any program-specific grade point requirements. Students must complete 45 of their last 60 credits at Alvernia University. Students must complete 12 credits in the major and 9 in the minor at Alvernia University.

Any students requesting a variance from degree requirements must petition the Academic Standards Committee in writing and should submit supporting documents from their academic advisors as well as from the relevant departments. Contact the Registrar's Office for the Academic Standards Committee information. All students are encouraged to participate in Commencement exercises, which are held in May and December (a fee is charged for commencement). August and December graduates walk in the December Commencement exercises and May graduates walk in the May Commencement exercises. Seniors must submit the Graduation Application

Form to the Registrar's Office as follows: October 1 for May Graduation, December 1 for summer graduation, March 1 for December graduation.

## **Associate Degree Requirements**

To receive an Associate of Science degree at Alvernia University, a student must complete a minimum of 65 semester credits. The total semester credits may vary according to major. Associate degree students interested in working toward a bachelor's degree must complete the associate degree before accumulating credits toward the bachelor's degree. Students must achieve a 2.0 GPA in their major field and a 2.0 cumulative GPA in all completed courses. Further, all required courses must be passed. See program descriptions and courses of study in this catalog for any program-specific grade point requirements. All associate degree candidates must complete 30 of their last 36 credits at Alvernia University. Students must complete a minimum of 9 credits in their major.

Any students requesting a variance from degree requirements must petition the Academic Standards Committee in writing and should submit supporting documents from their academic advisors as well as from the relevant departments.

All students are encouraged to participate in Commencement exercises, which are held in May and December (a fee is charged for commencement). August and December graduates walk in the December Commencement exercises and May graduates walk in the May Commencement exercises. Seniors must submit the Graduation Application Form to the Registrar's Office as follows: October 1 for May Graduation, December 1 for summer graduation, March 1 for December graduation.

## **Mid-Degree Program**

**Prerequisites:** Students must transfer at least 70 credits of college work or an associate's degree from a regionally accredited college into a degree program. Former Alvernia University students who meet the criteria of the previous requirements (i.e., 70 earned credits or an associate degree) may exercise the mid-degree option after an academic absence of one year.

Students, who meet the entry requirements for the School of Graduate and Adult Education and earn an associate degree, may request Mid-Degree status. Students who are in a dual enrollment program and transition within an academic year do not have to reapply through the Admissions Office for

acceptance into an Adult Education bachelor's degree program. The stipulation, that students must achieve a 2.0 GPA in their major field and 2.0 cumulative GPA in all completed courses, and all required courses must be passed, apply to dual enrolled students prior to advancing into a bachelor's degree program.

**Requirements:**

- Satisfy the standards for a major degree program.
- At least 30 credits must be at the 300/400 level at Alvernia, which excludes experiential credit, e.g. life experience, challenge.
- Satisfy requirements for human diversity, and community service.
- Complete at least 12 credits in the major at Alvernia University.
- Complete a modified core curriculum at Alvernia to include the following (relevant transfer credits may be applied to the modified core):

Communication	3
Composition & Research	3
Literature	3
Fine Arts	3
Mathematics	3
Science	3
Social Science	3
Ethics/Morality	3
Theology/Philosophy	<u>6</u>
Total Credits	30

## **Transfer Policy**

**Bachelor's Degree Residency Requirements:**

- All students must take at least 45 of the last 60 credit hours at Alvernia University; 12 credits in the major and 9 credits in the minor must be completed at Alvernia University.
- All transfer students must complete at least 30 credit hours at the 300/400 course level. Students must complete a minimum of 9 credits at the 300/400 level at Alvernia University in their major.
- Up to 75 credit hours may be accepted from regionally accredited community, junior or other two-year colleges.
- Within the guidelines established above, bachelor's degree programs require at least 123 credits.

**Second Baccalaureate Degree**

When contemplating a second baccalaureate degree, alumni of Alvernia should consult the Registrar for applicable policies.

## **Second Major**

When contemplating a second major, Alvernia students should consult the Registrar for applicable policies.

## **Progress Toward a Degree**

A student may make progress toward a degree by:

- A. Completing courses at Alvernia University.
- B. Transferring approved course credits from other colleges and universities.
- C. Successfully completing a departmentally administered challenge examination for a course in the current catalog.
- D. Receiving credit for the following credentials in accordance with the policies and procedures currently in effect at Alvernia University:
  - American College Testing/Proficiency Examination Program (ACT/PEP)
  - College Level Equivalency Program (CLEP)
  - College Board Advanced Placement Tests (AP)
  - Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)
  - Dual Credit
  - Life Experience Credits
  - United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI)

### **Maximum Number of Credits/Charges**

A maximum of 30 credits can be awarded through a combination of the options identified in sections C and D above. Processing and per-credit fees are charged for challenge examinations and life experience credits. Students planning to earn credits through challenge examinations, CLEP and life experience must complete those options prior to their last semester of coursework at Alvernia.

### **Transferring Credits from Other Colleges/Universities**

A matriculated student who wishes to take a course at another college and transfer the credit to Alvernia must obtain and complete a transfer credit approval form from the Office of the Registrar prior to enrolling at the other institution. Transfer credits are not applicable for the repeat/delete option. No credits are transferred for courses in which grades below a “C”/2.0 (or equivalent at Alvernia) are earned. Credits that are transferred are entered on a student’s permanent record without reference to the grade earned. Grades are not transferred; only credits are recorded.

*For information on consortium classes see the Academic Opportunities section of this catalog.*

**Challenge Examinations**

An enrolled student may challenge certain courses by examination but cannot challenge courses that have been audited or for which the student received a grade of “F.” Students interested in this option should contact the departmental chairperson to determine the courses available for challenge and, if appropriate, to make arrangements for an examination at least two semesters prior to graduation. A grade of “C”/2.0 or better on the examination is required to obtain credit. A student’s cumulative GPA is not changed by the examination because no grade is recorded for a course completed in this manner. A student pays a tuition charge for credits earned through a challenge examination.

**Advanced Placement/College Level Equivalency Program (CLEP)**

Information regarding CLEP examinations is available in the Registrar’s Office. As a participant in the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board, Alvernia University awards college credit to high school students who do advanced work in high school and score well on Advanced Placement Examinations. In general, credit is given for APE recommended scores.

**Dual Credit**

Students may have concurrently enrolled in a class that counts for both the high school requirements and college credits. To receive credits for these courses, students must submit an official transcript from the college offering credits. These transcripts should be sent to the Alvernia University Admissions Office during the application process.

**Life Experience Credits**

Request for credit for specific courses based on documented life experience is initiated with the chairperson of the department directly involved. A student pays a tuition charge for credits earned through life experience. There are two ways by which students may earn life experience credits:

- Life experience credits may be granted for full course credit as identified in the current university catalog. A student must be in good academic standing. The request for Life Experience must be submitted in the second semester of enrollment or after 12 credits earned at Alvernia, but at least two semesters prior to graduation. Each department is responsible for determining which courses are appropriate for life experience credits.
- Life experience credits are also offered as General Electives upon entrance to Alvernia through portfolio review. See COL 210 in the Programs and Courses of Study section of this catalog for details.

*Consult the Office of the Registrar for applicable policies.*

## Registration

### **New Student Registration**

New students entering Alvernia University in the fall semester complete their registration during the summer. New students entering Alvernia University in the spring semester register before classes begin in January.

### **Current Student Registration**

Students register online for upcoming semesters on Self-Service. Advance registration is held in the middle of the fall and spring semesters. If a student registers during advanced registration and then decides not to return to the university, it is the student's responsibility to complete the withdrawal process prior to the beginning of classes.

Students are charged an additional fee for any credits over 17. Students may register for more than 17 credits with the approval of their advisor. Items considered for approval are the student's academic progress, cumulative grade point average, and plan of study. Students are officially registered when tuition and charges for the semester have been paid or arrangements for payment have been made with the Student Billing Office.

Courses are offered on a rotating schedule. The university reserves the right to revise course plans in response to changes in student interest, enrollment demand, and staff availability. The university also reserves the right to cancel any scheduled course for which there is insufficient enrollment.

### **Summer School Registration**

Information regarding course offerings and tuition charges is available from the office of Graduate and Adult Education and on the Alvernia website.

## Registration Changes

Each of the following constitutes a registration change:

- Adding or dropping a course or changing a course section
- Withdrawing after the add/drop period
- Auditing a course

### **Add/Drop Period**

The deadline to add or drop courses or change a course section is at the end of the business day of the sixth day of classes, unless otherwise indicated by the Registrar's Office. The student may complete and return the schedule change form in the Registrar's Office and obtain the signatures of his/her advisor and the instructor before returning the form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline.

**Withdrawal After Add/Drop Period**

No student is permitted to withdraw from a course after the last day for withdrawal, which is listed on the academic calendar. Discontinuing a course without a valid withdrawal results in a grade of “F.” A student receiving financial aid must notify the Financial Aid Office of his/her withdrawal from a course. Schedule Change forms are obtained from the Registrar’s Office and must be filed there to complete the process. The instructor for the course involved and the student’s academic advisor must sign the form. During this period, a “W” is placed on the student’s official record.

**Auditing a Course**

A student wishing to audit a course must submit a written request to the Registrar’s Office. This request must include the signatures of the instructor involved and the student’s academic advisor. After the first week of classes no reimbursement is made when changing from credit to audit. The deadline for either request is the first week of instruction of current semester. No credit is earned for auditing a course.

## **Attendance Policy**

Attendance and participation in class are integral parts of the educational process and are significant factors in academic achievement. Students are expected to attend all classes, take exams during scheduled times, and are responsible for all material covered in class. Instructors are expected to report students whose absences are excessive. At the discretion of the instructor, excessive absences or tardiness may result in a lowered grade or failure for the course. Individual instructors may identify more specific attendance requirements, which are clearly stated in the course syllabus. Other guidelines can be found in the Undergraduate Student Handbook.

## **Change of Major**

A student may change his/her major by obtaining written approval of the department chairperson or program director of the new major. The Change of Major form, obtained from the Registrar’s Office, is completed and returned to the Registrar’s Office. The department chairperson or program director assigns the student to an academic advisor.



## Grade Reports

### Early Warning Notices

In mid-semester, faculty members submit early warning notices to the Office of Student Success. Students who are doing less than “C” work are identified and specific information regarding their lack of progress is noted. Students, their advisors, and the Registrar’s Office are notified.

### Semester Grade Reports

At the end of each semester, grade reports may be viewed through the student’s Self Service account. It is the student’s responsibility to identify grading errors within 21 days of posting. Any correction must be made by the instructor and filed in the Registrar’s Office. Please refer to the Undergraduate Student Handbook for the grade appeal process.

## Grading Policy and Grade Point Average (GPA)

The university provides the following guidelines for grade assignments. Final grade assignments are at the discretion of the faculty member.

A	94-100	P	Passing Grade
A-	90-93	I	Incomplete
B+	87-89	WP	Withdrawal/Pass
B	83-86	WF	Withdrawal/Fail
B-	80-82	AU	Audit
C+	77-79	F	Failure
C	73-76		
C-	70-72		
D+	67-69		
D	63-66		
D-	60-62		
F	0-59		

### Incomplete Grade

A student may request an incomplete grade for a course by completing a Request for Incomplete form available in the Registrar’s Office. An Incomplete will be assigned only if there are extenuating circumstances preventing the student from completing all course requirements and the instructor, Department Chair, and Dean approve and sign the form. The completed form must be returned to the Registrar’s Office by the end of the final exam period to have the incomplete grade posted.

The student must complete and submit the assignments listed on the form to the instructor within four weeks of the exam period. Incomplete grades that have not been changed by the instructor at the end of this four-week period will automatically be changed to an “F.” In extreme circumstances, the instructor may file a request for an extension with the Registrar.

### **Grade Point Average**

Letter grades are converted into a point system for calculating grade point averages:

A	4.0	B-	2.7	D+	1.3
A-	3.7	C+	2.3	D	1.0
B+	3.3	C	2.0	D-	0.7
B	3.0	C-	1.7	F	0

The grade point average is obtained by dividing the total number of quality points achieved, by the total number of credit hours attempted.

### **Repeat/Delete Option**

The repeat/delete option may be used when students have a grade of less than “C” or have failed to meet the minimum grade required by a specific program (for example, Nursing students need a “C+” or better in each nursing course). When a course is repeated for credit, the earlier grade remains on the student’s permanent record and will appear on all transcripts. The higher grade is used in computing the cumulative GPA. The repeat/delete option may only be used in cases where both the original and repeated courses were earned in class at Alvernia; neither may be by correspondence or by study at another institution. Students may be required to use the repeat/delete option to fulfill specific requirements.

### **Internal Transfer Option**

A student transferring to a new major before earning 60 credits has the option of requesting that the Department Chair delete up to 15 credits from those earned in the old major. These credits may not include requirements from the general education core, the new major or graduation requirements. The Department Chair must submit his or her request for deletions to the Academic Standards Committee using the internal transfer form. The student must pick up the form from the Registrar’s Office to initiate the procedure. If the student returns to the previous major, the Registrar reinstates the deleted courses and all grades are computed in the GPA. No grade of “C” (2.0) or higher may be deleted. The internal transfer option may be exercised only one time during the student’s enrollment at Alvernia. The student’s transcript reflects all courses taken, even if not computed in the GPA.

## Plagiarism

Procedures for reporting alleged plagiarism will be closely adhered to, according to university policy and procedure. Plagiarism is the failure to cite a source, deliberately or accidentally presenting as your own work words or ideas of another (*Harbrace Handbook*). This includes but is not limited to:

1. Copying, paraphrasing, or summarizing from any published or unpublished source without citing.
2. Copying a paper, parts of a paper, or submitting any work that is not your own.
3. Submitting as one's own, parts or a whole, another's computer program, work of art, or musical composition.
4. Using words of others without quotation marks enclosing those words.

## Academic Grievance Policy

The Student Grievance Committee attends to grievances of an academic nature. The committee is composed of faculty members and two students. Students are selected by the Student Government Association. The chair is elected by the committee members. The committee is involved in a student grievance only if the proper procedures have been followed by the student. Those procedures can be found in the Undergraduate Student Handbook. The student must discuss the situation/grade with the instructor within 20 calendar days of occurrence/disagreement.

## Academic Standing

Class level is determined by the number of credits a student has earned in the following manner:

Freshman	0-29 credits
Sophomore	30-59 credits
Junior	60-89 credits
Senior	90+ credits

The Academic Standards Committee reviews the academic records of each student at the end of each semester. The credits used in the following scale are determined by the Alvernia GPA credits plus transferred credits plus experiential and pass/fail credits. For students with Incompletes, the Academic Standards Committee reaches a decision based on available evidence.

12 to 23 credits

Cumulative average 1.75 and above:  
student in good standing

Cumulative average between 1.00-1.749:  
student placed on Academic Probation

	Cumulative average below 1.00: student subject to dismissal
24 to 59 credits	Cumulative average 1.80 and above: student in good standing Cumulative average between 1.60-1.799: student placed on or continued on Academic Probation Cumulative average below 1.60: student subject to dismissal
60 to 71 credits	Cumulative average 2.00 and above: student in good standing Cumulative average 1.70-1.999: student placed on or continued on Academic Probation Cumulative average below 1.70: student subject to dismissal
72 or more credits	Cumulative average below 2.00: student subject to dismissal

*Note: Students enrolled in associate, master or doctoral degree programs should see the Dean of Graduate and Adult Education for information regarding their academic progress requirements.*

### **Student-Athletes**

Students-Athletes must attempt and maintain a minimum of 12 credits each academic semester. If at any time a student-athlete withdraws and/or drops below the minimum 12 credits during the academic semester, he/she will be deemed academically ineligible for the remainder of the season.

### **Academic Probation**

Students placed on academic probation may not take more than 14 credits the following semester. It is recommended that these students meet with their advisor and use the repeat/delete or internal transfer options to raise their GPA. Students placed on probation at the end of the spring semester are encouraged to take courses at Alvernia during the summer sessions to improve their GPA.

### **Academic Dismissal**

Students who are academically dismissed lose the right to complete their degree requirements under the catalog that was in effect when they first enrolled at Alvernia University; they lose their right to live in campus housing; and they also lose their eligibility for financial aid. Academically dismissed students may petition the Academic Standards Committee in writing for reinstatement to degree candidacy. After one academic year's absence students must reapply to

the university and may be reinstated by documenting their academic commitment.

Academically dismissed students may take coursework during the summer sessions at Alvernia University and petition the Academic Standards Committee for reinstatement prior to the beginning of the fall semester if they meet the criteria for good standing based on the scale above. Students who have been academically dismissed may also petition the Academic Standards Committee in writing for immediate reinstatement to degree candidacy. A written petition should be accompanied by a letter of support from either the student's academic advisor or an Alvernia faculty member who has taught the student.

## **Dean's List — Academic Honors**

### **Dean's List**

Students who have a semester Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.50 or better (for a minimum of 12 credits taken for a letter grade) are placed on the Dean's List. Courses receiving a grade of "Pass" are not included.

### **Academic Honors at Commencement**

- Bachelor's degree: At Commencement, students may receive their bachelor's degree with Honors. With Honors is defined as a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or above with a minimum of 40 Alvernia credits. As noted above, courses receiving a grade of "pass" are not included. The award of honors shall be as follows:

cum laude:	In recognition of a GPA of at least 3.50.
magna cum laude:	In recognition of a GPA of at least 3.70.
summa cum laude:	In recognition of a GPA of at least 3.90.

- Associate degree: At Commencement, students may receive their associate degree with Honors. With Honors is defined as a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or above with a minimum of 40 credits. As noted above, courses receiving a grade of "pass" are not included. The award of honors shall be as follows:

with distinction:	In recognition of a GPA of at least 3.50.
with high distinction:	In recognition of a GPA of at least 3.70.
with highest distinction:	In recognition of a GPA of at least 3.90.

## Honors Program

Students who have completed all of the following requirements may graduate from the Alvernia University Honors Program and the distinction is noted on their transcript:

Twelve credits in coursework, including:

- First Year Honors Seminar (3 credits)
- Three courses (9 credits) of Honors Colloquia
- Six Credits in Honors Thesis. Identify a scholarly problem or develop a creative work under supervision of advisor.
- Reach a cumulative grade point average of 3.3 or higher

For full description of the Honors Program, see the Academic Opportunities section of this catalog.

## Transcripts

Requests for transcripts may be made in writing to the Registrar's Office or requested through Self Service. Forms are available from that office or at <http://www.alvernia.edu/student-life/student-services/registrar/>. No transcript request is released until all financial obligations to the university have been met. Students may request unofficial copies for their personal use. The first transcript requested after the degree is conferred is free. Processing of a transcript request is completed within five working days after the request is received; the prevailing fee must be submitted with the request for each transcript.

## Withdrawal from the University

A student voluntarily withdrawing from the university for non-medical reasons must complete an exit interview. The student is responsible for meeting any financial or residence hall obligations before leaving campus. If the proper withdrawal procedure is not completed, the student may also be academically responsible for the semester. For example, if the student withdraws from the university after the last official date to withdraw from classes, instructors assign a "WP" or "WF" indicating the academic standing at the time of withdrawal. If the student does not officially withdraw, instructors assign a grade indicating the academic standing at the end of the semester. The university reserves the right to require the withdrawal of any student whose scholarship is unsatisfactory or whose conduct renders him/her undesirable as a member of the university community.

## **Military Deployment**

Alvernia University will make every effort to accommodate students who are in the armed forces. Students who are deployed to active duty while enrolled in classes should contact the VA Certifying Officials in the Student Financial Planning Office to determine the best financial option. Their educational status will be held until their return to the university following deployment.

## **Non-Academic Dismissal**

Students may be dismissed from the university for non-academic reasons. Only the Vice President of University Life and Dean of Students may dismiss a student from the university for non-academic reasons. See the Undergraduate Student Handbook for details on this policy.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The university follows the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Under this act, education records of students are not released except by written consent and request of eligible students. Exceptions are made in accordance with the law to authorized persons within the university, to authorized agencies outside the university and local education agencies who have been determined to have legitimate educational interest and are specified in the updated January 3, 2012 Act. Eligible students may inspect their records by submitting a written request to the Registrar. For more information on the ability to waive FERPA rights, please contact the Registrar's Office.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, is a federal law that states (a) that a written institutional policy must be established and (b) that a statement of adopted procedures covering the privacy rights of students must be made available. Alvernia University shall maintain the confidentiality of student education records in accordance with the provisions of the act and shall accord all the rights under the act to students who are or have been in attendance at Alvernia University.

The act provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their educational records, to challenge the contents of those records which students consider to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if the decision of the hearing panel is unacceptable. The Registrar at Alvernia

University has been assigned to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student education records, which include admissions, personal, academic, financial, academic, cooperative education, and placement records. A copy of the university's complete FERPA policy may be obtained from the Registrar.

## **Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act**

The university complies with the Student Right-to-Know, Campus Crime and Security, and Athletic Participation and Financial Support (EADA) reporting and disclosure regulations issued by the Department of Education effective as of November 1, 1999, in order to remain Title IV compliant (federal financial aid programs). These regulations permit the university to disclose completion / graduation and transfer-out rates of its students. Further information is available from the Registrar's Office.

## **Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges**

Alvernia University limits academic residency to no more than 25 percent of the degree requirements for all undergraduate degrees for active-duty servicemembers. Academic residency can be completed at any time while active-duty servicemembers are enrolled. Reservists and National Guardsmen on active-duty are covered in the same manner. Programs that require clinical or field placement such as nursing, occupational therapy, education, etc., are subject to academic approval.