

## **Chapter 7**

### **Academic Policies and Procedures**

#### **7.1 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (formerly 2.8.4)**

##### **7.1.1 CLASS PROCEDURES<sup>1</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.1)**

The faculty member must, at the beginning of each semester or short term, distribute a syllabus that explains:

1. The course objectives and student-learning outcomes.
2. Special requirements for the course, such as term papers, oral reports, field trips, etc.
3. Grading procedures.
4. Attendance policy.

Faculty members must maintain clear records of all grades. Students will be allowed to review grades by appointment. Faculty shall report grades of students making D's, F's, or NC's on the official mid-term grade report. A written record of all grades must be kept for at least one (1) year after the grade is recorded in the administrative computer system.

A faculty member is expected to:

1. Conduct classes in a professional manner, whether the format is traditional, hybrid, or online.
2. Grade and return test results within a reasonable time.
3. Maintain adequate records of grades and be accountable in grading. In the event of separation from the university, faculty shall leave such records with the department head or director.
4. Maintain regular, scheduled office hours regardless of the delivery format of courses taught. Faculty members shall establish and inform students of their regular weekly office hours. These hours shall be set in accordance with school policy.

Faculty members shall consult the current Jacksonville State University Student Handbook for policy statements on academic honesty.

##### **7.1.2 GRADING SYSTEM<sup>2</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.2)**

Undergraduate: Faculty members shall refer to the current Student Handbook for the undergraduate grading system.

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<sup>1</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>2</sup> Revised 06/2023

Graduate: Faculty members shall refer to the current Graduate Catalog for the graduate grading system.

### **7.1.3 CHANGING OF GRADES<sup>3</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.3)**

No grade except Incomplete (I) may be changed after the submitting of final grades except in the case of error. Within 6 weeks after grades have been reported, an instructor may change a grade due to an error by a written application through the appropriate department head to the Office of the Registrar, stating the reason for the error and the need to change. Faculty members are accountable for accurate grading and recording. This procedure does not apply to removal of Incompletes ("I"). To remove an Incomplete and assign a permanent grade, faculty that do not have a school policy on Incomplete reporting may go to the Office of the Registrar to change the grade or send a signed memorandum to the registrar to initiate the change.

### **7.1.4 TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS<sup>4</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.4)**

In fairness to students, instructors shall apprise students of the nature of their methods of evaluation.

All undergraduate tests and examinations shall be proctored. In cases where cheating is encountered or suspected, faculty members should handle each situation with good judgment. Faculty members should exercise caution and seek the advice of the department head, who may then refer the matter to the dean of the appropriate school for action. Faculty members should consult the current Student Handbook for policy statements on academic honesty. The registrar is responsible for the schedule of final examinations. All final examinations shall be given at the scheduled time unless a change is approved by the department head and dean. Under extenuating circumstances, a faculty member may reschedule an individual student's final examination for just cause.

### **7.1.5 MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS<sup>5</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.5)**

Faculty members shall, at the beginning of the semester, acquaint their traditional, hybrid, or online classes with their policy on make-up examinations. In some areas of academic work, course work and experience cannot be made up, and the faculty member should so advise in the syllabus. Students who miss announced examinations or announced assignments for legitimate reasons may take a make-up examination, which shall be scheduled by the faculty member at a reasonable time and under reasonable conditions. The legitimacy of the excuse for missing the test or assignment is to be determined by the faculty member; however, a student may appeal the decision to the department head and the dean, if there is disagreement about the legitimacy of the excuse.

### **7.1.6 STUDENT ATTENDANCE<sup>6</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.6)**

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<sup>3</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>4</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>5</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>6</sup> Revised 06/2023

Specific policies on attendance for traditional classes or participation in non-traditional classes may be established by individual departments or schools. Faculty members should be familiar with all policies that apply in the department and should communicate these policies to their students through the syllabus given at the beginning of the semester.

If a policy requires attendance or participation, faculty are required to maintain attendance records to support the policy. Students are held responsible for attendance or participation at all meetings of their classes or delivery modes.

#### **7.1.7 OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY-EXCUSED ABSENCES<sup>7</sup> (formerly 2.8.4.7)**

Official university-excused absences may be issued to groups or individuals by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs for participation in authorized Jacksonville State University activities. Although absences may be excused, work missed in class is not. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request to make up class work missed.

Faculty members sponsoring an activity for students for which an excused absence is required may obtain the appropriate form from any academic dean's office or the office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The form must be completed prior to the scheduled activity.

#### **7.1.9 FACULTY ABSENCE<sup>8</sup> (formerly 2.8.7)**

Faculty are expected to adhere to scheduled traditional class-meeting times. If a faculty member is unable to meet a traditional class, appropriate arrangements shall be made with the department head by the faculty member. If a faculty member is unable to deliver an online or hybrid course, the department head should be notified immediately.

#### **7.1.10 DEADLINES<sup>9</sup> (formerly 2.8.9)**

Each faculty member is responsible for meeting appropriate deadlines established by the department head, dean, registrar, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the campus bookstore.

#### **7.1.12 INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY<sup>10</sup>**

Decisions to close university operations, including classes, will be made by the President or a designated representative. When the campus is closed or classes are cancelled, faculty must follow the Class Continuity Policy outlined in Section 7.1.13.

If the university remains open during extreme weather conditions, faculty should adopt flexible deadlines and make-up policies for students who determine they cannot safely travel to campus. Faculty should not penalize students for non-attendance on these days. Faculty who

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<sup>7</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>8</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>9</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>10</sup> Revised 06/2023; 12/2025

are unable to travel to campus on such days must notify their department and communicate with students via Canvas regarding class cancellations or alternative assignments and arrangements.

### **7.1.13 CLASS CONTINUITY POLICY FOR UNEXPECTED CAMPUS CLOSURE<sup>11</sup>**

When a regularly scheduled course is interrupted due to an unexpected campus closure (e.g., weather event, pandemic, or other emergency), faculty may adjust course requirements, due dates, and grading policies as necessary. All changes should be communicated through Canvas, and students should be reminded to check Canvas regularly for updates. If a faculty member is unable to communicate with students due to the closure, they must notify their department head.

For in-person classes, faculty may assign alternative coursework or transition to synchronous or asynchronous online sessions during the closure. In accordance with the Inclement Weather Policy (Section 7.1.12), faculty should not penalize students for non-attendance at synchronous sessions and should offer flexible deadlines and make-up opportunities. Synchronous sessions should be recorded and made available to students who are unable to attend.

Faculty should also apply deadline flexibility to online and hybrid courses during campus closures.

## **7.2 CURRICULUM (new)**

### **7.2.1 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT<sup>12</sup> (formerly 2.8.5)**

The primary responsibility for development of new courses, deletion or changes in existing courses, initiation of new programs, and program modifications lies with the faculty. All proposals concerning programs and curriculum shall be reviewed by department, school, and university curriculum committees, in accordance with established procedures. For curriculum actions that require notification to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) or the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), please refer to the Substantive Change Policy/Curriculum Change Request Process in the Jacksonville State University Manual of Policies and Procedures.

### **7.2.2 COURSE OFFERINGS AND CONTENT<sup>13</sup> (formerly 2.8.6)**

All course offerings shall be in accordance with the general requirements of the university, the needs of the department's majors, and the needs of students. Faculty members are responsible for teaching at a standard appropriate to the level assigned to the course; for planning and presenting the course material; for establishing course objectives and student-learning outcomes consistent with departmental policy and making them known to students;

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<sup>11</sup> Revised 12/2025

<sup>12</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>13</sup> Revised 06/2023

for selecting texts and supplemental materials; for preparing, administering, and grading tests and examinations; and for assigning grades.

### **7.2.3 CREDIT HOUR POLICY<sup>14</sup> (formerly 2.13, 2.13.1, 2.13.2, 2.13.3)**

Jacksonville State University's policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs conforms to the Office of Post-Secondary Education, US Department of Education's 2020 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 600.2 credit hour definition,<sup>15</sup> which states:

A credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that—

(1) Reasonably approximates not less than—

(i) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit...or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or

(ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; and

(2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

The institutional accrediting body for Jacksonville State University is the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) who also recognizes and uses as a basis, the Federal definition of a credit hour in its *Credit Hours Policy Statement*.

### **Clock-Time Conversion**

Consistent with the clock-time conversion set by the Office of Post-Secondary Education, US Department of Education's 2010 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 668.8,<sup>16</sup> Jacksonville State University defines three (3) credit hours of instruction as equivalent to 37.5 hours of instructional time (2250 minutes). This exceeds the US Department of Education's 2020 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 Section 668.8<sup>17</sup> minimum of 30 clock hours of instructional time for three (3) credit hours and meets SACSCOC standards.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Revised 06/2023; 08/2024

<sup>15</sup> US Department of Education (2020) § 600.2 Definitions - <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-09-02/pdf/2020-18636.pdf#page=68>

<sup>16</sup> US Department of Education (2010) §668.8 Eligible program rules and regulations - <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2010-10-29/pdf/2010-26531.pdf#page=118>

<sup>17</sup> US Department of Education (2020) §668.8 Eligible program rules and regulations - <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-09-02/pdf/2020-18636.pdf#page=74>

<sup>18</sup> SACSCOC Credit Hours Policy Statement (2023) - [Credit Hour Policy Statement \(sacscoc.org\)](https://www.sacscoc.org/Credit-Hour-Policy-Statement)

### **Determination of Course Credit**

Faculty and curriculum committees determine the quantity of credits for a course in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education. Standards established by external discipline-specific accreditation agencies will be applied as required. Institutionally established criteria reflect professional standards and include some or all of the following:

- Discipline-specific best practices
- Purpose and goals of the course
- Content and topics
- Learning outcomes
- Major assignments
- Assessment methods
- Course level: lower or upper division undergraduate, master's level, doctoral level
- Course schedule type: lecture, lab, clinical, studio, study abroad, internship, field placement, independent study, thesis, or dissertation
- Course delivery method: face-to-face (traditional), hybrid (blended), online synchronous, online asynchronous, or other mode of delivery
- Articulation and transferability of credit to other institutions
- Other factors as appropriate

Faculty develop courses and programs and provide justification for proposed credit amounts. Departmental, college, and university curriculum committees conduct rigorous reviews of course and program proposals, including justifications for credit to be awarded and are responsible for the final approval of proposals. Final acceptance of a proposal by each appropriate curriculum committee denotes the review and acceptance of the proposed number of credits.

Note that course instructors and department heads are responsible for ensuring that a given course (e.g., PSY 201) provides regular and substantive interactions with students, equivalent workload in terms of quality and quantity, and equivalent learning outcomes, regardless of delivery method or calendar type (e.g., short term, summer term, or full term). Ultimately, the responsibility for protecting the academic integrity of curricula, programs, and class schedules rests with the University's Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### **Responsibility for the Credit Hour Policy**

Faculty are responsible for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum; therefore, the responsibility for credit hour determination resides with the faculty. The amount and level of credit hours awarded for a course will be determined according to these guidelines and courses will be monitored to ensure that they meet or exceed these expectations. Faculty and academic departments are charged with following the credit hour policy in developing or offering new courses or new modes of delivering existing courses. Department heads are charged with ensuring that courses in their department meet the requirements of the credit hour policy, as defined above, when creating schedules and assigning faculty to courses. The University Registrar oversees the creation and distribution of the university-wide course

schedule and works to ensure that courses are scheduled in compliance with the credit hour policy. The Faculty Handbook Committee is charged with periodically reviewing the credit hour policy, as well as reviewing after any changes in the federal or accreditor regulations or policies.

### **7.2.3 EXPERIMENTAL COURSES<sup>19</sup> (formerly 2.15)**

An experimental course is a course approved and offered at the departmental or school level for a limited number of times to test its viability in the program's curriculum. An experimental course does not require university undergraduate or graduate curriculum committee approval. A course may be offered experimentally over a 2-year period to assess student interest, demand, and course appropriateness. Although an experimental course may be submitted through the regular curriculum process any time during the two-year limit, the course must be submitted through the regular curriculum process (undergraduate and/or graduate) within the 2-year limit to be offered during the third year or later. The 2-year time limit begins with the course's first offering. Failure to act in a timely fashion to remove an experimental course or to pursue the regular curriculum approval process will result in the course being removed from the class loadings by the Office of the Registrar.

## **7.3 ACADEMIC YEAR AND WORKLOAD (formerly 2.9)**

### **7.3.1 ACADEMIC YEAR<sup>20</sup> (formerly 2.9)**

The 9-month academic year consists of the Fall and Spring semesters. The academic year begins with the date for the return of faculty for Fall semester, as published in the academic calendar, and ends with the completion of the Spring semester. Nine-month faculty are employed for the entire academic year. The workload is comprised of a teaching load and other duties and expectations. Twelve-month faculty shall teach in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

### **7.3.2 TEACHING LOAD/WORKLOAD<sup>21</sup> (formerly 2.9.1)**

The standard teaching load obligation for the Fall and Spring semesters is 12 credit hours per semester for regular full-time faculty, plus other duties and responsibilities. The standard workload expectation for the Fall and Spring Semesters is 15 hours per semester. The teaching load may be adjusted at the discretion of the department head and dean to accommodate special faculty roles, graduate intensive course loads, and the needs of the university, both off and on campus. For example, a hypothetical workload adjustment might yield 9 hours teaching, 3 hours scholarly activity, and 3 hours of non-teaching assignments for a total workload of 15 hours. Examples of non-teaching assignments are noted in 2.9.2. Teaching load credit for supervising students enrolled in independent study, research, practical internship, and similar courses shall be determined by the department head with approval by the

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<sup>19</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>20</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>21</sup> Revised 06/2023

appropriate dean. Librarians performing their assigned professional duties shall be deemed to be fulfilling their teaching-load obligations.

### **7.3.3 OVERLOADS<sup>22</sup> (formerly 2.9.1.1)**

To allow faculty to concentrate their energies adequately on a reasonable teaching load, it is the policy of the university to generally avoid the use of overloads. Any arrangement for an overload must have the approval of the dean and Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### **7.3.4 OTHER DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS<sup>23</sup> (formerly 2.9.2)**

The standard non-teaching duties required of all full-time faculty include:

1. Academic advising. The responsibilities of faculty with respect to academic advising include, but are not limited to, scheduling office hours to meet advising responsibilities regardless of mode of delivery of the curriculum; assisting students in setting academic goals; informing students of curriculum requirements; maintaining appropriate records of advising; and providing, as necessary, referrals to appropriate student services.
2. Participating in meetings of the general faculty, school, and department.
3. Participating in departmental activities such as curriculum planning, departmental policy- making, evaluation procedures, library additions, program assessment, and care of instructional supplies and equipment.
4. Participating in student recruitment activities.
5. Engaging in appropriate scholarly activities.
6. Participating in community engagement and other service activities.

### **7.3.5 AVAILABILITY AND OFFICE HOURS<sup>24</sup> (formerly 2.9.3)**

As per school policy, all faculty members shall be available for consultation with students enrolled in their classes, regardless of the mode of delivery. University policy allows a department or school to adjust faculty workload by 3 hours for non-teaching assignments, e.g., committee work, class preparation, student advisement and/or consultation, or other non-teaching duties as assigned. During pre-registration advisory periods and during registration itself, faculty members shall be available for scheduled advising periods.

Each faculty member shall establish, post, and make students aware of regular and adequate office hours so distributed throughout the week as to be convenient to students. A copy of the office hours schedule is to be submitted to the department head and dean. The department head is responsible for notifying the faculty member if office hours are inadequate.

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<sup>22</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>23</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>24</sup> Revised 06/2023