

## GPA requirements for receiving graduate degree

Arkansas State University currently requires students receiving a graduate degree to have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on all graduate credits earned. Occasionally, a student will begin a degree and discover (sometimes after 12 or more hours of C grades and a suspension) that they are better suited to pursuing a different graduate degree. If accepted into the other program, they must then work to raise their cumulative GPA up to 3.0 in order to get the other degree. I believe the 3.0 level is fairly common, but don't know about all graduate credits compared to those used for the particular degree.

Questions:

What GPA is required to receive a graduate degree at your institution?

Is this GPA required on ALL graduate coursework, or only on coursework that is used to satisfy the degree requirements?

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The University at Albany, SUNY, requires a 3.0 in the coursework used to satisfy the degree requirements.

The University of Southern Maine requires a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all graduate credits earned.

North Dakota State University requires a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. This is for ALL courses, not just those on the Plan of Study. Courses in which a student receives a C may be used on the Plan of Study. However, more than 2 grades of C or lower may also be cause for dismissal.

At the University of Central Missouri we require a minimum GPA of 3.0 for a graduate degree. The GPA is cumulative and includes all graduate coursework.

NKU also has this requirement. We have instituted academic bankruptcy for graduate students which will allow them to have previous courses from date certain and before removed from the GPA although they remain transcribed. They are not allowed to cherry pick courses or semesters. We have had several instances of this. This will not work if the student had completed a degree previous to the course work to be bankrupted.

ETSU requires a minimum 3.0 GPA to earn a degree and this is for all graduate coursework and for all classes on the program of study.

[U. Wisconsin – LaCrosse] At our institution, we require a cumulative GPA of 3.0 as well similar to East Tennessee.

University of Northern Iowa - requirements for graduation:

### Overall 3.0 GPA for courses used to satisfy degree requirements

Maximum of 6 credit hours of C (C+, C, C-) in courses used to satisfy degree requirements

No credit toward graduation is allowed for courses in which the earned grade is below C-

For Ohio University:

3.0 is required. It is an all-attempts GPA, so all graduate coursework is included.

The Air Force Institute of Technology requires a cumulative GPA of 3.0 over all courses.

Like most of the other responding institutions, Towson University requires an overall GPA of 3.0 on all graduate work (allowing two Cs, as long as they are compensated with As in other courses to keep the GPA up)

However, I have been thinking recently that this policy is too limiting. The example from Andy is certainly a likely possibility. Also, a student may be misadvised or misunderstand requirements and hence take a course in error. When the error is discovered, should a low grade in that erroneous course affect his/her achievement report in the real requirements?

In a different direction, it seems we might want to encourage students to reach beyond their field occasionally to try something new without fear of endangering their program GPA. Maybe an MBA student with a science background might want to take a Biology course or computer science student might be interested in Art—since they are at the university anyway, these extra courses could broaden their minds, but if it isn't their field, they might get a low grade. That shouldn't be reflected in their degree. OR—does this just encourage students to delay their work on “frivolities”?

This is just a comment—I have floated it in my own office, but so far, we have not changed.

EKU also requires 3.0 GPA for all graduate work. We've thought about implementing a gpa requirement by program for the reasons discussed in some of the emails. One reason we haven't pursued this is because of the logistical problems of tracking a program GPA in our student records system. We use "vanilla" Banner and my understanding from the Registrar's Office is that it will only calculate a GPA for all graduate work (unless some act of god takes place). So tracking this by program would be very labor intensive, something that we could not consider given our current staff.

One thing we have done is follow our undergrad policy of allowing a student to declare "academic bankruptcy" for one semester. If a student starts out in one program, does poorly, and wishes to move to another, we can exclude some of the grades in one term, taken from the first program, from the overall GPA calculation. We've only had a few students use this but it does address some of the issues, yet is restrictive enough so that the overall gpa is still a fairly accurate reflection of the student's overall performance for all graduate work

NAU is the same as U. of N. Iowa

Bradley requires a 3.0 overall grade point upon completion of the program. They may accumulate no more than 6 hrs of C or below without dismissal.

Shirley's thoughts run along the same line as mine at Appalachian State, but from the opposite direction!

Our current policy is that academic standing is based on the program of study courses only (3.0 GPA, limit on the number of C's, no grades of F or U). This means that a student who takes courses off the program does so with no fear of penalty, even if the course is directly connected to the major -- i.e., could be used as an approved elective. There are several consequences to this, that I view as negative:

(1) Students can change their programs later with advisor approval and exchange a lower grade elective for a higher grade elective, boosting the final GPA. In fact, students can fail courses on their program provided those courses were not specifically required and their advisor agrees to change the program to include a different elective. The only proviso to this is that the graduate school will not permit substitutions for required courses once taken.

(2) Federal financial aid (which is used more and more by our grad students) is based by federal guidelines upon adequate progress in program of study courses, and it is hard to argue that courses are program of study courses if the student doesn't list them on the final approved version. Our (admittedly extremely conservative) financial aid office lives in fear of an audit showing that students received federal financial aid funding for more courses than show on the final program.

Point 2 is a big problem here for students who wish to experiment outside their fields, so it is discouraged for financial aid awardees.

We are thinking about requiring that the GPA be calculated with (and hence the program of study include) all courses required in the major \*and\* any other courses taken in the major department. This seems to meet Shirley's concerns (which I share) and eliminate some of my own.

I don't know if our Graduate Council would be willing to adopt this policy, but I hope to have this discussion this year.

At Georgia Southern University we require a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to be eligible to graduate with the Master's degree. No grades below "C" may count but a student may count "C" grades if the cum GPA is met.

The University of Hawaii has a policy that is the same as Northern Iowa.

[U. of Arizona] We allow an **academic renewal** for students changing majors: [http://catalog.arizona.edu/2009-10/policies/graduate academic renewal.htm](http://catalog.arizona.edu/2009-10/policies/graduate%20academic%20renewal.htm)

You can see our form: <http://grad.arizona.edu/academics/degree-certification/forms>