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# Academic Procedures and Requirements

## Placement Testing

All new enrollees who have not successfully completed college-level English and mathematics courses “nor scored 20 or above on the math and English portions of the ACT exams” must take the COMPASS placement test before registering for classes. This test indicates the beginning levels of math, English and reading courses.

This test allows calculator usage on the algebra portions. The following types of calculators are **not** permitted: pocket organizers, handheld or laptop computers, electronic writing pads or pen-input devices, models with a QWERTY (typewriter) keypad, and models with built-in capability to simplify algebraic expressions, multiply polynomials, or factor polynomials. Specifically prohibited models: CFX-9970G, Casio Algebra fx 2.0, TI-89, and TI-92. Any four function, scientific, or graphing calculator, except as specified, may be used.

**For placement purposes, students may re-test only once. Prior approval from the Vice President of Instruction’s office is required for retesting. There is a \$8.00 retesting fee.**

### **College Preparatory Placement**

Students who score below the standard placement score established by the College will be required to enroll in certain preparatory courses. College preparatory instruction is designed to remediate prior deficiencies in knowledge and skills judged necessary for a student to progress satisfactorily through a college level program or course of instruction. Credit earned for college preparatory courses shall not satisfy requirements for graduation in degree, certificate or diploma programs. A student may enroll in college level courses while enrolled in college preparatory courses as long as the discipline is different than the discipline in which the student scores below the standard placement score. Any student enrolled in two or more college preparatory courses shall not enroll in more than a total of 12 credit hours that semester. Any student who scores below the standard placement score and is placed into college preparatory course instruction in a given discipline must remain in such instruction in that discipline until academic deficiencies are remediated. The College shall maintain data files on each student enrolled in college preparatory courses.

## Academic Advisement

Academic advising is an extension of the educational process and is considered an essential part of the student’s educational experience. Its primary purpose is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans which are compatible with their life goals. While the academic advisor assists the student by helping identify and assess alternatives and consequences of decisions, the student has the ultimate responsibility for making these decisions.

The College maintains an advising process for the benefit of students. Every student enrolled will be assigned a faculty advisor. Each student is encouraged to discuss plans, problems, and needs with the faculty advisor. If students do not know who their advisor is, they should call Admissions at the Shoals Campus 331-5425 or the Phil Campbell Campus at 331-6227.

It is mandatory that students obtain the signature of their assigned advisor when scheduling classes. Advisors aid students in making certain that all educational requirements of both the College and their specific program are met. Advisors are available during advising days and regular office hours throughout the semester. Students should make an appointment with their advisor, prior to registering for classes each term.

Students experiencing academic difficulty or considering withdrawal from the College for any reason are encouraged to contact their advisor, counselor, advising coordinator or a dean.

## Registration

Registration dates are listed on the College Academic Calendar as well as in each semester’s class schedule. Currently enrolled students may choose to use web based or walk-in registration. The student is responsible for completing the registration process correctly and for attending classes as scheduled.

All course changes must be completed by the end of the day given as the deadline date for add/drop in the College Academic Calendar. Students may register for credit courses after the last day of add/drop only with special permission from the Vice President of Instruction or appropriate designee.

### **Walk-In Registration Procedures**

1. Obtain an advising transcript, registration form, and class schedule from the Admissions Office;
2. Make an appointment to meet with the assigned advisor. The assigned advisor’s signature must be obtained in order to complete registration, and in certain cases, the approval of the Vice President of Instruction may be required;
3. Have the class schedule processed in the Admissions Office;
4. Students will need to check schedule and if student owes money to the college it will need to be paid by deadline or schedule will be cancelled.

### **Web Based Registration Procedures**

Currently enrolled students can register on the web. Detailed procedures for this option are outlined in the class schedule published each semester.

## Maximum and Minimum Credit Hour Load

The Northwest-Shoals Community College Academic year is 32 credit hours and the normal credit hour load is 16 to 18 credit hours. Total credit hours above 19 credit hours constitutes a student overload. A student desiring to take more than 19 credit hours must obtain special permission from the Vice President of Instruction. A maximum load of 24 credit hours may be taken by a student in extraordinary circumstances and only with special permission. No student will be approved for more than 24 credit hours in any one semester for any reason. Students must have a 2.00 GPA or higher to request a course overload. The minimum load for a regular full-time student is 12 hours. A typical student will earn 32 semester hours in two semesters or 16 hours each semester (fall and spring).

## Auditing a Course

1. A student who desires to audit a course must be admitted to the College and meet the pre-requisites of that course, or have the permission of the instructor;
2. **The student's intent to audit a course must be made at the time of registration.** The Registrar will designate on the class roll that the student is auditing the course. "AU" is assigned upon completion of the course and will appear on the official transcript;
3. The student who audits a course will complete the same course work as students who register for credit with the exception of tests and examinations;
4. Once the grade of "AU" has been established, it will not be changed.
5. The cost of auditing a course is the same as that for taking a course for credit.

## Cancellation of Classes

Every effort is made to insure that courses and programs described in the College Catalog are offered to students in an appropriate and reasonable sequence. Students should be aware, however, that admission to the College or registration for a given semester does not guarantee the availability of a specific course. Course availability is determined by student demand and instructor availability. Northwest-Shoals Community College reserves the right to cancel or modify any class scheduled.

## Schedule Changes

### **Adding or Dropping a Course (Add/Drop)**

Students may make schedule changes during the designated Add/Drop period by:

1. Obtaining proper forms from the Admissions Office.
2. Obtaining the signature of appropriate instructor(s) in courses added/or dropped.
3. Having the form processed in the Admissions Office.

**Students may not add classes after the end of the Add/Drop period without approval of the Vice President of Instruction and the instructor for each course to be added.**

Students adding a course after the Add/Drop period must pay tuition and fees for the course (or courses) added.

### **Withdrawal from a Course**

A student who is unable to complete a course is expected to withdraw from that course by proper withdrawal procedures in the Admissions Office.

A grade of "W" will be assigned for the course, provided that withdrawal is prior to the end of the first 60 percent (60%) of the semester. The date at which the 60 percent time frame ends will be published in each semester class schedule. This grade will have no affect on the student's GPA. The grade of "W" is allowed regardless of the student's grades to the point of withdrawal. This withdrawal may only be done by student request.

For withdrawals after the first 60 percent of the semester, a grade of "WP" (Withdrawal Passing), or "WF" (Withdrawal Failing), based on the student's grades to the point of withdrawal, will be assigned for the course by the instructor. Credit hours for the course will not be averaged into the student's GPA if a grade of "WP" is obtained. Credit hours will be averaged into the student's GPA if a grade of "WF" is obtained. The latter has the same effect on the GPA as a grade of "F".

Students receiving financial aid should consider the impact of their withdrawal on their financial aid status before withdrawal from a course.

**Withdrawal from a class will not be approved after final exams begin.**

### **Withdrawal from College**

A student may initiate withdrawal upon request at any time during the term by obtaining the proper forms from the Admissions Office and completing the forms according to the instructions given. The official withdrawal date will be the date these forms are completed and submitted to the Cashier's Office on the Shoals or Phil Campbell Campuses.

A grade of "W" will be assigned as the final grade if a student withdraws during the first 60 percent (60%) of the semester. The date at which the first 60 percent time frame ends will be published in each semester class schedule.

For withdrawals after the first 60 percent of the semester, the determination of "WP" (Withdrawal Passing) or "WF" (Withdrawal Failing) will be made based on the student's grades at the time of withdrawal. **Failure to follow formal procedures for withdrawal will result in a grade of "F" for all courses in which the student is registered. A grade of "WP" may not be assigned after final exams begin.**

Credit hours will not be averaged into the student's GPA if a grade of "WP" is obtained. Credit hours will be averaged into the student's GPA if a grade of "WF" is obtained. The "WF" has the same effect on the GPA as a grade of "F".

Students receiving financial aid should consider the impact of their withdrawal on their financial aid status before withdrawal from college.

### Administrative Withdrawal From a Course or From College

A student may be withdrawn administratively from any course for:

1. Failure to complete College registration properly.
2. Failure to fulfill a financial obligation to the College.
3. Failure to fulfill conditions of registration in those cases in which a student was admitted on conditions.
4. Failure to fulfill other conditions of admission and/or registration.
5. Failure to meet standards of progress requirements.
6. Failure to attend class during the first week of the semester, if the student is receiving a Federal Pell Grant or Federal Stafford Loan.

## Grading System

Each course for which a student has registered must be assigned one of the letter grades as follows. The numerical scale applies to all courses except NUR, LPN, and EMS.

Grade Definition	Numerical Scale	Quality Points
A Excellent	(90-100)	4 points
B Good	(80-89)	3 points
C Average	(70-79)	2 points
D Poor	(60-69)	1 point
F Failure	(below 60)	0 points
S Satisfactory		0 points
U Unsatisfactory		0 points
IP In Progress		0 points
I Incomplete. Class work must be made up no later than the end of the following semester or the grade automatically becomes an F.		0 points
AU Audit. Course taken for non-credit. Credit hours will not be averaged into the GPA. Must be declared by the end of the registration period and may not be changed thereafter.		0 points
W Official withdrawal from a course within a time period designated by the College, but not to exceed 60 percent of the semester time or withdrawal from the College within a time period designated by the College. Credit hours will not be averaged into the GPA.		0 points
WP Official withdrawal from a course after the time period designated by the College for receipt of "W" grade. The student must be passing at the time of withdrawal. Credit hours will not be averaged into the GPA.		0 points
WF Official withdrawal from a course after the time period designated by the College for receipt of "W" grade and which the student is failing at the time of withdrawal. Credit hours will be averaged into the GPA.		0 points

Satisfactory grades are "A," "B," and "C". While a grade of "D" is considered passing at the College, senior colleges and universities may not grant credit for a course in which the student has made a grade of "D".

A final grade of "I" may be assigned if a student fails to complete all course requirements because of illness or other extenuating circumstances that occur near the close of a term, preventing a student whose performance has otherwise been satisfactory from completing the requirements of a course. Unless extenuating circumstances are present, a student's failure to submit required work when it is due does not provide a basis for the grade of "I". In such cases, a grade of "F" is usually appropriate. **A grade of "WP" may not be assigned after final exams begin.**

## Final Exams

Final exams are administered in all courses. They are to be given during the dates scheduled or the last scheduled class meeting for the course. Requests for permission to take or to give final exams early must be approved by the Vice President of Instruction in writing.

In cases where early exams are permitted, it is expected that all course requirements will be met and/or appropriate additional assignments be completed to account for the time missed.

If a student fails to report for a final exam without known cause, the grade to be reported should be determined as follows: If the student has done satisfactory work to that point, a grade of "I" may be reported on the assumption that the student is ill or will otherwise present sufficient reason for an official excuse. If the student's work has been unsatisfactory to that point, the grade of "F" should be reported. A grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F" unless it is removed during the next semester.

## Grade Appeal

It is preferred that all grade appeals be handled in an informal manner between the student and the instructor. If the discussion between the two does not result in a resolution, a formal grade appeal may be initiated.

The grade appeal procedure must be initiated by the end of the drop/add period of the term following the term in which the grade was awarded. There can be no formal grade appeal for any grade other than a final grade; however, lab grades, project grades, tests, and other assignments which may adversely affect the final grade may be appealed by the student.

Since the first level of appeal is between the student and the instructor of the course, it is necessary that the student confer with the instructor to gain understanding of the procedure used in awarding the grade. Preferably any disagreement will be resolved at this level. If a resolution is impossible at this level, the student may make a formal grade appeal to the Division Chairperson. The student should obtain a form from the office of the Vice President of Instruction to formally request a grade appeal.

Upon completion of the Grade Appeal form, the student should return the form to the Vice President of Instruction. The Vice President of Instruction will then inform the Division Chairperson of the appeal and will request that the Chairperson meet with the student to discuss the problem. If the matter can be resolved at this level, it should be done in writing on the Grade Appeal form. If no resolution is reached, the student will meet with the Grade Appeal Committee. This committee is selected by the Division Chairperson to hear this appeal only. (If the Division Chairperson is the instructor of the course, the Vice President of Instruction will appoint another Division Chairperson to handle the Grade Appeal Committee.)

The committee will be headed by the Division Chairperson or his/her designee and will consist, if possible, of at least one faculty member from the discipline of the course in dispute. All committees should consist of no fewer than three faculty members. The committee will be objective and even-handed as it reviews the grade appeal.

The committee may request any documentation necessary from the student and/or the instructor. The committee will interview the student and may wish to interview the instructor. Based on the findings from the information and the interview, the committee will make a formal recommendation to the Vice President of Instruction.

The Vice President of Instruction may accept the recommendation, request further information, or reject the committee's recommendation. In all cases, the Vice President of Instruction will inform the student in writing of the findings.

## Class Attendance Policy

Because class attendance is considered to be essential to the accomplishment of course objectives, excessive absences, more than 20% of the class meetings for a course, are discouraged. These absences also include any absences accrued during late registration. Failure to adhere to the 20% policy may result in a failing grade based on academic performance. Any variation of this policy must be approved through the Vice President of Instruction. A student who is absent due to required participation in a school activity must be allowed to make up work, according to guidelines issued by individual instructors.

## Excused Absences

The only excused absences that the College recognizes are absences from classes due to students representing the College in some official capacity such as a scholarly competition sponsored by the College, or attending documented required military duties. Absences are excused only with written permission of the Vice President of Instruction. Students are responsible for making prior arrangements for class assignments.

## The Semester System

The academic year is divided into two semesters of approximately sixteen weeks and a summer term of eleven weeks. Credit is awarded based on standard criteria of hours students receive instruction in a semester.

### **Quality Points and Grade Point Average - GPA**

- A - 4 quality points per hour
- B - 3 quality points per hour
- C - 2 quality points per hour
- D - 1 quality point per hour
- F - 0 quality points per hour

The student's scholastic standing or GPA is obtained by dividing the total number of quality points earned by the total number of semester hours attempted for which the grades of A, B, C, D, or F are assigned.

## Standards of Academic Progress: General

Required GPA levels for students according to number of hours attempted at the College.

A student will attain clear academic status provided he or she:

1. Attempts 12-21 credit hours and maintains a 1.5 GPA or
2. Attempts 22-32 credit hours and maintains a 1.75 GPA or
3. Attempts 33 or more credit hours and maintains a 2.0 GPA

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** - The grade point average based on all hours attempted during any one semester at the College based on a 4-point scale.

**Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)** - The grade point average based on all hours attempted at the College based on a 4-point scale.

**Clear Academic Status** - The status of a student whose GPA is at or above the level required by this policy for the number of credit hours attempted at the College.

**Academic Probation** - The status of a student whose Cumulative GPA falls below the level required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College; or the status of a student who was on Academic Probation the previous semester and whose Cumulative GPA for that semester remained below the level required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College but whose GPA for that semester was at least 2.0.

**One Semester Academic Suspension** - The status of a student who was on Academic Probation the previous semester but who has never been suspended or who, since suspension, had achieved Clear Academic Status and whose Cumulative GPA that semester was below the level required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College and whose GPA for that semester was below 2.0.

**One Year Academic Suspension** - The status of a student who was on Academic Probation the previous semester and who had been previously suspended without since having achieved Clear Academic Status and whose Cumulative GPA that semester remained below the level required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College and whose GPA for that semester was below 2.0.

**Appeal of Suspension** - The process by which the College shall allow a student suspended for one semester or one year (whether "native" student or a transfer student) to request readmission without having to serve the suspension.

### **Intervention for Student Success**

When a student is placed on academic probation, one-semester academic suspension, or one calendar year academic suspension, college officials may provide intervention for the student by taking steps including, but not limited to, imposing maximum course loads, requiring a study skills course, and/or prescribing other specific courses.

## Application of Standards of Progress:

1. When the Cumulative GPA is at or above the GPA required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College, the student's status is **Clear**.
2. When a student's Cumulative GPA is below the GPA required for the number of credit hours attempted at the College, the student is placed on **Academic Probation**.
3. When the Cumulative GPA of a student who is on Academic Probation remains below the GPA required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College but the semester GPA is 2.0 or above, the student remains on **Academic Probation**.

When the Cumulative GPA of a student who is on Academic Probation remains below the GPA required for the total number of credit hours attempted at the College and the semester GPA is below 2.0; the student is suspended for one semester. The transcript will read **SUSPENDED-ONE SEMESTER**.

4. The student who is suspended for one semester may appeal. If, after appeal, the student is readmitted without serving the one semester suspension, the transcript will read **SUSPENDED-ONE SEMESTER/READMITTED UPON APPEAL**. The student who is readmitted upon appeal re-enters on Academic Probation.
5. A student who is on Academic Probation after being suspended for one semester (whether the student has served the suspension or has been readmitted upon appeal) without having since achieved Clear academic status and whose Cumulative GPA falls below the level required for the total number of hours attempted at the College but whose semester GPA is 2.0 or above will remain on Academic Probation until the student achieves the required GPA for the total number of hours attempted.
6. A student returning from a one semester or one year suspension and, while on academic probation, fails to obtain the required GPA for the number of hours attempted and fails to maintain a semester GPA of 2.0, will be placed on a **one year suspension**.
7. A student may appeal a one semester or one year suspension. The permanent student record will reflect the student's status (except when the status is clear). When appropriate, the record will reflect **ACADEMIC PROBATION, ACADEMIC SUSPENSION-ONE TERM, ACADEMIC PROBATION-ONE YEAR, ONE TERM SUSPENSION-READMITTED ON APPEAL, or ONE YEAR SUSPENSION-READMITTED ON APPEAL**.

### **Process for Appeal for Readmission**

If a student declares no contest of the facts leading to suspension but simply wishes to request consideration for readmission, the student may submit a request in writing for an "appeal for readmission" to the Director of Admissions no later than the close of open registration (see College Catalog or Semester Course Schedules for dates). During the meeting of the Admissions Committee, which shall not be considered a "due process" hearing but rather a petition for readmission,

the student shall be given an opportunity to present a rationale and/or statement of mitigating circumstances in support of immediate readmission. The decision of the Admissions Committee, together with the materials presented by the student, shall be placed in the College's official records. Additionally, a copy of the written decision shall be provided to the student. Equity, reasonableness, and consistency should be the standards by which such decisions are measured. If the student is readmitted without serving the one semester suspension or the one calendar year suspension, the transcript will read **SUSPENDED-ONE SEMESTER** or **ONE YEAR/READMITTED UPON APPEAL**.

## Standards of Academic Progress: Transfer Students

1. A transfer student who is admitted on Clear academic status is subject to the same standards of academic progress as a "native" student. Grades accrued at other regionally accredited postsecondary institutions are not included in GPA calculation.
2. A transfer student who is admitted on Academic Probation retains that status until the student has attempted at least 12 credit hours at the College. If, at the conclusion of the term in which the student has attempted a total of 12 or more credit hours at the College, the Cumulative GPA is below 1.5, the student is suspended for one term. The transcript will read **SUSPENDED—ONE SEMESTER**.
3. If, at the conclusion of the semester in which the transfer student admitted on Academic Probation has attempted a total of 12 or more credit hours at the College, the Cumulative GPA is 1.5 or above, the student's status is Clear.

## Course Repetition Policy

Any course for which the student has previously registered may be repeated. When a course is repeated, only the last grade awarded is included in calculating the Cumulative GPA for graduation purposes. However, a course may be counted only once toward fulfillment of credit hours for graduation.

## Course Forgiveness Policy

If a student repeats a course, the last grade awarded (excluding grades of W and WP) replaces the previous grade in the computation of the Cumulative GPA. The GPA during the semester in which the course was first attempted will not be affected. (The initial grade is not removed from the transcript.)

When a course is repeated more than once, all grades for the course - excluding the first grade - will be used in computation of the Cumulative GPA. Official records at the College will list each course in which a student has enrolled.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the Registrar of a repeated grade since recognition of a repeat grade is not automatic.

**NOTE:** Nursing and other programs may have special provisions for course repetition, as approved by the Chancellor. Students planning to transfer to another institution should contact that institution regarding this policy.

## Academic Bankruptcy Policy

1. A student may request in writing to the Registrar to declare academic bankruptcy under the following conditions:
  - (a) If fewer than three (3) calendar years have elapsed since the term for which the student wishes to declare bankruptcy, the student may declare academic bankruptcy on all coursework taken during that one term provided the student has successfully completed a minimum of 30 quarter or 18 semester credit hours of coursework at the College since the bankruptcy occurred. All coursework taken, even hours completed satisfactorily, during the term for which academic bankruptcy term is declared will be disregarded in the Cumulative GPA;
  - (b) If three (3) or more calendar years have elapsed since the most recent term for which the student wishes to declare bankruptcy, the student may declare academic bankruptcy on all coursework taken during 1-3 terms, provided the student has taken a minimum of 30 quarter or 18 semester credit hours of coursework at the College since the bankruptcy term occurred. All coursework taken, even hours completed satisfactorily, during term(s) for which academic bankruptcy is declared will be disregarded in the Cumulative GPA.
2. When academic bankruptcy is declared, the term "ACADEMIC BANKRUPTCY" will be reflected on the transcript for each term affected. When academic bankruptcy is declared, the transcript will reflect the term of its implementation and the transcript will be stamped "ACADEMIC BANKRUPTCY IMPLEMENTED."
3. A student may declare academic bankruptcy only once.
4. Implementation of academic bankruptcy at the College does not guarantee that other institutions will approve such action. This determination will be made by the respective transfer institutions.

## Student Records Policy

As Provided By Public Law 93-380, Protection of Rights of Privacy of Parents and Students, Northwest-Shoals Community College maintains information about students which facilitates educational development of the student and effective administration of the College in order to guarantee the rights of privacy and access as provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The College has formulated the following policies and procedures:

### **A. General Policy**

It is the policy of Northwest-Shoals Community College that all student records are maintained for **five years** after the student graduates or leaves the institution. Records are then stored in a fireproof alphabetical filing system in the records room at each campus and only the official permanent record (official application for admission, official transcript containing grades and credit and other official transcripts/GED) is maintained. Other information contained in the student record is destroyed in keeping with the State Record Manual published by the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. No information from records, files, or other data directly related to a student, other than public information

defined below, shall be disclosed to individuals or agencies outside the College without the written consent of the student, except pursuant to a lawful subpoena or court order, or except in the case of educational or governmental officials as provided by law. Information contained in such records may be shared within the College.

Students shall have access to all such information with the exceptions set out below in accordance with the procedure outlined within this policy statement.

#### **B. Definition of Student**

For the purpose of this policy, a "student" is defined as, "any individual currently or previously enrolled in any course(s) offered by the College."

#### **C. Definition of Educational Records**

Student educational records are defined as those records, files, documents, and other material which contain information directly related to students. Records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel which are the sole possession of the maker and accessible only to the maker or a substitute are specifically excluded from this definition of educational records.

Records which are made or maintained by institutional counselors or other professionals or paraprofessionals, and which are maintained in connection with personal treatment or personal counseling, and are not available to anyone not involved officially within the College, are also excluded from a student's educational records. Such records, however, are available to a physician or appropriate professional of the student's choice, if requested.

#### **D. Public Information**

The following is a list of public information which may be made available by the College without prior consent of the student and is considered part of the public record of the student's attendance:

1. Student's name
2. Student's address (local and permanent)
3. Student's telephone number
4. Date and place of birth of student
5. Major field of study
6. Student's participation in officially recognized activities, clubs, organizations, and weight and height of members of athletic institution teams
7. Dates of attendance of student
8. Degrees and awards received by student
9. The institution most recently previously attended by the student

If any student has an objection to any of the aforementioned information being released during any given term or academic year, the student should notify, in person or in writing, the Director of Admissions.

#### **E. Location of Individuals Responsible for Student Records**

The College has designated the following officials as being responsible for students' records within their respective areas:

**Director of Admissions** - The Director of Admissions will see that all students upon acceptance to the institution will have an individual student record file containing all admissions criteria needed for acceptance to the institution. The Director of Admissions is charged with the responsibility of continuously maintaining all students' files in a safe and orderly manner, updating all records needed on the individual student, and updating and maintaining an adequate backup system for all student records.

**Chief Fiscal Officer** - The Chief Fiscal Officer will have the responsibility of seeing that all provisions as set forth in this policy are applied to the release of financial information concerning individual students.

#### **F. Disclosure of Student Records to the Student**

The student is accorded the right to inspect, in the presence of the appropriate official, as stated in section "E" of this policy statement, records, files, and data primarily and directly related to the student. In order to inspect one's file, the student should go to the office of the appropriate official and present a valid photo identification and initiate a written request. If the named student cannot personally appear, the student must submit a notarized request to the appropriate official. The request for inspection shall be granted within forty-five (45) days of the time of the receipt of the request by the College. If, in the opinion of the appropriate official, inspection can reasonably be accomplished only by providing copies of documents, such copies shall be made and provided to the student. The right of inspection does not include financial statements of parents, confidential recommendations placed in the file prior to January 1, 1975, other confidential recommendations, nor access to items waived by the student in accordance with paragraph H.

#### **G. Challenging the Contents of the Record**

The College will respond to any reasonable request for an explanation or interpretation of any item in a student's file. Requests for such explanation or interpretation should be addressed in writing to the appropriate official.

If, after inspecting a record, a student wishes to challenge any part of the file's content, a written request for a hearing should be addressed to the President, who will set a date and time for the hearing within forty-five (45) days of receiving the written request.

The request for a hearing should identify the item or items in the file to be challenged and state the grounds for challenge, i.e., inaccuracy, misleading nature, inappropriateness. The President, with the appropriate records official as stated in section E, shall examine the contested item(s) in the file and shall examine any documents or hear any testimony the student wishes to present. The President and the records official may decide that the items should be retained or that they should be deleted or altered. There may be a decision

that the material is accurate and appropriate but that the student should be allowed to place a written explanation in the file. The President shall issue a written decision within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the hearing.

#### H. Waiver of Access

The College may request that a student waive his/her right to inspect confidential recommendations regarding that student's application for admission, application for employment, the receipt of an honor, or other recognition. If a student receives a request for waiver, the student may sign and return the waiver, may request a list of names of persons who will be asked for recommendations before signing, or may refuse to waive the right to access.

Such a waiver shall not be a condition for admission to the institution, financial aid assistance, or any other benefits received by students at the College.

#### I. Providing Records to Third Parties

The general policy of the College is to refuse access to a student's records to third parties without the written consent of the individual student. Should a student wish to have such records released, a written request must be directed to the proper official specifying the records to be released, the person to whom records are to be released, and a request for copies to the student, if desired. The College will then transfer or grant access to the information. The established service fee for producing photocopies of records will be assessed against the person whose record is involved.

Transcripts are not provided for noncredit courses. A student's records may be available to the following persons under conditions noted without written consent of the student:

1. School officials including administrators, instructors, department heads, counselors, and staff designated by such persons within the College who have a legitimate educational interest.
2. Official representatives of federal departments or agencies, or state education authorities for purpose of audits, evaluative studies, etc. Data collected will be protected to prevent personal identification except when specifically authorized by federal law. The data or copies that may be on file at the College will be destroyed when no longer needed.
3. Financial aid officers when such information is relevant to financial aid needs analysis or other aspects of determining and/or renewing financial assistance to the individual student.
4. Release of educational records of deceased students may only be released to the student's parents or the executor/executrix of the deceased student's estate. A record of requests for access, the legitimate interest involved, and action taken will be placed in the student's file for all requests of the file, except those from school officials as noted in paragraph one above. Inspection of individual student records, other than by the personnel noted in paragraph one above, will be supervised by the appropriate official or designee. The student's record shall not be taken from the designated official's office area.

5. Officials of other educational or governmental agencies based on the case of need.

#### J. Student Issued Records

The Records Office must have a written request from the student to receive a personal copy or to have a transcript sent to another college, agency, place of employment, etc. OFFICIAL copies of transcripts must be mailed by the Records Office. An unofficial copy is defined as a copy that does not bear the official seal of the College, but is otherwise a true copy when released by the College records official. Records officials will not copy or otherwise reproduce copies of official student transcripts and other information obtained from transfer students as official transcript requirements.

The Records Office honors FAX requests to send official transcripts to third parties, and will accept FAX transcripts for advising purposes only. The following information is needed to process your request.

1. Full Name (maiden/other names)
2. Date of birth
3. Social Security Number
4. Approximate dates of attendance at Northwest-Shoals Community College
5. Complete mailing address to whom the transcript is to be released
6. Signature required and copy of photo ID
7. Official transcripts cannot be faxed

Requests are normally processed within 48 hours. There may be longer delays during registration periods and end of semester processing.

Students who have ceased attendance or have graduated from the College have basically the same FERPA rights as students currently attending.

#### K. Changes in the Policy

This policy statement is subject to change by additional federal regulations or court decisions that may modify and/or negate any portion of the regulations in Public Law 93-380. This statement of policy will be published in the future in appropriate college publications. To provide additional notice of the policy, copies will be posted on bulletin boards on all campuses of the College.

## Credit from Non-Traditional Sources

The College provides an opportunity for students to earn a reasonable amount of credit toward the associate degree through methods other than formal classroom instruction.

While non-traditional credit applies toward degrees granted by the College, it should not be assumed that such credit will automatically be accepted by other institutions. Students are advised to consult a counselor to obtain information regarding policies at other institutions. A maximum of 25 percent of credit toward any degree may be earned from non-traditional sources.

The types of non-traditional credit and procedures are listed below:

### **A. Course Credit by Departmental Challenge Examination**

Students may be awarded credit for documented competencies and previous formal training by demonstrating their competencies on departmental challenge exams. These departmental exams are generally used as credit for experience or as credit earned in programs at area vocational schools. These departmental exams are not available for core courses in Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degrees.

The guidelines and procedures for obtaining credit by departmental examination are:

1. The maximum number of semester hours a student can challenge is 9.
2. A student may not challenge a lower level course in a sequence in which he/she has passed a higher level course in the sequence.
3. A student cannot challenge a course he/she has already completed.
4. Prerequisites for a course must be completed before the course may be challenged.
5. A course may be challenged only once.
6. The student must register and pay for the course he/she is planning to challenge.
7. The student must make arrangements within the first five (5) HOURS of class meeting time (i.e. within first week for a M-F class; within the first two (2) class meetings for M-W or T-TH classes) with the division chairperson to challenge a course.
8. The student must attend class until the results of the challenge examination are determined.
9. The challenge examination results should be made known to the student within three (3) school days of the administration of the examination (to allow for schedule alteration if desired and possible).
10. A student cannot withdraw from the class after taking the challenge exam.

11. The challenge examination grade will serve as the course grade. The student may remain in the challenged course and complete the course for a second course grade. If this occurs, the instructor will complete a change of grade form reflecting the new grade. This will replace the earlier grade on the student's transcript.

12. Challenge examinations will be constructed by full-time faculty teaching within the challenged area, securely maintained in the division office; administered by the division office; graded, on a rotating basis, by full-time faculty teaching in the area challenged.

For more information, contact the appropriate divisional chairperson.

### **B. Specialized Military Training**

The College adheres to policies prescribed by the "Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services" in granting credit for military course work. The student should consult the Director of Admissions for information regarding the type and amount of credit which can be granted. United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI/DANTES) Credit earned under the auspices of USAFI/DANTES may be granted by the College. The policy which applies to the CLEP program also applies to USAFI/DANTES credit. Consult the Director of Admissions for a full evaluation of USAFI/DANTES credit.

### **C. Advanced Placement**

Students who have completed college-level courses offered by high schools through the CEEB Advanced Placement Program and who have passed the National Examinations of the CEEB Advanced Placement Program with a score of three (3) or higher will be awarded advanced placement credit in the equivalent courses at the College. Advanced Placement scores must be received for CEEB after the student applies for admission but prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student wants the credit to be applied. It is the student's responsibility to have the College Entrance Examination Board forward reports to the College Office of Admissions. The student should be aware that some universities may require a score of four (4) for advanced placement. Acceptance of a score of three (3) by the College will not assure that the senior institution will award advanced credit for the course credit through advanced placement by the College. A maximum of 20 semester hours credit may be awarded by state community and junior colleges.

### **D. Articulated Credit**

Articulation is a planned process that allows a high school student enrolled in certain Occupational/Technical Programs, the opportunity to progress from secondary to postsecondary in a sequential manner without duplication of instruction. Students may receive up to one semester of postsecondary course credit for skills and theory received at another school. Applicants seeking credit transfer from high school should contact the Occupational Program Instructor or contact the Admissions Office at the College for specific instructions.

**E. College Level Examination Program**

(CLEP) is a National System of credit by examination. The College is an open test center.

The College honors credit earned through CLEP examinations provided appropriate scores are achieved and certain conditions are met. A minimum score at or above the 50th percentile on both general examinations and subject examinations is required for specific course credit.

Any elective credit earned by nontraditional means may apply toward the total number of hours required for graduation but may not apply toward specific requirements in particular subject area. For example, elective credit in English will not meet degree requirements of composition or literature.

Credit for SUBJECT EXAMINATIONS is granted provided the student has not been enrolled for more than one week in the course for which credit is to be earned. CLEP credit is not granted for college level courses previously failed, for courses in which credit for higher level course work has been earned, or for both subject examination and its course equivalent.

The policy of granting credit through CLEP at the College may differ from policies at other colleges. CLEP Tests are administered by appointment. Tests will not be scheduled during final exams or official registration dates. For more information, contact a counselor at the College, or go to [www.collegeboard.com/clep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clep)

**F. Biology Placement Examination**

The state of Alabama has developed a Placement Exam for the Biology Department. The exam is an internet based 75 question multiple choice placement test which covers the objectives of BIO 103. Students who must take BIO 104 to satisfy degree requirements will not be allowed to substitute the test for the BIO 103 pre-requisite course.

A student who passes this examination may proceed directly to BIO 201. For information on this exam, contact the Science Department Chairperson, or the Division Chairperson.

**“CLEP” Subject Examinations (50th Percentile)**

<b>Examinations</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Course Equivalencies and Credit Awarded</b>	
American Government	50	POL SCI 211	3 Hours
American History I	50	HIS 201	3 Hours
American History II	50	HIS 202	3 Hours
American Literature	50	ENG 251, 252	6 Hours
Biology	50	BIO 103	4 Hours
Calculus with Elementary Functions	50	MTH 125	3 Hours
College Algebra	50	MTH 115	3 Hours
College Composition (with essay)	50	ENG 101, 102	6 Hours
Computers and Data Processing	50	CIS 146	3 Hours
Developmental Psychology	50	PSY 210	3 Hours
English Literature	50	ENG 261, 262	6 Hours
General Chemistry	50	CHM 113, 114	6 Hours
General Psychology	50	PSY 200	3 Hours
Introduction to Business Management	50	BUS 275	3 Hours
Introduction to Accounting.	50	BUS 241	3 Hours
Introduction to Business Law	50	BUS 263	3 Hours
Introduction to Macroeconomics	50	ECO 231	3 Hours
Introduction to Microeconomics	50	ECO 232	3 Hours
Introduction to Micro and Macro	50	ECO 231, 232	6 Hours
Introduction to Marketing	50	BUS 285	3 Hours
Introduction to Sociology	50	SOC 200	3 Hours
Spanish I	50	SPA 101	4 Hours
Spanish II	50	SPA 102	4 Hours
Western Civilization I	50	HIS 101	3 Hours
Western Civilization II	50	HIS 102	3 Hours
Principles of Management	50	BUS 275	3 Hours

## **Honors**

The College recognizes scholastic achievement by publishing the President's List and the Dean's List at the end of each regular semester.

The President's List includes the names of students carrying twelve or more hours who have a GPA of 4.0. Developmental courses carrying grades of A-F will be calculated in the term GPA, but will not count toward the minimum course load requirement for honors purposes.

The Dean's List includes the names of students carrying twelve or more hours who have a GPA of 3.5 or above but below 4.0. Developmental courses carrying grades of A-F will be calculated in the semester GPA but will not count toward the minimum course load requirement for honors purposes.

### **Academic Honors Upon Graduation**

Academic honors will be awarded annually to the three students achieving the highest Cumulative GPA as follows:

Highest Academic Achievement in a Degree Program  
Highest Academic Achievement in a Certificate Program

These awards can be presented only to students having a GPA of 3.75 or higher on all college work. Awards for certificate programs will be made only for programs which are one year or longer. Duplicate awards will be made if necessary.

The attainment of the following Cumulative GPA at the end of the spring term prior to spring graduation entitles the graduating students to honors at the Honor's Day Program.

### **Graduation Honors for Degrees**

Superior academic achievement by graduating students shall be recognized by the following designations on transcripts:

Graduation with Highest Honors  
(or Summa Cum Laude) ..... 3.90 to 4.00 GPA

Graduation with High Honors  
(or Magna Cum Laude) ..... 3.70 to 3.89 GPA

Graduation with Honors  
(or Cum Laude) ..... 3.50 to 3.69 GPA

### **Graduation Honors for Certificates**

Graduation with Distinction ..... 3.5 to 4.00 GPA

NOTE: Calculation of the GPA for graduation honors shall be identical to that method used to calculate the GPA to fulfill graduation requirements for the degree, diploma, or certificate being earned. In addition, in order to be eligible for a graduation honor, the student must have completed a minimum of 32 semester credit hours of college-level courses at the College.

## **Graduation Requirements**

The College awards the Associate in Arts, the Associate in Science, the Associate in Applied Science and the Associate in Occupational Technology Degrees, and certificates for nondegree programs.

### **Degrees**

The Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees are awarded to students who complete planned university parallel programs and the General Education Minimum Requirements as outlined in this catalog.

A majority of the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Degree Programs are designed for those students who plan to transfer to four-year institutions and pursue programs of study requiring little specialization on the freshman and sophomore levels. Substitutions to degree requirements in these programs are possible to afford maximum course transfer to a specific institution. All substitutions must be recommended by the advisor and approved by the appropriate Department Head or Division Chairperson and the Vice President of Instruction.

The Associate in Applied Science Degree is awarded to students who satisfy the requirements of a specific career, technical, or occupational degree program as outlined in this catalog.

The Associate in Occupational Technology Degree may be awarded to students who satisfy the requirements in both a primary and secondary technical specialty.

### **Degree Requirements**

1. Meet program requirements. Each student will determine program requirements from the College catalog. (Students who maintain continuous enrollment excluding summer term may elect either to meet graduation requirements specified in the original catalog in effect when they entered, or they may elect to meet graduation requirements listed in the catalog in effect at the time they apply for graduation. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment may use the catalog in effect at the point of readmission or the one in effect at the time they apply for graduation to determine graduation requirements.)
2. Earn a Cumulative GPA of 2.0 in all courses attempted at the College. The calculation of the GPA for graduation shall not include grades earned in "institutional only" credit courses. When a course (other than one which can be repeated for credit) has been repeated, only the most recent attempt will be used in calculating the Cumulative GPA for graduation. However, a course may be counted only once for purposes of meeting graduation requirements, unless specifically noted in the course description.
3. Complete at least 25 percent (25%) of degree requirements at the College. Transfer students who are admitted on probation must complete at least 30 hours at the College.
4. Complete all graduation application requirements within one calendar year of the last day of the last term of attendance.

5. Complete the graduation exit conference and/or assessment.
6. Clear all procedural, operational, and financial obligations to the College.

### Occupational and General Certificate Requirements

Graduation requirements for certificate programs are the same as those described for degrees, with the exception of Item 2. In order to graduate from certificate programs, students must complete all program requirements as outlined. Course substitutions are made only with the approval of the Department Head or Division Chairperson and the Vice President of Instruction.

### Multiple Degrees or Certificates

Students may apply and receive more than one degree or certificate with the following stipulations:

1. **Only one transfer degree** (Associate in Arts - AA or Associate in Science - AS) will be awarded;
2. All program-specific courses must be completed for each Associate in Occupational Technology Degree and Associate in Applied Science Degree awarded. Required general education courses (orientation, English, Speech, math, science, etc.) may be used for multiple degrees.
3. The cost for a second degree will be \$17.50.
4. The cost for reprinting a degree will be \$17.50.

### Procedures for Applying for Graduation and Processing Graduation Applications

#### I. Due Dates:

Applications for graduation need to be filled out by an advisor and paid in the Cashier's Office, before the Vice President of Instruction's Office receives them on or before the eighth week, mid-term, or the semester preceding the term in which students expect to complete all certificate or degree requirements.

1. The Vice President of Instruction will include notices as to when graduation applications are due in the class schedule each term. Notices will also be placed on bulletin boards on each campus.
2. Graduation applications (if submitted after the registration period of the term in which the applicant expects to complete graduation requirements) **MUST** have prior approval by an advisor and the Vice President of Instruction.
3. The Business Office or Bookstore **WILL NOT ACCEPT** graduation fees for the current term after the registration period without the signature of the Advisor.
4. By the end of the last final exam day prior to graduation all financial obligations need to be cleared, and all books and athletic supplies need to be returned.

#### II. Student Responsibilities:

Students are responsible for obtaining and filling out the forms and completing the process of applying for graduation. Faculty and staff have the responsibility to encourage and assist students in completing these procedures.

1. Pick up a Graduation Application, Program Award Planning Form, and attach a copy of your transcripts from either your advisor or the Admissions Office. (All three of these forms **MUST** be filed with the Office of the Vice President of Instruction to complete the application process).
2. Meet with an advisor to complete the Program Award Planning Form and/or perform a Graduation Audit to verify completion of requirements for program of study. Each program has been designed to meet specific requirements and any substitutions or changes that deviate from the student's Program Award Planning Form must be approved by the Vice President of Instruction's office.
3. Have the advisor designate the degree and official name of the program, sign, and date the Graduation Audit and/or Program Award Planning Form.
4. Take the completed application forms to the cashier's office to pay the graduation fee of \$35.00 for the first degree/certificate and \$17.50 for each additional degrees/certificates. The cost for reprinting a degree is \$17.50. The Business Office or Bookstore will write the date and receipt number on the bottom page of the application form. **There will be no refund on graduation fees.**
5. The Cashier's Office will promptly submit the completed application "packet" (with forms) to the Vice President of Instruction's office. Degrees/certificates will be mailed **approximately eight weeks** after each semester ends.

Any student who applies for graduation after the semester has ended will automatically become a perspective graduate of the next semester.

**Notes**