Curriculum and Classroom Policies

Course Information

Course Numbering System

Each course offered by The University of Texas at El Paso is identified by a four-digit course number. The first number indicates the level: 0 = developmental, 1 = freshman, 2 = sophomore, 3 = junior, 4 = senior, 5 or 6 = graduate. The second number indicates the semester-hour value of the course. The last two numbers identify the course within its particular department.

- Lower-Division Courses are designated by a 1 or 2 as the first digit of the course number.
- Upper-Division/Advanced Courses are designated by a 3 or 4 as the first digit of the course number. (The student should refer to the departmental and college requirements for specific conditions, if any, imposed on registration in advanced courses.)
- Graduate Courses are designated by a 5 or 6 as the first digit of the course number.

Courses Taken on a Pass/Fail Basis

A student can elect to take an S or U (Pass/Fail) grade in a course, but this course cannot count as deficiency work or as a part of the minimum requirements for a degree except for internships and practica when designated by the department. The Pass/Fail option must be requested by or before the date listed in the online Class Schedule at www.utep.edu (http://www.utep.edu) and is not available for all courses. Check with the appropriate academic department for a listing of these courses.

Courses Counted for Another Same Level Graduate Degree

No course counted toward a graduate degree may be counted toward another same level graduate degree, either directly or by substitution. Students pursuing a second graduate level degree must satisfy degree requirements without using courses applied to a previous same level graduate degree. Required courses duplicated on a second graduate level degree do not have to be repeated. The graduate advisor should assign appropriate substitutions to avoid reducing the total number of hours required of the second graduate level degree. Students in combined programs such as the MBA-MPA cannot apply the same courses to fulfill the MBA and MPA requirements. The student must complete a separate set of courses to meet requirements for each degree.

Reserving Courses for Graduate Credit

Undergraduate students are not eligible to enroll in graduate-level courses, but under certain conditions, can request permission from the Graduate School to enroll in the graduate-level courses. The undergraduate student must submit a graduate advisor- and college dean-approved Reservation for Graduate Credit form to the Graduate School. If approved, registration is processed by the Graduate School. Credit for graduate courses cannot be counted toward a baccalaureate degree; it can only be reserved for credit toward a graduate degree. Graduate level courses reserved for graduate credit will appear on a separate graduate level transcript. A student who has a baccalaureate degree is not eligible to reserve courses for graduate credit unless enrolled at the undergraduate level working toward a second baccalaureate degree. The form for reserving courses is available at the Graduate School Web site. Approval to reserve work for graduate credit neither constitutes nor implies admission to any graduate program.

1. This option is limited to one term.
2. The undergraduate must not lack more than 12 semester hours (or 6 semester hours in summer session) of work to complete all requirements for the baccalaureate degree and must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 in junior and senior-level courses.
3. These 12 hours (or less) must be completed in the same semester or summer session in which the graduate course(s) are taken.
4. Total enrollment for all work must not exceed 15 semester hours (or 9 hours in a summer session).
5. All requests for enrollment in graduate courses must be approved by the departmental graduate advisor, college dean and the Graduate School.
6. Graduate Research, Individual Studies, or Seminar courses cannot be reserved for graduate credit.

Fast-Track Dual-Credit Program

The Fast-Track Dual-Credit Program enables outstanding undergraduate UTEP students to receive dual undergraduate and graduate credit for up to 15 hours of UTEP course work as determined by participating Master's and Doctoral programs. Not all undergraduate programs have elected to participate in the Fast Track option, so students should see their departmental graduate advisor for information about requirements and guidelines.

Application Requirements

1. This program is intended for UTEP students who are interested in transitioning from a Bachelor's degree to a graduate degree. A student who has previously earned a Bachelor's degree may not apply to this program.
2. To be considered for the Fast Track Program, students need to complete a Graduate School application. Once the Graduate School clears the application based on the recommendations of the intended graduate program, students will be assigned a fast track code until the Bachelor's degree is conferred. The student will be subsequently admitted as a new student in the graduate program.
3. Students must have successfully completed at least 90 hours of undergraduate coursework toward their major with a minimum of 24 of those hours at UTEP.
4. Students must have and maintain the same GPA requirement in the major as for the university honor’s certificate, which is an undergraduate GPA of GPA equal or greater than 3.30.
5. Participating graduate programs may have additional requirements including specific GRE scores and undergraduate coursework preparation.

Program Guidelines

1. Each participating graduate academic program will determine which graduate level courses will be included in the Fast Track. The Graduate School will maintain an inventory of all approved courses.
2. Students must be advised each semester at the departmental level by both the undergraduate and graduate advisors and cleared for registration in graduate courses by the Graduate School.
3. Undergraduate students must earn a B or better in the graduate course for it to count as graduate credit. If the grade is a C, it will not count toward the graduate degree but the credit hours will still count toward the undergraduate degree. The earned grade will not be calculated in the undergraduate GPA and will show on the undergraduate transcript as a transfer. These graduate course grades should not be used for determination of undergraduate honors or other academic awards at the Bachelor’s level.
4. When the student graduates with the Bachelor’s degree, the graduate courses will be shown in the undergraduate transcript, and if a grade of C or better is attained, count toward the undergraduate degree. The courses will also show on the graduate transcript as graduate courses, but in these cases will be calculated into the graduate GPA.
5. Tuition will be based on the level of the course, not on the level of the student. Financial aid may be adjusted.
6. Exceptions to these guidelines will be handled through an appeal process established by the participating graduate program.

For a list of approved dual credit courses, please click on the following link: Fast-Track Dual Credit Courses (p. 1)

Class Attendance

The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences. When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor can drop the student from the class with a grade of W before the course-drop deadline or with a grade of F after the course-drop deadline.

Excused Absences for University-Recognized Activities

Students who will be absent while representing the University in officially recognized University activities (sports, band, forensics team, etc.) must notify the Office of Student Life not less than ten (10) days prior to the absence. The Assistant Vice President for Student Life will provide the student a letter of excuse for the instructors. It is the student’s responsibility to give the letter to the instructors prior to the officially recognized activity. Students following these procedures will be permitted to make up both assignments and examinations in consultation with faculty.

Absence for Religious Holy Days

Religious holy day means a day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code related to absences by students for observance of religious holy days states that the institution shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection cannot be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. The student must provide written notice to the instructor of each course that she or he will be absent for a religious holy day not less than ten (10) days prior to the absence. If a student and an instructor disagree about the nature of the absence being for the observance of a religious holy day as defined therein, or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor can request a ruling from the Provost or his or her designee. The student and the instructor shall abide by the decision of the Provost or his or her designee.

Military Leave

Section 51.9111, Texas Education Code, provides that students be excused from scheduled classes or other required activities if the student is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period and that the student shall be allowed to complete an assignment or exam within a reasonable time following the absence. The excused absence is permitted only if the student will not miss more than 25% of the total number of class meetings or the contact-hour equivalent (not including the final examination period) for the specific course or courses in which the student is enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service.

Students called to active military service must provide a copy of their military orders to the instructor of each course.

Further information is available under Complete Withdrawal Due to Active Military Service (http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/academic-regulations/registration-and-records/) in this catalog, or by visiting the Registration and Records Office.
Absence From Examinations
A student absent from a test during the semester is graded zero (0) unless another policy is set by the instructor.

Dead Day
This specific day will be scheduled one day after the last day of classes only during the fall and spring semesters. The following policy will be observed:

1. No classes will be held on this day, except classes which meet once a week on that day.
2. Makeup exams should be left to the discretion of each individual instructor.
3. All student work (i.e., research papers, lab reports, term paper, etc.) should be due prior to this day.
4. If a comprehensive final is given, new material, quizzes, or exams should be given two calendar days prior to Dead Day, and attention should be given to reviewing of semester material. Implementation of this recommendation is to be left to the discretion of the individual instructor.

Academic Integrity
The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty members insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating; plagiarism; collusion; the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of Student Life and the homepage of the Office of Student Life (http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/www.utep.edu/dos/), can result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing a grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

Grades and Grade Point Averages
Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 or higher program grade point average (PGPA) in their major field. Credit is given in the Graduate School for the grades A, B, and C only.

In some courses, the standard grading system is not practical; such grades are not used to compute the GPA. These grades include I (incomplete), P (in progress), W (withdrawal), and S or U (pass/fail). For information on the grade appeal process, students should refer to the Student Grievance Procedures (http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/student-life-policies-and-procedures/) in the Student Life Policies and Procedures section of this catalog.

Incomplete or In-progress Work
Assignment of the grade I is made only in exceptional circumstances and requires the instructor to file with the academic dean an outline of the work to be completed and the time span (not to exceed one calendar year) allowable for completion with the academic dean. In no case can repetition of the course be assigned as work to be completed. If the work has not been completed at the end of the specified time, the I will be changed to an F. A student cannot enroll in a course in which he or she has an unresolved grade of I. The grade of P is limited to specific courses in which re-enrollment is required. This includes all thesis courses (5398-5399, 6320-6321), graduate internships, and certain undergraduate courses. A student may not graduate with an incomplete or in progress work on his or her record. If the student wishes to graduate and if the course is not needed for a degree requirement, the incomplete will convert to an F, regardless of whether a year has lapsed from the date the incomplete was assigned. In the case of in progress work, if the course is not needed for a degree requirement, the P must be changed to a W. The instructor must submit a Change of Grade form to the Department Chair and College Dean. The college will file the form with the Registration and Records Office.

Grade Changes
Students must submit to the faculty of record a written request for a grade change as soon as possible after the receipt of the grade but not later than one year after the semester in which the course in question was taken. A graduating student must request a grade change within three months after the last day of final examination of the last semester enrolled. After this time, all grades become part of the student’s official academic history and cannot be altered unless approved by the academic dean.

A grade change must be approved by the faculty of record, the department chair, and the college dean. Additional approval is required from the Graduate School for thesis/dissertation and project courses (5396-5397, 5398-5399, 6320-6321, and 6398-6399). Students will receive notification of approved changes. Exceptions to the grade change policy will be at the discretion of the faculty member, department chair, and final approval from the academic dean.

Grades can be changed as a result of (1) grade changes initiated by the instructor and approved by the appropriate department chair and the college dean; (2) grade change initiated by the department chair for cases in which the instructor is no longer affiliated with the University and cannot be contacted and there exists clear and convincing evidence for a grade change; (3) grade change because of disciplinary action imposed by the Office
Curriculum and Classroom Policies

of Student Life or Hearing Office for violation of University rules; or (4) action taken by the Student Welfare and Grievance Committee in grade-appeal procedures.

Grades determined as a result of actions taken in items (3) or (4) above are final and not subject to change. No other grade change shall occur without the consent of the instructor. The Registrar will notify the student and the instructor of any change in grade.

Academic Standing

Students admitted into graduate programs must remove all admissions conditions within one semester. Failure to meet conditions within one semester can result in dismissal from the Graduate School. Students admitted into a graduate program must maintain a 3.0 or better program grade point average. Post-baccalaureate non-degree, teacher and professional certification, and/or endorsement students must maintain a program grade point average of 2.5 or higher. Students enrolled in cooperative (COOP) courses must maintain a minimum program grade point average (PGPA) of 3.0.

Individual departments can impose more rigorous grading standards.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student admitted into a graduate program whose program grade point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. The student must return the program grade point average to a 3.0 after completion of the next nine (9) hours of study. Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.

A dismissed student will remain on suspension for one full semester before appealing for reinstatement. Appeals for reinstatement are submitted by the respective Graduate Studies Program Committee to the Dean of the Graduate School. Only the Dean of the Graduate School can approve reinstatement of dismissed students.

Appeals must include a plan of action describing intervention to ensure student success. If readmitted, the student must raise the program grade point average to a 3.0 by the end of the first semester of reinstatement or face permanent dismissal from the Graduate School.

Post-baccalaureate non-degree, teacher and professional certification, and/or endorsement students whose program grade point averages drop below 2.5 will be placed on academic probation. The program grade point averages must be raised to at least a 2.5 after completion of the next nine (9) hours of study. Failure to meet the 2.5 grade point average requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.

Dismissed non-degree, teacher and professional certification, and/or endorsement students will remain on suspension for one full semester before appealing for reinstatement. Appeals for reinstatement are submitted by the respective college dean to the Dean of the Graduate School. Only the Dean of the Graduate School can approve reinstatement of dismissed students.

Textbooks

Textbooks may be purchased through the university-affiliated bookstore. However, a student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a University-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer, per Texas Education Code 51.9705.