

Policy on Fostering Undergraduate Student Success

I. Purpose. The University of North Carolina (UNC) System’s policies on student success adopted by the Board of Governors direct constituent institutions to:

- A. Set academic progress and degree attainment as primary outcomes;
- B. Promote academic quality, rigor, and integrity; and
- C. Make possible “seamless” educational opportunities across the UNC System constituent institutions, with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), and early college high schools.

Improving retention, graduation rates, and time to degree are important aspects of such policies. However, the Board of Governors also recognizes that students come into the system from a number of different life circumstances and their paths to success vary accordingly. Policies, therefore, set parameters within which a constituent institution can best meet the needs of these diverse student populations.

II. University-Wide Policies

A. The Board of Governors has adopted the following policies for all institutions comprising the University of North Carolina System except the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.¹

- 1. Constituent institutions will require no more than 120 semester credit hours for a four-year baccalaureate degree program unless an exception is granted by a board of trustees as described in Section 400.1.5[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.
- 2. Constituent institutions will follow the credit hour limits for five-year baccalaureate degree programs as described in Section 400.1.5[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.
- 3. Constituent institutions will develop academic policies within the regulations established by the UNC System on:
 - a. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
 - b. Course Adjustment Periods (“Drop/Add”)

- c. Course Withdrawal
 - d. Grade Exclusion or Replacement
 - e. Minimum, Maximum, and Average Course Load
4. Constituent institutions will establish a student success and support structure to review and to issue regular reports on:
- a. Retention, academic progression, graduation, and time to degree;
 - b. Course scheduling as it relates to whether courses required for graduation are offered on a timely basis and with an adequate number of sections and seats;
 - c. Course offerings and grade requirements to assess if any undue additions to general education requirements exist or if such requirements unintentionally lengthen time to graduation; and
 - d. The academic advisement system to ensure students receive appropriate assistance in proceeding toward graduation in a timely manner.
5. Constituent institutions will be compliant with Title IV regulations that define student eligibility for and receipt of federal financial aid.
6. Constituent institutions will be compliant with the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement with the NCCCS and are encouraged to develop policies that promote seamless transfer among schools in the University of North Carolina System.
7. The UNC System Office shall, in consultation with faculty and staff from the constituent institutions, establish and maintain a common course numbering system for undergraduate lower division courses, which shall be mapped to the unique course numbers used at each respective institution of higher education. The president shall approve regulations to describe and implement this common undergraduate course numbering system, which shall be established and operational by the 2022-23 academic year.
8. UNC institutions will either (1) accept for transfer academic credit issued by regionally-accredited institutions for a student's participation in internships and academic programs managed by The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars (TWC), or (2) enter into an agreement with TWC that provides that the UNC institution will issue academic credit for a student's participation in TWC internships and academic programs.
9. For students entering on or after July 1, 2025, UNC institutions will require, as a condition of awarding a baccalaureate degree, that students successfully complete a course or courses covering the foundations of American democracy.
- a. The course or courses that fulfill this requirement must include substantively the following student learning outcomes:

i. Evaluate key concepts, principles, arguments, and contexts in founding documents of the American republic, including the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and a representative selection of the Federalist Papers; and,

ii. Evaluate key milestones in progress and challenges in the effort to form “a more perfect Union,” including the arguments and contexts surrounding the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Letter from Birmingham Jail, as well as other texts that reflect the breadth of American experiences.

b. The student learning outcomes may be met in a single course, or each student learning outcome may be met separately in a total of two courses.

c. The president shall issue regulations implementing this requirement. Without limitation, the regulations shall determine exemptions to this requirement for a student’s prior learning, including appropriate exemptions for postsecondary courses taken at non-UNC System institutions and Qualified Advanced Course Examination Scores, as that term is defined in Section 700.10.1[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.

B. These policies are designed to ensure that campus and system-wide policies and practices facilitate behaviors that support retention and timely graduation.

III. Other Matters

A. Effective Date. The requirements of this policy shall be effective on the date of adoption of this policy by the Board of Governors.

B. Relation to State Laws. The foregoing policy as adopted by the Board of Governors is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this policy.

C. Regulations and Guidelines. This policy shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations and guidelines as may be adopted from time to time by the president.

¹The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics shall track data on student attrition, completion rates of its high school curriculum, and high school graduation. See G.S. 116-235.