ACADEMIC POLICIES & RECORDS

While pursuing studies and joining in campus activities, there are things students need to know about LCC’s policies on grades and student records, academic and graduation requirements, and rights and responsibilities as a student. Knowing these rules will help students move smoothly through the college system.

Grades & Credits

At Lower Columbia College, students receive both letter and points-per-credit grades. Each credit class is offered for a predetermined number of credits, generally one credit per weekly contact hour of lecture or two weekly hours of laboratory contact. Points, or numerical values, are assigned to letter grades. At the end of each quarter, students receive both a letter grade and its corresponding number of points for each course in which they are enrolled. Courses receiving a grade of P (Pass), W (Withdraw), R (Retake), N (Audit), X (Expunged), I (Incomplete) or V (Instructor-Initiated Withdrawal) are not included in the GPA. Grades and their points are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points per Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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Quarter grade point averages, called GPAs, are obtained by separately adding the student’s total course credits attempted and the number of points received for those courses. The total grade points earned are divided by the total GPA credit for which the student has enrolled. The resulting figure is the student’s grade point average for one quarter. Only credits earned in courses at LCC are used in computing a student’s grade point average.

Cumulative grade point averages are found by dividing total grade points earned by total credits attempted. To aid the student in understanding individual progress, mid-quarter grades are available from individual instructors. These are not recorded on a student’s permanent record.

Grade Forgiveness

A student returning to LCC after an absence of three or more years is eligible for grade forgiveness after completing at least 24 new credits at LCC, with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher. Forgiveness applies only to courses taken before returning, and students can only use forgiveness once. Students must choose entire quarters (not individual courses) for grade forgiveness. The courses will remain on your transcript, but old grades will be replaced with an “X” for expunged and will not be figured into the GPA. Contact the Registration Office for more information.

Grade Report

Students may view their grades (unofficial transcripts) through the online student information via the LCC website, using Student ID Numbers and global PIN (personal identification number) available from the Registration Office. This unofficial transcript can be printed.

Audit

A student may audit any course for no credit upon payment of tuition and fees. Auditors are not required to take examinations, but may participate in course work. If you want to audit a class, you must register as an auditor. Registered students wishing to change to audit status must follow the procedure for change to audit registration, including obtaining the instructor’s written permission.

Senior citizens may audit courses at a reduced rate, on a space-available basis. Contact the Registration Office for details on the Senior Citizens’ Waiver Program.
Final Exams
The Final Exam schedule is included in the printed quarterly course schedule and available online. Search for ‘Final Exams’ at lowercolumbia.edu.

Evening classes meeting once a week will take their final exam at the regular class time during finals week. Evening classes meeting more than once a week will take the final exam at the regular class time on whichever day during finals week the class agrees upon.

Students are not required to take final exams for more than two classes on a single day. Students may petition the Vice President of Instruction for other final examination arrangements if such a conflict arises, after first contacting the instructor. Exam priorities shall be based on class meeting day order first, then meeting time.

Final exams will be administered on the day designated on the final exam schedule. If a deviation from the scheduled day is desired, approval must be obtained from the Vice President of Instruction. Time changes, unanimously approved by the class, are acceptable.

Full-Time/Part-Time Load
The College considers a full-time course load to be 12 or more credits in a regular quarter and 10 or more credits during summer quarter. Full-time status may be defined differently for other purposes, such as certain financial aid programs or assessment of fees.

Incompletes
An instructor may give a grade of Incomplete (I) if a student satisfactorily completes most but not all of the course objectives. An Incomplete must be completed within one year of when it was given (or less than one year if so specified by the instructor). The final grade will replace the Incomplete on the student’s transcript after the instructor submits it. Incompletes not completed within the year may result in an F.

Instructor-Initiated Withdrawal
Students who do not attend any of the class sessions during the first five instructional days of the quarter (i.e., are absent for all of the scheduled class meetings) and do not contact the instructor regarding the absence in person, by phone, or by email, may be administratively withdrawn by the class instructor. In these cases, students will receive a grade of V (vanished) for the course.

Pass/Fail Option
Students may choose the pass/fail grading option through the first 10 days of each quarter. Students must initiate this option by completing a form available in the Registration Office and submitting it to the Registration Office no later than the tenth day of the quarter in which the course is being taken. The decision to enroll on a pass/fail basis may be reversed by notifying the Registration Office in writing by the normal deadline to drop classes. Limitations on courses taken through the student-initiated pass/fail grading option include:

- A maximum of five credits per quarter may be taken pass/fail. A maximum of 15 “Pass” credits may be used toward completion of associate degree requirements.
- Courses taken pass/fail may not be used to satisfy the communications, quantitative skills, Core program, or distribution requirements for any associate degree at Lower Columbia College, except when a pass/fail class is required by a specific program.
- “Pass” grades are not computed in the grade point average.

Students should understand that other institutions may restrict the acceptance of “Pass” grades, or restrict pass/fail grading for major, minor, or professional courses. Some courses are only graded on a pass/fail basis. These courses are designated in the class schedule or college catalog.

Repeating a Course
Students may repeat courses. Normally, all grades for repeated courses are used in calculating the student’s grade point average, although the student earns credit toward graduation only once. You may repeat a course and have the original grade disregarded for grade point average calculation. These rules apply:

- A student must request the grade change for a course after the course has been repeated.
- Upon the student’s request for removal of an earlier grade, the retake grade will be entered and the original grade removed and replaced with an “R” grade by the Registration staff.
- If a student has taken a course more than once before applying for retake, the student selects which quarter’s grade will be removed.
- The retake policy may be used once for any individual course.
- Grade points for any course taken more than once, with the exception of the approved retake course, will be included in the grade point average.

A petition form for course retake requests is available from the Registration Office.

Academic Standards

Academic Standards Committee
The Academic Standards Committee includes faculty from each department, the Vice President for Student Success, and a student representative. The committee acts on student or faculty petitions to waive graduation requirements or to make course substitutions for graduation, and on student appeals of the following:

1. Sanctions imposed on students for alleged arbitrary and capricious application of academic standards; and
2. Application of academic policies or procedures by instructors.

Petition forms are available in the Registration Office and the Office of the Vice President for Student Success. Completed forms should be directed to the Secretary of the Academic Standards Committee, who is the Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Success.
Student Academic Grievance Policy
LCC’s Academic Grievance Policy protects freedom of expression and protects students from improper, arbitrary or capricious academic evaluation.

If a student believes they have been graded improperly and are unable to informally resolve the situation with the instructor, the student may file a formal grievance with the Vice President for Student Success. More information and a copy of the Student Academic Grievance Policy are available from the Office of Student Success, 360.442.2300 or online.

Academic Warning and Suspension
Poor grades may result in an academic warning that alerts the student to low scholarship status and encourages steps to improve performance. The academic warning and suspension policies are:

- Any student who receives a quarterly GPA below 2.0 for any quarter will be placed on Academic Warning.
- Any student with two consecutive quarterly GPA’s less than 2.0 and/or whose cumulative GPA is less than 2.0 will be on Academic Probation and may be required by the college to enroll in College Success or other courses as determined by the College to assist with academic success.
- Any student with three or more consecutive quarterly GPA’s less than 2.0 and/or whose cumulative GPA is less than 2.0 is subject to academic suspension of up to three academic quarters. Students who are academically suspended must petition for reinstatement to the Vice President for Student Success at least six weeks prior to the quarter in which the student would like to re-enter the College.

Petition forms are available at the Registration Office and the Office of the Vice President for Student Success. Completed forms should be directed to the Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Success. If readmitted, the student must enroll under whatever conditions the Vice President believes will help him or her to succeed.

Non-Traditional Credits
Course Waiver
A student may request to have a course requirement waived based on prior education or work experience. Waived courses and credits are not included in the student’s grade point average. Waived courses may be used to satisfy any graduation requirement but may not be accepted as part of the 24 required credits in residence. The student must pay the required fees after assessment has occurred. Transferability of waived courses is determined by the receiving institution. To read more about non-traditional credits, search for ‘non-traditional credits’ at lowercolumbia.edu.

Credit by Challenge
A student may request to challenge a course if he or she has previously taken courses and established a transcript record at LCC and believes that previous experience has provided the competencies essential for passing the course to be challenged. The student must enroll in the course and pay the required fees. Some courses may not be challenged. Courses and grades resulting from the challenge process will be posted to the student’s transcript record at the end of the quarter during which the exam is taken. To read more about non-traditional credits, search for ‘non-traditional credits’ at lowercolumbia.edu.

Credit for Professional Certificates or Training
A student may request to receive credit for specific industry training and certifications that have been pre-assessed by faculty for alignment with specific classes offered at LCC. Credit granted for professional certificates or training may be used to satisfy any graduation requirement but may not be accepted as part of the 24 required credits in residence. The student must pay the required fees after assessment has occurred. Transferability of credit granted by this method is determined by the receiving institution. To read the current list of approved industry certifications please search ‘non-traditional credits’ at lowercolumbia.edu.

Alternative Options for Earning Credits
Advanced Placement – General Examination
Lower Columbia College grants credit for completion of the College Board’s Advanced Placement examinations. Advanced Placement is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. The program provides motivated high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses in a high school setting. Students who participate in the program gain college-level skills and may also earn college credit. AP courses are taught by high school teachers, following course guidelines developed and published by the College Board. LCC grants credit in several subject areas for students who have obtained a qualifying score on the College Board Advanced Placement examinations. Exams are given by the Educational Testing Service at locations around the country. Students must submit an official copy of their AP scores to the Registration Office. Upon evaluation of the scores, the student will be notified about acceptable credits. Provisional credit for AP scores will be used for advising purposes. Official credit will be granted once the student has earned 12 credits at LCC and has a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or higher. To read more about Advanced Placement, search for ‘advanced placement’ at lowercolumbia.edu.

College Level Examination Program
Credit will be granted for College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests with a minimum score equivalent to the 35th percentile for General and Subject examinations. Subject examination credits will be granted as equivalent to credits earned in courses at LCC. Credit for Subject examination will not be granted when students have earned credit in equivalent courses. Subject and general examination credits may count toward satisfying distribution requirements for any Associate in Arts-Direct
Graduation & Transfer

Applying for Graduation

To receive a degree from LCC, students must apply for graduation through the Registration Office. Graduation applications are available online at lowercolumbia.edu/registration/graduation and at the Registration Office. A student should consult with an advisor to assure that all course work will be completed by the intended date of graduation, and return the completed application to the Registration Office by the quarterly deadline. It is recommend that students apply for graduation two quarters before they intend to graduate, so that any deficiencies may be identified and corrected. Students may graduate at the end of any quarter.

Commencement exercises are held in June each year. Students who have completed requirements during the past year may participate in the June commencement ceremony. Students eligible to graduate at the end of summer quarter, may—during the preceding spring quarter—apply for spring graduation and participate in Commencement, completing requirements through the Summer Completion Option.

Students may apply for graduation under the graduation requirements in effect at the time they first enrolled, provided the first enrollment year is within five years of the year of graduation.

Transferring Credit

LCC recognizes academic credits earned at other regionally accredited collegiate institutions that are essentially equivalent in academic level and nature to work offered at LCC. Credits earned at other regionally accredited collegiate institutions will become part of the students’ LCC permanent records if the student earned a C or better, however, the cumulative GPA will only be calculated using LCC courses. The College subscribes to the Statewide Policy on InterCollege Transfer and Articulation Among Washington Public Colleges and Universities, which is endorsed by the state’s public colleges and universities and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and is adopted by the Washington Student Achievement Council. The policy deals with the rights and responsibilities of students and creates an appeal process in transfer credit disputes.

Reciprocity Between 2-Year Colleges

Washington community and technical colleges (CTCs) offer reciprocity to students transferring within the CTC system who are pursuing the Associate in Arts Direct Transfer Agreement degree or the Associate in Sciences – Transfer degree. Students who completed an individual course that met distribution degree requirements or fulfilled entire areas of their degree requirements at one college will be considered to have met those same requirements if they plan to complete the same degree when they transfer to another community or technical college in Washington. These degree requirements include Communication Skills, Quantitative Skills, and/or Distribution Area requirements. Students must initiate the review process and be prepared to provide necessary documentation. More information is available at the Registration Office.
Transfer Degrees
Washington State colleges and universities and many private colleges and out-of-state institutions recognize graduates of Lower Columbia College who have earned the Associate in Arts-Direct Transfer Agreement degree as satisfying most or all of their general education requirements and will normally grant junior standing on transfer. Some colleges require specific course patterns or courses, in addition to the basic Associate in Arts degree. For current information on LCC’s transfer agreements with other colleges, search for “Transfer Center” at lowercolumbia.edu or visit the Transfer Center.

Washington 45
A student who completes courses selected from the categories listed below will be able to transfer and apply up to 45 quarter credits toward general education requirement(s) at any other public, and most private, higher education institutions in the state.

First Year Transfer List
- Communications (5 credits)—ENGL& 101, ENGL& 102
- Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (5 credits)—MATH& 107, MATH& 148 or MATH& 151
- Humanities (10 credits in two different subject areas or disciplines)—PHIL& 101, MUSC& 105, DRMA& 101, HIST& 116
- Social Science (10 credits in two different subject areas or disciplines)—PSYC& 100, SOC& 101, POLS& 101, POLS& 202, HIST& 117
- Natural Sciences (10 credits in two different subject areas or disciplines)—BIOL& 100, BIOL& 160 w/ lab, ASTR& 101 with lab, CHEM& 110 with lab, CHEM& 121 with lab, CHEM& 161, CHEM& 162, GEOL& 101 with lab.
- Additional 5 credits in a different discipline can be taken from any category listed above.

For transfer purposes, a student must have a minimum grade of C or better (2.0 or above) in each course completed from this list. Students who transfer Washington 45 credits must still meet the transfer institution’s admission requirements and eventually satisfy all their general education requirements and their degree requirements in major, minor and professional programs.

Student Records

Official Transcripts
An official transcript is a copy of the student’s permanent record, signed by the Director of Enrollment Services/Registrar with the school seal placed over this signature. An unofficial transcript is an unsigned and non-seal-bearing copy of that record. A student may request a transcript in-person, in writing, or online by searching for ‘Transcripts’ at lowercolumbia.edu. A transcript will only be released to the student or to persons authorized in writing by the student. LCC charges a small processing fee for each official transcript requested.

Unofficial Transcripts
See Grade Report on the first page of the Academic Policy section.

Records Confidentiality
To respect the privacy rights of students, certain information is released only with the express written permission of the student. LCC’s records release policy complies with state and federal regulations.

Without the written consent of the student, the College shall not permit access to or the release of education records or personally identifiable information, except to:

1. College staff, faculty, and students when the information is required within the performance of their responsibilities to the College.
2. Federal and state officials in connection with the audit and evaluation of a federally or state-supported education program or with the enforcement of related legal requirements.
3. Agencies or individuals requesting information in connection with a student’s application for, or receipt of, federal or state financial aid.
4. Researchers conducting studies for or on behalf of the College. Such studies will not permit the personal identification of students by other persons.
5. Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions.
6. Any person or entity designated by judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, upon condition that the student is notified of all such orders or subpoenas in advance of the compliance therewith.

Directory Information, News and Photos—LCC may release the following for publication without the student’s written permission: (1) name, (2) field of study, (3) dates of attendance, full or part-time status, and alumni information, (4) degrees and awards, including academic awards, (5) the name and major of scholarship recipients, (6) the names of graduates of the college, (7) the names and qualifications of students receiving various honors, (8) sport, high school, height and weight of student athletes, (9) the names and activity of students participating in public performance events, and (10) images and pictures taken of students in the course of activities associated with the College.

If you choose to have Lower Columbia College NOT release your directory information, notify the Registrar in writing by using the form available in the Registration Office. You should be aware that asking Lower Columbia College to withhold directory information may prevent other colleges and employers from receiving information that might be to your advantage.

Release of Information in Emergencies—Necessary student information may be released in connection with an emergency and/or to protect the health and safety of a student or other persons. Definition of an “emergency” is determined by the Registrar.