

INDEPENDENCE UNIVERSITY

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# Academic Policies and Procedures

(2006 edition)

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### **About This Manual**

This **Academic Policies and Procedures** manual serves as the official guide to the policies and procedures that govern academic and related activities at Independence University (IU). IU makes every effort to present its policies and procedures accurately and fairly. Those responsible for the preparation of this manual and all other public announcements and documents have made every attempt to ensure that the information presented is correct and up to date. This policies and procedures manual supersedes all previous documentation and is subject to change. IU reserves the right to add, amend, or repeal any policies and procedures presented in this manual. IU will not assume responsibility for publication errors beyond its control.

# Introduction

## About Independence University

**Independence University (IU)** is an accredited institution of higher learning specializing in online distance education for working adults. Founded in 1978 as California College for Health Sciences (CCHS), the institution has focused from its start on allied health programs and early on made its mark in areas such as respiratory care, becoming the first institution to offer accredited respiratory care programs at a distance. Throughout its history, IU has reached beyond the barriers of traditional on-campus education to offer programs not only to working adults across the United States but also to those serving in the military and to international students.

In 2005, CCHS became Independence University, a name that more accurately reflects the institution's broader range of programs and its philosophy that education should lead to greater independence. Today, IU is comprised of three colleges: California College for Health Sciences, the College of Business, and the College of Education. With a wide array of programs in allied health, business, and early childhood education, the university currently offers over 20 degree and certificate opportunities to students.

## The University's Accreditation

Independence University is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC). Founded in 1926, the DETC has been America's leading association for distance education institutions. The Accrediting Commission of the DETC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency and is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

IU's respiratory care programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) upon the recommendation of the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC). CAAHEP is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

# IU Mission Statement and Objectives

## Institutional Mission Statement

Independence University is dedicated to being the leading global provider of high quality educational programs in allied health and health professions, business, and early childhood education that directly support career advancement. We focus on highly productive partnerships in education, business, and industry to deliver programs using 21st-century technologies and processes that accelerate learning, provide excellent student service, and facilitate the success of our students.

## Institutional Objectives

The university's institutional objectives are as follows:

- Continuously monitor and improve our student-centric curriculum and independent study delivery model.
- Deliver educational programs that lead to career advancement by ensuring the currency of our degrees and by providing up-to-date content, maintaining relevant accreditations, and supporting opportunities for additional meaningful credentialing.
- Continuously support business and industry by developing and improving educational programs that provide graduates who are qualified for employment in various sectors. The institution plans development and improvements using data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, requests from affiliates, information from accrediting agencies and professional organizations, and recommendations from its Respiratory Care Advisory Committee.

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# Academic Calendar and Academic Progress

## Academic Calendar

Independence University follows an open academic calendar. As such, the university does not adhere to an academic year with semesters, quarters, or fixed start/end dates. IU's academic calendar allows continuous rolling enrollments in which students can apply for admission and enroll at any time, register for and begin courses without waiting for semester/course start dates, and graduate as soon as their courses and program of study are completed.

## Academic Progress

In keeping with DETC accreditation requirements, IU seeks to ensure that its students complete their studies at rates that compare favorably to rates for students enrolled in similar programs and courses offered at similar accredited institutions of higher education.

A student's academic progress toward graduation begins when he or she enrolls in the first course of a program of study and ends with the student's graduation. Students set their own pace to complete their program within the limits of IU's required standards for completing courses and programs (see *Course Expiration Dates/Deadlines for Course Completions*, below). Students follow the required course sequence for their program, taking prerequisite courses before registering for more advanced courses.

Factors that might slow down, interrupt, or stop a student's progress toward graduation include inactive student status, leaves of absence, withdrawal from the university, academic probation and dismissal, and other factors. These factors are discussed in the Enrollment and Registration Policy and Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy, both in this manual.

### ***Course Expiration Dates/Deadlines for Course Completions***

The maximum timeframe for a student to complete a course without penalty is 30 days per semester credit (thus, 90 days per 3-credit course). Student can complete courses in less time (30 days, 60 days, etc.). After the course expiration date or deadline has passed, penalties exist for not completing the course on time, and a student must complete the course within an additional 90 days or risk being declared inactive and terminated from the program. (For more information about penalties, inactive status, and termination from a program, see the section of the Enrollment and Registration Policy entitled *Interruption of Studies*, in this manual.)

### ***Required Grade Point Average (GPA)***

For satisfactory academic progress, students must meet minimum grade point average (GPA) requirements. IU requires that undergraduate students maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 and that graduate students maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students who do not maintain the minimum required GPA are subject to academic probation and dismissal, as described in the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy, in this manual.



# Academic Honesty

## Policy

Independence University is an academic institution founded on the principles of scholastic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is an affront to the integrity of education at IU and a threat to the quality of learning. To maintain its credibility and uphold its reputation, IU reserves the right to initiate disciplinary action and impose sanctions, including termination from a program of study and dismissal from the university, for violations of academic honesty.

Violations of academic honesty include:

- Falsifying information contained in one's application or any other documentation submitted to IU.
- Cheating, or receiving unauthorized assistance or collaboration on an exam or academic exercise.
- Committing plagiarism.
- Violating any other standards of academic honesty.

This policy on Academic Honesty supplements the IU Student Rights and Responsibilities Code, also included in this manual.

Students are informed of IU standards regarding academic honesty through the university's Student Handbook and other materials provided by the university. IU welcomes student inquiries regarding its policies and standards to ensure that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities, including their responsibility to conduct themselves in an ethically honest and responsible way.

## Zero Tolerance for Academic Dishonesty

IU follows a zero tolerance policy on academic dishonesty. This zero tolerance policy is designed to protect the integrity of the education that students receive at the university. Cheating, plagiarism, falsifying materials, and other dishonest acts degrade a university education and are an insult to IU's staff and to the many students who commit themselves to conducting themselves honestly and ethically.

Students who engage in cheating, plagiarism, falsifying materials, and any other academically dishonest acts are subject to immediate disciplinary action. Moreover, if any student helps another student to cheat, plagiarize, falsify materials, or commit a dishonest act, then this student is also subject to immediate disciplinary action.

Possible disciplinary sanctions for academic dishonesty are listed in the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual. Sanctions range from a warning or reprimand to termination from a program and dismissal from the university. This range of sanctions is

designed to give university staff investigating academic dishonesty some leeway in imposing sanctions so that the punishment can fit the scope and severity of the violation.

However, staff members should be aware that, given the university's zero tolerance policy on academic dishonesty, the university considers immediate termination and dismissal from the university as the preferred sanction in cases in which a student has willfully and knowingly engaged in academic dishonesty. Only in this way can the university protect the reputation of the school and the education and credentials that it offers.

## **Violations of Academic Honesty**

### ***Falsifying Application Materials and Other Documentation***

An applicant who falsifies application materials by providing false or misleading information or documents will be denied admission to IU. If an individual has already received an offer of admission or been admitted based on falsified application materials, IU will revoke the offer of admission and terminate the student's enrollment in his or her program of study.

Once admitted, a student who falsifies information in any other documentation submitted to IU is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

### ***Cheating***

A student who receives unauthorized assistance or collaboration on any IU academic assignment (unit exam, final exam, clinical evaluation, paper, project, laboratory assignment, or any other assignment) is guilty of cheating and subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying from another student's exam.
- Using materials during an exam not authorized by the person giving the exam.
- Collaborating with any other person during an exam.
- Knowingly obtaining, using, buying, selling, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of any exam, without authorization of the appropriate official.
- Bribing any other person to obtain any exam.
- Soliciting or receiving unauthorized information about any exam.
- Substituting for another student or permitting any other person to substitute for oneself to take an exam or complete an assignment.
- Falsifying proctor information used to verify and approve proctors for final exams.
- Committing plagiarism, which is the unacknowledged or un-cited use of any other person or group's ideas or work. Plagiarism includes the purchase or borrowing of others' papers, projects, or other written assignments with the intention of passing these materials off as one's own. (More information about plagiarism can be found in the section Committing Plagiarism, which immediately follows this section.)
- Committing collusion, which is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit.
- Committing falsification, which is the intentional and unauthorized altering or inventing of any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.

- Giving, selling, or receiving unauthorized course or exam information.
- Using any unauthorized resource or aid in the preparation or completion of any coursework, exercise, or activity.

Guarding against cheating on academic exercises is especially critical in distance learning, in which students and instructional support staff are typically separated by the physical distance that enables immediate monitoring of student work. To guard against cheating, IU has established protections such as **proctors**\* for final exams and **plagiarism detection software** for written assignments. However, despite these safeguards, it is the student's responsibility to conduct him or herself in an ethically honest way and to complete all academic exercises without unauthorized assistance or collaboration. Any student who cheats on an academic exercise is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

\*More information about final exam proctors can be found in the section Educational Programs, Services, and Courses, in this manual.

### ***Committing Plagiarism***

IU does not tolerate plagiarism on papers, projects, or any other written assignments. A student who commits plagiarism is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions. In academic writing, the failure to acknowledge the sources of ideas and other original works, which leads to the appearance that another's work is one's own, is called **plagiarism**. Thus, plagiarism is the unacknowledged or un-cited use of the ideas or work of any other person or group. Plagiarism includes the purchase or borrowing of others' papers, projects, or other written assignments with the intention of passing these materials off as one's own work. This form of plagiarism includes passing off as one's own work any papers, projects, or other materials found either on the Internet or in reference sources. Plagiarism also includes acts of collusion, which is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit.

Often, plagiarism is unintentional and stems from a lack of knowledge of the procedures used to document and cite others' ideas and original work. Whether unintended or deliberately executed, plagiarism is taken seriously in higher education. It is considered wholly dishonest and a crime equal to stealing, lying, and cheating, with like consequences.

Higher education is particularly sensitive to plagiarism. Furthering knowledge, research, and the free exchange of ideas are at the center of higher education. The sub-discipline of law called **intellectual property** recognizes the central notion of copyrights and trademarks. Under the concept of intellectual property, all individuals in the academic community are bound to maintain the integrity of respecting others' original works by appropriately citing or documenting these works.

Plagiarism can lead to seriously negative consequences for both the student and the pursuit of knowledge in higher education. There are a few strategies, however, that assist writers to rise above unintentional instances that could be interpreted as plagiarism. First is paraphrasing, in which an original idea is re-stated or summarized in different words and in a different sentence structure. Second is the use of direct quotes copied word-for-word from the original source and cited following the citation guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) or another citation style.

Paraphrasing and the use of properly cited direct quotes are deliberate attempts at avoiding plagiarism. Even with paraphrasing, however, writers must always cite or give reference to sources of ideas. Whether a writer copies word for word, paraphrases information, or writes a summary of another author's work, that original source must be cited. Again, APA and other citation styles offer guidelines for citing the work of others. Finally, students are encouraged to consult with IU's instructional support staff or other qualified individuals or resources for information about using the work of others properly and avoiding plagiarism.

A student should not feel pressured to create totally new ideas. What's called original writing consists of thinking through ideas and expressing them in one's own way. Most scholarly writing reflects and incorporates properly the work of others in ways that strengthen one's own point of view. The results may very well not be new, but if honestly and correctly executed, the resulting writing should be interesting and worthwhile. When the work of others adds to one's thoughts, a writer must be sure to credit the sources as they so deserve.

### ***Violating Any Other Standards of Academic Honesty***

If a student violates any other standards of academic honesty beyond the ones outlined in this Academic Honesty Policy (falsifying application materials, cheating, plagiarism), he or she is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

## **Charges of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is a violation of the IU Student Rights and Responsibilities Code and, thus, charges of academic dishonesty are handled in the same way as other charges of violating the Student Code. More information about the Student Code can be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code, in this manual. Specific procedures for handling charges of academic dishonesty – including disciplinary sanctions for academic dishonesty – can be found in the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual.

## **Appealing a Judgment of Academic Dishonesty**

If a judgment of academic dishonesty is made against a student or applicant, he or she has the right to appeal this judgment. More information about appeals can be found in the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual.

## **Applying for Re-Admission after Dismissal for Academic Dishonesty**

A student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty may be terminated from his or her program of study and dismissed from the university. Any student dismissed for academic dishonesty must wait one year from the date of dismissal before applying for re-admission. Applications to be re-admitted after dismissal for academic dishonesty are handled on a case-by-case basis.

## Academic Probation and Dismissal

Independence University has established a system of academic probation and dismissal for students not making satisfactory academic progress toward graduation (see the section Academic Calendar and Academic Progress, in this manual, for more information about satisfactory academic progress).

Periodically, students' academic progress reports are generated and reviewed by an appropriate university representative or designee, who reviews the current cumulative grade point average (GPA) of each student on the report. If the cumulative GPA for a student falls below 2.0 or, for a graduate student, below 3.0, the student is placed on **academic probation**. The student is sent written notification of the probation status.

Once placed on academic probation, a student must work closely with IU Student Advisors to develop a suitable, personalized plan of action for increasing his or her GPA and achieving satisfactory academic progress.

While on academic probation, a student may not receive any further grades of D or F or, for a graduate student, no further grades of C, D, or F. Receipt of one of these grades, or failure to bring up the GPA, may result in **academic dismissal**. A student who is dismissed is sent written notification, which states that he or she may petition for re-admission to the program after one year from the date of dismissal. A student may appeal to the appropriate university representative or designee for an exception to the policy on dismissal (for information on submitting an appeal, see the section on Appeals in the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual). A status of academic dismissal is entered on the student's record.

Students may also be dismissed from a course or program for reasons other than GPA. These reasons include, but are not limited to the following: cheating, falsifying documentation, committing plagiarism, tampering with the final examination process, and other violations of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code. More information about these matters can be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code and the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, both in this manual.

# Admissions

## Policy

Independence University welcomes all qualified applicants and admits qualified persons without regard to age, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, or as otherwise provided by law. This policy pertains to applicants and students in matters of admission and access to all programs and services of the university.

IU complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and other applicable laws regarding discrimination against and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

## Admissions Process

An individual may apply for admission to IU at any time by contacting the university. An IU Enrollment Advisor assists the applicant during the admissions process to complete the necessary paperwork for admission and enrollment.

An applicant wishing to enroll with IU must meet all general admission requirements outlined in this Admissions Policy and, if applicable, additional admission requirements specific to a program of study, transfer students, international students, or any other special category of students.

The university offers its students enrollment in an entire program of study, rather than individual courses. IU defines a program as a set of packaged courses offered through the institution and leading to a credential such as a degree or certificate. Thus, when an applicant applies for admission, he or she must specify the program in which he or she wishes to enroll, with the understanding that he or she will complete the entire package of courses leading to the degree or certificate.

In certain cases, a student may be admitted to the university without being officially admitted to the program of study that he or she wishes to complete. In these cases, students typically are admitted to IU to take general education and prerequisite courses before being formally admitted to their program of study. They may also enroll in a first and, possibly, a second course pending review and approval of their enrollment materials, including, but not limited to, their program plan, financial materials, and transcripts of previous education. Admission to the program of study is not guaranteed, and a student may need to meet program-specific admission requirements beyond the general admission requirements mandated by the university.

### ***Enrollment Agreement***

As part of the admissions process, applicants complete and sign an **enrollment agreement**. Filling out the agreement is one of the first steps in the admissions process. Once signed, the enrollment agreement is binding and serves as a contract between the student and university.

The written enrollment agreement and any other written enrollment documents specify the program of study that the student is entering, the services and obligations of the institution, and the responsibilities and obligations, financial and otherwise, of the student. The student receives a copy of the signed enrollment agreement as well as copies of other applicable written documents related to his or her enrollment at IU. A copy of the signed enrollment agreement is also kept in the student's file at IU.

### ***Program Plan***

During the admissions process, the university begins preparing a **program plan** for the prospective student. The program plan lists the courses that the student must complete to earn the degree or certificate as well as any credits the student is transferring to the university.

The program plan is finalized after all official transcripts of the student's previous work have been received and reviewed by the university Registrar or other appropriate university representative or designee.

The program plan must be approved by the Registrar or other representative or designee before it can become official.

### ***Tuition Financing***

During admissions, the applicant also begins the process of arranging tuition financing for his or her enrollment. The student is informed of IU's tuition and tuition refund policies during the admissions process. (Full information about the university's tuition policies can be found in the Tuition Policy, Tuition Assistance Policy, and Tuition Refund Policy, in this manual.)

An initial payment is required as part of the admissions process. An applicant may enroll in his or her first course once the enrollment agreement has been signed and the initial payment has been made.

Full financial arrangements are finalized later, after the university has received all information and documents that are needed to arrange financing or that influence the cost of enrollment, including official transcripts of previous education. For certain programs, financing of courses such as prerequisites may be completed separately from financing for the rest of the program.

### ***Additional Application Materials***

During the admissions process, the applicant also submits any other application materials (copies of credentials, etc.) required for admission or recommended as part of the admissions process.

## **General Admission Requirements**

An individual seeking admission to IU must meet the following general admission requirements:

- Complete and sign an enrollment agreement.
- Submit official transcripts to the university, as instructed by the Enrollment Advisor or other appropriate university representative.
- Complete or submit additional materials as required by the university.

### ***Transcripts Required for Admission***

In general, the following transcripts are required for admission:

- To be admitted, an applicant must have received a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent by the time he or she begins a program of study at IU. **The university may require that the applicant provide an official transcript of high school work, or equivalent official documentation of successful completion of high school work, if she or he has earned no previous college-level academic credits at an accredited institution of higher education. If an applicant has earned previous college-level academic credits at an accredited institution of higher education and is beyond the age of compulsory education (i.e., 17 years or older), a high school transcript or the equivalent may not be required for admission. Instead, the applicant would submit official transcripts from all previous institutions of higher education.**
- Applicants to master's degree programs must furnish an official transcript from an accredited institution of higher education verifying that a bachelor's degree was awarded.

### **Recognized Equivalents to High School Diploma**

Recognized equivalents to a high school diploma include the following:

#### ***GED***

The General Educational Development (GED) program offers students a way to earn the equivalent of a traditional high school diploma. Applicants must submit official transcripts that prove they have earned the GED credential.

#### ***Early Admission***

A student who has excelled in high school and is considered academically prepared for college may be released early by his or her principal or school counselor. This student must provide a letter of release from his or her principal and/or counselor, as well as written authorization from his or her parent/guardian. If a student's cohort graduation class has been out of high school for at least seven years, the applicant can submit either an official high school transcript or a copy of his or her high school diploma, or submit a written statement confirming the graduation date and location.

Additional documents may be required to certify completion of the equivalent of a high school diploma.



### ***Home School Certification***

Students who have been home-schooled, and released from public schooling, must provide a letter of release from their local school district and a signed statement by their parent/guardian certifying that they have completed the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Additional documents may be required to certify completion of the equivalent of a high school diploma.

### ***International Equivalent to U.S. High School Diploma***

Applicants who completed their high school or equivalent education in a country outside the U.S. must submit proof that they have earned the equivalent of a U.S. high school diploma. To furnish this proof, international applicants must provide an official evaluation of their academic credentials completed by a member organization of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). An appropriate IU representative or designee will review the NACES documentation and determine whether the applicant's credentials are equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma.

Additional documents may be required to certify completion of the equivalent of a U.S. high school diploma.

### **Age Required for Admission**

A student must be beyond the age of compulsory education (i.e., 17 years or older) at the start of an IU program of study, unless IU can establish with responsible parties that the program of study will not interfere with the student's required schooling. **However, given the university's focus on career-oriented education for working professionals, enrolling at the university at an age younger than 17 is not encouraged.**

Documentation may be required to verify the age of an applicant.

### ***Age Required for Admission to the Respiratory Therapy Program***

**In keeping with the requirements of the university's respiratory therapy accrediting agency, any individual admitted to the university's respiratory therapy program must be at least 18 years of age and must have a high school diploma or equivalent credential.**

**Documentation may be required to verify the age of an applicant.**

### **Admission Requirements for Associate's Degree Programs**

An applicant to a program awarding an associate's degree must meet the general admission requirements outlined in this Admissions Policy. Associate's degree programs at IU may have additional admission requirements beyond the general admission requirements and specific to their program. Applicants should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor for information about additional requirements specific to a program.

Because students at IU commit to an entire program at the start of their IU studies, a student enrolling with IU is expected to declare, from the start, which associate's program he or she intends to complete.

### **Admission Requirements for Bachelor's Degree Programs**

An applicant to a program awarding a bachelor's degree must meet the general admission requirements outlined in this Admissions Policy. Bachelor's degree programs at IU may have additional admission requirements beyond the general admission requirements and specific to their program. Applicants should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor for information about additional requirements specific to a program.

Because students at IU commit to an entire program at the start of their IU studies, a student enrolling with IU is expected to declare, from the start, which bachelor's program he or she intends to complete.

#### ***Bachelor's Programs: Enrolling without an Associate's Degree or the Equivalent***

Given IU's career-ladder focus, the university's bachelor's degree programs are designed for students who have already earned an associate's degree or an equivalent number of semester credits (60) from an accredited institution of higher learning. Thus, if an applicant wishes to enroll officially in a bachelor's program, he or she must provide official transcripts that verify that he or she has earned either:

- An associate's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning.
- At least 60 semester credits with at least one-quarter (15 credits) of these credits in general education.

IU will accept applicants who wish to earn their bachelor's degree at the university but have not yet earned an associate's degree or the equivalent credits. To accommodate these applicants, IU states the following in its university Catalog: "An applicant with fewer than 60 units of transfer credit who wishes to enroll in a bachelor's program may be required to earn an associate's degree as part of the first two years of undergraduate study leading to the bachelor's degree. An applicant may enter IU as an upper-division student if the applicant has an associate's degree or has completed 60 semester credits at an accredited institution of higher education."

This policy is put into practice as follows:

- Typically, an applicant with 45 or fewer semester credits is first placed into an IU associate's degree program; he or she can then enter a bachelor's degree program once 60 credits have been earned. An associate's degree is noted on the student's record once 60 credits have been earned.
- If an applicant has more than 45 credits (i.e., more than 75% of transferable credits for an associate's degree), he or she is typically placed into an IU bachelor's degree

program. The applicant will be *officially* admitted into this bachelor's program upon successful completion of at least 60 credits.

These policies and practices may vary by program if there are additional requirements that must be met for admission or graduation.

## Admission Requirements for Master's Degree Programs

An applicant to a program awarding a master's degree must meet the general admission requirements outlined in this Admissions Policy, with the following exception: instead of furnishing an official high school transcript, the applicant must furnish an official transcript from an accredited institution of higher education verifying that a bachelor's degree was awarded. To be admitted into the master's degree program, the applicant must have graduated from the bachelor's program with a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher.

Master's degree programs at IU may have additional admission requirements beyond the general admission requirements and specific to their program. Applicants should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor for information about additional requirements specific to a program.

Because students at IU commit to an entire program at the start of their IU studies, a student enrolling with IU is expected to declare, from the start, which master's program he or she intends to complete.

## Admission Requirements for Certificate Programs

An applicant to a program awarding a certificate must meet the general admission requirements outlined in this Admissions Policy. Certificate programs at IU may have additional admission requirements beyond the general admission requirements and specific to their program. Applicants should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor for information about additional requirements specific to a program.

For certificate programs offering master's-level courses, applicants must meet the university's admission requirements for master's programs. For certificate programs offering bachelor's-level courses, applicants must meet the admission requirements for bachelor's programs.

Because students at IU commit to an entire program at the start of their IU studies, a student enrolling with IU is expected to declare, from the start, which certificate program he or she intends to complete.

## Admission Requirements for Special IU Programs

An applicant to a special program such as the university's Basic Sciences for Respiratory Care program must meet the general admission requirements outlined in this Admissions Policy. Special programs at IU may have additional admission requirements beyond the general admission requirements and specific to their program. Applicants should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor for information about additional requirements specific to a program.

For special programs offering master's-level courses, applicants must meet the university's admission requirements for master's programs. For special programs offering bachelor's-level

courses, applicants must meet the admission requirements for bachelor's programs. Finally, for special programs offering associate's-level courses, applicants must meet admission requirements for associate's programs.

Because students at IU commit to an entire program at the start of their IU studies, a student enrolling with IU is expected to declare, from the start, which special program he or she intends to complete.

## Transfer Applicant Admission

### *Transferring to IU from Another Institution of Higher Education*

IU admits applicants wishing to transfer to the university from other institutions of higher education. In general, there are no "transfer students" per se at the university. For the most part, transfer students are treated in the same way as any other students enrolling at the university. However, in addition to meeting the requirements for general admission, a transfer applicant typically must

- Submit official transcripts from all previous institutions of higher education.
- Be in good academic standing with no documented disciplinary problems at a previous institution.

Like any prospective IU student, transfer applicants may request that academic credits earned at other accredited institutions be transferred to IU. An appropriate IU representative or designee will determine which credits can be transferred. More information about transferring academic credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy, in this manual.

### *Transferring from One IU Program into Another Program*

IU allows students to transfer from one IU program of study into another program of study. A student interested in changing programs should contact the university to request the transfer and to learn of any additional admission requirements specific to the new program.

Depending on the program into which the student is transferring, he or she may need to complete a new enrollment agreement and financial plan.

A student who transfers from one program into another may request that academic credits earned in the earlier program be transferred to and counted toward the new program. An appropriate IU representative or designee will determine whether any credits can be transferred to the new program. More information about transferring academic credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy, in this manual.

## International Applicant Admission

IU accepts qualified international applicants who wish to enroll in any program other than the Associate of Science in Respiratory Therapy.

The university defines an **international student** as a person whose primary residence is in a country other than the United States and/or who is not a citizen of the U.S.

In addition to meeting the requirements for general admission, international applicants must send official proof of their **TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores. Minimum passing scores are 500 for the paper-based version (PBT) of the test, 173 for the computer-based version (CBT), and 61 for the Internet-based version (iBT). IU requires applicants who are non-native speakers of English to submit their TOEFL scores. This group of applicants includes, but is not limited to, citizens or residents of non-English speaking countries (excluding U.S. citizens living abroad) and/or applicants for whom English is a second language.

When registering for the TOEFL or requesting that TOEFL send an official score report to the university, international applicants may use the Designated Institution (DI) code that TOEFL has provided for the university. IU's Designated Institution (DI) code is **0257**. Students may enter this code (also known as a Sponsor code) into their TOEFL registration or score report request materials. By entering this code, students can ensure that their official score reports are sent directly to IU by TOEFL.

Beyond the TOEFL, additional assessment and/or placement examinations may be required for international students.

International applicants must submit documentation of official transcripts of high school or equivalent work and, if applicable, college-level work. Serving as this documentation is an official evaluation of their academic credentials completed by a member organization of the **National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)**. Evaluations must be received within six months of enrolling at IU. Additional documents may be required as part of an international applicant's materials for admission.

IU will accept as transfer credits certain college-level academic credits earned at non-U.S. institutions. An appropriate IU representative or designee will determine whether any credits can be transferred. More information about transferring international credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy, in this manual.

All IU services and courses are delivered in English, and students must request services and complete their coursework in English. The university welcomes international students but does not provide English assistance in its services or courses, either in the form of translation assistance, courses in English as a Second Language (ESL), or other forms of English language assistance.

IU does not provide help in obtaining student visas.

## Admission of Applicants Seeking a Second Degree or Credential

IU accepts applicants who already hold a degree or credential from an accredited institution of higher education, provided the following conditions are met:

- Applicants seeking a bachelor's degree who already hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution may apply to and enroll in a post-baccalaureate degree program.

Applicants must obtain permission from an appropriate IU representative or designee before enrollment is official. Once enrolled, students must complete all core course requirements in the IU program in addition to the initial degree to be eligible for the post-baccalaureate degree. Transcripts and all official school documentation will denote a post-baccalaureate degree program.

- Applicants seeking a two-year degree who already hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution may apply to and enroll in a program that leads to licensure. Applicants must obtain permission from an appropriate IU representative or designee before enrollment is official. Once enrolled, students must complete all core course requirements in the IU program in addition to the initial degree to be eligible for the post-baccalaureate licensure degree. Transcripts and all official school documentation will denote a post-baccalaureate licensure program.
- Applicants seeking a second associate's degree who already hold an associate's degree from another accredited institution may apply to and enroll in a program that leads to licensure. Applicants must obtain permission from an appropriate IU representative or designee before enrollment is official. Once enrolled, students must complete all core course requirements in the IU program in addition to the initial degree to be eligible for the second associate's licensure degree. Transcripts and all official school documentation will denote a second associate's licensure program.
- Applicants who hold advanced degrees (master's, doctorate, etc.) must obtain permission from an appropriate IU representative or designee before enrolling in an associate's or bachelor's program. These applicants will be governed by guidelines similar to those governing other applicants who already hold a degree or credential, but their applications will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Applicants who hold degrees or credentials not covered in this policy will be governed by guidelines similar to those governing other applicants who already hold a degree or credential, but their applications will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

As part of the admissions process, an applicant who already holds a degree or credential from another institution will have his or her transcripts and credits evaluated to (1) verify that the previous degree or credential has been awarded, and (2) determine if any credits from the previous program can be transferred to IU. More information on transfer of credits can be found in the section Transfer Credits and Transfer Students, in this manual.

Applicants seeking a second degree or credential should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor for more information about these and any additional conditions and requirements.

### **All Other Applicants for Admission**

All other applicants for admission not specifically described in this Admissions Policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in keeping with IU standards for admission of applicants.

### **Fast-Track Admissions**

IU offers a fast-track admissions process. As part of this process, an applicant completes an

enrollment agreement, a transcript request form for institutions of higher education previously attended, and a preliminary and unofficial self-evaluation of prior academic credits that indicates the courses the applicant has already taken and for which he or she believes credit has been earned.

The applicant is then enrolled in his or her first course on the basis of the information provided, if an appropriate IU representative or designee can determine with reasonable certainty that the applicant has the appropriate qualifications for admission. IU will then, upon their arrival, review official transcripts, certificates, test scores, and other application materials and verify and confirm the information provided by the applicant. The applicant, now a student, should receive an official acceptance or denial of items such as transfer credit within six months of registration.

### ***Fast-Track Admissions, Enrollment, Transfer Credit, and Prerequisites: Important Considerations***

Fast-track admissions offers applicants a fast, convenient way to enroll at the university. However, the following considerations should be kept in mind regarding fast-track admissions:

- An applicant participating in fast-track admissions is responsible for providing full and accurate information on any documents used in the fast-track admissions process. IU makes absolutely no representations whatsoever that, once an applicant's official transcripts, certificates, tests scores, and other application materials have been reviewed, this applicant will be allowed to continue as a student at IU.
- The university also makes no representations that an applicant will be awarded transfer credit for courses listed on the unofficial self-evaluation of prior academic credits earned. An applicant will only be granted transfer credit for courses that can be verified from official transcripts or other official documentation. If an appropriate IU representative or designee determines that an applicant cannot receive transfer credit for a course listed on the self-evaluation, the applicant will have to take that course.
- Lack of appropriate prerequisites may also affect an applicant's enrollment. For example, an applicant may be required to cancel a course in which he or she enrolled on the basis of the self-evaluation if an appropriate IU representative or designee determines that the applicant lacks a prerequisite or other requirement for that course. Lack of prerequisites may also delay an applicant's official enrollment in a program of study.
- In cases in which an applicant lacks prerequisites or transfer credit listed during the fast-track admissions process, IU will attempt to work with this individual to ensure that he or she can study at the university. In the case of transfer credit, official transcripts or equivalent documentation typically must be received and reviewed by the university before a student will be allowed to enroll in a course affected by the transfer credit. In the case of prerequisites, the prospective student may complete these at another accredited institution of higher education or through means such as credit by examination. The student may also complete these prerequisites at IU, which offers these courses or their equivalents.

## Re-Admission

Students in the following circumstances may be required to apply for re-admission to IU:

- Students whose studies have been interrupted and who have been declared inactive and had their enrollment terminated. (For more information, see the section of the Enrollment and Registration Policy entitled Interruption of Studies, in this manual.)
- Students who have been dismissed from the university for academic, financial, ethical, or other reasons.
- Students in other circumstances who may be required to apply for re-admission to continue their studies.

Applications for re-admission are decided on a case-by-case basis. A student who must apply for re-admission is treated as though he or she were a new student and must meet all current IU admission requirements, sign a new enrollment agreement, arrange a new financial plan, send in new, official copies of transcripts, and arrange a new program plan that must be approved by the university Registrar or other appropriate university representative or designee.

In cases of re-admission, there is no guarantee that the student's previous program will still be offered by the university. In these cases, the student will have to select another program if the previous program is no longer offered.

If a student is re-admitted, an appropriate IU representative or designee will determine whether this student can carry over any credits into the new enrollment from his or her previous enrollment. There is no guarantee that courses taken during the student's previous enrollment will be carried over into the student's new enrollment and counted toward his or her new program.

## Falsifying Application Materials

An applicant who falsifies application materials by providing false or misleading information or documents will be denied admission to IU. If an individual has already received an offer of admission or been admitted based on falsified application materials, IU will revoke the offer of admission and terminate the student's enrollment in his or her program of study. More information about this topic can be found in the Academic Honesty Policy and the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, both in this manual. These policies discuss disciplinary action for falsifying application materials, appealing a judgment of falsifying application materials, and related topics.



# Confidentiality of Records/FERPA

## Policy

Independence University's Confidentiality of Records Policy reflects a balance between the obligation of the institution to the welfare of the student and the obligation of the institution to public requirements.

Confidentiality of records at IU is governed by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974**. Also known as the Buckley Amendment, FERPA protects the privacy of student education records. The Act provides for the right to inspect and review education records, the right to seek to amend those records, and the right to limit disclosure of information from the records. The Act applies to all institutions that are recipients of federal funding. **Although IU is not required to comply with FERPA, the university adopts FERPA as a guideline.** The university will make reasonable efforts to maintain voluntary compliance with FERPA by withholding information from individuals who are not authorized to receive or view it.

The confidentiality policy included in this manual is taken from FERPA and is not a complete or unedited copy of FERPA. The policy in this manual is not meant to replace FERPA but to establish that IU has a confidentiality policy and to serve as a guide to FERPA at the university. A complete copy of FERPA can be found at the U.S. Department of Education Web site.

Students and others who have questions about confidentiality of records at IU should contact the university. An appropriate university representative or designee will answer questions related to education records and their privacy at the university.

All university staff are responsible for taking reasonable steps to maintain and protect the privacy of student education records.

## Definitions

The definitions of several terms critical to FERPA are included here to aid readers in understanding FERPA and its implications for confidentiality of student education records.

**Directory Information** – refers to information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

**Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, mailing address, telephone listing, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized student activities, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.** Under FERPA, students have the right to restrict disclosure of directory information.

**Disclosure** - to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication of personally identifiable information contained in education records to any party, by any means, including

oral, written, or electronic means.

**Education Records** - include any records that are directly related to a student and that are maintained by IU or by a party acting for the university. Education records include any records in the possession of a university employee that are shared with, or are accessible to, another individual. Education records include any information recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, and microfiche.

The term **education records** does *not* include:

- Records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record.
- Records of the law enforcement unit of an educational agency or institution.
- Records relating to an individual who is employed by the university, that
  - are made and maintained in the normal course of business;
  - relate exclusively to the individual in that individual's capacity as an employee;
  - are not available for use for any other purpose.

**NOTE.** Records relating to an individual enrolled at the university who is employed as a result of his or her status as a student are education records.

- Records on a student who is 18 years of age or older, or is enrolled at the university, that are
  - made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity;
  - made, maintained, or used only in connection with treatment of the student;
  - disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment; for the purpose of this definition, "treatment" does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the university.
- Alumni records, or records that only contain information about an individual after he or she is no longer a student at the university.

**Parent** - parent of a student, including a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.

**Personally Identifiable Information** - information that includes, but is not limited to:

- A personal identifier, such as the student's social security number or student number.
- Student grade point average (GPA), transcripts, final course grades.
- Admissions materials.
- Financial aid records.
- Disciplinary records.
- Attendance records.

- Academic counseling records.
- All other records or student information, except for records or information identified as directory information.

**Record** - any information recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, and microfiche.

**Student** - any individual who is or has been enrolled at the university and regarding whom the university maintains education records. **Eligible student** is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is enrolled at an institution of postsecondary education. In this Confidentiality of Records Policy, the term **student** is synonymous with **eligible student**, with the meaning of eligible student the intended meaning when either term is used. The only exceptions to this are instances in this policy in which the two terms, student and eligible student, must be distinguished to make the policy's meaning clear.

## FERPA Coverage

Persons who are currently enrolled at higher education institutions or were formerly enrolled, regardless of their age or status in regard to parental dependency, are covered under FERPA. Persons who have applied to, but have not attended, a higher education institution are not entitled to FERPA protection.

FERPA coverage includes records, files, documents, and data directly related to students, including electronically recorded data.

## Release of Directory Information

IU defines directory information according to the definition set forth by FERPA. Directory information may be disclosed in compliance with FERPA if a student has not placed a restriction on his or her directory information.

IU does not provide student directory listings to third parties for the purpose of marketing to students.

## Placing Restrictions on Release of Directory Information

Pursuant to federal law, a student has the right to place a restriction on the use or release of his or her directory information. A student has the right to refuse to permit the inclusion in a student directory or disclosure of any or all of his or her directory information.

To place a restriction on directory information, a student must submit a written request for the restriction to the university. (A student should contact the university to determine to whom this request should be sent.) **The request must be made within 30 days of a student first enrolling at IU.** This restriction will last for one year only, and if a student wishes to continue the restriction, he or she must contact the university annually, no later than the date upon which he or she first requested the restriction.

Questions concerning release of and restrictions on directory information should be directed to the university.

## **Anecdotal Notes**

All anecdotal notes made about a student that the university maintains and shares with school officials, regardless of the medium, would be included in the definition of education records and are, therefore, subject to FERPA.

Unless the notes are kept in the sole possession of the maker and are accessible only to a temporary substitute, they are part of the education records, subject to review by the student. This would include all shared paper files as well as notes made about the student on a shared computer or electronic record.

If a student has requested access to inspect and review his or her education records, none of these notes may be destroyed prior to student inspection and review.

## **Student's Right to Inspect and Review Education Records**

Upon request to the university, a student has the right to inspect and review his or her education records. IU complies with a request for access to education records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than 45 days after the university has received the request. IU also responds to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of records.

If circumstances effectively prevent a student from exercising the right to inspect and review his or her education records, IU will provide this student with a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the student to inspect and review the requested records.

IU adheres to the limitations set forth by FERPA on the right to inspect and review certain records. Documents that can be removed from education records before a student views the records are:

- Education records that contain information on more than one student. In these cases, the student may inspect and review only specific information in the records about him or herself, not other students.
- Financial records of the student's parents.
- Confidential letters and statements of recommendation placed in the student's education records and for which the student has waived the right to inspect and review those letters and statements.

The institution reserves the right to deny copies of education records available under FERPA if the student has an unpaid financial obligation to the university and/or there is an unresolved disciplinary action against the student.

## **Amending Education Records**

A student who believes that his or her education records contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights of privacy may ask IU to amend the records.

An appropriate university representative or designee will decide whether to amend the records as requested within a reasonable time after the university receives the request.

If IU decides not to amend the records as requested, the university shall inform the student of its decision and of his or her right to a hearing, as defined in FERPA, to challenge the information in his or her education records.

## **Right of Others to a Student's Education Records and Personally Identifiable Information**

### ***Written Consent to Disclose Records and Information to Others***

Except in the case of exceptions defined in FERPA, a student's written consent is required before an outside party will be granted access to his or her education records or personally identifiable information.

In keeping with FERPA, IU requires that a student provide a signed and dated written consent before the university can disclose personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except in the case of exceptions defined in FERPA. The student's written consent must

- Specify the records that may be disclosed.
- State the purpose of the disclosure.
- Identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

Consent may be given electronically if it identifies and authenticates the person granting consent and indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent. The disclosure of such information must include the condition that the recipient will not re-disclose information to any other party without prior written consent. If recipient does re-disclose without consent (unless pursuant to law), then the university may not permit access to that recipient for a minimum of five years.

The release of personally identifiable information over the telephone to a third party is prohibited by FERPA.

### ***Exceptions to Requirement of Written Consent***

An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from the education record of a student without that student's written consent if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions:

- The disclosure is to other school officials, including teachers, whom the university has determined to have legitimate educational interests.
- The disclosure is to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll.

- The disclosure is to authorized federal, state, or local representatives, officials, or authorities, as defined in FERPA, who may receive this information without written consent.
- The disclosure is in connection with the student's financial aid.
- The disclosure is to organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction. The university may disclose this information only if the study is conducted in a manner that does not permit personal identification of students by individuals other than representatives of the organization, and the information is destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes for which the study was conducted.
- The disclosure is to accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
- The disclosure is to a parent, as defined in FERPA, of a dependent student, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
- The disclosure is to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. IU may disclose this information only if the university makes a reasonable effort to notify the student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance, so that the student may seek protective action, unless the court has ordered that the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena is not to be disclosed. If the university initiates legal action against a student or a student initiates legal action against the university, the university may disclose to the court, without a court order or subpoena, the education records of the student that are relevant to the case.
- The disclosure is in connection with a health or safety emergency, as defined in FERPA, to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
- The disclosure is information the university has designated as directory information.
- The disclosure is to an eligible student or to the parent of a student who is not an eligible student.
- The disclosure is to a victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sexual offense.
- The disclosure is in connection with a disciplinary proceeding at the university, according to the conditions set forth by FERPA.

### **Parental Access to Student Education Records**

The inherent right to inspect and review education records is limited solely to an eligible student, as defined in FERPA, or to the parent of a student who is not an eligible student. Until a person is an eligible student, his or her parent has the same rights to inspect and review his or her education records that an eligible student holds. When this person becomes an eligible

student, the rights accorded to, and consent required of, the parent transfer from the parent to the eligible student. Thus, in keeping with FERPA, the university permits the parent or eligible student (not both) to inspect or review all education records unless such right has been waived. And, the parent or eligible student (not both) has the right to request the correction of education records that are believed to be inaccurate or misleading.

The education records of an eligible student may be released to a parent only by written consent of the student, unless the following conditions are met, in which case parental access is lawful:

- A parent may have access to education records information if the student is claimed as a dependent for federal income tax purposes for the year preceding the semester and for the year during which that semester occurs.
- The parent completes the Affidavit of Dependence form, which can be obtained from an appropriate university representative or designee responsible for student education records, and attaches the appropriate tax forms. After these steps are completed, the parent will then be eligible to review the student's education records.

If a student is not a dependent, he or she must be willing to provide a written consent before information will be released.

## Public Posting of Grades

The public posting of grades, including electronic and online posting, either by a student's name, institutional student identification number, or social security number without a student's written permission is a violation of FERPA.

Grades are considered "public" if they can be viewed by anyone other than the student, the instructional support staff member who graded the student's work, or another IU official authorized, as defined in FERPA, to have access to a student's education records, including grades.

Even with names obscured, complete numeric student identifier numbers are considered personally identifiable information as defined in FERPA. Therefore, the practice of posting grades by social security number or student identification number violates FERPA.

The posting of grades using the last four digits of the social security number in non-alphabetical student order is permitted.

The release of non-directory information, including grades, over the telephone to a third party is prohibited by FERPA.

## Maintenance of Requests for and Disclosure of Education Records

The university maintains a record of each request for access to, and each disclosure of, personally identifiable information. The records are maintained as long as the primary student records are kept. The records state the recipient of the information and the legitimate interest or exception that supported disclosure. IU handles requests to grant access to a student's

education records or disclose personally identifiable information according to the policies set forth by FERPA. Appropriate university representatives or designees are responsible for student education records and handle requests for student information, including non-directory, confidential information, personally identifiable information, and directory information on which the student has placed a restriction.



# Discrimination

## Policy

Independence University prohibits illegal discrimination, harassment, or prejudicial treatment of applicants and students and does not tolerate these forms of discrimination in its academic practices for any reason. As such, IU admits qualified applicants and provides programs and services without regard to age, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, or as otherwise provided by law. This policy pertains to applicants and students in matters of admission and access to all programs and services of the university.

IU complies with federal and applicable state laws and regulations against discrimination as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and other applicable laws regarding discrimination against and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

IU complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Section 402 of the Vietnam Veterans Act, as amended.

This policy forbids harassment based on age, race, color, etc. as a form of discrimination. Defined as a form of discrimination, sexual harassment is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which makes sexual harassment a form of sex discrimination. (Additional information regarding IU's policy on sexual harassment discrimination can be found in the Sexual Harassment Policy, in this manual.)

## Scope

This policy applies to all IU students, applicants for admission, university staff, and other members of the university community engaged in academic practices. Any person to whom this policy applies who practices discrimination that violates university policy is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

## Handling Matters Related to Discrimination

Matters related to discrimination in IU academic practices are handled by appropriate university representatives or designees. Certain matters of discrimination involving both a student and an IU employee may be jointly handled by appropriate university representatives or designees responsible for academic and human resource matters.

## Filing a Grievance Related to Discrimination

An applicant or student who believes that he or she is a victim of discrimination can file a grievance with the university according to the policies and procedures stated in IU's Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, included in this manual.

## Educational Programs, Services, and Courses

### Policy

Independence University provides distance education programs of study leading to master's degrees, bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees, and certificates. The university's educational objectives are clearly stated and reasonably attainable.

IU seeks to provide educational programs and services that meet the needs of students. IU provides educationally sound and up-to-date curricula and instructional materials as well as up-to-date technology for delivering its distance education programs and services.

IU discloses to applicants and students in writing the scope and nature of the educational programs that it offers and their educational and/or training objectives.

A student must meet all academic and financial obligations in order to receive a grade or credit for coursework, a degree or certificate, or other IU credential or service.

### Instructional Support Staff and Other Academic Personnel

Instructional support staff and other academic personnel (advisors, directors, deans, etc.) are appointed and monitored according to the requirements of the agencies that accredit the university and its programs of study. IU personnel are qualified by academic preparation and/or experience to provide instructional support or perform other duties in their areas of expertise.

Instructional support for university courses is provided by **Content Specialists**, qualified individuals who provide accurate assessment, correction services, and content information to students enrolled in IU courses. Content Specialists provide these services according to university policies that govern educational services. Content Specialists serve in lieu of a traditional course instructor and work under the direction of the university's Instructional Support Manager and Dean of Academic Affairs. In selecting and monitoring its Content Specialists, the university adheres to the requirements that its accrediting agencies have set for selecting and monitoring instructors/faculty.

To provide instructional support for IU courses and serve in other academic roles (directors, deans, etc.), personnel must have earned their degrees at institutions of higher education accredited by agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or, for non-U.S. institutions, an accepted foreign equivalent listed in the *International Handbook of Universities*.

When required by government, accrediting, and other agencies, instructional support staff and other academic personnel are appropriately credentialed professionals in their field. Clinical instructors are working, credentialed professionals in their field. IU maintains records documenting the academic and professional qualifications of its instructional support staff and other personnel.

IU encourages its instructional support staff and other academic personnel to grow professionally through continuing or advanced education in distance education and their areas of expertise, through continuing or advanced credentialing in their professional fields, and through other professional activities.

### ***Content Specialist Requirements: Associate's Degree Programs***

To provide instructional support for courses that are part of an associate's degree program, Content Specialists must possess, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree and demonstrated expertise in the subject field of the degree program. Content Specialists teaching general education courses must have their degree in the assigned subject field or have a bachelor's degree and 18 semester credits in the subject field. Content Specialists in technical fields must possess, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree in the assigned subject field.

### ***Content Specialist Requirements: Bachelor's Degree Programs***

To provide instructional support for courses that are part of a bachelor's degree program, Content Specialists must possess, at a minimum, a master's degree in the assigned subject field or a master's degree constructive to the program being offered.

### ***Content Specialist Requirements: Master's Degree Programs***

To provide instructional support for courses that are part of a master's degree program, Content Specialists must possess a graduate degree constructive to the program being offered, with Content Specialists assigned responsibilities in terms of their major and minor areas of expertise.

### ***Exceptions to Content Specialist Requirements***

In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of the formal academic preparation outlined above for instructional support staff. The university justifies such cases on an individual basis.

## **Courses: General Information**

IU provides student-centered, independent study courses delivered at a distance and supported by online and printed instructional materials. Because IU courses are delivered at a distance, using the Internet or other media to link instructional support staff and students, there are no requirements for students to visit a physical campus to attend class or other scheduled activities, nor are there any physical residency requirements. The only exceptions to this are programs with a practicum, internship, or clinical component. In these cases, students complete their practicum, internship, or clinical instruction at local sponsoring facilities whose credentials have been approved by IU.

A student is responsible for developing a personal study schedule that enables him or her to complete each course by the deadline for completing a course without a penalty (30 days per semester credit; thus, 90 days per 3-credit course). While enrolled, a student has access to qualified instructional support staff assigned to IU courses and, when available, to other

students in the same course and program. Finally, a student has access to one-to-one advising provided by the university's Student Advisors.

Once enrolled, a student has access to the online tools that the university uses to support its distance education programs and services. With these tools, a student can access program materials and online courses, schedule and complete online examinations, contact instructional support staff, connect with Student Advisors and student support services, and perform other routine educational tasks.

### **Textbooks, Study Guides, and Course Materials**

Textbooks, study guides/workbooks, and other course materials are sent automatically to a student when he or she enrolls in a new course. **The majority of textbooks and study guides are printed texts sent from the university's education fulfillment center directly to the shipping address that the fulfillment center has on file for the student. Printed materials are typically sent via a standard shipper (UPS, Fed Ex, etc.), though other shipping arrangements may be made for students in special circumstances.** IU recommends that students check their printed course materials upon arrival to ensure that they have received correct and complete materials. If a student does not receive the required materials, he or she should contact the university immediately so that correct materials can be shipped.

Depending on the course, additional course materials may be provided to students in online form, through the student's online courses.

### **Clinical Instruction**

If a student's program has a clinical component, he or she will complete clinical instruction at local sponsoring facilities and with clinical instructors (Preceptors, Clinical Evaluators) whose credentials have been verified and approved by IU. Clinical instructors are working, credentialed professionals in the clinical field. **The terms of a student's clinical instruction (facility, Preceptor, etc.) are established prior to enrollment in the first clinical course and, when necessary, modified during a student's enrollment.**

A student should contact the university if he or she has any questions about clinical instruction.

#### ***Important Policies Regarding Clinical Instruction***

IU has established policies to ensure that students receive the best clinical education possible. All students in programs with a clinical component and all others involved in clinical instruction are expected to adhere to the following policies:

- During clinical instruction, students must be identified as students and have their ID card with them at all times.
- Students cannot be substituted for staff.
- Students must not be paid for time spent in clinical instruction.

The university takes these policies seriously and expects all clinical students, clinical instructors, and clinical facilities to strictly follow them. Failure to follow these policies may result in disciplinary action against a student and others involved in clinical instruction.

### ***Access to Student Information in a Clinical Program***

Access to a clinical student's information may be granted to the student's Preceptor, Department Head, and Medical Director at his or her sponsoring clinical facility. This policy applies to students in all IU programs in which clinical instruction takes place (respiratory therapy, electroencephalography, and any other program with a clinical component).

### ***HIPAA***

In keeping with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), all hospital and patient information must be held in confidence. The nature of clinical practice gives students and Preceptors access to confidential and proprietary hospital, employee, and patient information. State and federal laws, including HIPAA, protect this confidential information. Students and Preceptors must not disclose any information relating to patients, the hospital, or staff, including, but not limited to, conversations, medical records, and hospital memoranda, except as is necessary in order to carry out their clinical duties and that they will meet all state and federal requirements. Also, students and Preceptors must not disclose such information, either by publication, verbally, or otherwise, to any person without the prior written consent of the hospital and/or patient.

## **Course Assignments**

Assignments and coursework are designed to measure the student's achievement of a course's stated learning objectives and outcomes. Depending on the course, a student may be asked to complete unit exams, final exams or final projects, clinical assessments, papers, projects, case studies, theses, or other assignments. Students are informed of a course's requirements in writing when they first enroll in a course.

Given IU's academic calendar, which employs continuous rolling enrollments, there is no set, institution-wide assignment or examination schedule. Nevertheless, all assignments for a course must be completed by the deadline for completing a course without a penalty (30 days per semester credit; thus, 90 days per 3-credit course), unless a student has received permission to extend the course through a leave of absence. (See the Enrollment and Registration Policy for more information about leaves of absence.)

IU strongly discourages students from putting off assignments or trying to complete assignments all at once, near the deadline for completing a course. If a student does not make satisfactory progress throughout a course, he or she may find it difficult to complete the course on time and may be contacted by an IU Student Advisor.

### ***Unit Examinations***

Most IU courses are divided into several units (also known as modules, section, or lessons),

each of which covers a portion of the course material. In many IU courses, a student will complete unit exams that assess his or her knowledge of the course material covered in that unit.

Unit exams are taken online through the student's online course. Unit exams are open-book and comprised of objective questions (multiple choice, true/false) and, on occasion, open-ended or short-answer questions. A student receives instant scoring and feedback on objective questions. Short-answer and similar written responses are graded by the course's Content Specialist, typically within two business days of the student submitting the exam.

To pass a unit exam, a student must earn a score of at least 90%, although certain courses may require a different passing score. A student who does not earn the required passing score on a unit exam receives re-test notification on the exam results that indicate which questions were answered incorrectly. The student is instructed to review these areas of weakness. In addition, a student who fails to earn the required passing score must re-take the unit exam until the passing score is achieved. However, if a student does not earn the passing score in three attempts, he or she must consult with the course's Content Specialist before attempting the unit exam a fourth time. Regardless of the number of times a student takes a unit exam, the original unit exam score is typically used to calculate the final course grade.

Because different IU programs and courses may have different policies regarding unit exams, a student should ask about his or her program or course's policy. A student should also contact the university if he or she has any other questions about unit exams.

### ***Final Examinations***

In many courses, a student will complete a proctored final exam that assesses his or her knowledge of a course's material. Final exams are taken online through the student's online course. Final exams are closed-book and comprised of objective questions (multiple choice, true/false) and, on occasion, open-ended or short-answer questions. A student receives instant scoring and feedback on objective questions. Short-answer and similar written responses are graded by the course's Content Specialist, typically within two business days of the student submitting the exam.

Final exams in certain courses (RES, BIO, EEG 150) require a minimum passing score of 75%. In all other courses, there is no minimum passing score requirement. However, to pass the course, a student would have to earn a final exam score that yields at least a 75% overall average for the entire course.

Students are allowed to re-take a final exam one time, for a total of two attempts. The average of the two final exam scores is typically used to calculate the final course grade. The only exception to this policy is for exams in certain courses (RES, BIO, EEG 150). Students in these courses are required to earn a minimum score of 75% on their final exam for the course. These students may attempt the final exam up to 3 times (i.e., 2 re-takes) to achieve 75% on at least one attempt. Typically, the final course grade will then be calculated using the average score of all attempts.

When a student retakes a final exam, the second and, when applicable, third exams are different versions from the previous exam(s).

Finally, a student must submit a new final exam request before he or she will be allowed to schedule the re-take. (See the following section, *Requesting and Scheduling a Final Exam*, for more information about final exam requests and scheduling.)

Because IU programs of study and courses have different policies regarding final exams, a student should ask about his or her program or course's policy. A student should also contact the university if he or she has any other questions about final exams.

### *Requesting and Scheduling a Final Exam*

A student may request the final exam for a course when he or she has completed and passed all other coursework for that course. Thus, a final exam request should not be submitted until a student has passed all unit exams with the required minimum passing score (typically, 90%) and completed all other required course assignments.

A student should submit a final exam request four to five business days prior to the preferred exam date. Students submit their requests online through the university's online tools. If a student requests a final exam before he or she is eligible for the exam, the request will be deleted, and the student will have to re-submit the request when he or she is eligible.

If the student's final exam scheduling request is approved, the university contacts the student to confirm that the request has been approved. This confirmation message also instructs the student on how to schedule the final exam at the university's testing center provider or at an alternate, IU-approved location. The student then contacts the testing center provider to schedule the exam or makes arrangements to take the exam at the alternate location. Students should allow two business days before contacting the testing center provider to schedule the exam.

After the student receives the confirmation, he or she has 14 days to complete the final exam unless told otherwise by a Student Advisor or other appropriate university representative. All final exams are monitored and recorded by computer address, login, unique password, and email address.

A student should contact the university if he or she has any questions about how and when to submit a request or schedule a final exam.

### *Final Examination Locations*

A student will take his or her final exam online at a pre-arranged time and place. A student living within 50 miles of a testing center managed by the university's testing center provider will take final exams at that center.

IU will evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, the circumstances of students living more than 50 miles away from a testing center and, when necessary, approve alternate testing locations. Acceptable alternate locations might include: a public library recognized by the American Library Association (ALA), a community or private college recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or another testing location approved by the university.

### *Final Examination Proctors*

All final exams are administered by a proctor, either a testing center staff member or, if the student takes the exam at an alternate location, another trustworthy individual approved by IU. Co-workers, friends, and family of the student are unacceptable proctors and will not be approved. The proctor must be a responsible, disinterested individual who presents no conflict of interest, has no direct personal or professional contact with the student, and has no vested interest in the student's scores.

Because proctors receive the code that unlocks a final exam via email, alternate proctors are required to supply the university with a professional email address. Professional email addresses include those attached to a company or any other professional organization or facility. Personal email addresses include those provided by companies such as AOL, Earthlink, Yahoo, Hotmail, or similar email providers. Potential proctors who submit a personal email address to the university will not be allowed to proctor final exams.

### ***Final Projects***

In certain courses, students may be asked to complete a final project in lieu of a proctored final exam. Final projects are more often assigned in graduate-level or advanced courses rather than in undergraduate or lower-level courses. A student's course materials outline what is required in a final project.

Students completing final projects may take advantage of **paper/project re-submission**. The section Papers and Projects (below) describes this option, which allows students to pursue a higher grade on a final project already submitted to the university for grading.

### ***Clinical Assessments and Evaluation***

Students enrolled in programs with a clinical component will have their clinical knowledge and skills assessed through periodic clinical assessments and a final clinical evaluation.

Clinical assessments and the final clinical evaluation are performed by clinical instructors (Preceptors, Clinical Evaluators) who are working, credentialed professionals in the clinical field. In the case of Clinical Evaluators who perform the final clinical evaluation, these individuals must not be affiliated with the students whose abilities are being assessed.

Students will be provided with instructions, information, and study materials related to their clinical education. If a student does not show competency on clinical assessments and evaluations, advising is provided to help the student pass future assessments or evaluations.

### ***Papers and Projects***

In certain courses, students may be asked to complete papers or projects that assess their knowledge of the course's subject matter. Typically, these papers and projects are required in addition to a course's unit exams or in place of the unit exams.

All text-based assignments such as papers and projects are processed through **plagiarism**



**detection software** to guard against plagiarism and guarantee student authenticity of the work submitted. Plagiarism is a violation of the university's Student Rights and Responsibilities Code, and students who commit plagiarism are subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

Finally, IU offers the option of **paper/project re-submission** to students who would like to improve their paper or project grades. Occasionally, a student's paper or project may not be graded, but returned to the student to correct and re-submit. The paper then must be re-submitted and successfully passed prior to the student taking the final exam. Additionally, if a student receives a score below 85% on a graded paper or project but wishes to increase the grade, he or she may re-write and re-submit the paper or project one time. The student receives the average of the original and new scores.

### ***Additional Assignments***

Depending on the course, a student may be asked to complete assignments such as case studies, theses, or other assignments. For more information about these assignments, a student should read the course materials provided for a course or contact the university or his or her Content Specialist.

## **Submission of Assignments, Grading, and Posting of Grades**

A student typically submits course assignments using IU's online tools, following the directions that accompany the assignment.

A student typically completes and submits unit and final exams online. **Objective exam questions receive instant electronic scoring and feedback. If an exam requires short-answer or written responses, these are graded by the course's Content Specialist and results are typically returned within two business days.**

**Once submitted, papers, projects, and similar written assignments are graded by the course's Content Specialist. Results are typically reported to the student within two business days.**

**Clinical assessments and evaluations may be graded by the clinical instructor or, in the case of assignments that must simply be marked as completed, by other appropriate university personnel. Clinical assignments may be submitted online or in print form, with grading completed either electronically or by using paper-based methods.**

Finally, the results of graded assignments are typically posted in the university's online learning management system, which allows students secure access to their results and any comments by instructional support staff once the grade on an assignment has been posted.

## **Grading Practices and Standards**

A student's coursework is assessed according to a grading system in which all work is assessed promptly, accurately, fairly, and consistently, and results and grades are reported promptly to the student. Evaluation of student work is performed by qualified instructional support staff. More information about the university's grading practices and standards can be found in the section Grading and Assessment, in this manual.

## Requesting Assistance with Courses

Students are encouraged to contact the university for assistance with their courses, course materials and assignments, and other aspects of their IU education. Students contact the Content Specialists assigned to their courses for questions related to course materials, assignments and exams, grades, readings, activities, or any other aspect of the instructional materials that make up their courses. For administrative questions related to a course (final exam scheduling, enrolling in a new course, tracking down textbooks, using online tools to submit an assignment, etc.), students contact the university's Student Advisors, who manage these administrative issues for the university.

## Assessing Student Achievement and Satisfaction

IU seeks to ensure that students are satisfied with the educational programs and services provided by the university. IU also seeks to ensure that students achieve learning outcomes that are appropriate to its mission and to the rigor and depth of the degrees and certificates offered.

Student evaluations of their courses, programs of study, and other aspects of their IU education are systematically sought and the results systematically reviewed. End-of-course critiques and other evaluations are valued and used as one basis for assessing and improving educational programs and services, including instructional materials and the delivery of instruction.

In addition to assessing student achievement and satisfaction through evaluations, the university encourages students to offer feedback on the university's programs and services when communicating with Content Specialists, Student Advisors, and other university staff. Feedback is also solicited through informal polls on the IU Web site and other means.

# Enrollment and Registration

## Policy

Students may enroll in the university's programs of study and courses if they have successfully completed the admissions process and are in good academic and financial standing with the university.

All students are expected to complete all programs and courses in which they are enrolled, unless the program or course is officially cancelled by the university.

## Definitions: Enrollment and Registration

As explained in the university's Admissions Policy, IU students commit themselves to an entire program of study upon admission, rather than only to individual courses. When an applicant applies for admission, he or she must specify the program in which he or she wishes to enroll, with the understanding that he or she will complete the entire package of courses leading to the program's degree or certificate.

As used in this Enrollment and Registration Policy, the term **enrollment** may be used to refer to a student's enrollment in his or her entire program or to his or her enrollment in the courses that make up that program.

The term **registration** is considered a synonym of enrollment, though the term typically refers to a student's enrollment in an individual course rather than an entire program of study.

## Good Financial Standing and Enrollment

A student must be in good financial standing with IU to remain enrolled in a program of study and enroll in courses. A student who is in default on tuition payments or has other outstanding financial obligations to the university will not be allowed to enroll in courses and may be terminated from his or her program of study. **In addition, transcripts of academic work will not be released to students whose account is in default.**

## Program Plans

Each IU program of study is made up of a series of courses that have been chosen to provide students with a quality education in that subject or field. **During the admissions process, the university begins preparing a program plan for the prospective student. The program plan lists both the courses that the student must complete to earn the degree or certificate and any credits the student is transferring to the university. The program plan is finalized after all official transcripts of the student's previous work have been received and reviewed by the university Registrar or other appropriate university representative or designee. The program plan must be approved by the Registrar or other representative or designee before it can become official. Students are provided with a copy of their program plan.**

Courses on the program plan are listed in the order in which the student must take them. Prerequisite and introductory courses are listed before more advanced ones, with general education courses required, as needed, to fulfill the university's and its accrediting agency's general education requirements.

Program plans are designed to provide students and the university with a comprehensive overview of all courses that a student must take in order to complete a program of study. Program plans are subject to change at any time, if necessary. Any changes to the program plan must be approved by the university.

### **Enrollment Responsibilities: Enrollment Advisors and Student Advisors**

Students enroll in the university and in their program of study with the assistance of Enrollment Advisors and Student Advisors. In general, an Enrollment Advisor guides a student through the initial admissions and enrollment process and is typically responsible for getting the student admitted and enrolled in his or her first course. Once a student has been admitted and enrolled, a Student Advisor typically assumes responsibility for the student from the Enrollment Advisor. The Student Advisor assists the student in getting accepted into and enrolling in the actual program of study and guides the student through the remainder of his or her studies.

### **Enrolling in Courses: Procedure**

Students may enroll in individual courses through all means used by the university to enroll students. Currently, beginning students enroll in their first course through an Enrollment Advisor. Students typically enroll in subsequent courses through their Student Advisors. A Student Advisor enrolls a student in a new course at or near the time this student completes the previous course. This automatic enrollment is designed to accelerate students' education and help them to avoid any gaps in their enrollment that could delay their graduation and even lead to termination from a program of study.

When enrolling in courses, students follow their official program plan, taking courses in the order in which they are listed on the plan.

### **Enrollment Timeframe**

The university offers continuous rolling enrollments in which students may enroll in and begin courses at any time of year, without waiting for semester or course start and end dates. Students enroll in a new course as soon as their previous course has been completed.

### **Prerequisites**

Certain IU programs of study require that a student complete prerequisites before being officially admitted to and enrolled in the program. These prerequisites are published in the university Catalog and are explained to a prospective student during the admissions process.

All prerequisites must be verified by an appropriate IU representative or designee before a student's official enrollment in a program of study will be approved. Prerequisites are verified

through official transcripts or equivalent official documentation. Students may complete their prerequisites at accredited institutions of higher education or through other equivalent means approved by the university (typically, extra-institutional credit examinations such as AP, CLEP, DSST/DANTES, etc.). Students may complete their prerequisite requirements by completing equivalent IU courses.

Certain programs may place limits on the age of prerequisites. Currently, the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy program requires that prerequisites for the program have been taken within the last five years. The only exception to this is the A.S.R.T. prerequisite course BIO 110 (Human Anatomy and Physiology). BIO 110 is not subject to the five-year rule and does not need to have been taken within the last five years.

### **Availability of Courses**

IU strives to ensure that courses are available when a student is ready to enroll in them. Students concerned about course availability should contact the university for more information as they plan their studies.

### **Dropping a Course**

A student who wishes to drop a course may do so through the means established by the university for dropping courses. Currently, students drop courses through their Student Advisors.

A student who has completed less than 50% of a course may drop the course. A student who has completed 50% or more of a course may not drop the course.

When a student drops a course, a status of Drop (DR) is assigned to the student's transcript. This status does not affect the student's grade point average (GPA).

If a student drops a course, tuition is refunded, when applicable, according to IU's Tuition Refund Policy (included in this manual). Typically, the student must request the tuition refund.

### **Course Expiration Dates/Deadlines for Completing Courses without Penalty**

The course expiration date or deadline for completing a course without a penalty is 30 days per semester credit. Thus, students have 90 days to complete a 3-credit course, 120 days to complete a 4-credit course, 150 days to complete a 5-credit course, etc. Students can complete courses in less time (30 days, 60 days, etc.) if they wish. All coursework – including the course's final exam or final project – must be submitted prior to the course expiration date or deadline.

Penalties exist for not completing a course by its expiration date or deadline. For more information about these penalties, see the section of this Enrollment and Registration Policy entitled Interruption of Studies.

If a student faces an emergency, he or she has the option of asking for a leave of absence that extends the deadline for completing a course. Information about leaves of absence can be found in this Enrollment and Registration Policy, in the section entitled Interruption of Studies.

### ***Determining a Course Expiration Date or Deadline***

When a student enrolls in a new course, he or she receives an email from UPS, the preferred shipper for university course materials. This email notifies the student that his or her new course materials have been shipped. The date of shipment is used to determine the new course's expiration date or deadline.

As an example, a 3-credit course (the university's most common type of course) would expire according to the following schedule:

<b>If course materials were shipped any day in:</b>	<b>The course expires on the following day:</b>
January	April 30
February	May 31
March	June 30
April	July 31
May	August 31
June	September 30
July	October 31
August	November 30
September	December 31
October	January 31
November	February 28
December	March 31

### **Maximum Course Load**

An IU student typically enrolls in one course at a time, following his or her official program plan and completing this course before enrolling in the next. However, the university may consider allowing a student to enroll in more than one course at a time if this student has at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and the permission of the appropriate university representative or designee. The student will need to explain why enrolling in more than one course is necessary to his or her educational or professional plans. A student should contact the university to learn more about enrolling in more than one course at a time.

### **Minimum Course Load**

A student must be enrolled in at least one course at any given time in order to remain on active status. A student who is not enrolled in a course, and who has not received a leave of absence or some other extension from the university, may be declared inactive and terminated from his or her program of study. More information about inactive status and termination can be found in the section of this Enrollment and Registration Policy entitled Interruption of Studies.

## Repeating a Course

IU places no limit on how many times a student can enroll in and take the same course. However, when a student re-takes a course, the university's Student Advisors typically review this student's situation to assess why he or she may have decided to re-take the course. The university will use the results of this review to determine ways that the university can improve the course, if necessary, and/or provide academic advising to the student if he or she is having difficulty with the course.

## Verification of Enrollment Letters

IU will provide a student with a verification of enrollment letter upon request.

Verification letters may be sent by regular mail or fax. Verification letters are not sent by email.

## Semester Credits Defined

Courses at IU are measured in semester credits. Courses currently range from 2 to 6 semester credits, with 3-credit courses being the most common at the university.

To measure semester credits, IU relies on definitions used by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) in its Policy on Degree Programs (DETC Accreditation Handbook, Appendix C.9) and by the American Council on Education (ACE) in its Credit Recommendation Evaluative Criteria.

According to the DETC, "semester and quarter hours shall be equivalent to the commonly accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement in accredited institutions. Academic degree or academic credit-bearing distance learning courses are normally measured by the learning outcomes normally achieved through 45 hours of student study (one credit/semester hour) or 30 hours of student study (one quarter hour credit)." DETC's definition reflects ACE's definition, which states that "normally, academic credit is assigned on the basis of one semester credit hour for each 15 classroom contact hours plus 30 hours of outside preparation or equivalent."

For its purposes, IU measures semester credits according to the learning outcomes normally achieved through 45 hours of student independent study per semester credit (i.e., 45 hours of independent study = 1 semester credit).

## Interruption of Studies

A student's studies may be interrupted for several reasons. A student may

- Not complete a course by its expiration date or deadline.
- Be granted a leave of absence.
- Withdraw from the university.

- Be administratively withdrawn by the university.
- Be placed on academic probation or dismissed by the university.
- Experience other circumstances that interrupt his or her studies.

These cases of interrupted studies are explained in the sections that follow. Also included is a section that explains the university's policy on resuming studies after an interruption.

### ***Interruption of Studies, Active and Inactive Student Status, and Termination from a Program***

A student must remain on **active status** to remain enrolled in a program of study. An active student is one who is enrolled in at least one course and who is making satisfactory academic progress toward completing his or her courses.

IU defines **satisfactory academic progress** as completing each course within 30 days per semester credit (thus, 90 days per 3-credit course) while maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 or, for graduate students, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

Except in the case of leaves of absence, a student whose studies are interrupted will typically be declared **inactive** and **terminated** from his or her program of study. To resume his or her studies, this student must be re-admitted to the university. (See the section of this Enrollment and Registration Policy entitled Resuming Studies after an Interruption for more information about re-admission.)

A student declared inactive and terminated may be eligible for a tuition refund according to the university's Tuition Refund Policy, included in this manual. Typically, the student must request the tuition refund.

### ***Not Completing a Course by Its Expiration Date or Deadline***

A student who does not complete a course by its expiration date or deadline may be declared inactive and terminated from a program of study. The deadline for completing a course without a penalty is 30 days per semester credit, thus, 90 days per 3-credit course. (See the section of this Enrollment and Registration Policy entitled Course Expiration Dates for a full definition of course expiration dates or deadlines.)

If a student does not complete a course by its expiration date or deadline, and has not received a leave of absence, a status of Incomplete (I) is assigned. Once the Incomplete is assigned, the student has 90 days to complete the course for a grade of A, B, C, D, or F. If the student does not complete the course within the additional 90 days, the Incomplete is removed, and a final course grade calculated. In this case, the student cannot receive a final course grade higher than a D, regardless of the grades earned in the course. In addition, the student may be declared inactive and terminated from his or her program. To repeat the course, the student would have to be re-admitted and repeat the course at his or her expense.



### ***Leaves of Absence***

A student may request a leave of absence if an emergency interferes with his or her ability to complete courses or continue in a program of study. A leave extends the deadline (30 days per semester credit) for completing a course without a penalty. IU grants the following types of leaves:

- **Personal Leave of Absence (PLOA):** Personal leaves are granted for serious personal crises or events such as divorce, loss of job/spouse's job, caring for an ill relative, victim of natural disaster, bereavement (immediate family only), or family leave for reasons such as birth or adoption. Work-related issues are not acceptable reasons for a leave. Time allotted may not exceed three months, and no more than two personal leaves may be granted per calendar year.
- **Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA):** Medical leaves are granted for personal medical emergencies such as surgeries, serious illness, accidents, etc. Medical leaves pertain to the student only. Physician verification is required for medical leave. The verification must be on physician's letterhead with physician signature, contact information, and dates of illness/disability. Time allotted will vary according to the doctor's recommendation.
- **Military Leaves, Past and Present (MilLOA):** Reasons for military leaves include, but are not limited to, active duty assignment and military transfer/reassignment. A copy of the military order or written verification from commanding officer is required for military leaves. Written verification must be on military letterhead with CO signature, contact information, explanation, and dates of leave. Time allotted will vary based on individual circumstances.

A student must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the university. Currently, these written requests are submitted using the Leave of Absence Request form in the university's online learning management system. The student's written request must state the reason that a leave is being requested.

Documentation is required for all leave requests and must be received by the university within one week of the submission of the Leave of Absence Request form. Students should submit the original documents, except where indicated, and retain a copy for their records. Information about how to send this documentation to the university (mailing address, contact person, etc.) is posted with the Leave of Absence Request form. A student may also contact the university for this information.

Once the student's request and documentation are received, an appropriate university representative or designee will decide whether the student should be granted a leave based on the information provided. The student will be notified of the university's decision.

### ***Student-Initiated Withdrawal***

A student may withdraw completely from the university and cancel enrollment in a program of study. A student should contact the university to initiate this process. If a student withdraws from the university and cancels enrollment, tuition is refunded according to the university's

Tuition Refund Policy, included in this manual. Typically, the student must request the tuition refund.

### ***Administrative Withdrawal***

The university may administratively withdraw a student from a program of study or course. Reasons for administrative withdrawal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If a student is enrolled in a program for which he or she has not completed the prerequisites or in which he or she is not properly placed, he or she may be withdrawn from the program. When possible, the university will work with the student to determine if he or she can still enroll at the university. Options may include enrolling in an alternate program or creating a program plan that enables the student to complete prerequisites or other requirements for the original program.
- If a student is enrolled in a course for which he or she has not completed the prerequisites or in which he or she is not properly placed, he or she may be withdrawn from the course. When possible, the university will work with the student to determine if he or she can enroll in an alternate course or fulfill the requirements for the original course. However, if a student does not follow through on these options (enroll in alternate course, fulfill requirements), he or she risks being withdrawn from his or her entire program.
- If a student is placed on academic probation and does not achieve the satisfactory academic progress needed to be removed from probation, he or she may be withdrawn from a program. More information about academic probation and dismissal can be found in the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy, in this manual.
- If a student violates the university's Student Rights and Responsibilities Code (Student Code), he or she may be withdrawn from a program. More information about the Student Code and disciplinary matters may be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code and the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, both in this manual.
- If a student does not make timely and complete tuition payments or otherwise fails to remain in good financial standing with the university, he or she may be withdrawn from a program.
- If a course is dropped from the IU schedule due to uncontrollable circumstances, a student may be withdrawn from the course. A student who is administratively withdrawn from a course may enroll in an alternate course. However, if a student does not enroll in an alternate course, he or she risks being withdrawn from his or her entire program.

Typically, being withdrawn from an entire program of study is equivalent to being declared inactive and terminated from a program. A student who is administratively withdrawn from a program or course is eligible for a tuition refund according to the university's Tuition Refund Policy, in this manual. The student typically must request the tuition refund.

### ***Academic Probation and Dismissal***

A student's studies can be interrupted if he or she is placed on academic probation or dismissed for academic reasons. More information on academic probation and dismissal, including resuming studies after dismissal, can be found in the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy, in this manual.

### ***Other Circumstances That Interrupt Studies***

A student may experience other circumstances that interrupt his or her studies. Depending on the circumstances, this student may be declared inactive and terminated from a program. A student in these circumstances may be eligible for a tuition refund according to IU's Tuition Refund Policy, in this manual. Typically, the student must request the tuition refund. To resume his or her studies, the student would need to be re-admitted to the university.

### **Resuming Studies after an Interruption**

A student whose studies have been interrupted, and who has been declared inactive and terminated, may resume studies by being **re-admitted** to the university and re-enrolling in his or her program and courses. To be re-admitted, a student must repeat the admissions process, including signing a new enrollment agreement, sending new, official copies of transcripts to the university, and arranging a new program plan and financial plan. This policy applies whether the student has just started a program or is nearly finished. In addition, there is no guarantee that courses taken before the student was declared inactive and terminated will be carried over into the student's new enrollment and counted toward his or her new program.

More information about re-admission can be found in the Admissions Policy, in this manual.

## Extra-Institutional Credit

**NOTE.** IU accepts two forms of transfer credit: (1) credit earned in courses taken at other accredited institutions of higher education, and (2) extra-institutional credit, or credit earned outside of traditional courses through credit examinations and American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations. The first type of transfer credit – credit earned in courses – is discussed in the Transfer Credit Policy, included in this manual. The second form of transfer credit – extra-institutional credit – is addressed in this Extra-Institutional Credit Policy.

### Policy

IU grants extra-institutional credit to students for adequately documented and validated extra-institutional learning. IU currently grants extra-institutional credit to students enrolled in its associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. IU does not currently grant extra-institutional credit to students enrolled in its certificate programs.

To receive extra-institutional credit at IU, a student must provide official documentation (examination results, transcripts, other documentation) that can be used to validate the credit. This documentation is kept on file by IU. The student is responsible for requesting that these documents be evaluated for extra-institutional credit at IU.

A student must be enrolled at IU before any extra-institutional credit will be assigned to his or her transcript.

IU reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding the granting of extra-institutional credit by the university.

A student with questions about extra-institutional credit should contact the university.

### Maximum Extra-Institutional Credit Allowed

As a form of transfer credit, extra-institutional credit is subject to the same limits as any other type of transfer credit:

- A maximum of one-half of the credits required for a master's degree may be granted through transfer credit, including a combination of extra-institutional credit and transfer courses.
- For an associate's or bachelor's degree, a maximum of three-fourths of the credits required for the degree may be granted through transfer credit, including a combination of extra-institutional credit and transfer courses.

### Experiential Credit: Credit for General Work or Life Experiences

IU does not grant experiential credit, or academic credit for general work or life experiences. IU will only grant academic credit for accredited academic study or its equivalent (credit by examination, ACE credit recommendations).

## Grade Point Average (GPA) and Extra-Institutional Credit

Extra-institutional credit is not calculated into a student's grade point average (GPA).

## Duplicate Credit

If a student earns extra-institutional credit for an IU education requirement that has already been met through another form of credit, he or she has earned what the university calls "duplicate" credit. Under IU policy, duplicate credit cannot be applied toward the same education requirement. More information about duplicate credit (including a full definition of this term) can be found in the Graduation Policy, included in this manual.

## IU Staff Responsible for Evaluating Extra-Institutional Credit

Credit by examination scores, transcripts, and other documents are verified as official and evaluated for extra-institutional credit by an appropriate university representative or designee.

Staff assigned to evaluate scores, transcripts, and other documents for extra-institutional credit are qualified and trained for this assignment. Their evaluations are appropriate, fair, and consistent, and credit is applied according to the policies and procedures in this policy on Extra-Institutional Credit.

## Extra-Institutional Credit Granted by IU

IU currently grants two types of extra-institutional credit:

- Credit by examination.
- Credit granted according to credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE).

IU will evaluate requests for extra-institutional credit from other sources on a case-by-case basis.

IU grants **credit by examination** through the following programs:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Program.
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP).
- DSST Program [formerly, DANES Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs)].
- Excelsior College Examinations [formerly, Regents College Examinations/Proficiency Examination Program (PEP)].
- United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI).

IU also grants credit according to **credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE)** for:

- Military training, experience, and occupations.
- Other types of training, courses, professional examinations, and educational experiences, including professional licenses, certificates, and training programs.

The university's policies and procedures for granting each type of extra-institutional credit listed above are outlined in this Extra-Institutional Credit Policy.

## Credit by Examination

### *General Information and Submitting Examination Results*

A student can receive credit by examination for the following programs: AP, CLEP, DSST/DANTES, Excelsior/Regents/PEP, and USAFI. To receive credit by examination, a student enrolled at IU must provide the university with official results of an exam administered by an examination program recognized by IU. The student should contact the university to determine to whom the results should be sent.

Official results must be sent directly from the program to the university. Results are typically sent by regular mail. However, IU will consider accepting results sent by other means (for example, electronic results), if the credit by examination program can verify these results as official. IU will also consider accepting examination results listed on other official documents, for example, on official ACE or military transcripts. (See the subsection Credit Granted through American Council on Education Credit Recommendations, in this Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, for more information about these transcripts).

Examination results that are unofficial, marked student copy, issued to the student, or sent to IU by the student are not considered official and will not be used by IU to determine credit by examination.

Examination results are verified as official and evaluated for credit by an appropriate university representative or designee, who will make a recommendation as to the amount of IU credit, if any, to be granted.

### *Advanced Placement (AP) Credit*

IU grants credit by examination for scores earned through the Advanced Placement (AP) Program of the College Board. The AP Program offers 35 exams across 20 subject areas that test an individual's knowledge of a subject at the introductory or general education level. A student who earns a satisfactory score on an AP exam can receive credit toward IU general education requirements. Credit granted typically ranges from 3-12 credits, depending on the exam. Credit is granted according to the AP credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) in its *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, by the AP Program, or by another reputable source.

When applicable, IU will grant credit for a specific IU course requirement that an AP exam covers. When an AP exam and its credit recommendation do not correlate to a specific course in a student's program of study, IU may apply the credit to another education requirement, usually a general education or elective requirement. For this credit to be applied, the AP exam's education level, content, and subject area (i.e., business, science, humanities, etc.) and the IU requirement's education level, content, and subject area must be substantially similar. An appropriate university representative or designee will decide the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted.

### ***College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Credit***

IU grants credit by examination for scores earned through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Board. The CLEP Program offers exams in more than 30 college-level introductory subjects. These exams test an individual's knowledge of a subject at the introductory or general education level. A student who earns a satisfactory score on a CLEP exam can receive credit toward IU general education requirements. Credit granted typically ranges from 3-12 credits, depending on the exam. Credit is granted according to the CLEP credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) in its *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, by the CLEP Program, or by another reputable source.

When applicable, IU will grant credit for a specific IU course requirement that a CLEP exam covers. When a CLEP exam and its credit recommendation do not correlate to a specific course in a student's program of study, IU may apply the credit to another education requirement, usually a general education or elective requirement. For this credit to be applied, the CLEP exam's education level, content, and subject area (i.e., business, science, humanities, etc.) and the IU requirement's education level, content, and subject area must be substantially similar. An appropriate university representative or designee will decide the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted.

### ***DSST Program [formerly, DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs)]***

IU grants credit by examination for scores earned through the DSST Program, formerly known as the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs).<sup>\*</sup> DANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) still participates in the DSST Program, and the program is still closely associated with military servicemembers and veterans. Nevertheless, civilians can also take the DSST exams.

The DSST Program offers more than 37 exams in a range of college-level subjects that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate courses. A student who earns a satisfactory score on a DSST exam can receive credit toward IU general education or upper division requirements. Credit is granted according to the DSST credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) in its *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, by the DSST Program, or by another reputable source.

When applicable, IU will grant credit for a specific IU course requirement that a DSST exam covers. When a DSST exam and its credit recommendation do not correlate to a specific course in the student's program of study, IU may apply the credit to another education

requirement, usually a general education or elective requirement. For this credit to be applied, the DSST exam's education level, content, and subject area (i.e., business, science, humanities, etc.) and the IU requirement's education level, content, and subject area must be substantially similar. An appropriate university representative or designee will decide the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted.

\*Because the DSST Program has changed over the years, a student might discover that he or she took a DSST exam under a different program name. Or, a student might discover that a DSST exam taken in the past (possibly under a different program name) is no longer offered by the DSST Program. In these situations, IU will work with a student, on a case-by-case basis, to determine if IU credit can be granted for an earlier exam. In many cases, ACE continues to offer credit recommendations for these earlier exams.

### ***Excelsior College Examinations [formerly, Regents College Examinations/ACT Proficiency Examination Program (PEP)]***

IU grants credit by examination for scores earned on Excelsior College Examinations, a series of exams formerly known as the Regents College Examinations and, before that, as the ACT Proficiency Examination Program (PEP).# The Excelsior Program offers 40 exams in a range of subjects that test an individual's knowledge of the exam's subject. A student who earns a satisfactory score on an Excelsior exam can receive credit toward IU general education, upper division, or graduate requirements. Credit granted typically ranges from 3-12 credits, depending on the exam. Credit is granted according to the Excelsior credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) in its *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, by the Excelsior Program, or by another reputable source.

When applicable, IU will grant credit for a specific IU course requirement that an Excelsior exam covers. When an Excelsior exam and its credit recommendation do not correlate to a specific course in the student's program of study, IU may apply the credit to another education requirement, usually a general education or elective requirement. For this credit to be applied, the Excelsior exam's education level, content, and subject area (i.e., business, science, humanities, etc.) and the IU requirement's education level, content, and subject area must be substantially similar. An appropriate university representative or designee will decide the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted.

#Because the Excelsior Program has changed over the years, a student might discover that he or she took an Excelsior exam under a different program name. Or, a student might discover that an Excelsior exam taken in the past (possibly under a different program name) is no longer offered by the Excelsior Program. In these situations, IU will work with a student, on a case-by-case basis, to determine if IU credit can be awarded for this earlier exam. In many cases, ACE continues to offer credit recommendations for these earlier exams.

### ***United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI)***

IU grants credit by examination for scores earned by military veterans through the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI), which was replaced in 1974 by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). Similar to the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs), USAFI exams tested knowledge in a range of college-level subjects. IU students who would like to receive credit for their USAFI examination scores should contact the university. An appropriate IU representative or designee will review the



student's request and USAFI records and make a decision, on a case-by-case basis, as to the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted for a USAFI examination.

### ***Credit by Examination and Placement into English and Mathematics***

Students may fulfill their English and mathematics general education requirements and/or be placed into higher levels of English and mathematics if they have earned a satisfactory score on an English or mathematics examination administered by a credit by examination program recognized by the university. IU policy dictates the scores required to fulfill English and mathematics general education requirements and be placed into higher levels of English and mathematics.

## **Credit Granted through American Council on Education (ACE) Credit Recommendations**

### ***General Information***

IU grants academic credit according to credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) Military Programs for military training, experience, and occupations. In addition, IU also grants academic credit according to credit recommendations made by ACE's College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) for certain types of training, courses, professional examinations, and other educational experiences, including professional licenses, certificates, and training programs.

When applicable, IU will grant credit for a specific IU course requirement that an ACE recommendation covers. When an ACE credit recommendation does not correlate to a specific course in the student's program of study, IU may apply the credit to another education requirement, usually a general education or elective requirement. For this credit to be applied, the ACE recommendation's education level, content, and subject area (i.e., business, science, humanities, etc.) and the IU requirement's education level, content, and subject area must be substantially similar. An appropriate university representative or designee will decide the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted.

### ***ACE Credit Recommendations for Military Training, Experience, and Occupations***

A student enrolled at IU who has completed specific military training may request academic credit based on credit recommendations in the American Council on Education's (ACE) *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services*. IU considers the *Guide* the standard reference for granting credit for military training and experience. The *1954-1989 Guide* includes recommendations for training that took place prior to January 1990. The current edition, published biennially, contains recommendations effective January 1990 to the present.

### ***Submitting Military Transcripts or Other Documentation***

To receive academic credit based on ACE recommendations, a student must submit official

military transcripts to the university. A student should contact the university to determine to whom the transcripts or other documentation should be sent.

In certain cases, the university may accept other documentation in addition to or in lieu of military transcripts. This documentation is discussed below, in the section entitled Other Documentation.

**Military Transcripts.** IU recognizes the following official military transcripts:

- Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS).
- Sailor/Marine/American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART).
- Transcripts from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF).
- Transcripts from the U.S. Coast Guard Institute.

**AARTS** and **SMART** are automated transcribing systems designed to assist colleges and universities in awarding credit to servicemembers and veterans who serve or have served in the Army, Navy, and Marines, as well as the National Guard and Reserves. The transcripts list military coursework, training, and occupations, as well as credit recommendations from the *ACE Guide*. Transcripts also include test scores for CLEP, DSST/DANTES, and other examinations, along with ACE-recommended cutoff scores and credit recommendations.

Unlike AARTS and SMART, transcripts from the **Coast Guard Institute** and **CCAF** do not include ACE credit recommendations. Nevertheless, transcripts from the Coast Guard Institute reflect the credits recommended by ACE, while most formal training completed by enlisted members of the Air Force is evaluated for credit by CCAF. The university will consider Coast Guard Institute and CCAF transcripts for extra-institutional credit, using ACE credit recommendations, when available, as a guide in determining the amount of credit, if any, that should be granted.

An IU student must request official transcripts directly from AARTS, SMART, CCAF, or the Coast Guard Institute. Official transcripts must be sent directly to the university from the military transcript service. Official transcripts are typically sent by regular mail. However, IU will consider accepting transcripts sent by other means (for example, electronic transcripts), if the military transcript service can verify these transcripts as official.

Military transcripts that are unofficial, marked student copy, issued to the student, or sent to IU by the student are not considered official and will not be used to evaluate and grant academic credit.

Military transcripts are verified as official and evaluated for credit by an appropriate university representative or designee, who will make a recommendation as to the amount of IU credit, if any, to be granted.

**Other Documentation.** A student who is a servicemember or veteran but is not eligible to receive a military transcript may still be able to receive academic credit. A student (active duty or veteran) in this situation can submit to the university the DD Form 295 (Application for the

Evaluation of Learning Experiences during Military Service), DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), and/or NGB Form 22 (National Guard Bureau Report of Separation and Record of Service). Students should also submit any course completion certificates they have.

Students who do not have access to DD Form 295 can obtain copies by contacting the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records. Base education officers and education services centers are another resource for forms and information. Students are also encouraged to contact the university for more information about documentation other than transcripts that may be used to grant credit for military training, experience, and occupations.

### ***ACE Credit Recommendations for Other Types of Training***

A student enrolled at IU who has completed certain types of training, courses, professional examinations, and other educational experiences may request academic credit based on credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) through its College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT).

ACE makes recommendations for academic credit for formal training, courses, professional examinations, and other educational experiences taking place outside college and university programs. ACE recommends credit for educational experiences offered by all types of organizations, including business and industry, labor unions, professional and voluntary associations, schools, training suppliers, and government agencies. ACE also recommends credit for professional licenses, certificates, and training programs.

ACE's credit recommendations are outlined in its *National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs*, which lists all ACE-reviewed courses, and its *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, which lists all ACE-reviewed examinations, including certification examinations. Each guide also lists appropriate ACE credit recommendations. IU recognizes ACE's expertise in evaluating these activities for academic credit and uses ACE recommendations when making credit decisions.

### **Submitting ACE Transcripts**

To receive academic credit based on ACE recommendations, a student must submit to the university an official ACE transcript. A student should contact the university to determine to whom the transcript or other documentation should be sent.

An ACE Transcript lists a student's training, courses, professional examinations, and other educational experiences that took place outside of a college or university. Also included on the transcript are ACE's credit recommendations for these items. An ACE transcript can also include scores received through AP, CLEP, DSST, Excelsior, and other credit by examination programs.

The student is responsible for contacting ACE to set up an ACE transcript through the ACE Transcript Service.

After setting up an ACE transcript, the student must request that the transcript be sent to IU. An official ACE transcript must be sent directly from ACE to the university. Typically,

## Extra-Institutional Credit

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transcripts are sent by regular mail. However, IU will consider accepting transcripts sent by other means (for example, electronic transcripts), if ACE can verify these transcripts as official.

ACE transcripts that are unofficial, marked student copy, issued to the student, or sent to IU by the student are not considered official and will not be used to evaluate and grant academic credit.

ACE transcripts are verified as official and evaluated for credit by an appropriate university representative or designee, who will make a recommendation as to the amount of IU credit, if any, to be granted.

# General Education

## Policy

Independence University has established policies and procedures designed to ensure that all students pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree graduate with the broad base of knowledge mandated by the university's accrediting agencies and required of all individuals who have earned a degree.

## Definitions

**General Education.** Series of courses in language arts, math/science, and social science required of all IU students pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree. General education courses are part of IU's graduation requirements. These courses are typically not part of the student's program core or major and include instruction in analytical, communicative, and quantitative skills. Through these courses, students acquire the broad base of knowledge and habits of critical thought expected of individuals who have received a higher education. These courses provide a solid foundation for more specialized studies in a student's program core or major.

**Language Arts.** General education courses in which students refine their abilities in written and oral communication in English. Also included are courses in foreign languages and music.

**Math/Science.** General education courses in the physical and natural sciences, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and related disciplines.

**Social Science.** General education courses that emphasize scientific inquiry into human social behavior.

## General Education Requirements for a Bachelor's Degree

The following general education requirements apply to students pursuing a bachelor's degree at IU:

- To graduate with a bachelor's degree, a student must complete a minimum of 120 semester credits. Of these, a minimum of one-quarter (30 credits) must be in general education. A student may complete these general education credits through IU courses and/or transfer credit (transfer courses and extra-institutional credit).
- Typically, a student enrolls in his or her IU bachelor's program with an associate's degree or equivalent credits already in hand and, thus, has often completed at least half of the 30 general education credits required for the bachelor's degree. For this reason, an IU bachelor's student may only need to complete approximately 15 general education credits while enrolled at the university. Students who have not entered with at least half of their general education credits must complete the credits needed to satisfy the university's requirement of 30 total credits. A student may be required to

complete these general education credits before being officially admitted to the bachelor's program. Finally, students who enter with more than half of their general education credits may be able to apply qualifying credits toward the general education credits required for their bachelor's degree.

- A student must complete at least 3 semester credits (1 course) in each of the following general education categories: Language Arts, Math/Science, and Social Science. The remaining 6 credits (2 courses) can be taken in any of the 3 general education categories listed above.
- Specific IU courses used to satisfy the general education requirements for the bachelor's degree are determined during the admissions process. IU courses that might apply include, but are not limited to, general education courses in algebra, medical math, business math, advanced math, statistics, writing and grammar, communication, research writing, linguistics, sociology, and integrated science.

### General Education Requirements for an Associate's Degree

The following general education requirements apply to students pursuing an associate's degree at IU:

- To graduate with an associate's degree, a student must complete a minimum of 60 semester credits. Of these, a minimum of one-quarter (15 credits) must be in general education. A student may complete these general education credits through IU courses and/or transfer credit (transfer courses and extra-institutional credit).
- A student must complete at least 3 semester credits (1 course) in each of the following general education categories: Language Arts, Math/Science, and Social Science. The remaining 6 credits (2 courses) can be taken in any of the 3 general education categories listed above.
- Specific IU courses used to satisfy the general education requirement for the associate's degree are determined during the admissions process. IU courses that might apply include, but are not limited to, general education courses in algebra, medical math, business math, advanced math, statistics, writing and grammar, communication, research writing, linguistics, sociology, and integrated science.

### General Education Procedures

The procedures for determining how an IU student will fulfill his or her general education requirements can be summarized as follows:

- A review of a student's general education requirements begins during the admissions process, when this student's program plan is developed and possible general education transfer credit is evaluated.
- During the admissions process, a student's transcripts and other documents are evaluated to determine if he or she can transfer in any extra-institutional credit or courses from other accredited institutions to satisfy the university's general education

requirements. Typically, IU will grant transfer credit for qualifying general education credit that falls into the same category (Language Arts, Math/Science, Social Science) as the IU requirement, rather than granting credit only for a course or credit that is identical to an IU course.

- After this review of transfer credit, a student who must complete additional general education courses will work with IU staff to determine which IU courses can be taken to satisfy his or her remaining general education requirements.

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# Grading and Assessment

## Policy

This Grading and Assessment Policy outlines general policies and procedures for assessing student coursework at IU. At IU, student work is assessed according to a grading system in which all work is assessed promptly, accurately, fairly, and consistently, and results and grades are reported promptly to students.

## Grading Scale

The university's grading system employs letter grades that correspond to course averages and point values on a 4.0 grading scale. Specifically, IU employs the following grading scale:

Letter	Description	Course Average	Point Value
<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>94-100</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>88-93</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>81-87</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Passing</b>	<b>75-80</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Failing</b>	<b>&lt;75</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>P/F*</b>	<b>Pass/Fail</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>I*</b>	<b>Incomplete</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>TM*</b>	<b>Termination</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>DR*</b>	<b>Drop</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>

\* does not affect grade point average (GPA)

### *Pass/Fail (P/F)*

A grade of Pass (P) or Fail (F) is assigned to specific types of student work or activities. For example, Pass/Fail grades are typically used to document clinical requirements that a student must fulfill as part of clinical training for a program with a clinical component. A grade of



Pass/Fail may also be used to document a student's completion of other, non-clinical requirements. Often, these requirements are attached to a student's entire program and not just a specific course.

A grade of Pass (P) or Fail (F) is not calculated into a student's grade point average (GPA) but serves more as a marker that a student has successfully completed a certain requirement.

### ***Incomplete (I)***

An Incomplete (I) is a temporary status assigned when a student does not complete a course by the deadline that the university has established for completing a course without a penalty (30 days per semester credit; thus, 90 days per 3-credit course). Incompletes are not calculated into a student's GPA.

The use of Incompletes at IU can be explained as follows:

- If a student does not complete a course by the deadline, and has not received a leave of absence, a status of Incomplete (I) is assigned to that course. Once the Incomplete is assigned, the student has 90 days to complete the course for a grade of A, B, C, D, or F.
- If the student does not complete the course within the additional 90 days, the Incomplete is removed. A final course score is calculated and a final grade is assigned, using the grades that the student received on work for the course. Any coursework not completed will be assigned a zero (0) at the time of score calculation, and the final course score calculated using the zeroes.
- In most cases, this final course score will not be a 75 or above (i.e., a grade of D or higher), and so most students will receive a final grade of F for the course. However, regardless of the final score calculated, a student will not be assigned a final course grade higher than a D. Thus, if there is a case in which, even with zeroes, the student's final score is calculated as a 75 or above, the student can receive a D, but no grade higher than a D. [Example: If the final score calculation yields an 81 or C, an 80 (highest D grade) would be assigned instead of a C.]
- Finally, a student who does not complete a course within the additional 90 days granted for an Incomplete may be declared inactive and terminated from his or her program. To repeat the course, the student would need to be re-admitted and repeat the course at his or her expense.

More information about inactive student status, termination, and re-admission can be found in the Enrollment and Registration Policy, in this manual.

### ***Termination (TM)***

Termination (TM) is a historical status used before IU instituted the status of Incomplete (I) and, therefore, one that long-term IU students may find on their transcripts. Termination was a temporary status assigned when a student did not complete a course within the time allowed. Students had one year from the date that a TM was assigned to complete their coursework or

risk being declared inactive and terminated from their program. TMs were typically not calculated into a student's GPA.

**NOTE.** This historical status of Termination (TM) should not be confused with the university's current use of the status of termination, which now refers to the termination of a student's entire enrollment for academic, financial, or other reasons. Currently, if a student's enrollment has been terminated, his or her transcript will indicate an F, and not the historical status of TM, for courses not completed. There is also no longer a year-long grace period if a student does not complete a course within the time allowed. More information about inactive student status and termination of enrollment can be found in the Enrollment and Registration Policy, in this manual.

### ***Drop (DR)***

A Drop (DR) is a student-initiated status assigned when a student drops a course in which he or she is enrolled. This status does not affect the student's GPA.

A student who has completed less than 50% of a course may drop the course. A student who has completed 50% or more of a course may not drop the course.

More information about dropping a course can be found in the Enrollment and Registration Policy, in this manual.

## **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

A student's grade point average or GPA is calculated using the point values of the university's 4.0 grading scale. The GPA is calculated by multiplying the point values earned by the total credits available, and then dividing that amount by total completed credits. A student's GPA is noted on his or her transcript. A student can request a free transcript from the university at any time. (See the Student Records Policy, in this manual, for information about transcript requests.)

IU courses in which a grade of A, B, C, D, or F was earned are the only ones calculated into a student's GPA. Transfer courses, extra-institutional credit, courses that the student has dropped, and courses with a current Incomplete (I) or Termination (TM) are not calculated into the GPA. Additionally, if a student repeats an IU course, only the best grade received will be calculated into his or her GPA, and not the grades from the student's other attempts. (More information about repeated courses can be found in the section Repeating a Course for a Higher Grade, in this Grading and Assessment Policy.)

## **Calculation of Final Course Grades**

The final grade for a course is calculated automatically when a student completes a course. This calculation takes place after the final examination or equivalent work has been submitted and the grade for this exam or equivalent work entered into the IU system.

## **Grade Changes and Appeals**

**Grade changes** are made in the following circumstances:

- When a clerical error or omission has occurred while calculating or recording grades.
- When a grade appeal has shown a grade to be inappropriate, inaccurate, or unfair.
- In the case of an Incomplete (I) or Termination (TM), when a student has completed the necessary coursework within the time allowed to complete the work (90 days for an Incomplete; one year for a status of TM). In these cases, the Incomplete (I) or Termination (TM) is removed and an actual grade (A, B, C, D, or F) entered in its place. [NOTE. The status of TM is a historical status that is no longer used by the university but that may appear on the transcripts of long-term students. The historical status of TM applies to single courses only and should not be confused with termination of a student's entire enrollment. More information about the historical status of TM can be found in the section of this Grading and Assessment Policy entitled Termination (TM).]

Requests for grade changes for other reasons are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

No grade will be changed for any reason after three years.

### ***Grade Changes Initiated by Students***

If a student finds grading omissions or errors, he or she should notify the university and, if the error or omission did occur, a grade change will be submitted on the student's behalf.

A student who believes that a grade received for a course is inappropriate, inaccurate, or unfair can submit a **grade appeal**. Policies and procedures for appealing a grade can be found in the Appeals section of the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual.

### ***Institutional Grade Changes***

In certain cases, grade changes may be initiated by the university rather than by a student. Grade changes that remove a status of Incomplete (I) or the historical status of Termination (TM) from a student's record fall into this category. Also included in this category are grade changes made by the university after an appropriate staff member determines that a grade must be changed for one or more students enrolled in a course. These cases include, but are not limited to, instances in which an exam or other assignment was improperly graded or recorded and the grades of one or more students must be changed.

Institutional grade changes are made by university staff member(s) responsible for grading and recording exams and other assignments. All changes must be documented. The immediate supervisor of the staff member(s) making the grade change must be notified of the change and must approve the change.

### **Repeating a Course for a Higher Grade**

If a student receives an unsatisfactory grade in a course, he or she may repeat the course for a higher grade, provided the following criteria are met:

- The student must enroll in and pay tuition for the course repeated.
- Credits earned for any given course, regardless of the number of times repeated, may be counted toward graduation requirements only once.

The original course and grade remain on the transcript as part of the student's permanent record, and the original grade will be annotated with a repeat code. The student's GPA will be re-calculated on the basis of the best grade received.

The original grade will be replaced by the best grade received as long as the courses were taught at IU. The grade of a course taken at another institution and transferred to IU cannot be used to change the GPA on a student's IU transcript.

If a course is revised after the student's first attempt, the student may not be allowed to repeat the course for a higher grade. Therefore, a student should repeat a course as soon as possible after the first attempt.

### **Criteria Used to Grade Student Work**

Final course grades as well as grades for examinations and other student assignments are assessed according to criteria that are made known to a student in writing. The weights assigned to a student's examinations, clinical assessments and evaluation, papers or projects, and other assignments are specified in these written materials. These written materials may be transmitted to a student in print form and/or electronically through the university's online tools. These written materials may include course syllabi, to which students have access at the start of a course, and other materials provided at the start of or during a course to aid students in completing a course.

### **Academic Probation and Dismissal**

IU has established a system of academic probation and dismissal for students not making satisfactory academic progress toward graduation. Grades and GPA play a critical role in academic probation and dismissal. More information can be found in the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy, in this manual.

# Graduation

## Policy

IU awards master's degrees, bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees, and certificates for the programs of study listed in its university Catalog.

Upon a student's satisfactory completion of all requirements for the program of study in which he or she is enrolled, the degree or certificate for that program is conferred. Students who complete degrees and certificates are awarded the appropriate credential after grades are posted.

## Good Financial Standing and Graduation

A student must be in good financial standing with IU in order to graduate. A student must clear all financial obligations to the university before a degree or certificate will be awarded.

## Applying for Graduation

When a student completes the final course required by a program of study, he or she may apply for graduation. Students apply for graduation by submitting a **Graduation Application** to the university. A student can find this application in the university's online learning management system. Students can also contact the university to request an application or to request assistance with the graduation process.

Upon receiving a student's Graduation Application, an appropriate university representative or designee audits the student's transcript and other records to ensure that he or she has completed all courses and any additional requirements for the appropriate degree or certificate. This representative or designee verifies course-by-course completion and ensures that the required number of lower division and upper division courses and overall degree unit requirements have been satisfied. Once it has been confirmed that the student has completed all graduation requirements, the student is notified and the student's file is assigned a degree completion status. If the student has not completed all graduation requirements, he or she is notified and asked to work with a Student Advisor to plan the completion of all requirements for the degree or certificate.

## Receiving a Diploma

Students receive their diplomas six to eight weeks after graduation.

### *Receiving a Diploma for the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy Degree*

The majority of IU students receive their diplomas six to eight weeks after graduation. The only exception to this is the diploma for the Associate of Science in Respiratory Therapy program. Students in the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy program may officially graduate from their program once they have completed all the requirements for their degree. However, they

are required to take the National Board for Respiratory Care's (NBRC) credentialing exams in order to receive the actual diploma for their degree. Thus, if a student is in the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy program, his or her diploma will only be released when the university receives notification of a score on the NBRC credentialing exams. In this case, the diploma may be held longer than six to eight weeks.

### ***Diploma versus Transcript as Proof of Graduation***

Students may use their official IU transcript as proof that they have graduated from the university. Many students may believe that their IU diploma proves that they have graduated from the university. However, a student's official IU transcript (not diploma) serves as the official academic record of successfully completing a program of study. For this reason, a student who requires evidence of graduation should request an official transcript from the university. This transcript should be a final transcript, requested after the student has successfully completed all courses and other requirements for his or her program.

### ***Proof of Graduation from the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy Program***

For respiratory therapy students, the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy degree is not just a personal achievement but one required by the field's certification or licensing agencies and many employers. Respiratory therapy professionals often must provide evidence of graduation to meet certification, licensing, or employment requirements.

Respiratory therapy students might believe that their IU diploma proves that they have graduated from the university. However, their official IU transcript (not diploma) serves as the official academic record of successfully completing the program. For this reason, if a respiratory therapy student must provide evidence of graduation, he or she should request an official transcript from the university. This transcript should be a final transcript, requested after the student has successfully completed all courses and other requirements for the respiratory therapy degree.

## **Grade Point Average (GPA) Required to Graduate**

A student pursuing a bachelor's degree, associate's degree, or certificate must attain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.00 for all registered work to be eligible to graduate from IU. A student pursuing a master's degree must attain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 for all registered work to be eligible to graduate from IU.

For bachelor's, associate's, and certificate courses taken at IU, only courses in which the student earned a grade of D or higher will be counted toward graduation requirements. For master's-level courses, only courses in which the student earned a grade of C or higher will be counted toward graduation requirements. Transfer credit (transfer courses, extra-institutional credit) is not calculated into a student's GPA. However, only courses in which the student earned a grade of C or higher (for graduate courses, a grade of B or higher) will be transferred to IU and counted toward graduation.

GPA is further discussed in the Grading and Assessment Policy, in this manual.

## Selecting an IU Catalog under Which to Graduate

Ordinarily, a student, including a transfer student, will follow the graduation requirements of the IU Catalog in effect at the time he or she was first admitted to the university. However, a student in certain circumstances may be required to follow the graduation requirements of a Catalog different from the one in effect at the time he or she was first admitted. Students in these circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A student who takes more than two years to complete graduation requirements.
- A student whose studies are interrupted due to a leave of absence, academic probation or dismissal, or other reason. These interruptions can delay a student's graduation and often lead to a student being declared inactive/terminated from a program and having to be re-admitted to the university. (More information about interruptions in studies can be found in the Enrollment and Registration Policy, in this manual.)

IU will determine, on a case-by-case basis, the Catalog under which a student in the circumstances noted above will graduate. The criteria upon which this decision will be made include, but are not limited to, how long the student has been out of school, how much of a program of study the student completed before leaving school, and whether the program or graduation requirements have changed significantly from the time the student was first admitted to IU.

A student in these circumstances may be asked to follow the graduation requirements described in the Catalog in effect (1) at the time he or she was first admitted to IU; (2) at the time the student resumed IU studies; or (3) during the academic year he or she graduates. IU will endeavor to reach a decision that both supports the academic integrity of the student's program and places no undue hardship upon the student.

Once a Catalog is selected, a student must abide by all graduation requirements specified within that Catalog.

## Credits Required to Graduate with Master's Degree

A candidate for graduation with a master's degree must be able to demonstrate learning outcomes comparable to those achieved through a minimum of 36 semester credits. IU reserves the right to determine if the courses in a master's degree program require any prerequisite or foundation courses and if the program's courses should be offered in a prescribed sequence so as to maximize students' achievement of the program's educational objectives.

Students in master's degree programs may fulfill credit requirements through a combination of IU courses and transfer credit (i.e., transfer courses and extra-institutional credit).

More information about transfer courses and extra-institutional credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy and Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, both in this manual.

### **Credits Required to Graduate with Bachelor's Degree**

A candidate for graduation with a bachelor's degree must be able to demonstrate learning outcomes comparable to those achieved through a minimum of 120 semester credits. A minimum of one-fourth of the learning outcomes shall be in general education, with at least 3 semester credits (1 course) in each of the following general education categories: Language Arts, Math/Science, and Social Science. The remaining 6 credits (2 courses) can be taken in any of the 3 general education categories listed above.

General education learning outcomes normally will be acquired through courses other than those in areas of concentration and will include instruction in analytical, communicative, and quantitative skills, with due allowances for the nature of the subject and the objectives of the specific degree offered.

Students in bachelor's degree programs may fulfill credit requirements through a combination of IU courses and transfer credit (i.e., transfer courses and extra-institutional credit).

More information about IU's general education requirements can be found in the General Education Policy, in this manual. More information about transfer courses and extra-institutional credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy and Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, both in this manual.

### **Credits Required to Graduate with Associate's Degree**

A candidate for graduation with an associate's degree must be able to demonstrate learning outcomes comparable to those achieved through a minimum of 60 semester credits. A minimum of one-fourth of the learning outcomes shall be in general education, with at least 3 semester credits (1 course) in each of the following general education categories: Language Arts, Math/Science, and Social Science. The remaining 6 credits (2 courses) can be taken in any of the 3 general education categories listed above.

General education learning outcomes normally will be acquired through courses other than those in areas of concentration and will include instruction in analytical, communicative, and quantitative skills, with due allowances for the nature of the subject and the objectives of the specific degree offered.

Students in associate's degree programs may fulfill credit requirements through a combination of IU courses and transfer credit (i.e., transfer courses and extra-institutional credit).

More information about IU's general education requirements can be found in the General Education Policy, in this manual. More information about transfer courses and extra-institutional credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy and Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, both in this manual.

### **Credits Required to Graduate with Certificate**

A candidate for graduation with a certificate must meet the semester credit requirements specified for his or her program of study.



Students in certificate programs must fulfill credit requirements through courses taken at IU, since the university does not currently accept transfer courses or extra-institutional credit for its certificate programs.

### **Credits Required to Graduate with a Second Degree or Credential**

A student who already holds a degree or credential from an accredited institution, and is pursuing a second degree or credential at IU, typically must complete all core course requirements in the IU program in addition to the initial degree or credential to be eligible for the second degree or credential. More information about requirements for a second degree or credential can be found in the Admissions Policy and Transfer Credit Policy, both in this manual.

### **Graduation Requirements Satisfied by Transfer Credit**

Students in associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs can earn credits required for graduation through **transfer credit**, which IU defines as transfer courses and extra-institutional credit. Courses can be transferred from other accredited institutions of higher education or, if the student transfers from one IU program of study into another, from the previous program. Extra-institutional credit includes credit by examination and American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations.

A student must be enrolled at IU before any transfer credit will be assigned to his or her IU transcript.

A maximum of one-half of the credits required for master's degrees may be granted through transfer credit, including a combination of transfer courses and extra-institutional credit. For an associate's or bachelor's degree, a maximum of three-fourths of the credits required for the degree may be granted through transfer credit, including a combination of transfer courses and extra-institutional credit.

IU does not currently accept transfer credit for its certificate programs.

Detailed information about transfer credit can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy and the Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, both in this manual.

### **Transfer Students and Graduation Requirements**

A student who transfers to IU from another institution of higher education, or from one IU program of study into another program, must meet all graduation requirements of IU and his or her new program in order to graduate.

### **Double Counting of Credit and Graduation Requirements**

With the exception of general education credit, academic credits earned through courses or other means (transfer, credit by examination, military credit, etc.) cannot be "double counted" at IU. **Double counting** refers to the practice of applying the same credits to more than one program of study or credential (degree or certificate).

If a student enrolls in more than one program, changes programs, or decides to pursue multiple credentials, his or her credits can be applied to only one program or credential. The only exception to this policy is general education credit, which typically needs to be satisfied only once.

**Example:** A student wishes to earn both the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and the Master of Science in Health Services (MSHS). Both programs require the same course in management, which this student takes and passes. Credits earned for this course can be applied towards the MSN *or* the MSHS, but not to both. If this student wishes to earn both master's degrees, he or she must earn enough credits to satisfy requirements for both. In these cases, the university will work with the student to determine a second master's course that can be taken to satisfy the second degree's requirements.

This policy covers not only students completing multiple credentials *at IU* but also students completing multiple credentials at more than one institution of higher education. Thus, if a student is enrolled in or has completed a program at an institution of higher education other than IU, he or she cannot apply credits used to fulfill the requirements of the other institution's program to his or her IU program.

### Duplicate Credit and Graduation Requirements

The term **duplicate credit** refers to credit earned through courses or other means (transfer courses, credit by examination, military credit, etc.) that “duplicates” credit already applied to a single IU education requirement. Duplicate credit exceeds the amount of credit needed to fulfill a single education requirement. If a student earns duplicate credit for a single education requirement, this duplicate credit cannot be applied to the education requirement.

**Example:** If a student's program requires only six credits of freshman English, but the student has earned as many as 15 credits of freshman English through courses, transfer courses, and/or credit by examination, only six of these credits will be applied to the student's freshman English requirement. The nine extra or “duplicate” credits cannot be applied to the freshman English requirement.

If more credit is earned than is needed to fulfill a single education requirement, the university will consider, on a case-by-case basis, applying all or a portion of the duplicate credit to another education requirement, usually a general education or elective requirement. In order for duplicate credit to be applied to another education requirement, the duplicate credit must be substantially similar in subject area, content, and education level to a requirement in the student's program of study. An appropriate university representative or designee will decide the amount of IU credit, if any, that will be granted.

# Internet Privacy and Security

## Policy

Given IU's use of the Internet and online technologies to deliver its educational and student programs and services, the university has established policies and procedures for information gathering, information use, and information security on its Web site ([www.independence.edu](http://www.independence.edu) and its subdomains).

## Information Gathering

The university may collect information to improve functionality and content and to monitor performance. IU staff members use such data to help answer specific questions about the usage and performance of the Web site or individual Web pages. When a student or other user visits the IU Web site, IU may collect information regarding:

- Internet location (IP address).
- The Web pages that a user visits on the IU Web site.
- The Web site or Web page from which a user came to the IU site.
- The software a user employs to visit the IU site and the configuration of this software.

If a user applies for admission or asks to receive other services provided by IU, any information he or she provides is confidential and is not shared with any third parties except as authorized by that user as part of the application process or other services received.

## Information Use

The IU Web site does not:

- Collect personally identifiable information (e.g., name, email address) unless a user voluntarily provides this information to the university.
- Provide or sell any personally identifiable information to outside agencies (third parties) except as authorized by a user as part of the application process or other services received.

IU works in a distributed information technology environment. Policies and procedures for other Web sites may vary. If a user has questions about any Web site's privacy practices, he or she must contact the specific department, unit, or organization that maintains the content of that site.

IU staff members occasionally monitor search terms that users enter into the IU search engine, but this tracking is not associated with individual users.

IU will disclose a user's personal information, without notice, only if required to do so by law or in the good faith belief that such action is necessary to: (a) conform to the edicts of the law or comply with legal process served on IU or the Web site; (b) protect and defend the rights or property of IU, and (c) act in urgent circumstances to protect the personal safety of users of IU's online systems or the public.

### **Information Security**

The IU Web site has security measures in place to protect the loss, misuse, and alteration of the information under the university's control.

In the case of information gathered or maintained online or through the Internet, this information is restricted to authorized staff members. Authorized staff members are those whose job duties require them to access and use this information to serve applicants, students, fellow employees, and others connected to the university. These staff members access this information through secure, password-protected means.

### **Contacting the University**

If an individual has any questions about IU's Internet Privacy and Security Policy, the practices of the IU Web site, or his or her dealings with the Web site, he or she may direct these questions to the university.

# Respiratory Therapy Policies and Procedures

## Policy

In addition to the university's general policies and procedures, specific policies and procedures exist for the university's respiratory therapy program. These policies and procedures supplement, but do not replace, the university's general policies and procedures.

## Program Goals

IU adheres to its respiratory therapy accrediting agency's requirements for program goals, including, but not limited to, providing a written statement of the program's goals and learning domains, regularly assessing the goals and learning domains, and adopting the minimum expectations set by the accrediting agency. As a further goal, the program seeks to exceed its accrediting agency's minimum expectations.

## Resources

IU seeks to provide respiratory therapy program resources sufficient to ensure the achievement of the program's goals and outcomes. The university also seeks to collect accurate, current, site-specific data to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of its resources and to use the results of resource assessment as the basis for ongoing planning and appropriate change.

## Program Personnel

Program personnel (Program Director, Director of Clinical Education, Medical Director, Preceptors, Clinical Evaluators, etc.) are appointed and monitored according to the requirements of the university's respiratory therapy accrediting agency. When applicable, personnel must hold the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential of the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) and/or other required credential(s). When applicable, personnel must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

The university adheres to the respiratory therapy accrediting agency's requirements governing the following: (1) hiring, training, and evaluation of faculty and other personnel, including temporary and acting personnel, (2) documentation of faculty and other personnel, and (3) notification to the agency of any substantive changes in personnel.

## Curriculum

IU's respiratory therapy curriculum adheres to the requirements of the university's accrediting agency regarding the achievement of program goals and learning domains and the appropriate sequencing of classroom (didactic), laboratory, and clinical activities. Instruction is based on clearly written course syllabi or equivalent materials.

## Clinical Affiliations and Instruction

The university adheres to its respiratory therapy accrediting agency's requirements governing clinical affiliates, including, but not limited to, monitoring student activities, adding and deleting clinical affiliates, and documenting these affiliations.

### ***Use of Students as Staff and Payment of Students during Clinical Instruction***

During clinical instruction activities, students must be designated as a "respiratory student" to all staff members. Students cannot be substituted as staff members and cannot be paid for time spent in clinical instruction. To guard against practices that go against these policies, IU notifies all clinical sites that students may not be substituted as paid staff when engaged in clinical instruction. Students are also notified of IU's clinical instruction policies before and after being admitted to the respiratory therapy program.

### ***Clinical Affiliate Resources, Agreements, and Approvals***

IU is committed to ensuring that clinical affiliates/sponsoring facilities for respiratory therapy students have adequate resources to provide an optimal learning environment. **The university establishes and maintains Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with all clinical sites that list background information about the sponsoring facility (including network/system affiliation and accreditation, if any) and also list the clinical resources available at the facility. The MOU also defines the roles and responsibilities of staff members (Preceptor, Department Head, Medical Director) involved in the respiratory therapy student's clinical instruction. MOUs must be signed by these staff members and the student and returned to the university before the student can be formally enrolled in the respiratory therapy program.**

Appropriate university representatives or designees will be responsible for verifying and approving the sponsoring facility and clinical faculty information reported in the MOU with the clinical site. Clinical faculty information will be verified to ensure that the faculty member is an appropriately credentialed Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT). This will be accomplished by verifying registration through the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC).

Each sponsoring facility will also be evaluated for its appropriateness in providing an adequate learning environment for the respiratory therapy program's students. **Sponsoring facilities will be required to provide, at a minimum, all necessary resources needed to support the university's clinical experience.**

**If the sponsoring facility is lacking any of the necessary resources, a co-sponsor hospital or sponsoring facility must be found. An MOU may be required for each additional hospital or sponsoring facility and approved by the university before any clinical hours are completed at the new facility.**

Each sponsoring facility's services will be verified through the American Hospital Directory Database.

## Access to Student Information

Access to a respiratory therapy student's information may be granted to the student's Preceptor, Department Head, and Medical Director at his or her sponsoring clinical facility.

## Age Required for Admission to the Respiratory Therapy Program

In keeping with the requirements of the university's respiratory therapy accrediting agency, any individual admitted to the university's respiratory therapy program must be at least 18 years of age and must have a high school diploma or equivalent credential.

Documentation may be required to verify the age of an applicant.

## Student and Graduate Evaluation and Assessment

The university adheres to its respiratory therapy accrediting agency's requirements regarding evaluation of students and outcomes assessment and reporting.

### *Evaluation of Students*

The university conducts evaluations of students on a recurrent basis and with sufficient frequency and thorough analysis of the student's performance. Methods of assessment and evaluation, including those for clinical skills, are carefully designed and constructed and consistent with the competencies and objectives being tested. Respiratory therapy students are eligible for the academic guidance, advising, and counseling services offered by the university. Records of evaluations of students are maintained to document student performance.

### *Outcomes Assessment and Reporting*

The university periodically assesses its effectiveness in achieving its stated goals and learning domains. The results of these evaluations are reflected in the review and revision of the respiratory therapy program. The university periodically submits information related to outcomes assessment and reporting to its respiratory therapy accrediting agency, according to the agency's requirements for accurately reported data.

As part of IU's efforts to assess its effectiveness, the university administers end-of-course and other surveys to its respiratory therapy students. The university also provides institutional support for and monitors student performance on national credentialing examinations.

## Substantive Changes

The university adheres to its respiratory therapy accrediting agency's requirements regarding notifying the agency of any substantive changes in sponsorship, key personnel, program goals, legal status, curriculum, and other areas of change specified in the agency's requirements.

# Sexual Harassment

## Policy

In accordance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) regulations and amendments, this policy addresses sexual harassment within or related to the university's instructional setting. Students are protected by this policy and the law. The sexual harassment of any student is illegal and absolutely forbidden. Retaliation against a person who reports or files a grievance of sexual harassment or against those involved in an investigation of sexual harassment is also forbidden. **IU complies with Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which makes sexual harassment a form of sex discrimination.**

## Scope

This policy applies to all IU students, applicants for admission, university staff, and other members of the university community. Any person to whom this policy applies who practices sexual harassment that violates university policy is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

## Handling Matters Related to Sexual Harassment

**Appropriate university representatives or designees are responsible for ensuring compliance with federal and applicable state laws against sexual harassment of students and for accepting, investigating, and acting on reports of and grievances related to sexual harassment. Issues of sexual harassment as they relate to IU employment practices are handled by appropriate university representatives or designees responsible for human resource matters. Certain cases of sexual harassment involving both a student and an IU employee may be jointly handled by appropriate university representatives or designees responsible for academic and human resource matters.**

## Definitions

As used in this and other IU policies, **sexual harassment** is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic work or student status.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individuals.
- Or, such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, uncomfortable, or offensive working or learning environment.



A victim of sexual harassment, as well as the harasser, may be a woman or a man. The victim and harasser may or may not be of the same gender.

A student may be the victim of sexual harassment committed by an IU staff member, which is defined here to include instructional support staff, another student, or other member of the university community.

The definition of sexual harassment includes instances of **third party sexual harassment**, in which a student or other individual observes an apparent act of sexual harassment involving someone else, which creates a hostile environment for the observer. Thus, a victim of sexual harassment may not be the person to whom the harassment is directed but any individual affected by the harassment.

Instances of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, harassment that is physical, verbal, or visual. These instances include, but are not limited to, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, unwelcome verbal comments of a sexual nature, and the unwelcome display of or exposure to sexually explicit materials. Sexual harassment also includes unwelcome instances in which an individual interferes with or restricts another individual's movements or actions.

As a provider of distance education, IU delivers educational programs and services through media that connect individuals separated in time and space. For this reason, IU defines sexual harassment to apply to harassment that takes place both in immediate time and physical space and at a distance, through the following media used by IU to deliver programs and services: online or Internet media, email, telephone, fax, regular mail, and any other media employed by the university currently or in the future.

## **Reporting, Investigating, and Resolving Cases of Sexual Harassment**

IU officials are responsible for taking prompt necessary steps, including timely and appropriate disciplinary action, to ensure and maintain an environment free of sexual harassment and free of retaliation, intimidation, and coercion against the person who reports or files a grievance of sexual harassment, against witnesses, against those conducting the investigation, and against anyone else involved in the investigative process.

An immediate investigation must be conducted whenever possible sexual harassment is observed or reported. Therefore, students who are sexually harassed, or who believe that they might be the subject of sexual harassment, are strongly encouraged to report the behavior and file a grievance. A student can report the behavior and file a grievance according to the policies and procedures outlined in IU's Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, included in this manual.

## **Privacy**

Due to the personal nature of complaints of sexual harassment, and the damage that could result to the career and reputation of any person who is falsely accused of sexual harassment or who reports or files a grievance of sexual harassment, all investigations and hearings surrounding such matters shall be designed, to the maximum extent possible and as permitted by law, to protect the privacy of, and minimize suspicion toward, the accused, the complainant

## Sexual Harassment

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(i.e., person who reports or files a grievance of sexual harassment), and any other individual involved in the investigation. Only individuals with a “need to know” will be provided with information related to reports of sexual harassment, grievances, and investigations. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, it should be exercised by all parties in all phases and areas before, during, and after appropriate action is taken.

### **Retaliation**

It is unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing practices that discriminate based on sex or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII. For this reason, retaliation against a person who reports or files a grievance of sexual harassment or against those involved in an investigation of sexual harassment is forbidden. Any member of the IU community who retaliates against a person who reports or files a grievance of sexual harassment or another individual involved in an investigation is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

### **Appeals**

An individual who has been disciplined for sexual harassment may appeal this judgment according to the policies and procedures outlined in IU’s Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, included in this manual.

# Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals

## Policy

Independence University adheres to the belief that all students have the right to student disciplinary, grievances, and appeals processes that are uniform, fair, and consistent. For this reason, the university has sought to establish a process for investigating and deciding matters of discipline, grievances, and appeals that is uniform, fair, and consistent.

## Handling Matters of Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals

Matters of student discipline, grievances, and appeals are handled by appropriate university representatives or designees. Certain cases of discipline, grievances, and appeals, in which both a student and an IU employee are involved, may be jointly handled by appropriate university representatives or designees responsible for academic and human resource matters.

## Definitions

**Student discipline** refers to the university's procedure for investigating and deciding alleged violations of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code (Student Code) and for imposing fair sanctions if these violations are judged to have occurred. A copy of the Student Code is included in this manual.

A **grievance** is a claim by a student of injustice, oppression, or discrimination based upon an event or condition connected to the university that the student believes has affected his or her welfare or conditions.

An **appeal** is a request by a student or other individual involved in a decision related to a student for reconsideration of a university decision or action that the student or other individual believes was erroneous. Appeals also include grade appeals and requests by students for exceptions to academic and other policies.

## Privacy

Due to the sensitive nature of matters related to discipline, grievances, and appeals, and the damage that could result to the career and reputation of any person who is falsely accused or who is otherwise involved in these matters, all investigations and hearings surrounding such matters shall be designed, to the maximum extent possible and as permitted by law, to protect the privacy of, and minimize suspicion toward, the individuals involved in an investigation.

Only individuals with a "need to know" will be provided with information related to matters of discipline, grievances, and appeals.

Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, it should be exercised by all parties in all phases and areas before, during, and after appropriate action is taken.

## Retaliation

The university seeks to foster an atmosphere in which students and others can participate in matters related to student discipline, grievances, and appeals without fear of retaliation. For this reason, the university forbids retaliation against any member of the university community involved in matters of discipline, grievances, and appeals. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, retaliation against a member of the university who files a charge of violating the Student Code, who files a grievance or appeal, or who is involved in an investigation related to discipline, grievances, or appeals.

Any member of the IU community who retaliates against a person involved in these matters is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

## Student Discipline

### *Disciplinary Action*

IU seeks to provide a uniform, fair, and consistent method for investigating and deciding alleged violations of the Student Code. Disciplinary action at IU is standardized, beginning when a charge of violating the Student Code is filed, continuing with an investigation into the alleged violation, and concluding with a judgment concerning the alleged violation. If the student appeals this judgment, the disciplinary process then moves to a review of the judgment and, ultimately, a final decision regarding the violation and original judgment.

The university's procedures for disciplinary action are summarized below.

### *Filing a Charge of Violating the Student Code*

The procedure for filing a charge of violating the Student Code is as follows:

- To file a charge that a student has violated the Student Code, an individual must submit to the appropriate university representative or designee a signed and dated written statement. This individual should contact the university to determine to whom the statement should be sent. The written statement must include a concise statement of the charge, naming the persons involved and summarizing the facts, conduct, or circumstances alleged to constitute failure to comply with the Student Code.
- This written statement must be submitted to the university's representative or designee within sixty (60) days from the time that the alleged violation took place.

### *Investigating and Deciding the Charge*

The procedure for investigating and deciding the charge is as follows:

- Once the signed, dated written statement charging that a student violated the Student Code has been received by the appropriate university representative or designee, the representative or designee will begin an investigation into the alleged violation.

- Within five (5) business days of receiving the written statement, the representative or designee must inform, in writing, the accused student of the charge. The student may respond in writing to the charge and submit this response to the representative or designee.
- From the time that the written statement of violating the Student Code is received, the university representative or designee will have thirty (30) business days to conduct an investigation. While this investigation takes place, no adverse action may be taken against or sanction imposed upon the accused student.
- Once the appropriate university representative or designee reaches a decision regarding the alleged violation, this judgment will be sent, in writing, to the accused student and the person who submitted the charge. Included will be a statement that the accused student or person who submitted the charge has ten (10) business days from receipt of the written judgment to appeal this judgment. (NOTE. The procedure for filing, investigating, and deciding an appeal is outlined in this Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in the section on Appeals.)
- If the representative or designee determines that the student has violated the Student Code, he or she will consult with the appropriate university officials and legal counsel for advice as to the appropriate disciplinary sanction. The disciplinary sanction should be commensurate with the scope and severity of the violation, and may include one or more of the disciplinary sanctions outlined in this policy on Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals.
- Once the disciplinary sanction has been decided, written notification of the sanction will be sent to the student judged guilty of the violation, with a statement that the sanction will be imposed immediately after the 10-day appeal period, if no appeal is filed. If an appeal is filed, the university will not sanction the student judged guilty of violating the Student Code while this appeal is under review.
- Finally, if the university's representative or designee determines that no violation of the Student Code has occurred, no record shall be made of the charge in the file of the accused student. In cases in which the representative or designee judges that a student has violated the Student Code, a complete record of the charge and its investigation will be kept in the file of the student judged guilty of the charge.

### ***Disciplinary Action for Bringing Frivolous or False Charges***

The charge that a student has violated the Student Code is a serious one. All charges are taken seriously and investigated. For this reason, the university also takes seriously any charge of violating the Student Code that is intentionally frivolous or false.

If a charge is determined to be intentionally frivolous or false, the individual bringing the charge is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

### ***Disciplinary Sanctions for Violating the Student Code***

A student who violates the university's Student Code is subject to one or more sanctions,

imposed according to the scope and severity of the violation. The disciplinary sanctions that the university may impose on a student are as follows:

- **Warning or Reprimand** - Verbal or written notice to a student that his or her conduct or actions may be in violation of university rules and regulations and must end, and that the continuation of such conduct or actions may result in further disciplinary action.
- **Probation** - A specified period of observation and review of conduct during which the student must demonstrate compliance with university rules and regulations. Counseling or participation in specific courses or workshops for a specified period of time may be required. Terms of probation and the probationary period will be determined at the time the sanction is imposed.
- **Termination and Dismissal** - Permanent termination of enrollment in a program of study and dismissal from the university. A permanent indication of termination and dismissal will be made on the student's transcript.
- **Grade Adjustment** - A grade adjustment either for an examination/assignment or for an entire course.
- **Restitution** - Payment of restitution to the university for damages or losses.
- **Withholding of Records**, including transcripts, grade reports, and graduation records, for refusal to return university property, pay university debts, or other violations of university standards.
- **Denial or Revocation of Degree, Certificate, or Other Credential**, for academic violations only.
- Temporary and/or permanent **Removal from a Course**.
- **Other Disciplinary Sanctions** appropriate to the violation.

More than one disciplinary sanction may be imposed for any single violation.

When a student is terminated from a program of study and dismissed from the university, tuition is refunded according to IU's Tuition Refund Policy, included in this manual. Typically, the student must request the refund.

### ***Applying for Re-Admission after Dismissal for Violating the Student Code***

Any student dismissed for violating the Student Code must wait one year from the date of dismissal before applying for re-admission.

Applications to be re-admitted are handled on a case-by-case basis.

## Grievances

IU provides a grievance procedure through which a student can make a claim of injustice, oppression, or discrimination based upon an event or condition connected to the university that this student believes has affected his or her welfare or conditions.

The university's grievance procedure is voluntary, and a student is not required to file a grievance unless he or she wishes. However, in certain situations including, but not limited to, discrimination and harassment, the university retains the right to pursue action against the party causing the grievance if the university believes that this behavior undermines the university's ability to adhere to laws regarding behaviors subject to criminal or civil action.

### ***The Grievance Process***

#### ***Resolving a Grievance Informally***

Grievance procedures that foster dialogue and promote informal resolution between the immediate parties involved in a dispute are encouraged in situations in which both parties are open to resolving the grievance informally. When both parties are open to informal resolution, the university encourages efforts to resolve disputes at the lowest possible level, between the individuals closely aware of and involved in the matter.

For this reason, a student with a grievance has the option of attempting to resolve the grievance informally instead of filing a formal grievance. A student is not required to attempt to resolve the grievance informally before filing a formal grievance, nor will a student be pressured by the university to pursue informal resolution. Moreover, the university discourages a student from pursuing informal resolution if this student believes the attempt to do so will affect his or her welfare or conditions in any way.

A student who chooses to pursue informal resolution is encouraged to discuss the problem first with the IU staff member, student, or other member of the university community with whom they take issue. If a resolution cannot be reached, the student may file a formal grievance.

#### ***Filing a Formal Grievance***

The procedure for filing a formal grievance is as follows:

- To file a formal grievance, a student must submit to the appropriate university representative or designee a signed and dated written statement. A student should contact the university to determine to whom the statement should be sent. The written statement must include a concise statement of the grievance, naming the persons involved and summarizing the facts, conduct, or circumstances that the student alleges constitute a grievance.
- This written statement must be submitted to the university's representative or designee within sixty (60) days from the time that the event(s) or condition leading to the grievance occurred or manifested itself.

### ***Investigating and Deciding a Formal Grievance***

The procedure for investigating and deciding a formal grievance is as follows:

- Once a signed and dated written statement of grievance has been received by the appropriate university representative or designee, the representative or designee will begin an investigation into the grievance.
- Within five (5) business days of receiving the written statement, the university representative or designee must inform, in writing, the party accused of the grievance. The accused party may respond in writing to the charge and submit this response to the representative or designee.
- From the time that the written statement is received, the university representative or designee will have thirty (30) business days to conduct an investigation. While this investigation takes place, no adverse action may be taken against or sanction imposed upon the party accused of causing the grievance.
- Once the appropriate university representative or designee reaches a decision regarding the grievance, this judgment will be sent, in writing, to the student who submitted the grievance and the accused party. Included will be a statement that the student who submitted the grievance or the accused party has ten (10) business days from receipt of the written judgment to appeal this judgment. (NOTE. The procedure for filing, investigating, and deciding an appeal is outlined in this Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in the section on Appeals.)
- If the representative or designee determines that the grievance has foundation, he or she will consult with the appropriate university officials and legal counsel for advice as to the appropriate disciplinary sanction. The disciplinary sanction should be commensurate with the scope and severity of the grievance.
- Once the disciplinary sanction has been decided, written notification of the sanction will be sent to the party judged to have caused the grievance, with a statement that the sanction will be imposed immediately after the 10-day appeal period, if no appeal is filed. If an appeal is filed, the university will not sanction a party judged to have caused the grievance while this appeal is under review.
- Finally, if the university's representative or designee determines that the grievance has no foundation, no record shall be made of the grievance in the file of either the accused party or the student who submitted the grievance. In cases in which the representative or designee judges that a member of the university community has caused a grievance, a complete record of the grievance and its investigation will be kept in the university file of the person who caused the grievance.

### ***Disciplinary Action for Filing a Frivolous or False Grievance***

The charge that a party connected to the university has caused a grievance is a serious one. All grievances are taken seriously and investigated. For this reason, the university also takes



seriously any grievance charge that is intentionally frivolous or false. If a grievance charge is determined to be intentionally frivolous or false, the student who filed the grievance is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions.

## Appeals

The university provides an appeals process through which a student or other individual can ask for reconsideration of a university decision or action that this student or other individual believes was erroneous.

Typically, the person filing an appeal is an IU student. However, in appeals of earlier decisions made in disciplinary or grievance cases, one of two parties may file the appeal: either the person who brought the disciplinary charge or grievance, or the person accused of the violation or grievance. The person filing this appeal may or may not be an IU student.

Appeals also include requests by students for exceptions to the university's academic and other policies.

The university's appeals process is voluntary. A student or other individual is not required to file an appeal unless he or she wishes and may withdraw an appeal at any time.

### ***Grade Appeals***

If a student believes that a grade received in a course was inappropriate, inaccurate, or unfair, he or she can file a **grade appeal** requesting reconsideration of the grade. The process for filing a grade appeal is the same as that for filing any other type of appeal. This process is summarized below, in the sections that immediately follow this one.

#### *Informal Grade Appeals*

Most appeals require that the student or other person filing the appeal follow the process outlined below for filing a formal appeal. However, students who wish to appeal a grade have the option of doing so informally.

In grade appeals, procedures that foster dialogue and promote informal resolution between the immediate parties involved in the grade dispute are encouraged in situations in which both parties are open to resolving the dispute informally. When both parties are open to informal resolution, the university encourages efforts to resolve disputes at the lowest possible level, between the individuals closely aware of and involved in the matter.

For this reason, a student who wishes to appeal a grade has the option of attempting to resolve the grade dispute informally instead of filing a formal grade appeal. A student is not required to appeal a grade informally before filing a formal appeal, nor will a student be pressured by university representatives to pursue an informal appeal. Moreover, the university discourages a student from pursuing an informal appeal if that student believes the attempt to do so will affect his or her welfare or conditions in any way.

**A student who chooses to pursue an informal grade appeal is encouraged to discuss the problem first with the staff member with whom he or she takes issue. Typically, this person is**

the Content Specialist who assigned the grade. If the student persuades the Content Specialist or other appropriate staff member that the grade should be changed, then the staff member can submit a grade change on the student's behalf. The Content Specialist or other staff member responsible for the grade change must notify the applicable Program Director of the change. The Program Director must approve the change.

Finally, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, the student may file a formal grade appeal.

### ***Filing a Formal Appeal***

The procedure for filing a formal appeal is as follows:

- To file a formal appeal, a student or other person must submit to the appropriate university representative or designee a signed and dated written statement. The student or other person should contact the university to determine to whom the statement should be sent. The written statement must include a concise statement of the appeal. The statement should summarize the university decision or action that the student or other individual believes was erroneous and should be reconsidered. This decision or action might be a grade received in a course, a decision in a student discipline or grievance case, or some other decision or action. Finally, the statement might name the academic or other policy for which the student would like an exception. Reasons for granting an exception should be stated.
- This written statement must be submitted to the university representative or designee within sixty (60) days from the date of the university decision or action that lead to the appeal, with the following exceptions:
  - Appeals for exceptions to academic and other policies can be submitted before the policy takes effect.
  - Appeals for reconsideration of judgments made in student discipline or grievance cases must be submitted by the individual filing the appeal within the 10-day appeal period following receipt of the written message stating the judgment. (NOTE. More information about student discipline and grievance cases, and their written judgments, can be found in the Student Discipline and Grievances sections of this Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy.)

### ***Investigating and Deciding a Formal Appeal***

The procedure for investigating and deciding a formal appeal is as follows:

- Once a signed and dated written appeal has been received by the appropriate university representative or designee, this representative or designee will have thirty (30) business days to investigate and reach a decision regarding the appeal.
- Once the appropriate university representative or designee reaches a decision regarding the appeal, this decision will be sent, in writing, to the student or other individual who submitted the appeal, along with a recommendation of the following

actions, if any, that should be taken: grade change, exception to academic or other policy, disciplinary sanction, or other action. In disciplinary violation and grievance cases, the decision will also be sent to the other party involved in the case.

- In most cases, a complete record of an appeal will be kept in a student's file. However, in appeals of judgments in student discipline and grievance cases, a record will be kept in the file of a student and, when applicable, other member of the university community only if the appeal decision states that the student or other member of the university community is guilty of the disciplinary violation or grievance. If the appeal determines that this individual was not guilty of the violation or grievance, no record shall be made of the appeal, or the earlier charge, grievance, investigation, and judgment that led to the appeal, in either the student's file or the file of the other university community member.

### ***Disciplinary Sanctions While an Appeal is Under Review***

In appeals of cases involving student discipline and grievances, no adverse action may be taken against or disciplinary sanction imposed upon the party judged guilty of the disciplinary violation or grievance. Specifically,

- No sanction will be imposed during the 10-day appeal period (i.e., 10 days from receipt of an initial written judgment in a student discipline or grievance case).
- No sanction will be imposed while an appeal is under review, if an appeal is filed.

The disciplinary sanction will be imposed immediately after the 10-day appeal period, if no appeal is filed. If an appeal is filed and the accused party is judged guilty of the disciplinary violation or grievance, the sanction will be imposed after the appeal has concluded.

# Student Orientation and Advising

## Policy

Independence University promotes the success of its students through student orientation and advising programs.

## Student Orientation

The university provides new students with an orientation designed to familiarize newcomers with the university. Orientation is provided primarily through an online orientation that introduces students to the university and its educational programs and services. When they first enroll, students are strongly encouraged to complete the online orientation, which is delivered through the university's online learning management system.

## Student Advising

IU promotes student success through proactive student advising. Student advising services encourage and assist students in attaining institutional and program objectives, intended course learning outcomes, and educational goals. Provisions are made to meet the individual differences of students and to provide advising, as required, to assist students in achieving their educational goals.

### ***IU Student Advisement Program***

At IU, advising is provided primarily through a proactive **Student Advisement** program directed by the Director of Student Advisement, a full-time professional staff member. Under this program, each IU student is assigned upon enrollment to a team of Student Advisors who are responsible for providing assistance with and monitoring all aspects of this student's IU education. The university's advising model is a proactive one in which Student Advisors periodically monitor their students' performance and intervene in the learning process, as needed, to resolve academic issues that the students may be facing. In addition, students are repeatedly encouraged to contact their Student Advisors for assistance with any aspect of their IU education.

### ***Encouraging Student Success***

IU has established an active program to encourage students to start, continue, and finish the program of study in which they have enrolled, if continuing and finishing are their goals. As part of this program, students receive motivational support and encouragement throughout their enrollment.

This support and encouragement is provided primarily by Student Advisors and includes, but is not limited to, the following: welcome messages, periodic motivational messages, proactive communication if an advisor determines that a student may be experiencing difficulty, and positive feedback on student milestones.

Additionally, IU encourages satisfactory student success by offering students opportunities for remediation and grade improvement. Students who do not successfully pass proctored final exams, unit exams, written papers or projects, clinical assessments, and other assignments are given opportunities for remediation and improvement. These opportunities may include the following: advising by Student Advisors, opportunities to re-take and re-submit exams and assignments, opportunities to discuss course exams and assignments with instructional support staff, and other forms of assistance.

### ***Advising for Unsatisfactory Student Progress***

IU encourages students who are unable to make satisfactory progress through their program to continue until they either show inability to make satisfactory progress or demonstrate satisfactory progress. Student Advisors and instructional support staff are available to students who experience difficulty in making satisfactory progress. In addition, Student Advisors are encouraged to intervene and initiate contact with students who may be experiencing difficulty. Ultimately, however, the burden of making satisfactory progress rests with the student.

### ***Contacting Student Advisors versus Contacting Instructional Support Staff***

Students are encouraged to contact the university for academic assistance of any kind. Student requests that are administrative in nature (final exam scheduling, course enrollment, leaves of absence, accessing grades, using the online learning management system, determining course expiration dates, etc.) are managed by the university's Student Advisors. Student requests that relate to course content (unit exam content, textbook readings, assignments, references for a course paper, etc.) are managed by instructional support staff assigned to IU courses.

## **Personal Counseling**

IU does not currently offer personal counseling services to its students. The complexities and pressures of university life can cause unusual emotional and psychological stress. For therapeutic services, a student should consult a qualified professional.

## **Employment Counseling and Placement**

IU does not currently offer employment counseling or placement services to its students or alumni.

# Student Records

## Policy

Independence University maintains complete and accurate student records in ways that adequately protect these records from loss and that also protect the confidentiality of these records.

## Student Records Maintained by the University

In the course of a student's enrollment, various records related to the student's education are generated.

These records include, but are not limited to, records related to:

- The admissions and enrollment process, including application materials such as signed enrollment agreements and transcripts documenting previous academic work (high school diploma or equivalent, transcripts from previous institutions of higher education, transcripts verifying bachelor's degree for master's program admission, etc.). Application materials show student's name, chosen program of study, tuition cost, and other pertinent enrollment information, with documents that support accomplishment of prerequisites for the student's program of study and courses.
- Transfer credit, including credit by examination scores, transcripts from previous institutions, American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations, and other pertinent materials.
- Enrollment, including dates of enrollment in a program or course, course drops or cancellations, requests for leaves of absence, and other enrollment information.
- Tuition payments and financial aid.
- Termination or graduation/completion, including graduation applications and degree audit information.
- IU transcripts and grades.
- Correspondence between the student and the university.
- Personal or contact information, including current and permanent address, telephone number, and email address.
- Military service as that service relates to a student's enrollment at IU.
- Other records that relate to a student's enrollment at IU.

Of these records, the university maintains the following records indefinitely:

- Enrollment Agreement.
- Other records as required by law, accrediting agencies, and other applicable bodies. These records include, but are not limited to, transcripts or equivalent documentation of credit earned by the student at IU, at previous institutions, or through other equivalent means.

Student records are currently maintained in print form and/or electronically. Student records are protected from loss with adequate off-site back-up storage.

All transcripts and records of academic credit are kept indefinitely. However, students must send new, official copies of these documents when re-enrolling at the university.

## Confidentiality of Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 requires that student academic records be kept confidential. Although IU is not required to comply with FERPA, the university adopts FERPA as a guideline. More information on confidentiality of records at the university can be found in the Confidentiality of Records/FERPA Policy, in this manual.

## Student Access to Records

Certain student records can be generated at any time upon student request. These records include program plans, IU transcripts, a summary of the credits accepted in transfer and the courses/credits yet to be completed, and other records that detail or track a student's work at IU. A student should contact the university to request these records.

Upon request, a student can inspect his or her records. A student should contact the university to arrange for such inspection. More information about inspecting records can be found in the Confidentiality of Records/FERPA Policy, in this manual.

## Student Right-to-Know Disclosure

In compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, information on completion/graduation rates and transfer-out rates for students is available upon request.

## Requests to Change Personal Information in Student Records

A student who wishes to change personal information such as name, address, telephone number, or email address should contact the university. Copies of appropriate official documentation are required for name changes. Appropriate documentation may include the following: driver's license, social security card, passport, marriage license, divorce decree or other court documents, or any other official document that can verify the name change. A student should contact the university for information about how to submit copies of this documentation to the university.

## Transcripts

Two types of transcripts are maintained by the university:

- Transcripts of academic work that students complete while enrolled at IU.
- Transcripts documenting previous academic work (diplomas and degrees, courses taken at other accredited institutions, ACE, CLEP, DSST/DANTES, etc.). These transcripts are submitted by applicants and students for admission, transfer credit, and other reasons.

Staff assigned to evaluate academic transcripts and other materials for admission, graduation, transfer credit (both transfer courses and extra-institutional credit), and other reasons are qualified and trained for this assignment. Their evaluations are appropriate, fair, and consistent, and credit is assigned according to the university's policies and procedures for assigning credit.

### ***Requesting Copies of IU Transcripts***

A student or former student may request an academic transcript of work completed at the university. A request for a transcript must be in writing and can be submitted through the university's online tools or regular mail. Transcript requests by fax, email, and telephone are not accepted.

Requests for transcripts require the signature of the student or former student. For requests submitted online, student access to IU's secure online tools by username and password is accepted as a valid electronic signature.

The transcript request must include the student's name and other identifying information. The request must also designate the mailing address or fax number to which the transcript should be sent.

Students may request an official or unofficial transcript. *Official* transcripts are sent by regular mail directly to the receiving institution (school, employer, licensing agency, etc.). Transcripts can be sent by fax, but faxed transcripts are not considered official. Transcripts sent to a student are also not considered official. All unofficial transcripts are stamped "Unofficial" or "Student Copy."

Under no circumstances can transcripts be sent by email.

A transcript will be issued upon receipt of request from the student or former student. No transcripts will be released until a student or former student has cleared any outstanding financial obligations to the university. If a student or former student's tuition is not current at the time a transcript is requested, or if he or she has other outstanding financial obligations, a transcript will not be issued until he or she has satisfied these obligations.

Transcripts are provided free of charge. Once a transcript request is submitted, a student or former student should allow two weeks for the transcript to arrive at its destination.



### ***Requesting Copies of Non-IU Transcripts***

IU will not send students copies of their transcripts from other institutions that are kept on file by the university. These records are not IU records, and the university is not a steward of the records of other institutions. The university cannot make the decision to release these records.

### ***Confidentiality of Transcripts***

Transcripts at IU are protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Only university personnel with a “need to know,” as determined by their duties, have access to transcript documents. Parents, spouse, friends, other students, and other individuals may not obtain a copy of a student or former student’s transcript without written release from the student or former student.

More information on confidentiality of records at IU, including transcripts, can be found in the Confidentiality of Records/FERPA Policy, in this manual.

# Student Rights and Responsibilities Code

## Policy

This **Student Rights and Responsibilities Code (Student Code)** outlines both the rights and responsibilities of IU students. The purpose of this Student Code is to inform students of their rights as students and to encourage responsible citizenship within the university and larger community.

The university expects all students to obey the law, to show respect for properly constituted authority, to perform contracted obligations, to maintain absolute integrity and high standards of individual honesty in academic work, and to observe a high standard of conduct in the academic environment.

Students enrolled at the university assume the personal responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is compatible with the university's role as an institution of higher education. By enrolling at IU, students agree to maintain the standards of conduct set forth in this policy. The violation of these standards may result in disciplinary action and sanctions.

Students have the right to participate in any disciplinary matter involving the possibility of sanctions. This includes the right to be heard, the right to decision and review by impartial persons or bodies, and the right to adequate notice.

As a provider of distance education, IU delivers educational programs and services through media that connect individuals separated in time and space. For this reason, the rights and responsibilities outlined in this Student Code cover actions that take place both in immediate time and physical space and at a distance, through the following media used by IU to deliver programs and services: online or Internet media, email, telephone, fax, regular mail, and any other media employed by the university currently or in the future.

## Handling Matters Related to the Student Code

**Appropriate university representatives or designees are responsible for overseeing the Student Code and accepting, investigating, and judging alleged violations of the Student Code.**

**Certain cases related to the Student Code, in which both a student and an IU employee are involved, may be jointly handled by appropriate university representatives or designees responsible for academic and human resource matters.**

## Jurisdiction

The Student Code outlines a process for addressing disciplinary matters that is internal to the university. The jurisdiction of federal, state, and local courts and law enforcement officials is recognized with regard to criminal offenses and civil matters.

## General Student Rights

Students enrolled at the university can reasonably expect the right to the following services, treatment, and information:

- The right to be free of illegal discrimination, harassment, or prejudicial treatment. (More information about the university's policies regarding discrimination and harassment can be found in the Discrimination Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy, both in this manual.)
- The right to the institution's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. (More information about the university's policies regarding disabilities and discrimination can be found in the Discrimination Policy, in this manual.)
- The right to confidentiality of records and limited disclosure of personally identifiable information. (More information about the university's confidentiality policy can be found in the Confidentiality of Records/FERPA Policy, in this manual.)
- The right to proper enforcement of university rules.
- The right to file an appeal or grievance. (More information about appeals and grievances can be found in the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual.)

## Academic Performance Rights

Students enrolled at the university can reasonably expect the right to the following in academic affairs, services, and information:

- A written syllabus or equivalent materials describing the criteria and course requirements upon which their academic performance will be evaluated.
- The right to express themselves in academic or learning environments. This right includes, but is not limited to, appropriate and open discussion, inquiry, and expression in student/Content Specialist conferences and other course interactions, and the freedom to take exception to views presented in a learning environment and to reserve judgment in matters of opinion.
- Professional and ethical conduct from all university personnel.
- The right to confidentiality of education records. (More information about the university's confidentiality policy can be found in the Confidentiality of Records/FERPA Policy, in this manual.)
- Information prior to enrollment or registration regarding the cost of tuition.
- Accurate information regarding course offerings, requirements, programs, majors, transfer policy, and institutional requirements and expectations.
- Accurate information regarding changes in course programs or institutional requirements and reasonable accommodation for students already enrolled in programs or courses.
- Accurate information regarding academic standing.
- Accurate information regarding graduation requirements.
- The right to receive academic credit and/or academic degrees, certificates, or other IU credentials when all specified requirements and coursework have been satisfied.

## General Student Responsibilities

A student assumes the responsibility to conduct him or herself in an appropriate manner. Misconduct that is *not* considered responsible behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Failing to respect the right of every person to be secure and protected from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, hazing, verbal abuse, written abuse (print, online, digital, email, etc.), threats, coercion, and physical harm caused by the activities of groups or individuals.
- Engaging in sexual harassment, sexual assault, or any other non-consensual verbal or physical sexual activity, including the support or assistance of such activities.
- Engaging in disorderly, lewd, indecent, defamatory, or obscene conduct or expression within the academic or learning environments owned or controlled by the university.
- Participating, within the academic or learning environments owned or controlled by the university, in demonstrations, rallies, assemblies, performances, showings, exhibits, etc., in violation of any law or university policy.
- Distributing, publishing or posting materials, soliciting funds, selling items, engaging in commercial activity, erecting structures, exhibiting items, displaying films and videos, using official university logos, insignias or materials, or participating in performances and activities without proper authorization or which are not in accordance with university policy.
- Obstructing or disrupting teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, computing services, or other university-sponsored activities, services, or events, including public service functions.
- Initiating, or causing to be initiated, any intentionally frivolous or false report, complaint, grievance, or warning.
- Failing to meet contractual obligations, financial or otherwise, to the university.
- Knowingly violating terms of any disciplinary sanction.
- Intentionally furnishing false information, including false identification.
- Forging, altering, misusing, or mutilating university documents, records, identification, educational materials, or other university property.
- Influencing or attempting to influence the academic or any university administrative process through explicit or implied bribery, threats, sexual behavior, etc.
- Stealing or misappropriating property, equipment, materials, services, or data.
- Knowingly possessing stolen property, equipment, materials, services, or data.
- Intentionally or recklessly destroying, defacing, vandalizing, damaging, or misusing the property, equipment, materials, services, or data of the university or other university community members, or aiding, abetting, or contributing to such actions.
- Using or entering into, without authorization, university equipment, facilities, materials, data, properties, or services.
- Aiding, abetting, or inciting others to commit any act prohibited by law or university policy.
- Infringing on the copyright law of the United States, which prohibits the making or reproduction of copyrighted material except under certain specified conditions. Acts of copyright infringement include, but are not limited to, misusing copyrighted material in one's coursework and misusing material for which the university owns the copyright (i.e., IU Web site materials, course materials, publications, etc.).

- Making unethical and inappropriate use of any computer system or other university resource, and interfering with the productivity of other users of these systems.
- Misusing university-owned computer accounts or technology used to deliver educational programs and services at IU.
- Refusing to respond to requests and directions from university or government officials while in the performance of their duties.
- Endangering the health or safety of oneself, any member of the university, or others.

## Academic Performance Responsibilities

In addition to the foregoing responsibilities regarding general behavior, as a member of IU's academic community, a student shall adhere to the following standards of academic conduct:

- Maintain academic standards, including institutional, college, program, and individual course standards.
- Display appropriate conduct in learning situations that will enhance the learning environment.
- Meet the university's learning environment standards of behavior and participation or make contact with the university when unable to do so.
- Notify the university in advance of any planned absence of participation in course activities.
- Obtain the university's permission before copying any materials used in or created for a course.
- Maintain academic honesty and integrity. To this end, prohibited activities include the following:
  - Falsifying information contained on one's application or any other documentation submitted to IU.
  - Cheating, or receiving unauthorized assistance or collaboration on an exam or academic exercise.
  - Committing plagiarism.
  - Violating any other standards of academic honesty.\*
- Not infringe the copyright law of the United States, which prohibits the making or reproduction of copyrighted material except under certain specified conditions. Acts of copyright infringement in academic performance include, but are not limited to, misusing copyrighted material in one's coursework.
- Not make unethical and inappropriate use of any computer system used in academic performance [IU Web site, online tools, computer accounts, etc.], nor interfere with the academic performance and productivity of other users of these systems.

\*The instances of academic dishonesty listed here are explained in more detail in the Academic Honesty Policy, included in this manual.

## Violating the Student Code: The Disciplinary Process

The university seeks to investigate and decide charges of violating the Student Code in a uniform, fair, and consistent way. Thus, the university has established a disciplinary process that aims to provide this uniform, fair, and consistent method for investigating and deciding alleged violations of the Student Code. This disciplinary process is described in detail in the

Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual. Included in this policy are the procedures for pursuing disciplinary action as well as the sanctions that may be imposed for violating the Student Code.

### **Appealing a Judgment of Violating the Student Code**

If a judgment is made that a student has violated the Student Code, this student has the right to appeal the judgment according to the procedures outlined in the Student Discipline, Grievances, and Appeals Policy, in this manual.

While this appeal is under review, the university will not sanction the student who submitted the appeal.

### **Applying for Re-Admission after Dismissal for Violating the Student Code**

Any student dismissed for violating the Student Code must wait one year from the date of dismissal before applying for re-admission. Applications to be re-admitted are handled on a case-by-case basis.

# Technology Used to Support Educational Programs and Services

## Policy

Independence University employs appropriate and up-to-date information and communication technology to support its educational programs and services. IU employs this technology to support its mission of promoting student success, helping students to earn higher education degrees and credentials and advance in their careers. IU develops its programs of study and courses in such a way that learning outcomes are achievable using the technology that the university employs.

## Technology Currently Employed by IU

The technology employed by the university to support its programs and services includes the following: computer technology (including, but not limited to, online/Internet technology, database technology, information and content management technology), telephone services, and fax services. **The university employs a full-time IT Manager to plan and oversee the use of technology at the university.**

## Technology Growth

**The university's use of technology continues to evolve as the needs of the university, its students, and staff change. In planning for new technology, the university bases its technology decisions on value – i.e., will the new technology add value by improving the university's ability to serve students effectively and efficiently? Will the new technology accelerate, support, and facilitate student learning and routine tasks associated with the educational process?**

**Within the last few years, the university has embarked on an ambitious project to upgrade its technology. The university Web site, online learning management system, and other technology features have been implemented and/or upgraded. For this reason, the university is confident that its technology is up-to-date and adequately meets student needs, and expects that technology upgrades will continue as needed in the coming years.**

## Protection of Information Transmitted or Maintained through Technology

**The university makes reasonable efforts to ensure that student and other information transmitted or maintained through technology is handled in ways that provide adequately for the reliability, privacy, safety, and security of the information.**

**Information transmitted and maintained through technology is protected using suitable records management and database packages. The university employs computer systems with ample storage space and memory and protected by adequate back-up, safety, and security features. Advanced physical security features are also employed, including camera surveillance,**

biometric and card access, and 24/7 on-site security guards. Full back-ups of files are completed at regular intervals, with data stored off-site.

Access to information transmitted and maintained through technology is password-protected and restricted to university staff who have a “need to know” or vested interest in working with this information, as defined in their job duties.

### Internet Privacy and Security

The university has established policies and procedures for information gathering, information use, and information security on its Web site ([www.independence.edu](http://www.independence.edu) and its subdomains). More information about these policies and procedures can be found in the university’s Internet Privacy and Security Policy, in this manual.

### Technical Requirements for Students

To benefit academically from the technology that IU employs, students should have access to adequate technology and possess at least basic technological literacy. At a minimum, students should have access to the following: computer technology, including online/Internet access and email; telephone services; and fax services. Students should also possess technological literacy at a level that allows them to use this technology to access IU programs and services.

In terms of computer and online/Internet technology, the university’s programs and services are designed so that a student can access these programs and services using a low-level or a high-level computer. The speed and ease with which a student can access these programs and services will depend on the power of the computer used and the speed of the Internet connection linking the student’s computer with the IU system.

The university recommends that students have access to and the ability to use, at a minimum, the following technology:

- Pentium microprocessors.
- Windows 95 or later operating system.
- 150 MB of free disk space.
- 32 MB of RAM.
- Recent video and sound card.
- Speakers.
- 56K speed modem.
- CD-ROM player.
- Internet Service Provider or ISP (Earthlink, AOL, Netzero, etc.).
- Internet browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape, Mozilla, etc.).
- email account.

### Technical Assistance to Students

IU provides assistance to students using the technology employed by the university. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, an initial online orientation to the university’s online tools and ongoing technical support for users of the university’s online tools.



## **Student Use of Technology and the Student Code**

Student use of university-owned or controlled technology is governed by the IU Student Rights and Responsibilities Code (Student Code). Any student whose use of technology violates the Student Code is subject to disciplinary action and sanctions. More information about the Student Code can be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code, in this manual.

## **Student Feedback Regarding IU's Use of Technology**

IU seeks and accepts feedback from students regarding its use of technology. The university solicits feedback through surveys and polls. In addition, students are welcome to submit unsolicited comments and suggestions regarding IU's use of technology at any time.

The university uses this feedback from students to improve its use of technology to support programs and services.

## Transfer Credit

**NOTE.** IU accepts two forms of transfer credit: (1) credit earned in courses taken at other accredited institutions of higher education, and (2) extra-institutional credit, or credit earned outside of traditional courses through credit examinations and American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations. The first type of transfer credit – credit earned in courses – is discussed in this Transfer Credit Policy. The second form – extra-institutional credit – is addressed in a separate section of this manual, the Extra-Institutional Credit Policy.

### Policy

Students who have earned academic credit at other accredited institutions of higher education may transfer academic credit to IU from their previous institution. In addition, students in one IU program of study who wish to transfer to another IU program may request that credits from their previous program be transferred to their new program.

IU currently accepts transfer credit for students enrolled in its associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. IU does not currently accept transfer credit for students enrolled in its certificate programs.

To receive transfer credit at IU, a student must provide official documentation (transcripts, other documentation as requested) that can be used to validate the credit. This documentation is kept on file by the university. The student is responsible for requesting that these documents be evaluated for transfer credit at IU. An appropriate IU representative or designee will determine which credits can be transferred to the university.

A student must be enrolled at IU before any transfer credit will be assigned to his or her transcript.

IU reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding the granting of transfer credit at the university. Transfer credit will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis. The transfer credit evaluation is subject to audit and re-evaluation.

### IU Staff Responsible for Evaluating Transfer Credit

Transcripts and other documents required for transfer credit decisions are verified as official and evaluated for transfer credit by an appropriate university representative or designee. Staff assigned to evaluate transcripts and other documents for transfer credit are qualified and trained for this assignment. Their evaluations are appropriate, fair, and consistent, and credit is applied according to the policies and procedures in this Transfer Credit Policy.

### Definitions

#### *Transfer*

As used in this manual, the term **transfer** has several meanings. Transfer can

- Refer to the process of moving to IU from another accredited institution of higher education.
- Refer to the process of moving from one IU program of study into another IU program. This type of transfer is considered an **internal transfer**.
- Refer to the process of transferring academic credits, either from another accredited institution of higher education, or from one IU program of study into another. Can also refer to transferring extra-institutional credit (credit by examination, ACE credit recommendations) to IU.

### ***Transfer Credit***

The term **transfer credit** refers to academic credits that can be transferred into a student's IU program and counted toward his or her IU degree.

IU recognizes two types of transfer credit:

- Credit earned in courses taken at other accredited institutions of higher education.
- Extra-institutional credit, or credit earned outside of traditional courses through credit examinations and American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations.

This Transfer Credit Policy discusses the first type of transfer credit (transfer courses). For the second, see the Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, in this manual.

### ***Transfer Student***

A student who transfers to IU from another institution of higher education, or from one IU program into another, may be considered a **transfer student**. In general, however, there is no special category of "transfer student" at the university, although transfer students may be subject to special admission requirements (outlined in the Admissions Policy, in this manual).

Other than these special admission requirements, transfer students are treated in much the same way as any other students enrolling at the university. For example, like any students who have earned academic credits prior to being admitted to their IU program, transfer students may request that these credits be transferred into their new IU program.

## **Transfer Student Admission**

Information regarding admission of transfer students (students who transfer to IU from another institution of higher education or from one IU program into another) can be found in the Admissions Policy, in this manual.

For the most part, transfer students are treated in much the same way as any other students enrolling at the university. However, given their academic history, transfer students may be subject to special admission requirements. These requirements are outlined in the Admissions Policy.

## Maximum Transfer Credit Allowed

A maximum of one-half of the credits required for a master's degree may be granted through transfer credit, including a combination of transfer courses and extra-institutional credit.

For an associate's or bachelor's degree, a maximum of three-fourths of the credits required for the degree may be granted through transfer credit, including a combination of transfer courses and extra-institutional credit.

More information about extra-institutional credit can be found in the Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, in this manual.

## Credit Eligible for Transfer: General Information

Academic credits earned at other accredited institutions of higher education in courses equivalent to IU courses are eligible for transfer. Additionally, academic credits earned in one IU program of study in courses equivalent to courses in the student's new program are eligible for transfer.

In general, to be eligible for transfer, a course must meet the following requirements:

- Be listed on *official* transcripts from the previous institution.
- Be worth at least 3 semester credits (or the equivalent in quarter credits).
- Be equivalent in subject matter and educational level to the IU course for which it is substituted. To be considered equivalent, a course from another institution must have covered at least 75% of the course material covered in the IU course. More than one course can be combined to make up the 75%, as long as the credit requirement is met.
- Have an earned grade of C or higher or, for graduate courses, a grade of B or higher. Courses in which a student earned a grade of Pass/Fail are not eligible for transfer. Developmental or remedial courses are not eligible for credit at IU but may be used for appropriate course placement. Credit from courses taken more than once due to failing grades are eligible for transfer as long as a grade of C or higher was earned (for graduate courses, a grade of B or higher).

The bullets above identify the university's general requirements for transfer credit. More specific requirements (accreditation status, age limits, academic level, double counting, duplicate credit, etc.) are outlined in the sections that follow this one.

## Accreditation Status and Transfer Credit

To be eligible for transfer, credit must have been earned at **accredited** institutions. IU does not accept transfer credit from non-accredited institutions. An accredited institution is one accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

For international institutions, an accredited institution is typically one listed in the *International Handbook of Universities*, a handbook published by the International Association of Universities that lists institutions accepted as foreign equivalents to U.S. institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

## Age Limits Imposed on Transfer Credit

Credits are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they are eligible for transfer, and the university and its programs of study reserve the right to impose limits on the age of credits eligible for transfer.

Typically, general education courses of any age taken at other accredited institutions of higher education are eligible for transfer. **Program-specific courses in a student's core or major are generally eligible for transfer at any age, though certain programs may accept program-specific courses only if they are five or fewer years old. For example, the A.S. in Respiratory Therapy program currently requires that, to substitute for a core course, a transfer course must have been taken within the last five years. [The five-year rule also applies to A.S.R.T. prerequisite courses, which, with the exception of BIO 110 (Human Anatomy and Physiology), must also have been taken within the last five years.]**

For both general education and program-specific courses, transfer credit may be denied if it is determined that re-taking the course will better prepare the student academically.

## Academic Level Required for Transfer Credit

**To be eligible for transfer into a master's program, a course from another institution must be at the graduate level or above.**

**To be eligible for transfer into a bachelor's program, a course must be at least at the upper-division baccalaureate level. (This policy applies to courses beyond the initial 60 credits that bachelor's students must earn for their associate's degree or equivalent.)**

**To be eligible for transfer into an associate's program, a course must be at least at the associate's level or lower-division baccalaureate level.**

## Double Counting of Transfer Credit

With the exception of general education credit, academic credit earned through courses or other means, including transfer credit, cannot be "double counted" at IU. **Double counting** refers to the practice of applying the same credits to more than one program of study or degree, certificate, or other credential. Thus, a student may only transfer credit to IU if this credit has not been used to satisfy a degree or other requirement at another school or in another IU program. The only exception to this policy is general education credit, which typically needs to be satisfied only once.

More information about double counting (including a full definition of this term) can be found in the Graduation Policy, in this manual.

## Duplicate Credit and Transfer Credit

IU does not grant duplicate credit. The term **duplicate credit** refers to credit earned through courses or other means, including transfer credit, that “duplicates” credit already applied to a single IU education requirement. Thus, a student cannot apply transfer credit toward an IU education requirement that has already been met through other means. The student, however, may be allowed to apply this transfer credit toward another educational requirement.

More information about duplicate credit (including a full definition of this term) can be found in the Graduation Policy, in this manual.

## Converting Quarter Credits to Semester Credits

IU follows a system of semester credits. Students may transfer credits to IU that were earned at institutions granting quarter credits. Quarter credits transferred to IU will be converted to semester credits by dividing the quarter credits by 1.5. For example, a 4.5 quarter credit course is worth 3 semester credits (4.5 divided by 1.5 = 3).

## Grade Point Average (GPA) and Transfer Credit

Transfer credits are posted with the grades earned, but the grades are not calculated into a student’s IU grade point average (GPA).

## Transcripts Required for Evaluation of Transfer Credit

A transcript evaluation to determine transfer of academic credit is performed after applicants have confirmed their intent to enroll at IU and have been admitted as students.

**The evaluation is performed using only official transcripts bearing the official seal (or equivalent security measure) of the previous institution of higher education.**

Official transcripts must be sent directly to the university from each of the student’s previous institutions. Official transcripts must be sent each time a student enrolls or re-enrolls in the university. A student should contact the university to determine to whom these transcripts should be sent.

Official transcripts are typically sent by regular mail. However, IU will consider accepting transcripts sent by other means (for example, electronic means) if the previous institution can verify these transcripts as official.

Transcripts that are unofficial, marked student copy, issued to the student, or sent to IU by the student are not considered official and will not be used by IU to determine transfer of academic credits.

The transcript evaluator may require the student to supply catalogs, syllabi, and/or other materials from previous institutions and courses to help in determining the transferability of credits.

### ***Documentation Required for International Students***

In lieu of transcripts, international students must submit an official evaluation of their academic credentials completed by a member organization of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). NACES evaluations must be received within six months of enrolling at IU.

The same policies that apply to submission of official transcripts apply to the submission of NACES evaluations.

The transcript evaluator may require the international student to supply catalogs, syllabi, and/or other materials to help in determining the transferability of credits.

### **Fast-Track Admissions and Transfer Credit**

Applicants who participate in IU's fast-track admissions process **may perform an optional preliminary and unofficial self-evaluation** of their transfer credit. Important information about fast-track admissions and its relation to transfer credit can be found in the Admissions Policy, in this manual.

### **Military Personnel and Transfer Credit**

Credit earned in higher education courses taken while in the military is eligible for transfer to IU. The university recognizes several programs through which active duty military personnel and veterans can transfer course credit earned while in the military. These programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- IU participates in the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) program. Acting as a liaison between the student and the university, SOC enables servicemembers to transfer course credits to IU as well as transfer IU course credits to other institutions of higher education.
- Also eligible for transfer to IU are credits earned through courses recognized or coordinated by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) program and, formerly, the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) program.
- In addition to accepting transfer credit for courses taken while in the military, IU also grants extra-institutional credit to active duty military personnel and veterans. IU recognizes two types of extra-institutional credit: credit by examination and American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations for military and non-military training, education, and experiences. More information about these extra-institutional credit programs can be found in the Extra-Institutional Credit Policy, in this manual.

### **International Students and Transfer Credit**

Credit earned in courses taken at non-U.S. institutions of higher education is eligible for transfer to IU. International students requesting transfer of credit from non-U.S. institutions

must submit official documentation. More information about the official documentation that international students must submit can be found in this Transfer Credit Policy, in the section entitled Transcripts Required for Evaluation of Transfer Credit.

As with credit earned at U.S. institutions, international credit must have been earned at accredited institutions of higher education in order to transfer. More information about acceptable accreditation for international institutions can be found in this Transfer Credit Policy, in the section entitled Accreditation Status and Transfer Credit.

After receiving an international student's official documentation, an appropriate university representative or designee will evaluate the documents and determine whether any credit can be transferred to IU.

### **Transfer Credit and Applicants Seeking a Second Degree or Credential**

The university accepts applicants who already hold a degree or credential from an accredited institution of higher education and who would like to earn a second degree or credential from IU. As part of the admissions process, an applicant who already holds a degree or credential from another institution will have his or her credits evaluated to (1) verify that the degree or credential has been awarded, and (2) determine if any credits from the previous program can be transferred to IU.

In general, with respect to applicants seeking a second degree or credential, the following conditions for transfer credit apply:

- An applicant who already holds a degree or credential typically must complete all core course requirements in the IU program in addition to the initial degree to be eligible for the second degree or credential.
- Typically, an applicant seeking a second degree or credential cannot transfer to IU, as course credit, a core credit already completed during the initial program and applied toward the initial program's requirements. This is called "double counting" of credit and is also addressed elsewhere in this Transfer Credit Policy.
- If an applicant has already taken a core course for an initial degree, he or she may be allowed to substitute another IU course for this core course.
- Finally, if an applicant earned credits during the initial program that he or she did not use to satisfy the initial program's requirements, these credits may be eligible for transfer to IU.

More information about applicants seeking a second degree or credential can be found in the Admissions Policy, in this manual.

### **Transfer of IU Credits to Other Institutions of Higher Education**

Institutions of higher education vary in their acceptance of credits earned at other institutions. Some institutions of higher education will accept IU credits while others will not. IU has no say in the transfer credit decisions of other institutions of higher education. For this reason, a



student is responsible for asking the receiving institution about their policies before attempting to transfer IU credits to that school. IU offers absolutely **no** guarantee whatsoever that its credits will transfer to any other institution of higher education.

## **Repeated Courses and Transfer Credit**

### ***Transfer Credit and Courses Repeated at IU***

IU allows students to repeat a course in which an unsatisfactory grade was earned and to replace the unsatisfactory grade with a higher grade earned in the repeated course. However, IU does not allow students to replace a grade earned in a course taken at IU with a grade earned in a transfer course taken at another institution. More information about repeating a course for a higher grade can be found in the Grading and Assessment Policy, in this manual.

### ***Transfer Credit and Courses Repeated at Other Institutions***

Credit from courses taken more than once due to failing grades are eligible for transfer as long as a grade of C or higher was earned (for graduate courses, a grade of B or higher).

## **Transfer Students and Graduation Requirements**

A student who transfers to IU from another institution of higher education must meet all graduation requirements of IU in order to graduate. Additionally, a student who transfers from one IU program of study into another program must meet all graduation requirements of the new program in order to graduate.

# Tuition

## Policy

Independence University charges tuition according to the policies and procedures outlined in this Tuition Policy.

An appropriate university representative or designee is responsible for the administration of the university's Tuition Policy. This representative or designee will ensure that all IU Enrollment Advisors have a copy of the Tuition Policy, and that they understand and follow it. From time to time, the representative or designee will spot check and verify that enrollment agreements contain the correct tuition amount, and that students and sponsors are given the tuition discounts and scholarships offered by the university.

Tuition is subject to change without notice.

## Tuition Costs

The cost of an IU program of study is assessed according to tuition rates in effect at the time of a student's enrollment. The tuition rate per semester credit depends on the program of study and level of program (associate's, bachelor's, master's, or certificate). Current tuition rates per semester credit are published by the university and are also available upon request from the university. Current tuition rates are also explained to applicants during the admissions process.

At the time of a student's initial enrollment, the university estimates the tuition per semester credit for the student's entire program of study, along with any additional costs (textbooks and course materials, shipping and handling, etc.) for the program. From these calculations, the university determines the total **initial** cost or amount for the student's entire program of study. This total **initial** amount is specified in the student's signed enrollment agreement. Included in this amount are all fees comprising the overall cost of the program of study. Tuition per semester credit as well as the cost of textbooks and course materials and other costs associated with the program are included in this total initial amount.

The total initial cost or amount specified in a student's enrollment agreement is, in many cases, the actual amount that he or she ultimately pays for the entire program of study. As long as a student adheres to the terms of his or her initial enrollment agreement, program plan, and financial plan, this student should not see an increase in the total cost of his or her education from the amount specified in the original enrollment agreement. However, the actual, final amount that a student ultimately pays may be affected by several factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, discounts, scholarships, grants, or other assistance awarded at the start of or during the student's enrollment. Another factor that can affect the final cost of the program is whether previous credit earned by a student transfers successfully to the university. Review of a student's official transcripts of previous education may alter the total cost of a program, depending on whether or not the previous credit transfers to the university. Additional fees incurred during a student's enrollment may also affect a program's total cost. (See the section of this Tuition Policy entitled Additional Fees beyond the Initial Tuition Amount for more information about these fees.)

## Tuition Payment Options

All tuition payments must be made in U.S. currency by check, money order, debit card, credit card, purchase order from a student's employer, or national voucher (foreign students on government scholarship). There is a \$25 service charge for returned checks.

IU students purchase an entire program of study up front and pay for their tuition through a tuition financing plan that is arranged during their initial enrollment **and is typically finalized before they enroll in their second course.**

A student has the option of paying for his or her entire program of study in full and in advance or paying for the program over time through an agreed upon tuition financing plan. IU offers students several options for financing their program of study. These options are explained in the Tuition Assistance Policy, in this manual.

## Initial Tuition Payment

A \$250 initial tuition payment is required (\$500 for international students) for all programs of study. Upon receipt of payment, textbooks and course materials are shipped immediately, and the student is granted access to the university's secure online tools and other services.

## Penalties for Non-Payment of Tuition

Students who choose to finance their tuition are expected to make their tuition payments by the deadlines specified for these payments. A student's account is in default when he or she fails to pay tuition by these deadlines or according to the terms of the signed enrollment agreement and financial plan.

A student whose account is in default is not allowed to enroll in additional IU courses until his or her payments are up to date. The university also holds all records, including transcripts, grade reports, and graduation records, until payments are up to date.

IU follows tuition collection practices and procedures that are fair and in keeping with sound and ethical business standards. These practices and procedures protect the institution's finances and take into account the comparable rights and interests of the student. IU separates academic and financial services. The university's academic staff encourage academic progress while the university's accounting staff are responsible for managing tuition matters, including delinquent accounts.

Students who finance their IU education through an outside financial institution may incur additional fees and charges from these institutions when their accounts are in default.

## Additional Fees beyond the Initial Tuition Amount

**Included in the total initial cost or amount specified in a student's signed enrollment agreement are all fees comprising the overall charge for a program of study. However, in certain circumstances, additional fees may be incurred beyond the initial amount specified in the enrollment agreement. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:**

## Tuition

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- Cases in which a student cannot successfully transfer in previous college-level credit. As part of the admissions process, students perform a **preliminary and unofficial self-evaluation** of prior credit earned, listing the IU courses for which they believe they already have credit. The university then reviews this student's official transcripts to determine if this credit will in fact transfer. If this credit does not transfer, the initial amount listed in the student's enrollment agreement may increase.
- Cases in which a student becomes inactive, is terminated from a program of study, and must be re-admitted to the university. In these situations, a student may be required to sign a new enrollment agreement that may include a total cost or amount different from the amount in an earlier enrollment agreement.
- Cases in which a student transfers to a new program of study that includes additional costs not incurred in the previous program. In these situations, a student may be required to sign a new enrollment agreement that includes a new total cost or amount.
- Cases in which a student deviates from his or her original program plan and the courses that it specifies for a degree or other credential. These cases include, but are not limited to, dropping a course, repeating a course, or taking a course not on the original program plan. In these situations, a student may be required to pay an amount above the total cost or amount specified in the original enrollment agreement.
- Cases in which a student's account becomes delinquent and incurs extra fees and charges beyond the total amount specified in the original enrollment agreement.
- Other circumstances not foreseen when the original enrollment agreement was signed and that require additional fees beyond the total amount specified in the original enrollment agreement.

## Tuition Assistance

The university offers several tuition assistance programs (discounts, scholarships, grants, and other assistance) that can reduce the cost of an IU education or enable a student to more easily finance his or her education. These tuition assistance programs are described in the Tuition Assistance Policy, in this manual.

# Tuition Assistance

## Policy

Independence University strives to offer students an affordable and financially accessible education. For this reason, the university offers or participates in several tuition assistance programs designed to help students pay for their IU education.

## Tuition Assistance Programs: General Information

IU offers or participates in several tuition assistance programs, including discounts, scholarships, grant opportunities, employer tuition reimbursement, student loans, and benefits for military personnel, both active duty and veterans.

Applicants interested in the university's tuition assistance programs should contact an IU Enrollment Advisor. Once enrolled, students who want more information about tuition assistance should contact the university.

With the exception of programs for military personnel, IU does not participate in federal student aid programs.

IU allows students to combine certain discounts, scholarships, grants, and other tuition assistance programs. These combinations can reduce the cost of an IU education or enable a student to more easily finance his or her education. Individuals who would like to combine tuition assistance programs should contact an Enrollment Advisor or other university representative to find out which combinations are possible.

Certain reductions from discounts, scholarships, grants, and other tuition assistance programs are applied to the student's tuition costs when financial arrangements are first planned and approved during the admissions process. The total tuition amount in the student's signed enrollment agreement reflects these reductions. Other reductions are contingent upon a student's performance during his or her program of study and are applied as a student progresses through a program.

Unless otherwise noted, the university's discounts, scholarships, grants, and other forms of tuition assistance do not apply to textbooks and course materials or shipping and handling, which are charged at the full rate.

## Academic Scholarship

IU awards an academic scholarship to graduates who completed an average of three semester credits per month with a 3.0 grade point average (GPA). The scholarship equals 20% of the tuition paid and is awarded in cash at the satisfactory completion of the program of study. The academic scholarship applies in all cases where discounts are given, such as pre-payment or volume discounts, but not to active duty military personnel, as their tuition is already greatly reduced.

## Advance Tuition Payment Discount

IU offers a 10% prepayment discount if tuition is paid in full and in advance for an entire program of study. Prepayment carries a guarantee that tuition will not be increased while a student remains active in his or her program and completes his or her courses successfully and on time.

## EduPlan™

This institutional financing program provides educational loans with interest rates tied to the prime lending rate. Although this rate is subject to change, the rate under which a student enrolled will not change as long as he or she remains active in his or her program of study, completes courses successfully and on time, and remains current in tuition payments to the university. This financing option requires a completed enrollment agreement and validated program plan, an initial payment of \$250, and a minimum monthly payment of \$200.

EduPlan is affiliated with the National Loan Servicing Center (NLSC).

## Employer Tuition Reimbursement

Many employers reimburse tuition for employees who advance their knowledge and skills. A student may enroll at IU pending payment approval from an employer for tuition reimbursement. A student should ask his or her employer for the employer's policy on tuition reimbursement. IU will work with the employer so that tuition reimbursement can be used to finance the student/employee's education.

## External Grants and Scholarships

Many institutions such as corporations, hospitals, alumni and professional organizations, health care companies and organizations, medical equipment vendors, service providers, and pharmaceutical companies offer grants and scholarships to students in various programs of study. IU encourages students to pursue these external grants and scholarships. Students must contact these grant and scholarship programs directly.

## External Loans

IU assists students in arranging tuition financing through Sallie Mae (SLM) and EduPlan. However, IU students may arrange tuition financing through another, external loan program of their choice. In these cases, the university establishes no relationship with the external loan organization and does not participate in any disputes of any kind between the student and the loan organization.

## Group/Corporate Enrollment Discount

IU offers a group/corporate enrollment discount to an organization that enrolls three or more students simultaneously. This enrollment discount breaks down as follows:

<b>Number of Students Enrolled Simultaneously</b>	<b>Tuition Discount</b>
3-5 Simultaneous Enrollments	10%
6-10	15%
11-25	20%
26+	25%
Prepay Full Tuition Amount	additional 10%

## **Institutional Grant**

Special institutional grants of up to 50% of the total tuition may be awarded for proven economic hardship and for demonstrated student performance over the first six months of the program. Students who demonstrate special and proven economic hardship and who also demonstrate academic motivation and performance may be eligible for this grant of up to 50% of total tuition.

Institutional grants for economic hardship are granted on a case-by-case basis, based on the most worthy applications in any given period. The grants can range from a low of 10% of total tuition to a high of 50% of total tuition. Two of the key factors in determining recipients of the grants are commitment and motivation, in addition to economic hardship. Other conditions will apply, such as whether the applicant is supporting a large family, is a single parent, or has a recognized physical disability.

The grant applicant must maintain a 2.5 GPA and complete an average of three semester credits every 60 days.

## **Sallie Mae (SLM) Student Loans**

Sallie Mae provides SLM student loans to students enrolled at accredited institutions. Students may elect to pay interest only while in school.

IU assists students with applications and the processing of paperwork for SLM student loans.

## **Tax Deductions for Attending College**

IU encourages students to investigate financing their education through tax deductions for attending college. Many educational expenses are tax deductible. The U.S. government allows tax deductions for education expenses incurred to maintain or improve skills as a condition of employment, job status, or compensation. Students must consult their tax advisor directly to determine if they qualify for these deductions.

## **Tuition Assistance Programs for Military Personnel**

IU offers or participates in several tuition assistance programs for active duty military, veterans, and other qualifying individuals. The university's Military Education Services unit is responsible for assisting military personnel, base education officers, and VA counselors in

establishing tuition assistance at the university. Military personnel and their base education officers or VA counselors may contact IU Military Education Services for assistance.

### ***TA Program/Tuition Discount for Active Duty Military***

For active duty military personnel, IU reduces tuition to \$250 per semester credit and provides all textbooks and course materials free of charge. Additionally, all shipping and handling is free. No other university discounts or scholarships will apply to active duty military personnel, as their tuition is already greatly reduced through this benefit.

IU participates in the TA program for all qualifying branches of the military (Air Force, Army, Army National Guard, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy). Certain active duty military personnel may find that they do not qualify for the military's TA program. However, IU will work with these applicants or students to determine if they can still receive the university's \$250 tuition rate for TA program participants.

### ***Tuition Financing through the TA Program***

Once a student and his or her base education officer have agreed on an IU program of study, a Tuition Assistance (TA) form must be submitted for each individual course in the program. IU will not enroll a student in his or her next course until the university has received a signed TA form for that course. Forms can be sent to the university by regular mail, fax, or email.

Individual branches of the military have different payment processes for the Tuition Assistance program. For this reason, the university recommends that the base education officer work directly with IU Military Education Services to set up a payment and invoicing schedule.

There may be instances when the process for obtaining tuition assistance through the military differs from the protocol outlined above. In these cases, students and their counselors may work with IU Military Education Services to set up a payment process.

### ***Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits: GI Bill and Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment***

Programs at IU are approved by the Utah State Approving Agency to participate in VA education benefits under Title 38 of the U.S. Code. These benefits include GI Bill benefits and Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) benefits. Students must apply for benefits directly through the VA. However, the university's Military Education Services unit will assist applicants and students through the process to receive all VA education benefits for which they qualify.

Students should contact the VA to ensure that they have the correct information regarding benefits and to receive information on qualifying for the various entitlement categories. All admissions requirements must be completed and the VA benefits recipient must be a registered IU student before he or she will be certified for VA benefits. Payment of tuition and fees is a part of the enrollment process, and a person is not a registered student until payment is received.



### Tuition Financing and VA Benefits

Students financing their tuition through VA benefits will need to pay for the entire program or apply for financing. Students may have to cover the cost of one or two courses before they start getting their pay allotment from the VA.

Students are able to collect full-time pay reimbursement from the VA if they complete their courses in the allotted time. The amount of the reimbursement from the VA is based on the time the student takes to complete each course. Courses are certified when a final grade is awarded, and pay is based on time to completion or training time. The VA will pay the student directly once the certification is submitted and processed.

**Calculating Training Time.** Training time is calculated according to IU policies and in conjunction with the VA standards for training time. Specifically, a student who finishes a 3-credit course in 4 weeks will be considered full-time. A student who finishes a 3-credit course in 8 weeks will be considered half-time. A student who takes the full 90 days (12 weeks) to finish a course will be considered less than quarter-time. This policy applies to both undergraduate and graduate students, and the VA will pay based on this standard for training time. Students should keep in mind that the VA will pay based on the actual time for course completion. These breakdowns are a maximum time period and training time rates are prorated daily. Finally, there are a few exceptions to this policy that will vary by program and course. These exceptions will be addressed at the time of enrollment.

### Submitting Proof of Eligibility and Transcripts for VA Benefits

To use VA benefits at IU, a student must submit proof of eligibility and official transcripts.

To establish proof of eligibility, a student must first submit the appropriate form to the VA Western Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma. These forms include Form 22-1990 Application for Education Benefits (which generates a Certificate of Eligibility), Form 22-1995 Change in Program or Place of Training (if an individual has already applied and used benefits at another institution), or other applicable form. The VA or IU Military Education Services can assist a student to determine which form he or she must submit.

IU requires a copy of the form that the student chooses to use as proof of eligibility. Copies of eligibility forms can be sent to the university by regular mail, fax, or email.

The student must also submit **all** official transcripts for **all** institutions previously attended. These transcripts include, if applicable, an American Council on Education (ACE) transcript for any military education, occupations, and experiences. Transcripts must be official.

It is important that all transcripts from all institutions are submitted so that the VA can avoid double payment and revocation of monies paid to VA students.

### Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program: Special Circumstances

Special circumstances may apply to the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment program and its education benefit. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Forms Required for Vocational Rehabilitation Program.** Once a student and his or her Vocational Rehabilitation counselor have agreed on an IU program of study, a 1905 form must typically be submitted for each individual course in the program. IU will not enroll a student in his or her next course until the university has received a signed 1905 form for that course. Forms can be sent to the university by regular mail, fax, or email.
- **Payment and Invoicing Processes.** Individual Vocational Rehabilitation offices have different payment processes. For this reason, the university recommends that the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor work directly with IU Military Education Services to set up a payment and invoicing schedule.
- **Discount on Total Program Cost.** If a student's Vocational Rehabilitation counselor is able to pay for the entire program up front, the university can offer a 10% discount on the total program cost.
- **State-Sponsored Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.** Students using state funding through Vocational Rehabilitation programs may work with IU Military Education Services to set up contracts and payment plans. State VR users will be held to the university's standard policies and procedures. In addition, any requirements set forth by the sponsoring state unit must be met.

The information provided herein offers an overview of Vocational Rehabilitation and its educational funding practices. However, those participating in Vocational Rehabilitation or helping students to get VR funding should keep in mind that VR payments are handled on a case-by-case basis. The university's Military Education Services unit encourages prospective VR students and their counselors to contact the unit to set up VR funding tailored to the individual student.

# Tuition Refund Policy

## Policy

Independence University recognizes that there are legitimate reasons why an enrolled student may not be able to complete his or her IU studies. For this reason, the university provides equitable tuition refunds to students according to the policies and procedures outlined in this Tuition Refund Policy.

An appropriate university representative or designee is responsible for overseeing this policy and tuition refunds at the university.

This Tuition Refund Policy applies to all students except those enrolled through or by a sponsor such as a hospital or other sponsoring organization.

If a student pays his or her full tuition amount in advance, the amount returned is the tuition paid minus the tuition for courses or parts of courses taken. If a person has a student loan through EduPlan™ or another source, the refund is first applied to the borrowed funds, and any balance is paid to the student.

## Requesting Enrollment Cancellation and Tuition Refund

**A student who wishes to cancel his or her IU enrollment may do so. In keeping with the Business Standards of IU's accreditation agency, the Distance Learning and Training Council (DETC), a student may submit his or her cancellation request in any manner.**

The date that the request to withdraw is received serves as the date of withdrawal or cancellation. Upon cancellation, all money due to a student will be refunded within 30 days, subject to the conditions in this Tuition Refund Policy.

IU does not process tuition refunds automatically when a student cancels enrollment. Typically, a student must request the tuition refund.

## Enrollment Cancellation Refunds

If a student cancels within five days after enrolling in a program of study, he or she incurs no tuition obligation and is entitled to a refund of all tuition paid. If a student cancels after five days, but before submitting any coursework, the university refunds all tuition paid, less a \$90 cancellation charge. If, for any reason, IU does not accept a student's enrollment agreement, the university will refund all monies paid.

## Tuition Refund Calculations

If a student requests cancellation after submitting coursework, IU refunds tuition paid less tuition for courses completed and partially completed according to the following schedule:

<b>Length of Course</b>	<b>Refundable Tuition Due after –</b>		
1-6 weeks (1 credit)	1st week	=	70%
	2nd week	=	40%
	3rd week	=	20%
	4th week	=	0%
7-10 weeks (2 credits)	1st week	=	80%
	2nd week	=	60%
	3rd week	=	40%
	5th week	=	0%
11-16 weeks (3 credits)	1st week	=	80%
	2nd week	=	70%
	3rd week	=	60%
	4th week	=	50%
	5th week	=	40%
	6th week	=	30%
	7th week	=	20%
	8th week	=	10%
	9th week	=	0%

### **Textbook and Course Material Refunds**

Shipping, handling, and cost of textbooks and course materials are not included in the refund of tuition. Textbooks and materials may be returned for a refund up to two weeks after the commencement of courses or from receipt of textbooks, whichever is later. Books and materials must be returned in the same condition in which they were received. New books must be considered re-sellable. Shipping and handling expenses are non-refundable.