The University Without Walls

UWW Philosophy of Education

At UWW we believe that learning is a basic human function that occurs throughout the life cycle. As a UWW student you will have an opportunity to further develop a broad range of skills that are necessary for learning in any situation: the ability to understand what you read, hear, and see; to write clearly and expressively; to think critically and objectively; and to pursue independent research. In addition, you will better understand your own background and your experiential learning.

UWW also believes in the importance of integrating theoretical learning with practical experience, and we try to view students within the wider context of their overall lives. Students find that studying, learning and completing a degree has a positive impact on many aspects of their lives for years to come.

University and UWW Requirements

To graduate from the University of Massachusetts Amherst as a University Without Walls major, you must fulfill both University and UWW requirements. We represent the educational mission and standards of the University by seeing that you receive a general education spanning a variety of disciplines and that you build on that foundation a more specialized and extensive understanding of a particular field or concentration, often incorporating learning you have gained through experience.

Overview of Program Requirements

- 120 credits required for a bachelor’s degree
- 45 UMass Amherst credits (minimum residency requirement)
- Minimum GPA of 2.0 (academic standing)
- Completion of General Education Requirements (can be tracked by the ARR report in Spire)
- Completion of UWW Core Curriculum Courses (15 credits)
- 45 credits in Area of Concentration (AOC)
- 15 upper level credits in AOC (300 level or higher)

University Requirements

**Total credits:** Completion of 120 credits, 45 of which must be residency credits (students can transfer in a maximum of 75 credits). Of those 45 credits, at least 15 must be graded. Residency credit includes credits earned through the prior learning portfolio, as well as all other coursework or independent studies taken through the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**General education courses:** UMass Amherst students are required to fulfill general education requirements (a minimum of 13 courses totaling at least 39 credits). These courses can be taken through UMass Amherst, transferred in through other colleges and universities, or taken via CLEP or exemption exam.

- Writing: 2 courses
  - College Writing (CW) or an equivalent
- Junior Year Writing (JW), generally completed by taking UWW 370 Writing About Experience.

- Basic Mathematics and Analytical Reasoning: 2 courses
  - Basic Math (exemption exam or course) (R1)
  - 1 Analytical Reasoning (R2)

- Biological and Physical World: 2 courses
  - 1 Biological Science (BS)
  - 1 Physical Science (PS)

- Social World category: 4 courses. The Social World requirements can be combined with Social and Cultural Diversity requirements (see below).
  - 1 Arts or Literature (AL or AT)
  - 1 Historical Studies (HS)
  - 1 Social and Behavioral Science (SB)
  - 1 other course in the social world category (AL, AT, HS, SB, or an interdisciplinary course (I) - UWW 191G Frameworks of Understanding carries and interdisciplinary (I) designation

- Social and Cultural Diversity: 2 courses
  - 1 focused on Diversity in the United States (U)
  - 1 focused on Global Diversity (G)
  - The U and G designations may be combined with social world courses with designations like ALU, ALG, ATU, ATG, HSU, HSG, SBU, SBG, IU or IG.

- Integrative Experience: 1 upper level integrative experience course (IE); must be completed in major department or program; the UWW “experiential reflections” courses satisfy this requirement.

- Additional general education requirements: 2 additional courses may be selected from the following categories: Basic Math Skills and Analytical Reasoning; Biological and Physical World; Social World; or Integrative Experience.

UWW Major Requirements

- One degree planning course: UWW 191G Frameworks of Understanding OR UWW 394A Concepts in Learning Integration

- Two UWW “Experiential Reflections” courses (choose from UWW 310, 320, 330, 340, 350, or 360)

- Approval of a degree plan identifying an area of concentration and outlining a course of study

- Completion of the course of study outlined by the degree plan or with substitutions approved by your academic advisor
• Completion of the junior year writing requirement, *UWW 370 Writing About Experience*, during which most students develop a prior learning portfolio

• Completion of at least 45 credits within the area of concentration

• Completion in the area of concentration of at least 15 graded credits of upper level course work (usually 300 and above)

### UWW Courses

Because UWW views adult learners as people who have been and will be learning throughout their lives, our curriculum emphasizes the following two categories of skills that are crucial to any educational effort, whether inside the university or out:

*Communication skills*, including competence in expository or analytical writing, oral expression and/or audio and visual forms of communication.

*Critical thinking*, including the ability to identify and critique the assumptions and values upon which arguments are based and conclusions premised, to gather and evaluate information, to make connections between seemingly unconnected thoughts or ideas, and to use these capabilities to address problems.

### Frameworks of Understanding (UWW 191G)

**Course Description:** This course, which carries an interdisciplinary (I) general education designation, is designed to develop the skills in critical thinking, analytical and reflective writing, and research necessary for the UWW student to design an individualized, interdisciplinary degree and to develop a prior learning portfolio. It is in this class that you will develop your degree plan. Course assignments include readings about critical thinking and analytical writing and across disciplines, as well as exercises and papers designed to apply these skills, particularly to the examination of experience. A portion of the course will be devoted to identifying and evaluating source materials for academic writing and then incorporating and documenting them in papers.

**Goal:** To help students:

• Expand analytical reading and critical thinking skills
• Learn more about how theories are developed, how they are supported by evidence, and how they change (or do not change) in the face of new evidence
• Use different kinds of evidence to clarify thinking and to communicate ideas to others more effectively
• Explore ways to put personal experience in larger social, historical, and theoretical contexts
• Investigate different approaches to research and to develop information literacy skills
• Research and develop individualized degree plans
Concepts in Learning Integration (UWW 394A)

Course Description: Concepts in Learning Integration is the study of how experiential learning theory contributes to the process of designing an academic area of study. Utilizing research skills, self-reflection, critical analysis, and knowledge acquired through previous coursework, students will connect theory and practice by doing research that demonstrates an ability to use primary and secondary sources, solve problems and communicate effectively. Peer and instructor feedback will be integral to the learning process. Students will construct a degree plan that incorporates past coursework and experience.

Goal: To help students:
- Recognize different disciplinary approaches and limitations to addressing complex real-world problems and overarching questions
- Integrate multiple perspectives from experiential and curricular experiences (general education, area of concentration) while exploring a central theme
- Make connections between theory and practice in order to develop alternative solutions to challenges encountered in the workplace and community
- Develop collaborative approaches to learning through community by sharing similar competencies/skills in different areas of interest
- Develop transferable skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, reflection, and research
- Create an individualized academic degree plan that integrates educational and experiential experiences, and aligns with career and academic goals

Writing about Experience (UWW 370)

Course Description: Writing about Experience is an advanced course designed to help students enhance their writing skills, using their own experience and reflections as the subject matter. The students enrolled in the course develop and revise a prior learning portfolio based on experiential learning that may later be evaluated for academic credit. (Not all students elect to submit their portfolio for prior learning assessment.) Portfolios written in this course may be submitted for up to fifteen credits. Those seeking more credits may write two additional sections after the course is completed. Details about the portfolio process are included within the Prior Learning Portfolio Handbook.

Writing about Experience meets the University junior year writing requirement (JW). The academic credits awarded for the prior learning portfolio are evaluated separately from the course. Pre-requisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A and two of the following "reflections" courses are to be taken prior to or concurrently with UWW 370: UWW 310, 320, 330, 340, 350, 360.

Goal: In addition to the creation of a prior learning portfolio, the course will also teach students to:
- Develop organized and consistent themes throughout a longer piece of writing
- Integrate descriptive, analytical, and reflective writing
- Develop a voice in one’s writing
- Respond to others’ work with helpful comments and suggestions
- Revise sections to create a coherent whole
The UWW Reflections Courses

UWW students will select two of the following courses to be taken prior to or concurrently with 
*UWW 370 Writing about Experience:*

**Experiential Reflections of Technology (UWW 310)**
In this course students will examine the principles and frameworks of technology as a way to better understand their professional and other life experience. Prerequisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A taken prior or concurrently.

**Goals:**
- To briefly outline human technological advancement from muscle-powered agricultural ways of life up to the present
- Define the meaning of modern “technologies” and seek to understand their on-going relationship to the natural sciences
- Examine the influence of technologies on social relations, cultural forces, human connectedness and individual practice through the exploration of student experience and practice with technology
- Discuss how technologies may both “include” or “alienate” through an understanding of how humans adapt, embrace, or reject technology
- Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on, integrate, and apply his or her learning and experience derived from exposure to the various general education disciplines to his or her area of concentration

**Experiential Reflections of Leadership (UWW 320)**
Students will examine the principles and frameworks of leadership from both the perspective of leaders and those serving leaders within their professional and other life experience. Prerequisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A taken prior or concurrently.

**Goals:**
- Reflect upon and write about personal experiences with leading and being led
- Explore the dynamics of leadership in various groups and organizations
  Place personal experiences with leadership in a larger context through the study of leaders and ideas about leadership
- Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on, integrate, and apply his or her learning and experience derived from exposure to the various general education disciplines to his or her area of concentration

**Experiential Reflections of Public Policy (UWW 330)**
Students will examine the principles and frameworks of public policy and its impact on their professional and other life experience. Prerequisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A taken prior or concurrently.

**Goals:**
- Understand the theoretical framework of public policy-making and the environment within which policy is created and implemented at the national and state levels
- Develop familiarity with the major features of several areas of public policy, such as privatization policy, housing policy, or others
• Identify an area of public policy that has impacted his or her own life, work, or community, and develop, through research and classroom work, an understanding of the main issues that are at play in that area of policy
• Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on, integrate, and apply his or her learning and experience derived from exposure to the various general education disciplines to his or her area of concentration

**Experiential Reflections of Organizations (UWW 340)**
Students will examine the principles and frameworks of organizations as key elements in their professional and other life experience. Prerequisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A taken prior or concurrently.

**Goals:**
• Define the term *organization* within the context of this course
• Define what we mean by formal and informal organizations in terms of their similarities and differences
• Explain the key features of systems theory as they apply to living systems
• Describe and analyze in detail a familiar organizational system and our role within it
• Define organizational culture and describe the levels that comprise it
• Describe and engage more effectively in the processes through which organizational culture is created and re-created, and how it transmits to organizational members and impacts them
• Describe the culture of a familiar organization and discuss the implications of that culture for organizational members and the organization’s purpose
• Apply the above knowledge to a familiar organization, focusing on an analysis of past collaborative efforts, approaches to conflict management, and organizational and individual experiences with change
• Identify opportunities within that familiar organization for organizational development and cultural renewal
• Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on, integrate, and apply his or her learning and experience derived from exposure to the various general education disciplines to his or her area of concentration

**Experiential Reflections on Health (UWW 350)**
Students will examine the principles and frameworks of health as a way to better understand their professional and other life experience. This course seeks to address and understand varying responses to the questions “What is health?” and “How do we define ‘quality of life’?” These questions will be addressed through the use of reference material housed in the disciplines of public health, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, political science, communication, history, medicine, humanities, education, and economics. Prerequisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A taken prior or concurrently.

**Goals:**
• Illustrate how a multidisciplinary approach to understanding “health” and “quality of life” can inform an understanding of public and individual health
• Illustrate how a universal experience like “health” is experienced differently depending on culture, diagnosis, context, history, social determinants, and personal knowledge
• Prepare students for writing about individual experiences for their Prior Learning Portfolio in the University Without Walls program
• Provide a structured, credited context for students to reflect on and integrate their learning and experience from the broad exposure in their general education courses
• Provide the opportunity for students to practice general education learning objectives (collaboration, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary perspective taking) at a more advanced level
• Offer a shared learning experience for applying prior knowledge and experience to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems

Experiential Reflections of Learning and Education (UWW 360)
Students will explore formal, informal/incidental, and non-formal learning across the life span, beginning with early childhood and continuing into adulthood. Learning is defined as “the way in which individuals or groups acquire, interpret, re-organize, change or assimilate a related cluster of information, skills and feelings. It is also the primary way that people construct meaning in their personal and shared organizational lives” (Marsick, 1987, p. 4). Education is the delivery system for some, though not all, of this learning; much learning is acquired directly or indirectly through experience. Readings for this course will draw on a number of disciplines including education, technology, psychology, anthropology, history and sociology. Prerequisites: UWW 191G or UWW 394A taken prior or concurrently.

Goals:
• Deepen our understanding of learning and education across a variety of contexts
• Deepen our understanding of the ways in which formal, informal/incidental and non-formal learning influences our experience and that of others
• Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on, integrate, and apply our learning derived from exposure to the various approaches to learning and education to our lives
• Describe the similarities and differences among formal, informal/incidental and non-formal learning and education
• Reflect upon and write about personal experiences with learning and education
• Research, analyze and reflect on a specific issue or problem in learning or education in depth
• Work collaboratively with others in the completion of academic assignments
• Develop an action plan for lifelong learning
The Prior Learning Assessment Process

You have entered the University of Massachusetts Amherst with knowledge acquired through work and other life experiences. In the world outside the classroom, you have acquired skills for organizing and interpreting important information. Developing a prior learning portfolio through UWW can help you accomplish the following:

- Make intellectual contact with your theories, skills, and understanding
- Clarify your thinking
- Find out what you know—and what you don’t know—about your field
- Organize your ideas, your knowledge, and your skills in ways that allow you to communicate them more effectively to others
- Obtain university credit towards the completion of your degree
- Satisfy the UWW degree requirements

Prior Learning Assessment: UWW students who seek credit for prior learning will take *Writing about Experience* and *UWW 296Y Assessment of Prior Learning* (a placeholder course) during their second semester, although they may choose to enroll in the course in a later semester. Students may submit the portfolio completed in the writing course for up to fifteen credits, but have the opportunity to earn more credits by writing additional material, either on their own or in another class.

Final Review and Awarding of Prior Learning Credits: When your prior learning portfolio is complete, you will confer with your UWW 370 course instructor to discuss the review process. Portfolios of 15 credits or fewer require review, approval, and credit award only from the writing course instructor (and if the content is outside the faculty member’s expertise, an additional faculty evaluator). Portfolios of 16-30 credits require review, approval, and credit award by the UWW 370 course instructor and the UWW Academic Review Team (ART).

### Required Approval in the Prior Learning Assessment Process

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<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>UWW 370 Instructor</th>
<th>ART</th>
<th>Credentialed Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-30</td>
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Because most students engaging in this process need a good deal of support and guidance, developing a portfolio is addressed in a separate handbook specifically about the prior learning assessment and special transcript processes: [Prior Learning Portfolio Handbook](#). It is distributed in the UWW 370 *Writing about Experience* courses, but you can also download a copy from the UWW website at [www.umass.edu/uww](http://www.umass.edu/uww) (click on *Student Center Login*).
Steps in the UWW Program

The First Semester

- **UWW 191G Frameworks of Understanding OR 394A Concepts in Learning Integration:** UWW students come into our program with diverse academic histories, as well as professional and personal experience. These courses were designed with that in mind. All students are required to complete one of the degree planning courses. UWW’s academic advisors review your academic record and notify you as to which course will be the best fit.

- **A UWW “Experiential Reflections” Course:** Students select one of the required reflections courses as their second course during the first semester. These courses both satisfy the integrative experience general education requirement and prepare students for writing their prior learning portfolio.

UWW students typically take two courses a semester, but can take more credits if they think their schedule allows (a minimum of 6 credits is required to utilize financial aid). Students can expect to spend 6-9 +/- hours per course per week (this number increases for intensive courses). Read more about how to prepare for your online course at the Student Orientation and Research Area.

The Second and Subsequent Semesters

- **A UWW “Experiential Reflections” Course:** UWW students usually enroll in a second Experiential Reflections course during the second semester to complete the pre-requisites for enrolling in Writing about Experience.

- **UWW 370 Writing About Experience:** Students can take this course their second semester (pending completion of pre-requisites), though, there is no requirement to take the writing course in a particular semester.

- **Courses that meet area of concentration or general education requirements:** In the second or later semesters, you can begin other coursework in your degree plan.

On occasion, students are unable, for scheduling or other reasons, to take one or more of the specific courses listed on the degree plan. Please contact your academic advisor to discuss and receive approval for a substitution. In selecting substitutions, be sure that all key components of the concentration continue to be well-represented as you pursue the degree.

Graduation

**The Final Semester/Graduation:** As graduation approaches, you should make a final review of your degree progress in SPIRE to be certain that all of the requirements have been met. Your academic advisor will help you with this task and will clear you for graduation. If you entered UWW prior to fall 2012, you will be required to pay a $75 commencement fee. February, May, and September graduates within the current year celebrate with the UWW faculty and staff at the annual May graduation ceremony, and all UWW graduates of that year are eligible to attend the UMass Amherst Senior Recognition Ceremony. Review the UWW Graduation Instructions and Commencement Guide for more information.
Diploma and Certificate: University Without Walls is a major of UMass Amherst. Students who graduate from this program will receive a diploma that identifies a bachelor’s degree earned in University Without Walls. Students will also receive a certificate indicating they have successfully completed an area of concentration.

Academic Standing

Students’ academic status is determined by their cumulative grade point averages (GPA). Students are in good academic standing when their cumulative grade point average is 2.000 or above. If a student’s grade point average falls below a 2.000, one of the following will occur:

- **Academic Warning**: Students whose cumulative average is 2.000 or above, but whose semester average is less than 2.000.
- **Academic Probation**: Students whose cumulative falls below a 2.000.
- **Academic Suspension**: Students on Probation who fail to achieve or maintain good standing in any subsequent semester.
- **Academic Dismissal**: Students who are readmitted after any Academic Suspension and fail to achieve or maintain good standing in any subsequent semester. Academic Dismissal is a permanent separation from the University.

For more information on this policy, please refer to the Academic Regulations posted on the Registrar’s site.

Appeals Process

In special circumstances, UWW students may petition for a variance to a specific university policy by sending an explanatory letter to the Committee on Admissions and Records or General Education Variance Committee. UWW students may also petition for a variance to a specific UWW academic policy by sending a letter to the UWW Academic Matters Committee. The letter should clearly indicate the nature of the request and the reasons why you feel an exception is warranted. Before submitting the petition, speak with your academic advisor, who can help you evaluate the strength of your case.

Committee on Admissions and Records and General Education Variance Committee: These two committees act as boards of appeals for such petitions as reinstatements after dismissal, retroactive withdrawal from prior semesters because of illness or other intervening circumstances, acceptance of an alternative course to meet a general education requirement, and so on. The UWW Chief Undergraduate Advisor will write a letter of support if he/she considers the case substantive. More information about these committees and other academic regulations is available in the Academic Regulations posted on the Registrar’s site.
Graduating with Honors

Latin Honors

All graduating seniors are eligible for Latin honors designations on diplomas and transcripts if his/her complete academic record shows at least 54 calculable (graded residence) credits at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and he/she meets one or more of the following criteria:

- GPA places them among the top 5% of the graduating class of their school or college, then they will receive the degree – summa cum laude
- GPA places them among the top 10% of the graduating class of their school or college, but not among the top 5%, then they will receive the degree – magna cum laude
- GPA places them among the top 25% percent of the graduating class of their school or college, but not among the top 10%, then they will receive the degree – cum laude

At the start of the fall semester, the University Registrar’s Office posts on its website the GPA needed to secure a place in the top 5, 10, and 25 percent in each school or college based on the average of the previous three years’ graduating classes.

Pursuing Departmental Honors

Departmental Honors is awarded for completion of Commonwealth Honors College requirements with a four-or-more-course focus, including the Honors Thesis or Project, in approved Departmental Honors Programs.

UWW students who wish to focus honors work in their areas of prior experiential learning and/or concentration should consider undertaking UWW Departmental Honors (DH). UWW honors courses are non-honors courses with an honors colloquia attached. Colloquia are 1-2 credits and may have 2-25 students enrolled. Or, students may choose to complete an honors independent study (1-3 credits). Both honors colloquia and honors independent studies are designed to complement, deepen, and extend the experience of an academic major, area of study, or concentration. NOTE: There is no additional fee associated with UWW Departmental Honors at this time.

Students interested in UWW Departmental Honors should speak with their academic advisor and the UWW Honors Program Director, Connie Griffin (cgriffin@uww.umass.edu) upon completion of a minimum of 12 UMass Amherst graded credits with a 3.75 minimum GPA.

The specific requirements for satisfying UWW Departmental Honors requirements are as follows:

- One honors course, colloquium, or independent study at any level in the UWW program (196H, 296H, 396H, 496H), or in the student’s area of concentration
- One honors course, colloquium, or independent study at the 300-level or above in the UWW program (396H, 496H), or in the student’s area of concentration
  - i. UMass Amherst 600, 700, 800-level graduate courses in student’s area of concentration satisfies one honors course, as does a non-honors course linked with an honors colloquium.
  - ii. UMass Amherst graduate courses at the 500-level may be petitioned for honors course credit provided they:
1. Are three or more graded credits
2. Have a maximum enrollment of 25 students
3. Feature a high degree of interaction between professor and students
4. Feature a rigorous syllabus

And one of two options:

a. A six to eight credit independent study honors thesis. Students writing a thesis sign up for 499Y and then, 499T (usually in the following semester).
b. A six to eight credit independent study honors project. Students developing a project sign up for 499Y and then, 499P (usually in the following semester).

NOTE: Three of the independent honors thesis or project credits may apply to the student’s 15 upper-level area of concentration (AOC) credits if the thesis or project is thematically focused within the student’s area of concentration.

UWW honors students must:

a. Maintain a minimum of six credits during the fall/spring semesters, unless on a leave of absence. Students may petition for an exception to this policy.
b. Complete the residency requirement of 45 graded (not pass/fail) credits earned at UMass Amherst (not transferred).
c. Maintain a 3.75 cumulative GPA.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: Nine graded residency credits – added to the 45 required to graduate – will equal 54 graded residency credits, also making students eligible for consideration for Latin honors degree designations: summa, magna, and cum laude.

Application Guidelines

Please write a carefully crafted, one-page, single-spaced personal statement in which you explain why you want to engage in honors work and how honors work will help you realize your academic goals.

As you compose your personal statement, keep in mind that this statement is both an opportunity to articulate your commitment to the pursuit of academic excellence and the only sample of your formal writing available to the application review committee. The review committee will also expect clear, well-developed writing with compelling examples. The review committee will also expect careful proofing, including structure, spelling, and grammar. Submit your essay to Connie Griffin, UWW Honors Program Director at cgriffin@uww.umass.edu.

Include a header with the following information:

5. Your full name and UMass email
6. Your SPIRE ID number
7. The Honors curriculum sub plan to which you are applying (UWW Departmental Honors)
8. Your current major or pre-major as listed in SPIRE (UWW)

When composing your personal statement, pay particular attention to the questions below:

- What are your academic interests?
• What concentration or major (UWW)-appropriate topics might you address for your honors thesis or project?
• If your concentration crosses academic departments and fields of study, how will you integrate your interests across disciplines?
• Do you have in mind specific faculty with whom you would like to work?

Additionally:

• What academic experiences – courses, workshops, lectures, films, books – have you found to be intellectually rewarding?
• Have you participated in any extracurricular activities that relate to your academic interests and future goals?
• What contributions can you see yourself making to a community of academic peers?

Acceptance decisions will be sent to students’ “…@umass.edu” email addresses.

**Thesis or Project?**

The UWW Honors thesis may be either an analytical work (typically about 30-50 pages in length) or a substantial creative work, typically called a “project” (for examples, a collection of poems and stories or one longer work of poetry, fiction, or nonfiction; artistic work; or other proposed project).

The thesis or project is developed under the supervision of at least two faculty members. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate meeting with the Honors Program Director and then, to meet with and ask faculty to serve on his or her committee. Assembling a faculty committee (minimally, to include a chair and one member) can be challenging, so this step should be undertaken in advance of the final two semesters at UMass Amherst.

To begin the thesis or project, a thesis or project proposal, signed by both faculty chair and committee member, as well as the UWW Honors Program Director, must be submitted to the Honors Program Director prior to the final two semesters of coursework. Students will work closely with their committee chair to discuss research, drafts, and revision (committee members may serve as readers).

For further information about the UWW Departmental Honors Program, contact the UWW Honors Program Director, Connie Griffin at cgriffin@uww.umass.edu.

**Alpha Sigma Lambda**

UWW students are eligible for membership in Alpha Sigma Lambda, a national honors society established “to recognize the special achievements of adults who accomplish academic excellence while facing competing interests of home and work.” The national standards for student membership in Alpha Sigma Lambda are as follows:

• Members must be matriculated and have a minimum of 24 graded semester hours or the equivalent and shall be matriculated students in an undergraduate degree program. These 24 college credits must not include transfer credits. All credits must be taken through and graded at the matriculating institution, and must be included in the student’s GPA.
- At least 12 of a student’s total credits should be earned in courses in Liberal Arts/Sciences. If the student has not earned 12 Liberal Arts/Sciences credits within the 24 credits completed at the matriculating institution, accepted transfer courses may be used to meet this requirement.
- Members shall be selected only from the highest 10 percent of the class who have 24 graded credits and are matriculated in an undergraduate degree program.
- Those selected must have a minimum grade point average of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent. The cumulative scholastic record of the student as interpreted by the institution where membership is to be conferred shall be the basis for computing scholastic eligibility.

Each spring, the UMass Division of Continuing and Professional Education inducts new members into Alpha Sigma Lambda, and many UWW students have become members. Students may contact Connie Griffin, UWW Honors Program Director at cgriffin@uww.umass.edu.

**Umass Amherst Student Code of Conduct**

The University of Massachusetts is a scholarly community united by its engagement in the exchange of ideas and the advancement of knowledge. Learning also involves reflecting on decisions and improving decision-making skills. By establishing expectations for the community, the [Code of Student Conduct](#) (CSC) serves as an integral part of the University's educational mission.

The CSC describes principles for living and acting responsibly in a community setting, with respect for the rights of all members of that community, and for their property, common resources, and values. The purpose is to reinforce and encourage the development of good decision-making, personal integrity, and to teach these skills where they are lacking.

It is the University's goal that as students make their way through any aspect of the conduct process, they will leave that process as better educated students, better members of the University community, and better global citizens.

**Academic Honesty**

All members of the University community must participate in the development of a climate conducive to academic honesty. While the faculty, because of their unique role in the educational process, have the responsibility for defining, encouraging, fostering, and upholding the ethic of academic honesty, students have the responsibility of conforming in all aspects to that ethic.

Intellectual honesty requires that students demonstrate their own learning during examinations and other academic exercises, and that other sources of information or knowledge be appropriately credited. Scholarship depends upon the reliability of information and reference in the work of others. Student work at the University may be analyzed for originality of content. Such analysis may be done electronically or by other means. Student work may be included in a database for the purpose of checking for possible plagiarized content in future student submissions. No form of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or facilitating of dishonesty will be condoned in the University community.
Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- **Cheating** – intentional use, and/or attempted use of trickery, artifice, deception, breach of confidence, fraud, and/or misrepresentation of one's academic work.
- **Fabrication** – intentional and unauthorized falsification and/or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise.
- **Plagiarism** – knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise. This includes submitting without citation, in whole or in part, prewritten term papers of another or the research of another, including but not limited to commercial vendors who sell or distribute such materials.
- **Facilitating dishonesty** – knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty, including substituting for another in an examination, or allowing others to represent as their own one’s papers, report, or academic works.

Sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible.

Formal definitions of academic dishonesty, examples of various forms of dishonesty, and the procedures which faculty must follow to penalize dishonesty are detailed on the Academic Honesty website. Appeals must be filed within ten days of notification by the Academic Honesty Board that a formal charge has been filed by an instructor that s/he suspects dishonesty. Contact the Ombuds Office for more information on the process. The Provost’s Office is where the appeals are processed and filed.

**Tips for Student Success**

The following best practices can help you be successful as you work toward completing your degree:

- **Register Early:**
  This will increase your chances of being able to register for a course you really want before it fills. It will also allow you time to purchase any required course materials, so you have them in hand for the first week of courses.

- **Be Prepared:**
  - Keep track of important dates in the Academic Calendar.
  - Order required course materials prior to the start of the semester, so you have them in hand for the first week of courses. Be sure to take shipping time into consideration.

- **Organize Your Time:**
  - Be aware of the amount of work required per course and evaluate your schedule to determine how many courses you can dedicate time to. You can estimate to spend 6-9 hours (+/-) per week, per course.
  - Create a calendar that outlines daily activities.
• **Utilize Resources:**
  - Contact your academic advisor for support when needed.
  - Reach out to your instructor if you are struggling in a course – keep open communication throughout the semester.
  - Utilize UWW and UMass Amherst Resources, such as online tutoring, Disability Services, and others listed below.

• **Educate Yourself:**
  - Review financial aid information and policies.
  - Be aware of effect of withdrawals and failures.
  - Learn UMass policies and procedures.

• **Track Your Requirements:**
  Your support team is here to help you create and implement a degree plan, but ensuring you are meeting program requirements is ultimately the student’s responsibility. Be sure you are registered for the right courses by tracking where you are in meeting requirements utilizing the tools you will learn during your degree planning course and by keeping in touch with your academic advisor.

**Resources**

**Your Support Team**

Your UWW support team consists of your academic advisor, faculty, and administrative staff. We are all here to help as you work toward completing your degree.

Your academic advisor will support you every step of the way, from the moment you become a student through graduation, keeping you on track and providing you with advising, guidance, and reassurance when you need it.

It is important to stay in touch with your advisor and keep them informed about changes in your plans, such as adding/dropping courses, withdrawing, changing your expected graduation date, and more. If you find yourself struggling with your coursework or with questions regarding policy, be sure to reach out for support. Your advisor will also send important communications through your student email throughout your time at UWW, so be sure to check your UMass student email frequently.

UWW faculty will teach your degree planning course, helping you design your program of study, and the writing course, guiding you in the portfolio writing process which allows you to earn credit for your prior learning and life experience.

As a UMass UWW student you will also take classes with other distinguished UWW instructors, as well as faculty throughout UMass Amherst.

Both academic advisors and faculty are key figures in your development as an independent learner, offering encouragement and support, helping you clarify academic goals, and assisting you in designing a plan to meet these goals.
**Fellow Students**

Your fellow students can be extremely helpful in:

- Suggesting good courses
- Sharing their degree planning and prior learning experience with you
- Sharing study tips
- Helping with the logistics of going back to college (purchasing texts less expensively, setting up car pools and arranging for childcare for blended courses, etc.)
- Offering support and encouragement

**Online Tutoring**

UMass Amherst has partnered with ThinkingStorm to provide students with free online tutoring for a variety of courses each semester. Tutoring sessions for courses eligible for online tutoring can be accessed through Blackboard.

The UMass Amherst Writing Center offers online tutoring for students who are unable to make an in-person appointment. These appointments are 45 minutes long and incorporate audio, video, and chat. For more information on how to schedule an appointment, visit the [Writing Center’s Online Tutoring page](#).

**Places to Go For Help**

**UWW Student Center** is your one-stop-shop for staying informed and connected. When in doubt, go to the UWW Student Center! The UWW Student Center contains up-to-date information, links to important resources, instructions, forms, handbooks, scholarship information, and opportunities to connect with classmates via social media. To login to the UWW Student Center just enter your NetID and password in the ‘Student Center Login.’

**SPIRE** allows you to have direct secure access via the web to your student record, including course registration, course schedules, grades, billing information, and financial aid status. Check your SPIRE account regularly.

**Continuing & Professional Education** can help you with the registration process (including adding and dropping courses), obtaining transcripts and CPE forms, and questions about CPE and University policies.

- Registration: 800-922-8211 regoff@cpe.umass.edu
- Business office: 413-545-0337 busoff@cpe.umass.edu

**Financial Aid Office** assists students in answering questions regarding Financial Aid. When you contact them, please make sure you identify yourself as a UWW student so that you are directly to the appropriate support person.

- 413-545-0801 finaid@finaid.umass.edu

**Bursar’s Office** can help you with questions regarding billing and payment information.

- 413-545-2368 bursar@admin.umass.edu
Office of Information Technologies (OIT) Help Desk can assist with problems regarding SPIRE and UMail logins and passwords and related issues. They can also help if you are unable to get into Blackboard Learn using your NetID and password. Remember to identify yourself as a UWW student and have your student number handy.

413-545-9400 help@oit.umass.edu

Blackboard Learn Technical Support offers 24/7 technical support through live chat, email and phone to students taking online courses. Please note that if there’s something wrong with your login credentials for Blackboard Learn, you must call OIT for that.

1-888-300-6407 amherstsupport@umassonline.net

UMass E-learning is the second line of defense for students having technical problems with Blackboard Learn. They are available Monday–Friday 8:30-5pm.

413-545-9583 elearning@cpe.umass.edu

UMass Amherst Libraries - UMass Amherst has one of the finest university libraries in the world with vast online access. As a UMass UWW student, you have access to online research databases, e-books and articles, and if you have a UMass student ID (either a UCard or a Distance Learning Card), you can have UMass Amherst library books and articles mailed to your home through a service called Library Express! Even better, UWW has its own UMass library webpage and librarian. The UWW library webpage is a portal that will connect you to everything the library has to offer and provides resources on topics such as how to choose a paper topic, how to conduct a search, and how to find books and journals. You can even live chat with a UMass reference librarian. Your friendly UWW librarian is named Dave. Feel free to call or email him. He’s here to help.

PeopleFinder - Look up professors, staff and students.

Career Services provides personal and career counseling in-person and via phone or Skype, vocational and other testing, a career library, and short-term (three-session) workshops on a variety of topics of importance to students.

413-545-2224 ccnhelp@acad.umass.edu

Veteran Services provides assistance with veterans benefits and the Veteran’s Resource Center offers community and support at their walk-in center, and by phone and email.

413-545-0939 veteranservices@sacl.umass.edu

Disability Services helps students with learning and other disabilities. The Disability Services office is a starting point for testing for a learning disability, registering for sign language interpreters, and obtaining other services.

413-545-0892

Ombud’s Office will advocate for students who have encountered bureaucratic or academic problems for which they feel they have not obtained an equitable solution.

413-545-0867 ombuds@ombuds.umass.edu
Center for Woman and Community- women can receive quality services, share information, support each other, and work together in a comfortable multicultural environment.
413-545-0883 ewcmall@admin.umass.edu

Stonewall Center LGBTQIA+ Resource Center
413-545-4824 stonewall@stuaf.umass.edu

**UWW Handbooks (located in the UWW Student Center)**

- UWW New Student Guide – Provide helpful information for new students
- UWW Degree Planning Handbook – Provide information on the degree planning process
- UWW Prior Learning Portfolio Handbook – Provides detailed information on the portfolio writing process

**UMass Amherst Continuing and Professional Education**

- Add/Drop/Withdrawal Process
- Student Services
- Academic Calendar

**UMass Amherst Policies**

- [UMass Amherst Academic Regulations](#) – Provides information on UMass Amherst policies
- [UMass Amherst Student Code of Conduct](#) - The CSC describes principles for living and acting responsibly in a community setting, with respect for the rights of all members of that community, and for their property, common resources, and values
- [Academic Regulations, Policies, and Procedures](#) – Additional tools you'll need to learn the University’s policies and procedures.