# UMass Amherst University Without Walls

## Student Handbook

### 2018-2019

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University Without Walls

UWW Philosophy of Education

At UWW we believe that learning is a basic human function that occurs throughout the life cycle. UWW students have an opportunity to further develop a broad range of skills that are necessary for learning in any situation: the ability to understand what they read, hear, and see; to write clearly and expressively; to think critically and objectively; and to pursue independent research. In addition, they will better understand their own background and 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 have positive impacts on many aspects of their lives for years to come.

University of Massachusetts Amherst and UWW Requirements

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

<table>
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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Required total credits for a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum residence requirement (15 of the 45 must be graded credits)</td>
<td>45 UMass Amherst credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum GPA (academic standing)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of general education requirements</td>
<td>General education requirements should be verified by viewing the Academic Records Report (ARR) located in SPIRE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of UWW Core Curriculum Courses</td>
<td>A degree planning course (UWW 191G or UWW 305 [formerly 394A]) - Two Experiential Reflections courses - UWW 370 Writing About Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required number of credits in AOC</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required number of upper level credits in AOC (300 level or higher)</td>
<td>15</td>
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### General Education Requirements

To graduate from the University of Massachusetts Amherst as a University UMass Amherst student, they are required to fulfill specific general education requirements depending on the date they entered the University. Requirements can be viewed at [Gen Ed @ UMass](https://gen-ed.umass.edu). General education requirements can be fulfilled by coursework completed with UMass Amherst, transferred in through other colleges and universities (a minimum of 3 credits is required), or taken via CLEP, ALEKS, or exemption exam (prior approval may be required).
Students are required to complete at least one of the diversity requirements (Global Diversity or United States Diversity) within their first three semesters at UWW.

**UWW Course Descriptions**

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:

*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.

**Degree Planning Courses**

**UWW 191G Frameworks of Understanding (4 credits)**

*Course Description:*

This course 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. This course meets the Interdisciplinary (I) general education designation.
Goals: 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 develop information literacy skills; and
- research and develop individualized degree plans.

UWW 305 (formerly 394A) Concepts in Learning Integration (4 credits)

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.

Goals: 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 Course**

**UWW 370 Writing About Experience (3 credits)**

*Course Description:*

Writing About Experience is an advanced writing 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 a prior learning portfolio based on experiential learning that may later be evaluated for academic credit. Portfolios written in this course may be submitted for up to fifteen credits. Those seeking more credits may write one additional chapter after the course is completed. Not all students elect to submit their portfolio for prior learning assessment. Details about the portfolio process are included within the Prior Learning Portfolio Handbook. The academic credits awarded for the prior learning portfolio are evaluated separately from the course. This course meets the Junior Writing (JW) general education requirement.

*Prerequisites:*

Completion of the College Writing general education requirement, UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 394A), and one of the following Experiential
Reflections courses (UWW 310, 320, 330, 340, 350, 360). The second required Experiential Reflections course should be completed prior to or concurrently with UWW 370.

**Goals:**

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

**Experiential Reflections Courses**

Completion of two Experiential Reflections courses is required for the UWW program. Students may select two from the following six topics:

**UWW 310 Experiential Reflections of the Technological World (4 credits)**

*Course Description:*  
In this course students will examine the principles and frameworks of technology as a way to better understand their professional and other life experience. This course meets the Integrative Experience (IE) general education requirement. Prerequisite: UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 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 ongoing 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; and
• 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.

UWW 320 Experiential Reflections of Leadership (4 credits)

Course Description:

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. This course meets the Integrative Experience (IE) general education requirement. Prerequisite: UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 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; and
• 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.
UWW 330 Experiential Reflections of Public Policy (4 credits)

Course Description:

Students will examine the principles and frameworks of public policy and its impact on their professional and other life experience. This course meets the Integrative Experience (IE) general education requirement. Prerequisite: UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 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; and
- 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.

UWW 340 Experiential Reflections of Organizations (4 credits)

Course Description:

Students will examine the principles and frameworks of organizations as key elements in their professional and other life experience. This course meets the Integrative Experience (IE) general education requirement. Prerequisite: UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 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; and
- 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.

UWW 350 Experiential Reflections on Health (4 credits)

Course Description:

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. This course meets the Integrative Experience (IE) general education requirement. Prerequisite: UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 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; and
- offer a shared learning experience for applying prior knowledge and experience to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems.

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**UWW 360 Experiential Reflections of Learning and Education (4 credits)**

**Course Description:**

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. This course meets the Integrative Experience (IE) general education requirement. Prerequisite: UWW 191G or UWW 305 (formerly 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; and
- develop an action plan for lifelong learning.

The Prior Learning Assessment Process
UWW students have entered the University of Massachusetts Amherst with knowledge acquired through work and other life experiences. In the world outside the classroom, they have acquired skills for organizing and interpreting important information. There are two options to earn credit for prior work/life experience at UWW: the prior learning portfolio and special transcript.

**Portfolio**

UWW students will write a portfolio as part of the UWW 370 Writing About Experience course. Developing a portfolio can help accomplish the following:

- Make intellectual contact with theories, skills, and understanding
- Clarify thinking
- Discover what is known - and not known - about fields of work
- Organize ideas, knowledge, and skills in ways that allow more effective communication to others
- Obtain University credit
- Satisfy the UWW degree requirements

*UWW 296Y Assessment of Prior Learning* is a placeholder course for the portfolio credits and a method used to generate the portfolio fee (flat fee of $1190). Students who seek credit for prior learning (work/life experience) through the portfolio will be required to register for this course during the same semester UWW 370 is completed. The course will initially indicate three credits upon registration, but will update from three to however many credits earned from the portfolio.

Most students complete this process during their second semester, though they may choose to enroll in a later semester. Students may submit the portfolio completed in UWW 370 for up to fifteen credits (stage 1 portfolio), but have the opportunity to earn more credits by writing one additional chapter (stage 2 portfolio). Once credits have been awarded for the portfolio on a student’s transcript, the portfolio process is complete and no additional credits can be earned by portfolio. Based on Academic Review Team (ART) approval, it is
possible that three portfolio credits related to a student’s area of concentration may count as three upper level credits.

Developing a portfolio is addressed in a separate handbook, specifically about prior learning assessment: Prior Learning Portfolio Handbook. It is distributed in the UWW 370 Writing About Experience courses, but can also be accessed from the UWW Student Center.

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**Portfolio Submission Deadlines**

- October 1st – Students who enrolled in 296Y fall semester.
- February 1st – Students who enrolled in 296Y spring semester.

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**Special Transcript**

The special transcript process provides the opportunity for college credit to be awarded for work conducted outside of an accredited environment. The work must have been completed prior to entering UWW and it must reflect an integrated and sustained curriculum that directly relates to students’ area of concentrations. This work can include trainings, certifications, licensures, and workshops (internship and practicum work is excluded). Topics earning special transcript credit cannot be a topic included in the portfolio.

The work is evaluated by UMass faculty and possibly professionals in the field outside of UMass. A $75 fee is charged for each special transcript submitted and any credits awarded are considered transfer credits.

During the degree planning process, students will need to submit the Special Transcript Request form, along with official documentation of their previously completed work that includes: identification of the training sponsor, official verification of topic, training dates, and contact hours). College-level trainings are generally awarded one credit for every sixteen verified contact hours, although there are exceptions to this formula depending on the type of training.
UWW Program Course Sequencing

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 online courses in the Student Orientation and Research Area.

The First Semester

- **A Degree Planning Course**: UWW 191G Frameworks of Understanding OR 305 (formerly 394A) Concepts in Learning Integration. All students are required to complete one degree planning course. 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 two required Experiential 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.

Second and Subsequent Semesters

- **A UWW Experiential Reflections Course**: UWW students typically enroll in their second Experiential Reflections course during the second semester to complete the pre-requisites for enrolling in UWW 370 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 it in a particular semester.
- **Courses that meet area of concentration or general education requirements**: In the second or subsequent semesters, students can
begin other coursework identified in their degree plan to meet program requirements.

**Degree Plan Substitutions**

On occasion, students are unable, for scheduling or other reasons, to take one or more of the specific courses listed on their degree plan. Students should contact their academic advisor to discuss and receive approval for a substitution. In selecting substitutions, it is important that all key components of the concentration continue to be well-represented and program requirements are being met.

**Graduation**

As graduation approaches, you should make a final review of your degree progress by reviewing your degree plan, unofficial transcript, and Academic Records Report (ARR) to be certain all requirements have been met. Your academic advisor will help you with this task and will clear you for graduation. February, May, and September graduates within the current year celebrate with the UWW faculty and staff at the annual UMass Amherst commencement ceremony in May, and all UWW graduates of that year are eligible to attend the UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony, also in May. 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 an UMass Amherst diploma that identifies a bachelor’s degree earned in University Without Walls. Students will also receive a University Without Walls certificate indicating they have successfully completed an area of concentration. The diploma and the certificate will be mailed separately to the address indicated in SPIRE, so it is important to keep information up-to-date.
To Do

Make sure your Expected Graduation Term (EGT) is accurate in SPIRE: SPIRE > Graduation > Graduation Data > Change Expected Graduation Term

Honors and Academic Achievement Options

Graduating with Latin Honors

All graduating seniors are eligible for Latin Honors designations on diplomas and transcripts if they have completed at least 54 graded residence credits (courses taken Pass/Fail are not considered graded) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. In addition, students must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Summa Cum Laude: GPA places them among the top 5% of the graduating class of their school or college
- Magna Cum Laude: GPA places them among the top 10% of the graduating class of their school or college, but not among the top 5%
- 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%

At the start of the fall semester, the University Registrar will post 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.

Graduating with UWW Academic Achievement

Because the Latin Honors requirement of 54 graded residence credits may not be within reach for many UWW students, including those with large numbers of transfer credits or portfolio credits, UWW offers its own award to recognize students with outstanding GPAs. All UWW students graduating with a UMass Amherst GPA of at least 3.75 will be recognized for UWW Academic Achievement, consisting of a letter of recognition and a cord that can be worn at commencement ceremonies.
Academic Policies

Minimum Residence Credit Requirement/Transfer Credit Policy

A maximum of 75 credits can be transferred into UMass Amherst from outside accredited institutions, by special transcript, or by exam credits; 45 credits must be completed at UMass Amherst (considered residence credits). Residence credit includes credits earned through the prior learning portfolio, as well as all other coursework or independent studies completed through the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Courses with a grade of C- or higher are eligible for transfer. Credit is not awarded for developmental courses.

Fresh Start

Students who return to the University after an absence of at least three years may have their prior work not included in their cumulative grade point average subject to the following conditions:

1. Readmission to the University must follow normal procedures
2. A minimum of 45 credits must be taken in residence after readmission and before graduation
3. Courses taken and grades achieved in the first admission will appear on the transcript along with a notation that they are not included in the cumulative average
4. General education and free elective credits passed with a grade of C- or better in the first admission will be counted toward graduation credit upon readmission, but will not be included in the cumulative average
Pass/Fail

Students should not elect the Pass/Fail option for courses that they wish to count toward their General Education requirements. Courses taken on a pass/fail basis will not satisfy General Education, regardless of whether a P (Pass) grade is earned. In addition, UWW courses do not qualify for pass/fail. Students can request only one pass/fail per semester.

Students wishing to exercise the Pass/Fail option must do so by the mid-semester date and are strongly encouraged to discuss this option with their academic advisor.

Repeat Policy

No course for which a grade of C or higher was earned may be repeated. If this occurs, it will be considered an ‘Illegal Repeat”; no credit will be awarded and the grade will not factor into the GPA, however, the grade earned will remain on the transcript.

A course for which a grade of C-, D+, D or F (or CD before 2004) was earned may be repeated one time without permission. A course may be repeated a second time, for a total of three times, only with prior permission of the undergraduate dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Under no circumstances may a student take a course more than three times. Successful registration for a course does not constitute permission.

All enrollments and all grades will appear on the transcript; only the most recent grade will be calculated in the GPA.

Credit Limit

- Fall/Spring: 18 credits
- Summer: 16 credits total for the term, may not exceed 8 per session
- Winter: 4 credits
UMass Class Status

- Freshman: 26 credits and below
- Sophomore: 27-56 credits
- Junior: 57-86 credits
- Senior: 87 credits and above

Academic Standing

Students’ academic standing 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. For more information on grading, students can refer to Grading & GPA Calculation. 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.

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 an exception is
warranted. Before submitting the petition, students are encouraged to speak with their academic advisor, who can help you evaluate the strength of cases.

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.

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.

For more information on these and other University policies, please refer to the Academic Regulations posted on the Office of the University Registrar.
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.

Tips for Student Success

The following are recommended best practices to help students be successful as they work toward completing their degree:

1. **Register Early:**
   - This will increase the chances of being able to register for a desired course before it fills. It will also allow time to purchase required course materials early on.

2. **Be Prepared:**
   - Keep track of important dates in the OE Academic Calendar.
   - Order required course materials prior to the start of the semester, so they are in hand for the first week of courses (shipping time should be considered)/

3. **Organize Time:**
   - Be aware of the amount of work required per course and evaluate schedules. There is an estimated 6-9 hours (+/-) of work per week, per course.
• Create a calendar that outlines daily activities and schedule time for school.

4. Utilize Resources:
• Academic advisors are available for year-long support. Every student will have an assigned academic advisor.
• Communicate with faculty throughout the semester.
• Utilize UWW and UMass Amherst Resources, such as online tutoring, Disability Services, and others listed below.

5. Stay Educated:
• Review financial aid information and policies.
• Be aware of the effect of withdrawals and failures.
• Learn UMass policies and procedures.

6. Track Requirements:
• The UWW support team is here to help create and implement a degree plan, but ensuring degree requirements are being met is ultimately the student’s responsibility. Verify registration and course selections by tracking requirements utilizing the tools provided during the degree planning course and by keeping in touch with academic advisors.

Student Resources

UWW Support Team

The UWW Support Team consists of administrative staff, academic advisors, faculty advisors, and adjunct faculty, who are all here to help as students work toward completing their degree. This team provides students with information, guidance, and reassurance when needed.

UWW Advising Team

Both academic advisors and faculty advisors are key figures in students’ development as independent learners, offering encouragement and support, helping clarify academic goals, and assisting in designing a plan to meet them.
Academic Advisors

Academic advisors begin working with students the moment they enter the UWW program. It is important to stay in touch with academic advisors and keep them informed about changes in plans, such as adding/dropping courses, withdrawing, changing the expected graduation term, and more. If students find themselves struggling with coursework or with questions regarding policy, they can be contacted for support. Academic advisors will also send important communications to students’ through their student emails throughout their time at UWW.

Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors teach the degree-planning course (UWW 191G Frameworks of Understanding or UWW 305 [formerly 394A] Concepts in Learning Integration), helping students design a program of study, and assist in registration questions for the second semester. They also teach the UWW 370 Writing About Experience course, guiding students through the portfolio writing process, which allows students to earn credit for prior learning and life experience. As experts in their fields, they also provide imperative mentorship.

UMass UWW students will also take classes with other distinguished UWW instructors, as well as faculty throughout UMass Amherst.

Fellow Students

UWW fellow students can be extremely helpful in:

- Suggesting good courses
- Sharing their degree planning and prior learning experience
- 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

First Generation Group

A group for UWW students who are the first in their families to attend college, so they can connect with other first generation students about shared experiences and access the resources they need to help ease the pressure of college.

Online Learning Support

Online Tutoring

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

Writing Help

• 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.
• Writing Help for Adult Learners (WHALE)
• OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab (MLA and APA)

Blackboard Support

• Blackboard Student Orientation and Resource Area: Review tips to help prepare for online classes, video tutorials, and more
**Libraries**

- UWW students have access to online research databases, e-books and articles through the UMass Amherst library system. Students can also live chat with a UMass reference librarian!
- UWW library webpage and librarian Dave Mac Court: The [UWW library webpage](#) is a portal that connects students 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. Students can make an appointment with UWW librarian Dave Mac Court.
- Library Express: UMass Amherst library books and articles can be mailed to students’ homes through a service called Library Express with your library barcode.
- Library barcode: If you have a student ID card, your library barcode will be on the back. Or, it’s in SPIRE. Main Menu > My Personal Information > UCard Information. On the right side will be your library barcode even if you don’t have a student ID card.

**Accessing Information**

**Enrollment and Degree Verification**

*Instant electronic verification* of student enrollment to third party agencies such as employers, credit card companies, background search firms, etc.

**People Finder**

Through [People Finder](#), you can look up contact information for professors, staff and students.

**SPIRE**

[SPIRE](#) allows students direct secure access via the web to their student record, including course registration, course schedules, grades, billing...
information, and financial aid status. Be sure to check your SPIRE account regularly.

UWW Student Center

A one-stop-shop for staying informed and connected. Access up-to-date information, links to important resources, instructions, forms, handbooks, scholarship information, and opportunities to connect with classmates via social media. Use your SPIRE log-in credentials to access the UWW Student Center.

Blackboard

Blackboard is the online platform where you will take your UWW courses, as well as other online courses across the university. Use your SPIRE log-in credentials to access Blackboard.

University Departments

Assistive Technology Center (ATC)

The ATC provides a workspace and access to specialized software, equipment, and tools for individuals with an ADA-defined disability.

413-545-9623 – atc@umass.edu

Office of the Bursar

The Office of the Bursar issues bills and processes payments.

413-545-2368 – bursar@admin.umass.edu

Career Services

- Career Services: Provides personal and career counseling in-person and via phone or Skype.
413-545-2224 – careerservices@umass.edu

- **HandShake**: Networking platform for UMass Amherst students and alumni.

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**Center for Women and Community (CWC)**

The **CWC** is a multicultural center that offers many services to meet the needs of the diverse cultural and linguistic populations of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with a focus on providing education, leadership opportunities, advocacy, and support services that address the cause and impact of sexism.

413-545-0883 – cwc@umass.edu – 24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline:
413-545-0800

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**Disability Services**

**Disability Services** is committed to full access for all persons at UMass. Direct services are provided for all types of disabilities. Disability Services also provides information and referral on issues of accessibility and coordinates guest accommodations.

413-545-0892

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**Financial Aid Services**

**Financial Aid Services** 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 directed to the appropriate support person.

413-545-0801 – finaid@finaid.umass.edu
Ombuds Office

The **Ombuds Office** works with students experiencing a conflict or unfair situation involving fellow students, faculty, or staff, and provides confidential support and conflict resolution services.

413-545-0867 – ombuds@umass.edu

Online Education (OE)

- Online Education Admissions:
  413-545-3440 – admissions@oe.umass.edu
- Online Education Registrar’s Office:
  413-545-3653 – regoff@oe.umass.edu

The Stonewall Center LGBTQIA+ Resource Center

The **Stonewall Center** is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) Resource Center.

413-545-4824 – stonewall@umass.edu

Student Legal Services Office

Veteran Services

**Veteran Services** is committed to offering quality services and support programs for student veterans, active military, and their families.

- **Veterans Benefits**:
  413-545-3440 – vetbenefits@umass.edu
- **Veteran Resource Center**:
  413-545-0939 – veteranservices@sacl.umass.edu
Technological Assistance

Information Technology (IT) Help Center

The IT Help Center assists with problems regarding SPIRE, Blackboard, and email logins, passwords, and related issues. Emails should come from a student’s UMass student email; student ID numbers should be included and status as a UWW student should be indicated.

413-545-9400 – it@umass.edu

Blackboard Learn Technical Support

Offers 24/7 technical support through live chat, email and phone to students taking online courses. Please note – issues due to log-in credentials must go to IT.

855-757-7055

UMass eLearning

Your second line of defense for technical problems in Blackboard. Available Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time. Please note – issues due to log-in credentials must go to IT.

413-545-9583 – elearning@oe.umass.edu

Handbooks and Guides

- IT Guide for Students – An overview of the services IT offers UMass Amherst students, including instructional videos, free/discounted software and hardware, cell phone discounts, workshops and events, and the IT User Services Help Center.
• **UMass Amherst Academic Regulations** – Issued by the Office of the Provost, this contains rules, regulations, policies, and procedures all students are responsible for complying with.

• **UWW New Student Guide** – Provides helpful information for new students.

• **UWW Degree Planning Handbook** – Provides information on the degree planning process.

• **UWW Prior Learning Portfolio Handbook** – Provides detailed information on how to receive credit for prior learning, including the portfolio writing process.

• **Additional Tools** to help learn the university’s policies and procedures.