



Eastern Kentucky University

Policy and Regulation Library

Academic Regulation: 4.1.12ACR

Responsible Office(s): Office of the Provost

Effective: January 20, 2011

Next Review Date:

Academic Regulation: 4.1.12ACR

Course Registration

Statement

The University recognizes the importance of facilitating the timely progress toward degree completion for certain students whose progress toward graduation might be hampered by unavoidable scheduling conflicts. Without a regulation allowing early registration for certain populations, some students have been unable to maintain a reasonable pace toward degree attainment. ECU also has an obligation to comply with external regulations and rules. The University acknowledges the need to make a reasonable accommodation for certain populations of students who, for example, have traditionally encountered difficulty establishing academic schedules that also accommodate their special needs.

Entities Affected

- Students
- Academic Advisors (Faculty and ECU Staff)
- Office of the Registrar
- Center for Student Accessibility
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Student Outreach and Transition Office (VA)
- Departments

Background

The University developed this regulation because it recognized that allowing certain students to register before the general student population would

- Increase the likelihood of retention for those students;
- Increase the likelihood of satisfying course sequencing requirements for these students in a timely manner;
- Reduce the need for students to overload courses in certain semesters;
- Reduce the occurrence of registering for excessive free electives just to maintain full-

time student status;

- Begin advising for these students earlier;
- Reduce the University's (scholarships) and students' (tuition fees) expenditures on summer courses and taking courses during a fifth or subsequent year of enrollment;
- Allow the University staff members who serve these students to more prudently utilize their time and resources;
- Increase the likelihood of these students meeting financial aid requirements that may otherwise be adversely affected by course withdrawals, incompletes, and failing grades;
- Be a retention and recruitment tool at no cost to the University.

Specific rationale for allowing each of the student populations allowed to register before the general student body is found in Appendix A.

Procedures

Prior to Registration Period

Prior to the registration period in a semester, the Office of the Registrar will create a current, accurate list of students who are eligible for registering before the general student.

The Office of the Registrar will take the necessary steps to create and publish the registration sequence according to the defined timeline.

Registration Period

Eastern Kentucky University students register for classes in the following order:

- Group 1: Graduates and Seniors with 102 or More Hours Completed/In Progress
- Group 2: Group 1, Selected Students with Specific Disabilities, Honors Program Students, Student-Athletes, Spirit Group Members, and Veterans and Members of Military Service
- Group 3: Group 2, Seniors with Less Than 102 Hours Completed/In Progress and Post Baccalaureates
- Group 4: Group 3 and Juniors
- Group 5: Group 4 and Sophomores
- Group 6: Group 5 and Freshmen
- Group 7: Group 6 and All Remaining Students

The timeline for registration is:

1. Group 1 registers one University business day (24 hours) before Group 2
 2. Group 2 registers one University business day (24 hours) before Group 3
- The remaining groups (3-7) register 2-3 University business days

Definitions

- **Honors Program Students:** Members of the Eastern Kentucky University Honors Program who are in good standing
- **Selected Students with Specific Disabilities:** Students who are registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities and whose specific disability would create scheduling difficulties. See Appendix A for additional information.
- **Spirit Groups:** Eastern Kentucky University cheerleading team, dance team, marching band, and pep band
- **Student Athletes:** Students who participate in intercollegiate sports governed by the NCAA and sponsored by the Intercollegiate Athletics Department
- **Veterans and Members of Military Service:** Veterans, active duty military, and drilling Guard/Reserve members

Responsibilities

- Athletics Department
 - Inform affected students of Regulation 4.1.12
 - Respond to requests from the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner.
- Center for Student Accessibility
 - Inform affected students of Regulation 4.1.12
 - Respond to requests from the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner.
- Honors Program
 - Inform affected students of Regulation 4.1.12
 - Respond to requests from the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner.
- Office of the Registrar
 - Collaborate with Responsible Offices to create accurate lists each semester of eligible
 - Ensure compliance with the regulation and its procedures
- School of Music
 - Inform affected students of Regulation 4.1.12
 - Respond to requests from the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner.
- Student Outreach and Transition Office (VA)

- Inform affected students of Regulation 4.1.12

Respond to requests from the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner.

Regulation Adoption Review and Approval
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Regulation Revised

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ENTITY</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
October 18, 2024	University Counsel	Editorial Revision
January 20, 2011	President	Adopted
January 12, 2011	Provost Council	Approved
November 1m 2010	Faculty Senate	Approved
October 21, 2010	Council on Academic Affairs	Approved

Regulation Issued

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ENTITY</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
May 7, 2009	President	Adopted
May 4, 2009	Faculty Senate	Approved
December 3, 2008	Provost Council	Approved
October 30, 2007	Student Senate	Approved

Appendix A

Seniors with 102 or More Hours Completed/In Progress

Each term seniors registering for the final semester before graduation are placed in competition for needed courses with all students who have earned, or will be earning at the end of the current term, senior status. This may create a hardship on graduating seniors as students with less of an immediate need may secure the crucial and highly competitive seats in desired classes. Having the ability to register before other students with senior status could help facilitate graduation for this population without unnecessarily taking additional semesters. The minimum number of hours to qualify as a “graduating senior,” i.e. 102 hr., was determined based upon the logic that a student registering for 18 hours, and graduating in a degree program that requires only 120 hours, could be entering their final term before graduation.

Selected Students with Specific Disabilities

Students with certain disability-related needs may not achieve their academic goals within a reasonable period of time because of difficulties related to scheduling classes. Examples of appropriate disability-related situations justifying early registration status include, but are not limited to:

1. Mobility impairments that adversely impact a student’s ability to get from class to class in a timely fashion;
2. The need to frequently arrange for on and off-campus service providers (personal care assistants, etc.);

3. The inability to attend classes during certain parts of the day due to documented medical needs (chemotherapy, renal dialysis, etc.); and
4. The need for services requiring significant planning on the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities' part to arrange (sign language interpreting, Braille, etc.).

Determining eligibility is not unlike using professional judgment based on documentation in assessing for reasonable accommodation. Decisions for early registration will be considered on a case-by-case basis by either the Director or the Disabilities Analyst and take the following into account:

- What is the severity of the diagnosis and its direct impact on accessing an appropriate course schedule?
- What functional limitations are present as they relate to establishing a course schedule?
- What measures has the student taken on their own account to work out a reasonable course schedule?
- What are the fixed variables that the student has to deal with that are imposed by the impairment or disorder that are in direct conflict with a course schedule?
- What type of class schedule would provide access while best supporting the student's abilities, allowing the least amount of adverse impact, and equalizing the opportunity for success?
- Is early registration necessary to provide the accommodated schedule based on the courses needed for this particular semester?

This registration regulation aligns the University's commitment of accessibility, equity and accommodation to an operating regulation for students with disabilities; already matched by many sister institutions.

Honors Program Students

- Honors students must complete a clearly defined roster of courses to fulfill their honors requirements, courses that are offered in very few sections at a necessarily limited range of times. It is much more difficult to arrange a schedule when a student must first register for one of 3 sections of a 6 credit-hour, 5-day a week HON 102 Rhetoric course than it is to arrange a schedule that provides the student with their pick of one of 68 sections of a 2- or 3-day-a-week ENG 101 or even one of 38 sections of ENG 102. As a result in part of scheduling difficulties like these, many of the honors students cannot complete their honors requirements and their major requirements in four or even five years—and it is important to keep in mind that honors students are also often more likely to pursue double majors. The ability to register before the general student body would enable these students to progress in their degrees in a more timely fashion while also encouraging rather than discouraging them from completing an honors curriculum.
- A growing number of courses designated as honors are in fact cross-listed with other departments therefore offering even fewer seats to honors students in the courses they must take to complete their honors curriculum. Allowing honors students to register before the general student body would ensure that honors students could

indeed get the classes they need to remain in good standing with the ECU Honors Program.

□ Honors students often take on greater leadership roles across the university and have additional research and service obligations. In fact, honors students tend to be more widely involved across campus than their peers in the general student body. These activities add to the difficulty they often have scheduling their courses in a reasonable way.

□ Allowing honors students to register before the general student body has become a common benefit that honors administrators use to recruit new students. As a benefit with essentially no cost to the university, this registration system provides something to honors students that they understand to be invaluable to the successful completion of their degrees.

□ Allowing honors students to register before the general student body has in fact become so typical a policy for honors programs at universities across the country that the National Collegiate Honors Council has added priority registration to its list of “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program,” benchmarks for honors programs nationwide. To omit honors students from ECU’s regulation is to put ECU’s nationally recognized program behind our nationally equivalent institutions as well as to put the program at a tremendous competitive disadvantage in the region. (According to this list, available at www.nchchonors.org/basicchhonorprogramcharacteristics.aspx, “A fully developed program will provide priority enrollment for honors students who are active in the program in recognition of their unique class scheduling needs.”) Robert Spurrier, Director of the Honors College at Oklahoma State University argues that, “the unique scheduling needs of honors students are recognized even at institutions with large numbers of honors courses because even under the best of circumstances honors students must juggle their honors courses around requirements in their academic majors. Honors students frequently pursue double (or triple) majors, multiple minors, study abroad options, and internships—all of which make it imperative that they be able to implement sometimes extremely complex plans of study in order to graduate on time. The newest Characteristic quite properly recognizes these unique scheduling needs” [“The Newest ‘Basic Characteristic’ of a Fully Developed Honors Program” in *Honors in Practice* (2008) 4: 191.]

Student-Athletes

The difficulty in scheduling classes is important to ECU student-athletes because of their need to satisfy stringent National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) progress toward degree and Academic Progress Rate (APR) requirements which the general ECU student body does not have to satisfy. Also, student-athletes are engaged in ongoing, regularly scheduled practices each afternoon that they do not have discretion in scheduling. Furthermore, the bulk of the competitions they participate in are scheduled by the Ohio Valley Conference, not the ECU Athletics Department, and therefore the scheduling of those competitions is out of the control of the student-athletes and the Athletics Department. Allowing ECU student-athletes to register before the general student body will also:

- Reduce the probability of a varsity athletics team being assessed NCAA penalties for insufficient academic performance (see below for more detail);
- Help student-athletes comply with NCAA progress toward degree rules; and
- Eliminate, or at the very least significantly reduce, the number of instances where practice/game and class schedules overlap which will be beneficial to all involved – faculty, student-athletes and coaches.

It is also important to note the penalties associated with the NCAA APR. The APR is a semester-by-semester determination of scholarship student-athlete academic eligibility and retention at each NCAA Division I institution with the ultimate goal being graduation within five years of initial full-time enrollment. (By comparison, the federal graduation rate methodology uses a six-year deadline.) If teams do not meet the minimum standards for the APR they may be subject to contemporaneous or historical penalties.

Contemporaneous Penalty

Financial aid restriction(s)

Historical Penalties

Occasion one – Public warning

Occasion two – Public warning, financial aid and playing/practice restrictions

Occasion three – Public warning, financial aid restrictions, playing/practice restrictions and postseason competition restrictions

Occasion four – Public warning, financial aid restrictions, playing/practice restrictions, postseason competition restrictions and NCAA membership status restrictions

Like student-athletes, spirit group members are involved in service groups that do not have discretion in scheduling frequently and regularly occurring University-sanctioned service activities which significantly benefit the University and who also encounter problems graduating in four years because of course scheduling difficulties related to their service activities. More specifically, members of these groups are involved in practices and games for which the schedule of those activities is out of their control. Allowing spirit group students to register before the general student body would support the students and encourage membership in those groups by allowing students to plan for the extra time required to be members while still fulfilling academic requirements.

Veterans and Members of Military Service

Veterans and active members of the military services face numerous obstacles that impede successful academic progress. In regard to this proposal, student veterans are (1) students with prior military service, (2) students who are members of the armed service serving on active duty, and (3) students in active drilling positions in the National Guard or Reserves. This student population has placed the nation's defense ahead of their individual educational, career and family goals. Most have served in harm's way and cope with the effects of that experience as they begin their educational commitment.

Many have regular appointments with VA health services that are difficult to get or reschedule without adding to their difficulties. All face strict guidelines from the VA that prohibit payment for ANY coursework outside of their strict academic plan (including additional free electives). Additionally those still serving (Active Duty/Guard/Reserves) face unpredictable schedules and regular interruptions to their academic plans in response to the demands for their service. Finally, many veterans have accumulated significant college credit while taking night classes while on active duty, often building up many credit hours before transferring to ECU. Most of these courses are either GenEd or free electives, meaning that the student veteran must quickly begin coursework in his or her major once arriving on campus. Depending on the major, courses in the major often fill very quickly, creating additional override pressure in order to meet VA payment regulations.

Providing priority registration to this population will:

- Improve student veteran rates of persistence, adequate progress, and completion.
- Reduce requests for overrides and exceptions based on VA policy restrictions.
- Provide financial aid staff with earlier access to course schedules that must be validated before VA benefits can be certified for payment.
- Give student veterans the ability to schedule coursework around their VA health service appointments.
- Permit deploying service members to sign up for online courses before they quickly fill.
- Help deployed student veterans experiencing computer access restrictions get registered.
- Improve recruitment and retention of student veterans at no cost to the University (per Regulation Background final bullet)