REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

Academic and Judicial Discipline

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Graduate students are placed on academic probationary status by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies if their overall grade point average falls below 2.67, their semester GPA falls below 2.33, or they receive an unsatisfactory grade in research credit hours.

The period of probation extends to the end of the next semester in which the student is enrolled. If that probationary semester results in an overall grade point average below 2.67 or a semester grade point average below 2.33, the student may be dismissed without further warning. Additionally, graduate students with a cumulative GPA below 2.00 may be dismissed by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies without a probationary period.

As a courtesy, students will be notified of their probationary status once final grades have been received and posted to their records.

S/U grades cannot be used to end probationary status for low cumulative GPA.

Departments or programs may identify and define in their General Announcements Requirements tab stricter standards than the minimum GPA for coursework that satisfies their academic program requirements. A program can dismiss a student without a probationary semester by faculty vote.

Deadlines

Students must observe all deadlines listed in the Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/) and the General Announcements.

Dismissal

The two most common grounds for dismissal of a graduate student are (1) inadequate academic progress and (2) a disciplinary violation. The latter is discussed in detail under Disciplinary Probation, Suspension and Expulsion (p. 2). The following relates to academic progress.

Graduate programs must provide students upon entry to the program with detailed requirements, deadlines, and other program policies. Students are then responsible for meeting program and university requirements in their program of education. A student who is failing to meet departmental or university requirements, such as failing to meet grade requirements, failing to pass required examinations by the required time, or failing to advance to candidacy or defend her or his thesis within the required time, is subject to dismissal without further warning.

When a student is judged not to be making adequate academic progress, he or she must be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal and given clear information about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students similarly situated in the program. If the student does not meet the stated requirements within the time frame specified, he or she will be dismissed by the graduate program. A student is not eligible to return to Rice following a dismissal.

It is difficult to give a precise and general definition of “adequate academic progress” for graduate students, due to the variation in requirements among different graduate programs. Nevertheless, some general principles do apply. For example, most graduate programs consist of two stages. The first stage, preceding candidacy, typically consists of explicit requirements and milestones, such as course requirements, exams, research projects, and the like. In this stage, adequate academic progress typically means compliance with the requirements and milestones of the program, as well as research progress when applicable. The second stage, post-candidacy, is often referred to as “all but dissertation” (ABD). In this stage, graduate students are expected to conduct research and write and defend their theses. As the second stage typically lacks explicit intermediate milestones, it is harder to assess academic progress during this stage. It is extremely important, therefore, for graduate programs to make their expectations explicit for post-candidacy graduate students.

Post-candidacy graduate students often enroll only in research courses. Such courses can offer standard letter grades or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) grades. Grading mode, however, must be uniform within a section of a research course. Thus, all students in such a section should receive letter grades or all should receive S/U grades.

Graduate programs must establish mechanisms for tracking, reviewing, and documenting academic progress of graduate students on an ongoing basis and must provide graduate students a written assessment of their academic progress at least annually. In some graduate programs, this ongoing progress review is carried out by a student’s thesis committee, while in others it is carried out by a standing faculty committee. Although a student’s supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student’s academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program and requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program. For graduate students who are primarily engaged in coursework, for example, professional master’s students, the transcript is an adequate form of written assessment.

Dismissal of a graduate student requires that the student be notified of his/her dismissal from the graduate program. Such a notice is distinct from any earlier warning, which lets the student know of the possibility of dismissal. All dismissal notices, as well as warnings of possible dismissal, must be in writing, with a copy sent to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Email communication is considered to be “in writing”. (Academic units should archive copies of all email communications pertaining to student dismissal.)

Because of the serious consequences of dismissal from a graduate program, dismissed students must receive a 15-day notice of the dismissal. Such a notice may precede the trigger for the dismissal. For example, a program can notify a student 15 days before an examination that failure to pass the examination with a certain minimal grade would result in dismissal. In general, dismissal should not take effect during a semester in which the student is enrolled. Dismissals that take effect during a semester are exceptional and must be approved by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. A dismissal will be held in abeyance until the petition and appeal process is concluded, as students may petition for a dismissal to be revoked as described in the Dispute Resolution section (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/rights-responsibilities/dispute-resolution/).
Disciplinary Probation, Suspension and Expulsion

The Code of Student Conduct (https://qa.rice.edu/graduate-students/rights-responsibilities/code-student-conduct/) applies to all Rice students and applies to conduct both on and off campus. The Office of Student Judicial Programs may sanction students, including implementing disciplinary probation or suspension or expulsion for violations of the Code of Student Conduct or the Honor Code. Students who have been expelled, who are serving a suspension, who are under investigation for disciplinary violations, or who have Code of Conduct or Honor Code proceedings pending against them may not receive their degree even if they have met all academic requirements for graduation. Students who are suspended or expelled must leave the university within the time frame specified by Student Judicial Programs, generally 48 hours of being informed of the decision, though in cases of unusual hardship, Student Judicial Programs may extend the deadline. Any tuition refund will be calculated from the official date of suspension or expulsion based on the refund schedule noted in the Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/), published by the Office of the Registrar. A grade of “W” will be assigned to all enrolled courses regardless of when the suspension or expulsion began. Expelled students will have the expulsion noted on their transcript.

While on disciplinary probation or suspension, students may not run for or hold any elective or appointed office in any official Rice organization. Participation in student activities on and off campus and use of Rice facilities, including, but not limited to, the student center, the colleges, the playing field, the recreation center, and the computer labs, are limited to enrolled students.

Students seeking readmission after a suspension for Honor Code or Code of Conduct violations or other nonacademic action should submit a petition in writing to the Office of Student Judicial Programs by emailing SJP@rice.edu. That petition should include information on what the student did while away from Rice, including any schooling or employment; how the student met any requirements described by Rice at the time of separation; what the student did to address any issues leading to the separation; and what the student learned from the separation. Once approved by Student Judicial Programs, the petition is forwarded to the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies for final readmission approval and action.

Termination of Financial Support

Graduate students often receive financial support in the form of graduate stipend and tuition waivers. The termination of financial support to a graduate student, while not equivalent to dismissal, is a serious action that could deprive students of their financial ability to continue graduate studies. Consequently, the procedure to terminate a student’s financial support before the end of the financial-support commitment period should be analogous to those for dismissal as described above. Therefore, termination of financial support of a graduate student requires that the student be notified of the termination 15 days prior to the cancellation of support. Such a notice is distinct from any earlier warning, which lets the student know of the possibility of support termination. All termination of support notices, as well as warnings of possible termination, must be in writing, with a copy sent to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Active participation in required academic activities (for example, laboratory work in certain science and engineering programs) is a basic condition for continued financial support. Students who are absent from such required activities for contiguous two weeks without permission and without mitigating circumstances may be subject to termination of financial support. In addition, they may be judged not to be making adequate academic progress. Thus, if absences have to occur, they must be prearranged with the student’s supervisor, except for medical and family emergencies, in which cases timely notification is required. Graduate advisors and programs should be aware of unexplained student absences and must provide immediate written warnings when students are not present and carrying out required academic activities for more than one week.

When the source of a graduate stipend is an externally sponsored research grant, the principal investigator is responsible for certifying that compensation paid to those who are supported by the grant faithfully corresponds to actual effort in carrying out the sponsored research. This process is referred to as “effort certification.” The requirements above to give students warnings and notices before dismissal or termination of stipend are separate and independent of the effort-certification requirement. If a principal investigator determines that a graduate student is not contributing to the sponsored project that is the source of the student’s stipend, then the charge for the affected pay period must be reallocated to another fund by the program.

Degree Revocation

Rice University reserves the right to revoke any degrees granted. A degree awarded may be revoked if the university becomes aware that the degree should not have been granted, such as a degree that was obtained by violating the Honor Code or Code of Student Conduct or by deception, misrepresentation, falsification of records, academic misconduct, research misconduct, or if the work submitted in fulfillment of — and indispensable to — the requirements for the degree are determined to fail to meet the academic standards that were in effect at the time the degree was awarded. Notification of the date of revocation will appear on the student’s transcript, and the student will be asked to return the diploma. The Provost receives all recommendations for revocation of degrees and, after consideration and review, forwards to the President any recommendations deemed to be warranted. The Provost may also initiate and forward to the President his or her own recommendation for a degree revocation. The President will consider all recommendations forwarded by the Provost and effectuate those he or she determines to be warranted. Procedures governing degree revocations may be obtained from the offices of the Registrar, Provost, or President.

The university also reserves the right to withdraw a degree to correct an administrative error, such as an incorrectly listed degree, or in a situation where it was found that a student had not actually fulfilled all graduation requirements.

Academic Regulations and Good Standing

Good Standing

Graduate students must meet the minimum deadlines and course or grade requirements detailed on this page and the Grades page to remain in good standing and to graduate from the university. Graduate students must meet other requirements specifically mandated as essential for good standing by the graduate student handbook published by the relevant department or program. Failure to remain in good standing may result in probation, separation from the university, or dismissal.

Enrollment Requirements

PhD and DMA students must complete at least four full fall and/or spring semesters in full-time study at Rice University. The minimum enrollment requirements for all thesis master’s programs and non-thesis master’s programs in Business, Architecture, and Music is one fall or spring
semester of full-time graduate study. For non-thesis master’s programs outside of Business, Architecture, and Music, programs the minimum enrollment requirement is one fall or spring semester in full-time or part-time graduate study.

Concurrent Enrollment at Another Institution
Doctoral and thesis master’s students must secure written permission from the Office of the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to seek concurrently a degree at another institution, regardless of the level or delivery method. Additional permission is not needed for students in interinstitutional dual degree programs listed in the General Announcements. Non-thesis graduate programs may also require the approval of the graduate program. Graduate students seeking two graduate degrees should refer to this section (p. 10) of the General Announcements. Undergraduates seeking graduate degrees should refer here (https://ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students/academic-opportunities/undergraduate-graduate-concurrent-enrollment/). Graduate students seeking multiple graduate degrees at Rice should review the section under ‘Second Degree Programs at Rice.’

Minimum Credit Hours
Students must register for at least three credit hours in a semester. Students in their final semester who require less than three credit hours to complete their degree, may register for less than 3 credits with permission from the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies.

Continuous Enrollment
Students must maintain continuous program involvement and enrollment during fall and spring semesters unless granted an official leave of absence. See Leaves, Interruptions of Study and Withdrawals (p. 6) for more information.

Full-Time Study
Semester course load for full-time students on Rice’s three-semester Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/) is nine credit hours or more as required by specific graduate programs for the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Additional registration requirements and limitations can be found under ‘Registration and Courses.’

Semester course load for full-time students on Rice’s four-semester Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/) (e.g. the online MBA, MBA@Rice) is six credit hours or more, as required by specific graduate programs.

Graduate programs at Rice generally require full-time study. For information about dropping below full-time or changing to part-time status, see below.

Part-Time Study
Part-time students must register for at least three credit hours in a semester or term. All time boundary and degree requirements apply to part-time students. Students who wish to become part-time in the upcoming semester or term must obtain written permission from the graduate department before the semester or term begins. Students who wish to obtain part-time status after the semester or term has started must also obtain the approval of the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. In order for students to receive the per credit hour, part-time tuition rate, they must obtain verification of part-time approval from the Office of the Registrar by the end of the second week of classes. Part-time students are not eligible to receive fellowships, assistantship aid, tuition scholarships, or reduced rate tuition from Rice. See also Financial Aid (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/student-financial-aid/). International students should consult the Office of International Students and Scholars about the possible impact on their visa status of dropping below full-time.

Time to Degree (All Degrees)
PhD and DMA students are required to complete their program, including thesis defense, within 10 years of initial enrollment in the degree program. All master’s students are required to complete their program, including thesis defense, within five years of initial enrollment. In both cases, students have a limit of six additional months from the date of defense to submit their theses to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. These time boundaries include any period in which the student was not enrolled or enrolled part-time, for whatever reason. Failure to meet any university time to degree deadline may result in the student not being able to continue in their degree program.

Standard of Conduct
Students are expected to live up to the high standards Rice sets for its community members, as described in the Code of Student Conduct (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/rights-responsibilities/code-student-conduct/). Graduate students should be in compliance with the Code of Student Conduct at all times and not have holds from Student Judicial Programs or other offices.

Research and Scholarly Activities
Research and other scholarly activities of all students must conform to Rice University policies. It is recommended that students familiarize themselves with these policies before embarking on research or other scholarly activities. Particularly pertinent to students are policy 324 (Research Misconduct) (http://professor.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Professor/Independent_Pages/Policies/Rice_University_Policy_324.pdf), policy 326 (Human Research Protection Policy) (http://professor.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Professor/Independent_Pages/Policies/326.pdf), policy 333 (Patent and Software Policies) (https://policy.rice.edu/333/), and policy 334 (Copyright Policy) (https://policy.rice.edu/334/).

Non-course Training
Within their first semester of enrollment, graduate students are expected to complete some non-course training:

• Orientation – New graduate students are expected to attend all orientation events.
• Preventing Sexual Harassment – New graduate students are required to complete this online training.
• Responsible Conduct of Research – All graduate students are required to complete this online training. Students in the MBA and MLS programs are exempt from this training.
• Lab Safety Training - Lab Safety training is mandatory for all new students in the School of Engineering; in the School of Natural Science, with the exception of the Mathematics department; and any student outside those schools who will be working in a laboratory at Rice. This training is provided through the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (https://safety.rice.edu/).
Applicable Academic Graduation Requirements

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. In the event that there is a discrepancy between the GA and any other websites or publications, the GA shall prevail as the authoritative source.

All graduate students must meet the minimum university requirements for the academic credential, in addition to any program specific requirements. The official certifier of the graduate degree, may petition the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, or the delegate to allow substitutions or waivers to the degree requirements when academically appropriate. Graduate programs may not independently allow substitutions or waivers to program specific degree requirements.

Students enrolled in graduate programs at Rice may decide whether to follow the graduation general and degree program requirements in effect when they first matriculated at Rice or those in effect when they graduate. If a student has been separated from the university due to a voluntary or involuntary withdrawal, students must graduate under the regulations in effect at the time of their last readmission or those in effect when they graduate unless granted an exception by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. An archive of General Announcements is available online here (https://ga.rice.edu/archive/).

Graduate program degree requirements may vary from year to year during the period between a student's matriculation and graduation. The graduate program may, at its discretion, make any of these variations available to a student for completion of the degree requirements. If a new academic credential is created during the student's time at Rice, the new program will be available to the student as if the program appeared in the General Announcements at the time of matriculation.

Application for Degree

All students must complete and submit an Application for Degree Form available in ESTHER (https://esther.rice.edu/). This form is required for all students who plan to complete their degree requirements at the end of the fall or spring semester. A late fee will be assessed for applying after the deadline (please consult the semester-specific Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/) for deadline).

Grades

See also Faculty Grading Guidelines (https://ga.rice.edu/faculty/grading-guidelines/) and Syllabus Standards (https://ga.rice.edu/faculty/syllabus-standards/).

Minimum GPA

Students must achieve an overall 2.67 GPA in courses required for their chosen program of graduate study. Each department or program can identify and define stricter standards than the institutional overall 2.67 GPA minimum. Where applicable, stricter GPA standards are communicated in the General Announcements Programs of Study section, in the Requirements tab.

In addition to the minimum graduation requirement, to remain in good standing, graduate students must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.67 and a minimum term GPA of 2.33. Academic probation is discussed in detail in that section (p. 1).

Pass/Fail Option

Graduate students may not take a course pass/fail within their graduate degree requirements. Courses outside of their degree requirements must be designated as pass/fail no later than the end of the 10th week of classes; however, a pass/fail course may later be converted to a graded course by submitting the proper online form with the Office of the Registrar by the end of the second week of the following semester.

Registration During Summer Sessions

Currently enrolled Rice students should register for summer courses online via ESTHER (https://esther.rice.edu/) as per normal registration processes and procedures. Rice students should be aware that the registration and payment deadlines do differ, depending on the summer session, and should familiarize themselves with the Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendar/). Summer courses that do not generate enrollments sufficient to cover their costs may be canceled prior to the first day of class. Please see Graduate Student Financial Aid (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/student-services-organizations/financial-aid/#text) for information regarding course tuition and financial aid.

Pass/Fail During Summer Sessions

Currently enrolled Rice students can designate a summer course as Pass/Fail during the summer sessions, but can do so only by visiting the Office of the Registrar in person and completing a Pass/Fail Designation form. Similarly, conversions of summer Pass/Fail grades can only be done via paper form at the Office of the Registrar. Students should adhere to the applicable Pass/Fail deadlines, as stated in the Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/).

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Satisfactory/unsatisfactory courses are those that do not use traditional grading procedures and instead assign a grade of S or U rather than a letter grade. Such courses or labs are designated by the instructor and are, in most cases, graduate level courses. With S/U courses, instructors report the S if the student successfully completes the course, or the U if they have not. Students should be aware that while a grade of S or U does not affect their grade point average, no credit will be awarded if a grade of U is received. Courses with a grade of S will count towards total credits earned. Visiting Post Baccalaureates cannot take courses on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading basis.

Audit

Students have the option of auditing courses. For auditing students, instructors report either the AUD or the NC grade symbol, the AUD if the student met the audit requirements of the class, or the NC if they have not. There are no credit hours associated with audited courses, and auditing a course does not affect a student's GPA. Request to audit a class or to change from audit to credit or vice versa must be done by the dates and deadlines documented in the posted Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendar/). (See Grade Designations AUD (p. 5) and NC (p. 5) below.)

Grade Symbols

Instructors are required to report a grade for all students whose names appear on the class roster. They grade their students using the following conventional symbols: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F.
Grade Designations

Under certain circumstances, special designations accompany the student’s grade. These designations do not affect the grade point average. The special designations include the following:

AUD (“Audit”)

This designation is only used for students auditing the course, and specifically where the auditing student has met the audit requirements of the course as defined by the instructor. A grade designation of “NC” (No Credit) is given to students who do not meet the audit requirements. There are no credit hours associated with an AUD grade designation. (See Audit above.)

INC (“Incomplete”)

Instructors report this designation to the Office of the Registrar when a student fails to complete a course because of verified illness or other circumstances beyond the student’s control that occur during the semester. Students must provide independent corroboration of their illness or circumstances, and they are expected to coordinate with the instructor prior to final grades being submitted. For an INC received in the fall semester, students must complete the work by the end of the first week of the spring semester or an earlier date as defined by the instructor, and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the second week. For an INC received in the spring or summer semester, students must complete the work before the start of the fall semester or an earlier date as defined by the instructor, and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the first week. If a grade is not submitted by the appropriate deadline, the INC will be automatically converted to a failing grade.

Students with an INC must be certain that tests, papers, and other materials affecting their grade or essential to completing a course requirement are delivered by hand to the appropriate professor or office according to the timeline previously stated, for the instructor to grade the documents and submit the final grade to the Office of the Registrar by the deadline. Loss or lateness because of mail service is not an acceptable excuse for failing to meet academic deadlines. A student who receives two or more INC in a semester may not enroll in the next semester for more than 14 semester hours. Students also should be aware that they may be placed on probation or suspension when the INC is changed to a grade, either by an instructor or by default.

NC (“No Credit”)

This designation signals that no credit was granted for the course. It is used in situations where a person auditing a course has not met the audit requirements of the course as defined by the instructor. (See Audit above.)

NG (“No Grade”)

This designation signals that no credit was granted for the course. As a non-punitive grade, the NG is applied administratively and used in rare situations.

OT (“Other”)

Instructors report this designation to the Office of the Registrar when a student fails to appear for the final examination after completing all the other work for the course. An OT received during a fall semester must be resolved and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the first week of the spring semester. An OT received during a spring semester must be resolved and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the fourth week after Commencement. An OT received during a summer semester must be resolved and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the first week of the fall semester. If a grade is not submitted by the appropriate deadline, the OT will be automatically converted to a failing grade. Students should be aware that they may be placed on probation or suspension when the OT is changed to a grade, either by an instructor or by default.

SA (“Study Away”)

This designation is used for students that participate in a course of study hosted at another institution, such as a Rice-sanctioned Study Abroad program, or an approved inter-institutional agreement. The grade of SA is awarded for the Rice placeholder course, carries no grade points and there are no credit hours earned for a course which receives a grade of SA. There is corresponding transfer credit that is articulated once an official transcript is received from the host school.

W (“Official Withdrawal from University”)

Students who officially withdraw from the university after the designated drop deadline, the seventh week of classes, will receive a final grade of “W” for each course in which they were enrolled at the time of withdrawal.

Students who officially withdraw from the university before the drop deadline will not receive the grade of “W” for any courses in which they were enrolled for that semester. These courses will not be included on the official transcript.

W (“Late Drop with Approval”)

A student may petition in writing the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies to drop a course after the designated drop deadline. Students who receive approval from the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies will receive a grade of “W” for that course. When requests for late drops are denied by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, the Office of the Registrar records the submitted grade. Please see the Drop/Add section of the General Announcements.

If a student drops a class before the designated drop deadline for the semester, the course will not be included on his/her official transcript. Graduate students are reminded that the rule allowing new matriculants in their first semester at Rice to drop a class up until the last day of classes applies only to undergraduates.

Grade Points and Grade Point Average Calculation

To compute grade point average, letter grades are assigned numeric values as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>0.67</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<sup>1</sup> Effective Academic Year 2018-2019, the A+ grade is now worth 4.00, not 4.33, in calculating the GPA.
For each course carrying standard letter grades, the credit hours attempted and the points for the grade earned are multiplied. The grade points for each course are added together, and the sum is divided by the total credit hours attempted. Grade point averages are noted each semester on the student’s official transcripts. Courses taken on a S/U or pass/fail basis are excluded from the grade point average calculation.

**Employment**

Students receiving a stipend may accept employment only with the approval of their graduate program. Students working for more than 20 hours per week are not normally eligible for full-time status.

**Leaves, Interruptions of Study, and Withdrawals**

There are two types of interruptions in study: short-term releases and separations. Both releases and separations may be either voluntary or involuntary. Separations are periods of nonenrollment and require specific reinstatement or readmission processes.

**Short-Term Medical and Parental Release**

There are two types of short-term releases: medical and parental. Short-term releases can be up to six weeks in length.

If a graduate student cannot fulfill the duties of his or her appointment due to a medical emergency or the adoption or birth of a child, the student may be temporarily released from their academic responsibilities. Enrollment and stipend support may be continued for up to six weeks or until the appointment expires (whichever occurs first). A student may apply for short-term medical or parental release at any time during the semester. Complete guidelines for obtaining a medical or parental release are available at [https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves](https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves). Students taking a voluntary short-term release should make arrangements with their advisor and instructors to complete their academic responsibilities in a timely way.

The university may also insist on a student’s short-term medical release if, in the judgment of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, or her/his designee, the student has a serious medical or psychological condition that the student cannot effectively address while enrolled or which is likely to be exacerbated severely by the Rice academic and/or living environment.

Students may not do degree work or work involving Rice faculty or facilities while on short-term medical release. Students returning from a short-term medical release will be required to provide documentation that they are able to return to their studies.

**Voluntary Separations**

Voluntary separations include leaves of absence (generally one to two semesters in length) and withdrawals (medical and nonmedical). Students on a leave of absence are not required to petition for readmission. Withdrawn students are eligible to reapply. If students voluntarily withdraw for medical or psychological/psychiatric reasons, however, they must meet the readmission conditions for a medical or involuntary withdrawal.

**Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence allows a student to take time off from their studies and later resume study without having to petition for readmission to the university. Normally, students may take a leave of absence for no more than two consecutive semesters. The semesters that a student is on leave do not count against the time to candidacy or the time to defense. They do, however, count against time to degree.

A leave of absence is granted only by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies on the recommendation of the department chair or program director and only to graduate students in good standing with the university. Students must obtain approval for a leave before the beginning of the academic semester in which the leave is taken. Leave requests, endorsed by the graduate program, must be received in the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to the first day of classes (see [https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves](https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves)).

**Medical Leave of Absence**

Students who take a leave of absence for medical/health issues must submit documentation of treatment and demonstration of medical stability from their treating healthcare provider prior to returning from leave. Students must pay a reinstatement fee of $125 on their return from an official leave.

**Nonmedical Withdrawal and Readmission**

Students who wish to withdraw from Rice during the semester, for any nonmedical reason, are to notify the chair of their academic department in writing (see [Refund of Tuition and Fees](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/student-services-organizations/tuition-fees-expenses/#refunds)). Failure to register before the end of the fourth week of classes without a leave of absence granted by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies constitutes a de facto withdrawal.

Students who later wish to resume study after a voluntary or de facto withdrawal must petition for readmission to the university. Petitions must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies no later than **August 1** for Fall, **December 15** for Spring and **April 1** for Summer readmissions. International students should apply earlier to ensure enough time to secure a new visa.

- The petition must include an academic plan devised in consultation with the student’s advisor, advising committee, or director of graduate studies (depending upon the graduate program’s advising structure). Academic plan consultations should be initiated at least 3 weeks prior to the petition due date.
- The petition should also include a statement, addressed to the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, as to why the student withdrew and would now like to be readmitted.
- Readmission requires the recommendation of the department chair or program director and the approval of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. Therefore the petition should be reviewed by the department chair and a written statement of recommendation should be submitted with the petition or emailed directly to the graduate office ([graduate@rice.edu](mailto:graduate@rice.edu)).

The semesters that a student is not enrolled do not count against the time to candidacy or the time to defense. They do, however, count against the time to degree. Readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of $375.

Further information is available by contacting the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

**Medical Withdrawal and Readmission**

Graduate students may request a medical withdrawal from the university by applying in writing to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
Students considering taking time off for personal reasons related to their wellbeing and mental health are encouraged to contact the graduate affairs manager or the Student Wellbeing Office (http://wellbeing.rice.edu/) about the roadmap back to Rice. The Student Wellbeing Office serves as a liaison to the medical readmission process, during the separation process, as well as when students are ready to return.

Graduate students who wish to seek readmission following a medical withdrawal must submit to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies a written petition for readmission no later than June 1 for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester, and April 1 for the summer semester.

This petition must include documentation of treatment provided and demonstration of medical stability (usually six months); students may also be required to interview with the director of the Rice Counseling Center or Student Health Services or their designees.

The petition should include a letter to the Dean stating why the student feels they are ready to return to the University, actions they have undertaken in the interim that could support their return, and specific plans for their follow up treatment in Houston (if applicable).

The petition also must include an academic plan devised in consultation with the student’s advisor, advising committee, or director of graduate studies (depending upon the graduate program’s advising structure) and approved by the department chair. Academic plan consultations should be initiated at least three weeks prior to the petition due date.

Students who withdraw for psychological reasons within the last five weeks of a semester are strongly encouraged to focus on their wellbeing and mental health are encouraged to contact the Student Wellbeing Office as a liaison to the medical readmission process, during the separation process, as well as when students are ready to return.

The semesters that a student is not enrolled do not count against the time to candidacy or the time to defense. They do, however, count against the time to degree. Readmission requires the approval of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, and readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of $375.

Further information is available by contacting the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (https://graduate.rice.edu/contactus/).

Involuntary Separation

Sometimes, the university will require a student to withdraw, which requires a specific readmission process. An involuntary separation may result from a disciplinary and/or a medical reason.

The university may insist on a student’s involuntary separation from the university if, in the judgment of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies or her/his designee, or, in the case of disciplinary action, of Student Judicial Programs, the student’s behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Poses a threat to the safety or welfare of him/herself or other members of the Rice community;
- Has a serious medical or a psychological condition that the student cannot effectively address while enrolled or that is likely to be severely exacerbated by the Rice academic and/or living environment;
- Demonstrates behavior that seriously interferes with the education of other members of the Rice community; behavior that violates the Rice Code of Student Conduct, the Rice Honor Code, the Rice Sexual Misconduct Policy, the Rice Weapons Policy, or other relevant policies, or behavior that otherwise requires disciplinary action;
- Is not able to continue functioning as a student.

An involuntary separation can be the result of an interim decision or a final decision. An interim decision is usually a summary process that may result in a temporary separation.

A final decision comes after a process that includes notification, opportunity to respond, and opportunity to appeal. It can result in a suspension (i.e. temporary separation) or in an expulsion (i.e. permanent separation), as well as other sanctions.

Readmission Following Involuntary Separation

Following an involuntary separation, graduate students who wish to seek readmission must submit a written petition for readmission to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies no later than June 1 for the fall semester, November 1 for the spring semester, and April 1 for summer semester.

Students taking time off due to an involuntary withdrawal are encouraged to contact the graduate affairs manager or the Student Wellbeing Office (http://wellbeing.rice.edu/) about the roadmap back to Rice. The Student Wellbeing Office serves as a liaison to the readmission process, during the separation process, as well as when students are ready to return.

The petition should include a letter to the graduate dean stating why the student feels they are ready to return to the university and actions they have undertaken in the interim that could support their return.

Petitions must also include an academic plan devised in consultation with the student’s advisor, advising committee, or director of graduate studies (depending upon the graduate program’s advising structure) and approved by the department chair. Academic plan consultations should be initiated at least three weeks prior to the petition due date.

Petitions for return following an involuntary medical withdrawal must include documentation of treatment provided and demonstration of medical stability (usually six months); students may be required to interview with the director of the Rice Counseling Center or Student Health Services or their designees.

Students involuntarily separated from the university for violations of the Code of Student Conduct or other disciplinary reasons, including honor code violations, must also submit the petition to the Office of Student Judicial Programs and receive approval prior to returning to the university or for the award of a degree (See Academic and Judicial Discipline (p. 1)). Students should refer to their separation letter for any additional requirements.

Students who are involuntarily separated from the university for psychological reasons within the last 5 weeks of either fall, spring, or summer terms are not be eligible to apply for readmission for the following term.

The semesters that a student is not enrolled do not count against the time to candidacy or the time to defense. They do, however, count against the time to degree. Readmission requires the approval of the dean of
graduate and postdoctoral studies, and readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of $375.

Further information is available by contacting the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (https://grad.rice.edu/contactus/).

Resignation
A student may resign from the university by notifying the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies in writing. Resignation means the student is withdrawing, is no longer a student at Rice, and will not return to Rice. A resignation becomes effective when accepted by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. In general, if a student is under investigation for a potential Code of Student Conduct (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/rights-responsibilities/code-student-conduct/) violation or has charges pending under the Code, disciplinary proceedings will terminate upon acceptance of the resignation by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. However, this general rule does not apply if the resigning student has been charged with sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, stalking or any other behavior that could result in expulsion. A student who resigns is not eligible to receive a degree from Rice, even if the student has otherwise met all of the requirements for the degree. A notation will appear on the resigned student's transcript indicating that the student is ineligible to reenroll unrelated to academic or financial reasons.

Nonenrollment Restrictions
Students may not do degree work at Rice or work involving Rice faculty or facilities during any period of nonenrollment, except during the period following successful oral defense prior to submission of the final thesis. All separated students must return their student ID to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. All university keys must be returned to the appropriate offices. Participation in student activities on and off campus and use of Rice facilities, including, but not limited to, the student center, the playing fields, the recreation center, and the computer labs, are limited to enrolled students.

Separated students are expected to be away from Rice during the term of the separation. If the student is employed by Rice at the time of separation, he or she must relinquish such employment or petition the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (graduate@rice.edu) for written permission to continue the on-campus employment; separated students may not begin employment with Rice during the separation. Noncompliance with these requirements may delay or prevent readmission.

Name Changes
To comply with a number of government agencies' reporting requirements, the university must record the name of each student who is a U.S. citizen as the student's name appears on his or her Social Security card. Students who need to change their names on Rice University records and who are U.S. citizens must notify the Office of the Registrar and present a Social Security card, marriage license, divorce decree or court order, and picture identification when submitting the form. After the change is implemented, the name on the Rice University transcript will read as printed on the supporting document(s).

Registration and Courses
See also Academic Regulations (p. 2).

Drop/Add
During the first two weeks of classes, students may change their registration, add or drop courses without penalty. After the second week, the following conditions apply for both adding and dropping courses and credits hours. Graduate students:

• May not add courses after the second week of classes, except in extenuating circumstances and with the approval of the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (a $75 penalty fee per course will be assessed). The student's request to add a course first must be supported and approved by the student's advisor along with the course instructor and then forwarded to the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies for consideration.

• May drop courses through the seventh week without penalty.

• May not drop courses after the end of the seventh week of classes, except in extenuating circumstances and with the final approval of the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (a $75 penalty fee per course will be assessed). The student's request to drop a course first must be supported and approved by the student's advisor, the course instructor, and the director of graduate studies or the department chair. Afterward, it should be forwarded to the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies for consideration. Students who receive approval to drop a course after the designated drop deadline will receive a grade of "W" for that course.

Graduate students that drop a class after the second week should keep in mind that there is no refund of tuition, assuming the student continues to be enrolled in at least one other class. For additional information and relevant deadlines, please see the Academic Calendar (https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/).

Course Load
Graduate students must secure written permission from the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies or his/her designee to register for more than 18 credit hours in a semester, including courses taken elsewhere. Graduate programs may set lower course load maximums. Architecture, business, and music students are not held to this credit hour limit due to their unique curricula.

Course Registration
Currently enrolled students register in April for the fall semester and in November for the spring semester. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their advisor to discuss their courses for the upcoming semester. Please see the Drop/Add section above for requirements for adding or dropping a course after the semester has begun.

Course Numbering System
Courses numbered 100-499 are considered undergraduate level, with the 100-299 sequence classified as lower-level (freshman/sophomore) and the 300-499 sequence classified as upper-level (junior/senior). Courses numbered 500 and above are considered to be at the post-baccalaureate or graduate level. Graduate and undergraduate students may, with departmental approval, take certain courses outside their designated level.

Holds
Registration, official transcripts, degree verification, and other administrative processes may be impacted by a hold on a student account. Students may consult the website of the Office of the Registrar (https://registrar.rice.edu/students/holds/) to discover why a hold exists.
and how to resolve the issue. The Office of the Registrar cannot remove holds governed by another office or department.

**Repeated Courses**

Students may repeat courses previously taken, but the record of the first attempt (and grade) remains on the transcript, and both grades are included in term and cumulative grade point average calculations. In most cases, if students repeat courses previously passed, credit is awarded only once. For example, a student took HIST 571 and received a grade of B. The student then repeated HIST 571 and received a grade of A. Both grades—the A and B—appear on the transcript and are included in his/her GPA; however, he/she only receives three credits toward his/her degree. On the transcript, a repeated course is indicated by one of the following values:

- I – Included in GPA and earned hours
- A – Included in GPA, but excluded from earned hours
- E – Excluded from both GPA and earned hours

Some Rice University courses may be repeated for credit. They are specifically noted in the Course Offerings (https://courses.rice.edu) each semester. If a course may be repeated for credit, each grade appears on the permanent record and is included in the grade point average.

If students repeat courses for which they have received either advanced placement or transfer credit, credit will not be counted. Nor can credit be received twice for students transferring courses that repeat previous enrollment at Rice.

Students may not receive credit twice for cross-listed, equivalent, or graduate/undergraduate equivalency courses taken at the same time. If the course is not repeatable, students may not receive credit for cross-listed, equivalent, or graduate/undergraduate equivalency courses taken in different semesters.

**Final Examinations in Graduate Courses**

Graduate courses, especially those with significant undergraduate student enrollment, should follow the guidelines for undergraduate courses (see Final Examinations section) regarding scheduling of projects, papers, and finals during the last weeks of classes, reading periods, and final exam periods. However, instructors have the discretion to modify those guidelines as appropriate for their specific courses. Such modifications and the final schedule must be made clear at the beginning of the semester.

**Transcript Policies**

Rice University provides official hard-copy transcripts and electronic transcripts. Official transcripts are issued only at the request of the student. Official transcript requests should be made at least five working days before the desired date of issue. A $10 fee per transcript must be received before a transcript is issued.

Transcripts that have been presented for admission or evaluation of credit become a part of the student’s permanent record and are not reissued. Transcripts from other institutions, if needed, must be sent to Rice University directly from the original issuing institution.

**Transfer Credit**

**Transfer Credit Guidelines**

Courses taken at another accredited college or university are not automatically approved for transfer credit. Transfer credit is only granted with the approval of the student’s major department. Transfer credits are subject to the following restrictions:

- Students must have taken the course at a United States academic institution accredited by a regional accrediting agency or at a foreign institution accredited by the appropriate agency, such as the government’s Ministry of Education.
- Official transcripts from the transfer credit institution must be sent directly from the institution’s registrar to the major department or hand-delivered in an official sealed envelope.
- All coursework must have earned a grade of at least a C- or the equivalent. Some departments or programs may set a higher standard. Students may not transfer courses taken pass/fail or on a similar basis at other institutions.
- Students seeking transfer credit must submit a Graduate Request for Transfer Credit form (https://registrar.rice.edu/sites/g/files/bxs751/f/Graduate%20Request%20for%20Transfer%20Credit%20ao11052014.pdf) to the department for approval.
- The major department must approve the credits and submit a copy of the transcript and the approved Graduate Request for Transfer Credit form to the Office of the Registrar.

The following types of non-traditional coursework will not transfer to Rice for credit: a.) life experience; courses offered by non-collegiate sponsors such as businesses and government agencies, and labor unions, even if evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE); b.) equivalency examinations (e.g. CLEP); and c.) MOOCs (massive open online courses).

Grades earned for transfer credit are not entered on the Rice transcript, and transferred courses have no effect on a student’s Rice grade point average.

All transferable credits from schools utilizing a system other than the semester hour (such as quarter hours or ECTS credits) will be converted to semester hours. In accordance with university guidelines and based on the external transcript, the Office of the Registrar will determine appropriate transferable credit hours. In no instance will a course transfer in with credit greater than the semester hour equivalent originally earned for the coursework.

**International Transfer Credit**

Students seeking transfer credit for courses taken at institutions outside the United States must present a professional course-by-course evaluation of the foreign official transcript. The professional evaluation must verify that the foreign institution is equivalent to a regionally accredited U.S. academic institution and must include an explanation of credits earned (including U.S. semester hour equivalents), grade equivalents, and course levels. Two reliable services with course-by-course evaluations that include this required information are:

- SpanTran (https://www.spantran.com/)
- Education Credentials (https://www.ece.org/)

All professional evaluations should be obtained from one of these two recommended credential services and submitted to the major department. Payment for the professional evaluation is the responsibility of the student.

**Coursework Taken While an Undergraduate at Rice**

Graduate programs may consider counting courses taken by a student while an undergraduate at Rice as credit toward a graduate degree. The following guidelines must be followed:
• The courses must be chosen from those that normally satisfy requirements for the advanced degree
• No course can be used simultaneously to satisfy both an undergraduate and a graduate degree requirement
• Coursework taken as an undergraduate will not be converted to indicate a graduate level in the student’s academic history until after the bachelor’s degree is awarded
• Coursework taken as an undergraduate does not indicate the student’s matriculation term for the graduate program—the matriculation term will be the term the student officially enters the program as a graduate student after completing all undergraduate requirements
• Regardless of the number of graduate courses taken at the undergraduate level, a student must meet the residency requirement of the degree as a graduate student

Graduate programs may admit advanced undergraduates to a graduate program to seek concurrently the bachelor’s and graduate degrees. For additional information, please review the Undergraduate - Graduate Concurrent Enrollment section (https://ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students/academic-opportunities/undergraduate-graduate-concurrent-enrollment/) of the General Announcements.

Rice Undergraduates Entering a Graduate Degree Program

Advanced Rice undergraduate students who wish to enter a master’s degree program should apply for admission through the normal admissions procedures as they begin to pursue seriously the degree, regardless of their planned undergraduate degree conferral. While the application material requirements of official transcripts and test scores may be waived in these cases, the authority for the waiver rests with the graduate program. Letters of recommendation are still required for admission.

Graduate programs may count courses taken by the students while an undergraduate as credit towards the degree if the credit was not already counted towards the undergraduate degree.

For additional information, please review the Undergraduate - Graduate Concurrent Enrollment section (https://ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students/academic-opportunities/undergraduate-graduate-concurrent-enrollment/) of the General Announcements.

Transfer of Graduate Program

Graduate students at Rice are admitted into a specific graduate program. Admissions criteria are program specific; therefore, students who wish to transfer graduate programs must follow the guidelines listed below.

Transferring from Research/Thesis to a Professional/Non-Thesis Program

Students who wish to change from a thesis program to a professional/non-thesis degree program must petition their department in writing. Upon recommendation of the department and approval by the dean’s office, the request is sent to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for consideration and final approval. If approved, students who received tuition waivers while enrolled in the thesis program may be expected to repay the tuition before their professional degrees are awarded.

Transferring from Non-Thesis to Research/Thesis Program Within the Department

Non-Thesis degree programs terminate when the degree is awarded. Students who wish to continue graduate study after completing a non-thesis degree program must apply for admission into the research/thesis degree program. Upon recommendation of the department, the request for admission is sent to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for consideration and final approval. Some students may become eligible for tuition waivers in subsequent semesters. Tuition waivers will not be awarded retroactively.

Transferring to Master's Program (Non-Thesis or Thesis) as a Result of Dismissal from Doctoral Program

A graduate program may offer a non-thesis or thesis master’s opportunity to students who are being dismissed from a doctoral program. If the student accepts the master’s opportunity, the graduate program would follow internal procedures and notify the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of the change in degree program. Tuition will not be charged retroactively for courses already completed. If the student declines the master’s opportunity, the student will be dismissed without a degree awarded. Students who are dismissed from a doctoral program are not eligible for admission to other doctoral programs at Rice.

Transferring Departments

Students in good standing and not on academic probation who wish to change their graduate program to a graduate program in another department must apply for admission to the new department’s degree program, stating that they are currently a graduate student in another program at Rice. The application must be vetted through the regular admissions process. In addition to admission to the new department, applications for a transfer must also be approved by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies.

Second Degree Programs at Rice

Graduate students may enroll in a second degree program only with the approval of their home academic department. No course or credit hour may be used to satisfy the degree requirements of more than one degree. Graduate students seeking concurrent enrollment at another institution should review the section under ‘Concurrent Enrollment at Another Institution.’

Veterans Information

Qualified veterans, dependents of deceased or disabled veterans whose death or disability is a direct result of their military service, or dependents in receipt of transferred benefits from a veteran may be eligible for VA educational benefits under one of the following programs while attending Rice University:

• Chapter 10: Montgomery G.I. Bill® - Full-Time/Part-Time
• Chapter 1685: Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
• Chapter 31: Vocational Rehabilitation
• Chapter 33: Post 9/11 G.I. Bill®
• Chapter 35: Dependents Education Assistance
• Chapter 1606: Montgomery G.I. Bill® - Selected Reserve
• Chapter 1607: Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)

Rice University does not impose any penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the requirement that a covered individual borrow additional
funds, on any covered individual because of the individual's inability to meet his or her financial obligations to Rice University due to the delayed disbursement funding from VA under Chapter 31 or Chapter 33 (other than those that may be required by the particular aid program itself). Rice University may require additional payment or impose a fee for the amount that is the difference between the amount of the student's financial obligation and the amount of the VA education benefit disbursement. In some cases, the student may be required to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

If you qualify for state or federal education benefits through military service and payment to the school is delayed, you may be eligible for a 60 day deferment of tuition and fees to avoid late fees and/or being dropped from classes. The deferment request form is available here: https://www.tvc.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/HB-846-Form-Fillable.pdf. Submit the completed form to the Office of the Registrar.

At Rice University, veterans' benefits are managed through the Office of the Registrar. This office assists all veterans and their dependents who wish to receive Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits.

Please see the Office of the Registrar’s website (https://registrar.rice.edu/students/veterans/) regarding the documentation required to obtain educational allowances from the VA.

Veterans who are planning to attend the university should contact Rice University’s Veterans Affairs Representative (registrar@rice.edu) at least two months before the date of entry. Such time is required to expedite the processing of paperwork for educational allowances from the VA.

For certification of benefits, students should have an enrollment of at least half time (6 credit hours for undergraduates).

For additional information regarding other veterans’ educational programs, contact the Office of the Registrar at 713-348-4999 or registrar@rice.edu.