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Athens State University reserves the right to cancel any course without advance notification.

## Course Hour Load/Overload

The course hour load for a full-time student is 12-19 semester hours for the fall and spring semesters, and 12-15 semester hours for the summer term. During semesters in which compressed sessions are offered, the University reserves the right to further limit the number of hours for which a student may enroll. In addition, the University reserves the right to take appropriate steps for any student placed on academic probation, including limiting the student's course load. **No student may take more than 24 semester hours in a given term.** Students who wish to enroll in a course hour overload must complete and submit a standard overload request form available through the Office of Admissions webpage. **To qualify for a course hour overload, a student must have an overall GPA of 2.50 or higher.**

## Curriculum Adjustment Form

Course substitutions, course equivalences, and/or student curriculum adjustments require the student's advisor to submit a curriculum adjustment form. **Adjustments will not be made without the appropriate signatures required.** Once the form is submitted and signed at the appropriate levels it will be sent to the Records Office for processing.

## Degree Completion – Time Limit Requirement

A student who does not complete the requirements for a degree within a 5-year period from the date of entry must then follow the degree requirements published in the catalog which is issued when they begin their sixth year of enrollment. This process is repeated every five years until the student graduates.

## Degree Options

Athens State University offers three baccalaureate degree options: the Bachelor of Arts degree, the Bachelor of Science degree and the Bachelor of Science in Education degree. Not all degrees are available in every major/program. Students should refer to the academic College sections of this catalog for specific degree options and requirements.

## Directed Study/Research Courses

With approval of the faculty advisor and the dean of the appropriate academic College, an Athens State University student may complete and apply a maximum of 6 semester hours of Directed Study/Research course work towards the requirements for a particular degree or major. Such directed study or research must be conducted in the student's major area of study.

## Distance Learning – Online Courses and Online Course Content

Athens State University offers a variety of courses and course content through **Blackboard Learn**, the University's primary platform for delivery of online course content. The College of Business currently offers all of its majors online and many online courses are offered through the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences. **Students should consult an advisor or counselor before registering for an online course to ensure that they meet both the academic and technology requirements for the online course.** All courses offered in online formats meet the same requirements and quality standards as those offered in traditional classroom formats. All services of the University, such as library services, bookstore services and learning lab services, are available to both distance learning and traditional students through the University website, phone, or email.

All students enrolled in a least one regular course during any semester are **automatically enrolled** into a self-paced orientation course designed to familiarize students with Blackboard. While completion of this non-credit course is completely voluntary, all students, particularly new students who may be unfamiliar with online course technology or who are less confident in their computer skills, are strongly encouraged to complete the course.

## Final Grade Appeals

A student wishing to appeal a final grade must show **clear and convincing evidence** that:

- The grade was assigned in error, or;
- The faculty member did not assign the grade based on the grading policies and course requirements published in the course syllabus, or;
- The faculty member made changes in grading policies or course requirements without due notice and explanation.

Students cannot use this appeal process to review final course grades that are the result of an academic penalty or sanction for an academic violation of the *Student Code of Conduct*. For additional details, see the policy document [Final Grade Appeals](#).

## General University Requirements for Graduation

Every student planning on completing an undergraduate degree/major program at Athens State University must satisfy all University requirements and meet all financial obligations before a degree is awarded.

To be eligible to receive an undergraduate degree, a student must:

- Complete a minimum of 124 semester hours with at least 25 percent of the degree requirements earned at Athens State University.
- Attain a minimum institutional grade point average of 2.0 on all coursework attempted at Athens State University, and at least

a 2.0 in the major field. **College or departmental regulations may require grade point averages higher than 2.0. These degree-specific requirements are published in the appropriate degree/major section of the University catalog.**

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester hours from an accredited baccalaureate degree granting institution; **at least 51 semester hours of credit must be at the 300-400 level.**
- Complete all of the general education and pre-professional courses (Areas I-V) required for the degree or major(s).
- Apply no more than 64 semester hours of non-traditional/non-graded college credit toward the degree.
- Complete all course requirements for the degree or major(s).
- Complete a minimum of 15 semester hours of upper level (300-400 level) coursework in the major at Athens State University, not including courses taken by reciprocal or visiting arrangements. **College or departmental regulations may require completion of more than 15 semester hours of coursework in the major at Athens State University. These degree-specific requirements are published in the appropriate degree/major section of the University catalog.**
- When applicable, complete all course requirements for a minor with a minimum of six (6) semester hours of upper-level coursework in the minor from Athens State University. College or departmental regulations may require completion of more than six (6) semester hours of coursework in the minor at Athens State University. These specific requirements are published in the appropriate Minors section of the University catalog.
- Complete the requirements for teacher certification (when applicable).

## Grades

(For additional details see the policy document [Athens State University Grading System](#).) Grades of “A”, “B”, or “C” represent levels of accomplishment that indicate a student is performing satisfactorily. A grade of “D” is considered inferior and is the minimum level of accomplishment that will allow a student to continue study at the University if overall academic performance is satisfactory (see the policy *Standards of Academic Performance*). A grade of “F” is unacceptable and may be assigned when a student either: fails to meet the minimum course requirements specified in the course syllabus or assigned by the instructor, or; voluntarily discontinues class attendance without officially withdrawing.

A grade of “I” (incomplete) will be given only under extenuating circumstances, and only through consultation with and by written permission of the instructor. To obtain an incomplete in a course, a student must have completed at least 50% of the work required for the course. If an “I” is given, the time limit allotted for a student to complete the course requirements is at the discretion of the instructor, but will generally be no later than the end of the next semester. If the course requirements are not completed in the time frame allotted, the grade of “I” becomes an “F” unless the time limit is extended by the instructor. **For purposes of GPA computation the “I” is evaluated as “F” until course requirements are completed and a grade change is made.** A grade of “W” will be assigned only when a student officially withdraws from a course before the date of the first day of final exams as published in the academic schedule for the term of enrollment. See “Withdrawal from Courses” below or the policy document [Withdrawal from Courses](#).

While grades of “AU” (audit), “IP” (in progress, used when grades are pending), “W”, and “WC” (withdrawn administratively due to a conduct violation) may appear on the Athens State transcript, **these grades are not awarded quality points and are not used in calculating grade point averages** (see below).

## Grade Point Average (GPA)

### GPA Categories

Several types of grade point averages may be calculated depending on the program or major a student is pursuing. **GPAs appear on the Athens State transcript unless otherwise noted.**

- **Transfer** – calculated for all coursework completed at other postsecondary institutions. This GPA is calculated and used to determine eligibility for admission. See the policy document [Transfer and Acceptance of Academic Credit](#) for additional details.
- **Semester** – calculated for all coursework completed at Athens State University in a particular semester or term.
- **Institutional** – calculated for all coursework completed at Athens State University.
- **Program/major specific** – calculated for specific coursework (e.g., courses required for teacher certification) in Colleges or departments that have special requirements in the program or major. This GPA is calculated and used only to determine eligibility or fulfillment of College or departmental requirements, and does not appear on the Athens State transcript.

### Quality Points for Letter Grades

For each hour of credit in a course, quality points are awarded based on the letter grade earned for the course. Quality points are assigned as follows:

- “A” – 4.0 Quality Points per semester hour
- “B” – 3.0 Quality Points per semester hour
- “C” – 2.0 Quality Points per semester hour
- “D” – 1.0 Quality Point per semester hour
- “F” – 0.0 Quality Points per semester hour

The total number of quality points earned for a course is calculated by multiplying the quality point value for the letter grade

earned by the number of semester hours the course was worth. For example, a student earning the grade of “A” in a 3-semester hour course would be awarded 12 quality points. A student earning the grade of “C” in a 4-semester hour course would be awarded 8 quality points.

### Calculation of GPA

GPA's are calculated by dividing the total number of quality points earned by the total number of completed hours in the category. For example, a student that has completed 24 semester hours at Athens State and who has earned 81 quality points would have an institutional GPA of 3.38. **GPA's are rounded to the second decimal place.** A sample GPA calculation for a typical semester is seen below.

Course Hours	Grade Earned	Quality Points
3	A	12
3	B	9
3	D	3
1	B	3
2	C	4

$$\text{Semester GPA} = \text{Total Quality Points} / \text{Total Completed Hours} = 31/12 = 2.58$$

### Graduation (Commencement) Application

To apply for graduation, students must complete the online Graduation Application form by the deadline published in the class schedule each semester. Students will not be able to apply for graduation until the first day of the semester. Students are also strongly encouraged to complete the Graduating Senior Exit Survey available online. **Failure to notify the Office of Records in a timely manner of the intent to graduate may result in a student's graduation being postponed until the end of the subsequent semester.** Commencement ceremonies are held at regularly scheduled times at the end of each semester as determined by the University.

### Minors

Degree-seeking students can choose to complete coursework for one or more minors in addition to the coursework required for a degree/major. A minimum of six (6) semester hours of upper-level coursework in the minor must be completed at Athens State University. College or departmental regulations may require completion of more than six (6) semester hours of coursework in the minor at Athens State University. These specific requirements are published in the appropriate Minors section of the University catalog. To have completion of the minor(s) noted on the official transcript, all requirements for each minor being pursued must be completed, and additional minors must not have more than 6 semester hours of course requirements in common with any other minor. Students cannot receive credit for completing minors that clearly overlap any majors being completed; for example, a student majoring in Biology cannot receive credit for completion of a Biology minor.

Some degree programs require students to complete a minor (approved by the academic advisor) in addition to the coursework required for the degree/major. These degree and program specific requirements are published in the appropriate degree/major section of the University catalog.

### Registration for Courses

Students may register for courses using the Athens State Online system during periods prior to the beginning of each semester or term. The online registration periods are published in the academic schedule for each semester or term.

For a period following online registration periods as specified in the schedule for each semester or term, students may late register for courses, or courses may be dropped and other courses added, provided required payments are made. Veteran students receiving benefits or students receiving financial aid are strongly encouraged to confer with either the Director of Veterans Affairs or the Office of Student Financial Aid prior to making any schedule changes.

### Repeated Courses

Students should be aware that course repeats, regardless of the reason, are frequently looked upon unfavorably by employers, honor societies, and graduate schools. Any course originally taken at Athens State University **must** be repeated at Athens State University for the repeated course to count towards program requirements. While the grades for all repeated courses remain on the Athens State transcript, only the most recent course grade will be used in calculating the institutional GPA and for determining the fulfillment of program or major requirements or eligibility for honors.

Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor before repeating any courses. **Special regulations pertain to students receiving veteran's benefits or financial aid: those individuals must confer with the Director of Veterans Affairs or the Director of Student Financial Aid prior to registering for a course repeat.**

### Second Degrees

Students who have previously been awarded a baccalaureate degree at Athens State or another regionally accredited institution,

and who plan to pursue another degree at Athens State, must meet all **current** admission requirements, complete all **current** catalog requirements for the new degree and major, and must complete at least 25 percent of the requirements for the new degree and major at Athens State University beyond the conferral date of the first degree. [See also the Concurrent Degrees section above, and the Second (Double) or Additional Majors section below.]

#### **Students Who Earned a Previous Baccalaureate Degree at Athens State**

In order to pursue a second degree after the conferral date of the first degree from Athens State, at least 25% of the course requirements for the new degree and major must be unique to the new degree and major, and must not be courses that are major, pre-professional, or general education courses for the first degree and major. If 25% of the course requirements are not unique, the student is **not eligible** to pursue the second degree/major.

Upon completion of the second degree, the transcript will note the conferral of the second degree, the date conferred, and the major.

### **Second (Double) or Additional Majors**

#### **Second (Double) Majors**

Students can pursue two majors under the same degree (e.g., both are B.S. programs) concurrently only if at least 20 hours for one of the majors are unique to that major, and are not major, pre-professional, or general education courses for the other major. If at least 20 unique hours cannot be identified between the majors, then a double major is **not possible or allowed**. If 20 unique hours can be identified, then upon completion of the requirements for the degree and both majors, the transcript will note the conferral of one degree, the date conferred, and both majors. **Non-disciplinary majors such as Liberal Studies are excluded as a second major.**

Students wishing to pursue double majors must confer with their advisor(s), complete the appropriate forms to declare the double majors, and receive the necessary approvals as indicated by the forms before the double major declarations are added to the permanent academic record.

#### **Additional Majors**

Students can pursue two majors under different degrees (e.g., one major is a B.S. program, the other a B.A. program) concurrently only if at least 20 hours for one of the majors are unique to that major, and are not major, pre-professional, or general education courses for the other major. If at least 20 unique hours do not exist between the majors, then the additional major is **not possible or allowed**. If 20 unique hours can be identified, then upon completion of the requirements for the degree and both majors, the transcript will note the conferral of one degree (the primary degree as specified by the student when the additional major is approved), the date conferred, and both majors. **Non-disciplinary majors such as Liberal Studies are excluded as an additional major.**

The additional major is shown as an additional major only, with no indication that the major is associated with the degree conferred. Students wishing to pursue additional majors must confer with their advisor(s), complete the appropriate forms to declare the additional major, and receive the necessary approvals as indicated by the forms before the additional major declarations are added to the permanent academic record.

According to federal regulations, a student is no longer eligible for grant aid once they meet the requirements for a first bachelor's degree, even if the student does not receive the degree. Beyond meeting the requirements for a first bachelor's degree the student may receive aid in the form of student loans if the student is seeking an additional degree (for example, first degree BA, second degree BS or BSED) or completing courses to meet state requirements for teacher certification or the student is completing a certification with a minimum of 24 semester hours. Recommended or optional courses for professional recognition or advancement do not qualify a student for aid.

### **Standards of Academic Performance**

The University standards for satisfactory academic performance are designed to assist the student in meeting and maintaining a level of achievement that will assure reasonable progress toward graduation. As specified in the General University Requirements for Graduation, all students must maintain a minimum institutional grade point average of 2.0 for graduation; some College or departmental regulations may require grade point averages higher than 2.0 (see the appropriate College or departmental section of the catalog for additional details).

**While academic performance at other institutions is considered for admission to the University, the academic status of an Athens State student is based only on the student's performance in coursework taken at the University.**

Categories for the academic status of a student are:

- **Good Standing** – assigned to a student whose cumulative institutional GPA is 2.0 or above, and whose semester institutional GPA for any semester/term is 2.0 or above.
- **Academic Probation** – assigned to a student whose semester institutional undergraduate GPA in a semester/term is below 2.0. This status will also be assigned to a student already on academic probation in a semester/term who earns a 2.0 undergraduate GPA or above in a subsequent term, but whose cumulative institutional GPA is still below 2.0. This status will

also be assigned to a student who is admitted on probationary status from other institutions, or who is admitted to the University with a transfer GPA less than 2.0.

- **Academic Suspension, One Semester** – assigned to a student on academic probation in a semester/term and whose GPA in the subsequent semester/term is below 2.0. Students wishing to return to the University after serving a one-semester suspension must apply for readmission to the Admissions Committee (see below). Suspensions may be waived on appeal by application to and approval of the Admissions Committee. Students readmitted after serving a suspension, or on successful appeal of the suspension, are readmitted on academic probation status.
- **Academic Suspension, One Year** - assigned to a student on academic suspension, one semester, and whose semester GPA in the returning semester/term is below 2.0. Students wishing to return to the University after serving a one-year suspension must apply for readmission to the Admissions Committee. Suspensions may be waived on appeal by application to and approval of the Admissions Committee. Students readmitted after serving a suspension, or on successful appeal of the suspension, are readmitted on academic probation status.

Students receiving financial aid who have their aid suspended for failure to meet requirements for satisfactory academic progress must file a **separate** appeal with the Office of Financial Aid for consideration of reinstatement of aid. For additional details, see the Student Financial Aid section of this catalog or the Financial Aid section of the University website.

Students on academic probation or suspension cannot receive permission to take coursework from another institution. Credit earned at another institution may not be used to clear probation or suspension status at Athens State University. For additional details, see the policy document [Standards of Academic Performance](#).

### Student Classification

- **Freshman** – A student who has earned less than 32 semester hours of credit; this classification may be appropriate for applicants or admitted students who have not sent all official transcripts to Athens State University.
- **Sophomore** – A student who has earned a minimum of 32 semester hours of credit; this classification may be appropriate for joint or early admission students, or for admitted students who have not sent all official transcripts to Athens State University.
- **Junior** – A student who has earned a minimum of 64 semester hours of credit or who has received an associate’s degree from an accredited two-year college.
- **Senior** – A student who has earned a minimum of 93 semester hours of credit.
- **Non-degree Seeking** – A student admitted in order to achieve a limited objective and who is not pursuing a degree. (See the Admissions section of this catalog for additional details.)

### Testing/Assessment

Students seeking admission to the College of Education’s Teacher Education Program (TEP) must take the Alabama Prospective Teacher Test (APTT), which include three parts focusing on reading, writing, and mathematics. All three parts must be passed in order to apply for admission to TEP. Prior to graduation, the PRAXIS II Content Area/Subject Area test must be taken and passed prior to admission to internship/student teaching. For additional details, see the College of Education section of the catalog.

In non-teacher education fields, each department and major require some form of exit assessment. The assessment may be a capstone experience, exit exam, or other method to assess whether students leaving the program have the necessary curricular attributes associated with the major, and also assesses the effectiveness of the curriculum within the major. This is an opportunity for self-reflection and synthesis, allowing the student to demonstrate integration of learning and academic growth. Assessment helps the institution meet student needs and ensure that teaching and learning are actually taking place. Assessment is continually under review to determine its value and effectiveness, and assessment methods are subject to change as determined appropriate for the institution. Any student having questions about assessment should contact the department chair of the academic department overseeing the major or program.

### Withdrawal from Courses

A student may officially withdraw from an individual course **before** the date of the first day of final exams as published in the academic schedule for the semester or term of enrollment. A student who officially withdraws from a course after the late registration/change of schedule period but before the first day of final exams will be assigned a grade of “W” for the course and the grade will be entered on the Athens State transcript. A “W” grade will **not** be assigned after the withdrawal deadline.

**Absence from a course does not constitute an official withdrawal. A student enrolled in a course that stops attending and does not officially withdraw will receive a grade of “F”. Under no circumstances will a grade of “W” be changed to a grade, or a final grade be changed to a “W.”**

Students **must** process all official withdrawals using the procedure established by the Office of Admissions and published on the University website. Failure to do so may result in a failing grade for a course.

Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor before withdrawing from any courses. **Special regulations pertain to students receiving veteran’s benefits or financial aid: those individuals must confer with the Director of Veterans Affairs or the Director of Student Financial Aid prior to initiating a withdrawal action.**

## **Tuition and Fees**

**Tuition and fee rates are subject to change at any time, subject to the approval of the Athens State University Board of Trustees.** The Athens State University website has information on current [tuition and fee rates](#).

Payment due dates for each semester or term can be found on the University website or in the [class schedule](#) for the semester or term.

### **In-State Tuition**

In-state tuition rates apply to all Alabama residents. According to state law, in-state tuition rates also apply to Tennessee residents in 9 south Tennessee counties: Bedford, Franklin, Giles, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore and Wayne. In compliance with 38 U.S.C. §3679 (c) and Public Law 114-315, in-state tuition rates also apply to students eligible for funding under the Choice Act (see the Veterans Affairs section of this catalog for details).

### **Out-of-State Tuition**

Out-of-state tuition rates apply to all non-Alabama residents and to those who reside outside the Tennessee counties listed above.

### **Distance Learning Tuition**

The Distance Learning tuition rate applies to all courses taught 100% online and listed as Distance Learning (DL-Online) courses, regardless of the residency status of the student.

### **Senior Adult Scholarship Program**

This program allows any non-degree seeking student 60 years or older (who meets standard admissions requirements) to audit Athens State courses. The senior student is eligible to receive a tuition waiver for Athens State courses in the amount of one-half the applicable tuition rate. **All other applicable tuition and fees must be paid by the student.** Registration in courses under this program is on a space available basis and requires registration during the late registration process. Students must enroll each semester with no lapse in enrollment in order to be eligible. Repeated courses are not eligible under this program.

## **Refunds**

Current information about refunds can be found in the [Refunds of Tuition and Fees](#) policy in the University Policy Library.

### **Refunds in Compliance With Federal Regulations**

The University complies with federal regulations relative to refund of tuition and other institutional charges and the return of funds for Title IV (financial aid) recipients (see below).

### **Refunds for Alabama National Guard Members and Reservists Called to Active Duty**

Students who are active members of the Alabama National Guard or reservists or who are active duty military who are called to active duty in the time of national crisis shall receive a full tuition refund at the time of withdrawal, if such student is unable to complete the term due to active duty orders or assignment to another location.

### **Federal Regulations on Return of Funds for Students Receiving Title IV Aid (Financial Aid)**

Title IV funds are awarded to students under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded. When a student fails to complete the term, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds he or she was scheduled to receive, and the institution and/or the student may be required to return funds according to federal regulations. For additional details, see the Student Financial Aid section of the catalog or the Financial Aid Regulations on the University website.

## **Returned Checks/Returned Automated Clearing House (ACH) Payments**

If a student's check is not paid on presentment or is dishonored, the student will be assessed a bad check fee. Athens State University may electronically debit or draft a student's account for this charge. Also, if a student's check is returned for insufficient or uncollected funds, the check may be electronically re-presented for payment. Returned checks cannot be re-deposited by the Office of Financial Affairs. After the second returned check, the Office of Financial Affairs will **not** accept a personal check for tuition and fees payment. Payment must be made using cash, money order, credit card, or cashier's check.

## **Holds on Grades or Transcripts**

A student failing to meet financial obligations to the University may have semester grade reports, transcripts, and all other academic transactions put on hold until the financial obligations are cleared through the Office of Financial Affairs. Such financial obligations may include: unpaid fees, overdue library books, damaged or unreturned University equipment, and unpaid student loans. A student may also be withdrawn from classes and not permitted to register until pending financial obligations have been cleared.

## **Student Financial Aid**

The Office of Student Financial Aid supports the University goal of providing postsecondary education opportunities by assisting qualified Athens State University students pursue their educational goals with funds from grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study programs from federal, state, and private sources. The Office is committed to:

- Ensuring compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations and policy requirements governing student financial aid services;
- Maintaining funding sources by ensuring program integrity through ongoing staff training and continuing education, external audits, and self-evaluations;
- Maximizing funds available for Athens State University students to meet their costs of attendance, supplementing the efforts of students and parents in meeting educational goals; and
- Providing quality financial assistance services effectively and efficiently.

For questions regarding financial aid, contact the Office of Student Financial Aid: (mail) Athens State University Office of Student Financial Aid, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8122; (email) [finaid@athens.edu](mailto:finaid@athens.edu). Students may also visit the Financial Aid webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/financial-aid/>. The Student Financial Aid Office is located on the upper-level of the Sandridge Student Center.

### **Basic Steps for Applying for Aid**

**Students must apply for aid each academic year.** Additional details can be found on the Student Financial Aid webpage [Aid Process – Start to Finish](#).

#### **Apply for a U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID)**

Apply for an FSA ID at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Click the “FSA ID” link to create an FSA ID; you will be asked to create a username and password and enter your email address. You will receive a secure code by email at the address you entered asking you to confirm your email address with the code. The FSA ID will be your electronic signature for the FAFSA, renewal FAFSA, and Master Promissory Note for loans. Parents of dependent students must also have their own FSA ID to sign the FAFSA electronically.

#### **Apply for Federal Aid**

Apply for Federal Aid at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). This application is required to determine a student’s eligibility for federal grant and loan programs. The results of this application are mailed to each student and electronically transmitted to each institution listed on the student’s application. **Athens State University’s School Code is 001008.**

#### **Apply for a Direct Student Loan**

Students requesting loan funding must also fulfill the one time **online** requirements of Entrance Counseling and the completion of a Master Promissory Note at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov). The Master Promissory note requires an Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) to complete. The Financial Aid Office receives direct electronic confirmation of the completion of these requirements.

### **Federal Requirements on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Students Receiving Aid**

All undergraduate first-degree-seeking students must comply with the Federal Requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress:

- The student must maintain an institutional GPA of at least 2.0.
- The student must successfully complete 67% of all Athens State coursework attempted. All grades of “W”, “I”, and “F” count as unsuccessful completions. When unsuccessful completions exceed 33% of all coursework attempted, financial aid will be suspended.
- The student must complete the requirements for the first bachelor’s degree within 150% of the usual time frame for degree completion. Athens State generally requires completion of 124 semester hours to earn a first undergraduate degree. Therefore, financial aid will be available for no more than 186 semester hours of credit.
- Students seeking an additional degree must complete the requirements within 130% of the time frame for the degree. An advisor’s plan of study is required to be on file in the Financial Aid Office for all students pursuing an additional degree. The student must follow this plan. Therefore, if the plan of study calls for an additional 66 hours of study, financial aid will be available for no more than 86 semester hours of credit beyond the first degree. The additional undergraduate degree must be one in which Athens State will award an additional degree. This may not be an additional major or minor, but must be for a new degree program. For example, if the student has a B.S. degree, the additional degree must be for a B.A. or B.S.Ed. to be eligible for additional financial aid. The student must maintain a 2.0 on all coursework beyond the most recent bachelor’s degree.
- Students seeking a state required teaching certification or certificate program must complete the requirements within 130% of the time frame for the certification. An advisor’s plan of study is required to be on file in the Office of Student Financial Aid for all students pursuing course work toward a certification. The student must follow this plan. Therefore, if the plan of study calls for an additional 24 hours of study, financial aid will be available for no more than 31 hours of credit. The student must maintain a 2.0 on all coursework beyond the most recent bachelor’s degree.

All accepted transfer work will be included in calculations of the number of hours eligible for financial aid. Noncredit remedial

courses are not included in the calculations. Repeated courses and courses for which the student has been granted academic bankruptcy or course forgiveness are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned hours. Students changing majors will not have additional time allowed for goal accomplishment. For financial aid purposes, students are considered to be on probationary status the first term of enrollment (see below).

Compliance with standards of academic progress is checked at the end of each term. Students not in compliance will have financial aid placed on a "WARNING" status for one semester. If at the end of the WARNING semester the student fails to regain compliance with SAP, the student will be placed on SUSPENDED status. Students are notified via their student email account of suspension and steps for appeal and/or reinstatement of aid.

### **Suspension of Financial Aid – Process for Student Appeal/Reinstatement**

**Please note:** The process detailed below is for appeals related to the suspension and reinstatement of financial aid.

Students who have also been suspended from the University for poor academic performance must file a **separate** appeal concerning the University suspension. Additional information on this process can be found in the [Standards of Academic Performance](#) policy.

Students on SUSPENDED status may submit an appeal for aid reinstatement due to extenuating circumstances. Student appeals **must** include a completed Federal Aid Suspension Appeal Form and supporting documentation, including:

- A typed explanation of:
  - Unusual or mitigating circumstances that you believe prevented or hindered you in making satisfactory academic progress; **AND**
  - What has changed and/or corrective actions and steps being taken to prevent future problems.
- Supporting documentation relevant to the circumstances and your request for reinstatement of aid (e.g., doctor's statements, hospital discharge records, death certificate, etc.).
- A complete updated plan of study provided by your academic advisor.
- **RECOMMENDED:** At least one letter of support from someone (**not a family member**) who can attest to the extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical doctor, clergy, professional, etc.).

The appeal documentation must be provided to the Office of Student Financial Aid **no later than 30 days prior to the tuition payment deadline for the upcoming semester**. Failure to provide all documentation within the prescribed dates will result in a delayed determination.

Once the Office of Student Financial Aid has made a decision on the student's appeal, the student will be notified of the decision via the student's Athens State email account. If the student's appeal is approved, the status will be changed to PROBATION, which may require that the student agree to certain conditions. Generally, PROBATION continues until the student has regained SAP, provided the student has no grades of "W", "I", or "F" while on PROBATION status. Failure to follow all conditions related to the PROBATION status will result in financial aid being terminated.

The student may appeal the decision of the Office of Student Financial Aid with an additional typed letter to the Financial Aid Committee. The Committee will review the appeal and notify of their decision via the student's Athens State email account. The committee reviews appeals once per semester/term, near the beginning of the term. Decisions of the committee are final.

If the student's appeal is denied or the student elects not to appeal, the student generally must self-pay to complete the hours necessary and achieve the grades required to return to compliance with SAP. Financial aid status will return to **GOOD STANDING** when the Office of Student Financial Aid makes a determination that the student meets all the terms of SAP. Additional details can be found on the Student Financial Aid webpage [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#).

## **Financial Aid Programs**

Additional information on aid programs can be found on the Student Financial Aid webpage [Types of Aid](#).

### **Federal Programs**

#### **Pell Grants**

This program is for students who have not earned a bachelor's degree or first professional degree. The actual size of a grant award will depend upon the family's financial situation, the amount of funds actually available for the program each year and the cost of education.

#### **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)**

This program provides grants to qualified applicants who demonstrate exceptional financial need. Pell Grant recipients who demonstrate the most financial need will be the first to get FSEOGs.

#### **Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant**

The TEACH Grant Program provides up to \$4,000 a year in grant aid to Athens State University undergraduate students pursuing certain majors. **Students pursuing an additional bachelor's degree or a post baccalaureate certification are not eligible for the**

**TEACH grant program.** Eligible students may not receive more than \$8,000 in total TEACH Grants at Athens State University. A student who receives a TEACH Grant must complete the required teaching service as specified in the conditions of the TEACH grant, or will be required to repay the grants as a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan with interest charged from the date of each TEACH Grant disbursement.

#### **Federal Work-Study Program**

This program is designed to help students pay for part or all of their educational expenses by working part-time on campus in coordination with their class schedules. This program is available on the basis of need as defined by the student's Pell Grant information. All requirements and conditions for employment under the Federal Work-Study Program are available in the Athens State University Career Development Center.

#### **Federal Direct Loan Programs**

**Direct Subsidized Loans** – provides students the opportunity to borrow funds for education costs at low interest rates. For students with a defined need, the federal government subsidizes the interest during the certain specified periods.

**Direct Unsubsidized Loans** – for students with no defined need the federal government provides loan funds with low interest rates, but does not subsidize the interest. Interest accrues to the student while enrolled in school.

**Direct PLUS Loans** – provides parents the opportunity to borrow funds for their dependent undergraduate student enrolled at least half time in an eligible program at an eligible school. PLUS loans **require an acceptable credit history**. Parents may borrow up to the cost of education less other financial aid offered to the student.

**Athens State University does not certify loans to or for students on academic probation or for students failing to meet satisfactory academic progress standards as outlined in the preceding section.**

#### **Eligibility Requirements for Federal Aid Programs**

- U. S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Registered with Selective Service (if required)
- Working toward a degree or certificate
- Making satisfactory academic progress
- Not owe a refund on a federal grant or be in default of a federal educational loan
- Demonstrate financial need via the application process
- Not receiving aid at more than one school during the same enrollment period

#### **State Programs**

##### **Alabama Assistance Grant Program**

This program is a State/Federal Aid Program designed to provide assistance to residents of the State of Alabama. The program is need based and offers awards based on the Pell need analysis to students with demonstrated “exceptional need.”

##### **TRA -- Trade Readjustment Allowance**

This program is a State Aid program designed to assist individuals who became unemployed as a result of increased imports to return to suitable employment. Students must be referred by a state employment office.

##### **WIA --Alabama Workforce Investment Act**

This program is a State/Federal Aid program designed to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor market and to provide dislocated workers with retraining opportunities that will facilitate their re-entry into the labor market. Students must be referred by a state employment office.

#### **Federal Regulations on Return of Funds for Students Receiving Title IV Aid (Financial Aid)**

The federal regulations in effect at the time of publication of this catalog are given below. Regulations are subject to change; for additional details, see the [Financial Aid Regulations](#) on the University website.

Title IV funds are awarded to students under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded. When a student fails to complete the term, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds he or she was scheduled to receive, and the institution and/or the student may be required to return funds according to federal regulations.

The Title IV programs included in these regulations are Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), TEACH Grants, and Federal Direct Loans. Federal Work-Study funds are not included.

Federal refund regulations require Athens State University to determine the amount of aid “earned” by each student receiving Title IV funds who withdraws from all classes prior to the 60% point in the term. A student completing 60% of the term is considered to

have “earned” 100% of the Title IV funds the student was scheduled to receive during the period.

Any student earning a passing grade in at least one course for the term are not subject to the federal Return to Title IV Funds regulations. **Students are strongly encouraged to consult the Office of Student Financial Aid prior to withdrawing or dropping out of the term.**

Calculations are based on the student’s official withdrawal date. For unofficial withdrawals, calculations are based on the last date of an academically related activity that the student participated in, the mid-point of the term, or the date the school determines the student ceased attendance due to illness, accident, grievous personal loss or other circumstances beyond the student’s control. Unofficial withdrawals dates are determined by the faculty, identifying the last date of activity for courses where a student earned an ‘F’, ‘I’, or ‘W’.

The withdrawal date must be determined within 30 days of the end of the term, academic year or student’s program, whichever is earlier.

The institution must return the amount of Title IV funds for which it is responsible no later than 45 days after the date of the determination of the date of the student’s withdrawal. Athens State University offers all degree programs in a credit hour, term based format. As a credit hour, term based degree program, the following formula is used to compute aid to be returned:

$(\text{Days Enrolled} / \text{Days in Term}) \times \text{Title IV Aid Awarded and Disbursed} = \text{Aid Earned}$   
(Any break of five days or more is not counted in the days in the term)

$\text{Aid Disbursed} - \text{Aid Earned} = \text{Aid to be Returned}$

#### **Order of Funds to Return**

- Federal Direct Loans
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal TEACH Grant
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

If a student earned less aid than was disbursed, the institution would be required to return a portion of the funds and the student would be required to return a portion of the funds. **When Title IV funds are returned, the student borrower will owe a debit balance to the institution.**

If a student earned more aid than was disbursed, the institution will owe the student a post-withdrawal disbursement, to be paid within 120 days of the student’s withdrawal.

### **Responsibilities of Students Receiving Financial Aid**

A student receiving financial aid has the responsibility to:

- Review and consider all information about a school’s program BEFORE enrolling.
- Pay special attention to the application for student financial aid, complete it accurately, and submit it on time to the appropriate person, office or agency. Errors can delay or prevent receiving aid.
- Know all the deadlines for applying or reapplying for aid and meet them.
- Provide all documentation, corrections, and/or new information requested by either the Student Financial Aid Office or the agency to which the application was submitted.
- Notify the University of any information that has changed since an application was submitted for financial aid.
- Read, understand, and keep copies of all forms requiring signature(s).
- Repay any student loans. When a student signs a promissory note, the student is agreeing to repay the loan.
- Complete an entrance and exit interview for the University if the student has a Federal Direct Student Loan.
- Notify the University of any change in name, address, or attendance status. **If a student has a loan, the lender must also be notified of any changes.**
- Satisfactorily perform the work agreed upon, if the student is employed in a federal work-study job.
- Understand the University’s refund policy as specified in this catalog.

### **Rights of Students Receiving Financial Aid**

A student has the right to ask the University:

- For the names of the University’s accrediting and licensing organizations.
- For a copy of the documents describing the institution’s accreditation or licensing.
- About the University’s programs, instructional, laboratory, and other physical facilities, and about the faculty.
- About the cost of attending, and about the University’s policy on refunds to students who drop out.
- About the types of financial assistance that are available, including information on all federal, state, local, private and institutional financial aid programs.
- About financial aid personnel, where their offices are located, and how to contact them for information.

- About the procedures and deadlines for submitting applications for each available financial aid program.
- How the University determines financial need, including cost of education and resources available.
- How much of one's need, as determined by the University, had been met.
- How and when financial aid is received.
- To explain each type and amount of assistance in the financial aid package.
- About the interest rate on any student loan, the total amount to be repaid, the length of time for repayment and when repayment must start, and what cancellation or deferment provisions apply.
- If offered a federal work-study job— about the kind of job, the hours to be worked, the duties of the job, the rate of pay, and how and when wages are paid.
- To reconsider an aid package, if a student believes a mistake has been made, or if enrollment or financial circumstances have changed.
- About the requirements for satisfactory academic progress, and the consequences of unsatisfactory progress.
- About the special facilities and services that are available to persons with disabilities.

## **Veterans Affairs [Please also see catalog addendum August 2017]**

The veterans educational assistance programs and services at Athens State University are based on the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and as such are subject to change without notice.

Athens State University is a participating member in the Principles of Excellence Program. Educational institutions participating in the Principles of Excellence program agree to the following guidelines:

- Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentations.
- Accommodate Service members and Reservists absent due to service requirements.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advice.
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of federal student financial aid programs.

For questions regarding veterans programs, contact the Office of Veterans Affairs: (mail) Athens State University, Office of Veterans Affairs, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8271; (email) [carolyn.carthen@athens.edu](mailto:carolyn.carthen@athens.edu). Students may also visit the Veterans Affairs webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/veterans-affairs/>. The Veterans Affairs Office is located on the lower-level of the Sandridge Student Center.

### **Veterans Educational Assistance Programs**

- Montgomery G.I. Bill - Active Duty Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 30 of Title 38, U. S. Code)
- Montgomery G.I. Bill - Selective Reserve Educational Assistant Program (Chapter 1606, formerly Chapter 106, of Title 10, U.S. Code)
- Post 9/11 GI Bill - Chapter 33
- Vocational Rehabilitation - Chapter 31: This program provides educational assistance to disabled veterans who are in need of vocational rehabilitation. To be eligible a veteran must have a service-connected disability entitling him/her to these benefits. An award authorization must be received by the Office of Veterans Affairs before benefits can be used.
- Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35 of Title 38, U. S. Code): Paperwork for state benefits (tuition, fees, books) should be processed through the Athens State Business Office. Federal benefits (monthly checks) should be processed through the Office of Veterans Affairs.
- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) - (Chapter 1607)
- Fry Scholarship - a provision of the Post 9/11 GI Bill

### **Selection of Major or Program**

In consultation with a Transfer Student Success Center counselor or an academic advisor, each veteran or eligible dependent student must select and plan a program in accordance with the Athens State University catalog. Assistance in determining a course of study or a change of program will be furnished by the Office of Veterans Affairs in consultation with the appropriate academic advisor.

### **Prior Credit Evaluation Requirements**

Athens State University is required by the Department of Veteran Affairs to obtain a written record of the previous education and training completed by veterans and other eligible persons receiving VA benefits. Students are required to submit official transcripts of courses and training prior to the end of their second term of enrollment at Athens State University. The Athens State University Office of Veterans Affairs will not submit certification for VA educational funding after the second term if all transcripts have not been received, evaluated and applied appropriately.

Certification of enrollment by the Office of Veterans Affairs prior to evaluating all prior credit could result in VA overpayment to the school and student. Any overpayment created through non-compliance with veteran policies is subject to repayment, and such overpayment can cause a delay in the payment of further benefits.

Veteran students are not allowed to receive VA Educational benefits for courses in which they have earned credit or that are not required for their degree or program. Veteran students are not allowed to repeat courses in which they have a passing grade unless a higher grade is required to pursue their course of study.

### **Repeated Courses for Veterans Receiving Educational Benefits**

If a veteran student fails a required course, the student may receive payment for repeating that course. However, according to VA regulations, the student cannot repeat a course just to improve a passing grade and still receive payment for that course. (See also Repeated Courses in the Academic Policies section of the catalog.)

### **Standards of Academic Performance**

Veterans or other eligible students receiving VA benefits are subject to the same standards of academic performance and conduct as are other University students. For additional information, see the Academic Policies section of the catalog.

### **Withdrawal Requirements**

In addition to following the University's policy [Withdrawal from Courses](#), students who receive veterans benefits must notify the Office of Veterans Affairs when withdrawing from a course or when dropping or adding courses during registration periods. Each withdrawal or drop resulting in a reduction in the course load must show the effective date of the change and the reason for the change.

### **Choice Act**

In accordance with Section 702 of the Choice Act, the following individuals shall be charged the in-state/in-district rate, or otherwise considered a resident, for tuition purposes:

- A Veteran using educational assistance under either chapter 30 (Montgomery G.I. Bill – Active Duty Program) or chapter 33 (Post 9/11 G.I. Bill), of title 38, United States Code, who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- Anyone using transferred Post – 9/11 G.I. Bill benefits (38 U.S.C. § 3319) who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of the transferor's discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- A spouse or child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (38 U.S.C. § 3311 (b) (9)) who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of the Service member's death in the line of duty following a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- Anyone described above while he or she remains continuously enrolled (other than during regularly scheduled breaks between courses, semesters, or terms) at the same school. The person so described must have enrolled in the school prior to the expiration of the three-year period following discharge or death described above and must be using educational benefits under either chapter 30 or chapter 33, of title 38, United States Code.

### **Payments to Students Receiving Veteran Benefits**

#### **Receipt of Checks**

A student who completes an Application for Education Benefits or Change of Place of Training Form at the beginning of the semester should expect a VA processing period of about 6 weeks. If the estimated time has elapsed, the student should contact the Office of Veterans Affairs immediately and, if the case warrants, an inquiry will be made to the Regional Office.

#### **Payment**

Athens State University does not participate in the advance payment plan for veterans or eligible dependents; therefore, tuition and fees must be paid in full by the published payment date. Veteran students receiving Vocational Rehabilitation are eligible to register without payment of tuition and fees providing that an award authorization from the VA Vocational Rehabilitation office has been received prior to the payment due date for the semester. Post 9/11 veteran students must provide a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs showing the percentage for which he or she is eligible; this percentage will determine if the student will need to pay any tuition and/or fees.

#### **Overpayments**

Each veteran or dependent receiving benefits should be aware that it is his or her responsibility to comply strictly with the policies and procedures which govern the receipt of educational benefits. Any overpayment created through non-compliance with veteran policies is subject to repayment, and such overpayment can cause a delay in the payment of further benefits.

## **Responsibilities of Students Receiving Veterans Benefits**

It is the responsibility of veterans and dependents receiving VA benefits to notify the Office of Veterans Affairs via email of the following:

- Catalog changes
- Change of address
- Changes in enrollment or class schedule (including drops and/or adds, withdrawals)
- Change of major or program
- Course substitution (approval must be obtained prior to enrolling in the course)
- Enrollment/class schedule for each semester or term, including any enrollment at other institutions as a Visiting or Transient student while attending Athens State University
- Projected graduation date
- Veterans educational benefits eligibility changes

## **Services for Students with Disabilities**

Disability Services (DS) is the central contact point for Athens State students with disabilities. The goal of DS is to ensure that University programs and services are accessible to qualified students with disabilities. DS works with faculty and other members of the University community to provide individualized academic accommodations and support services while promoting student responsibility and self-advocacy.

It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose their disability, provide adequate documentation (if required), and to request academic accommodations/services from Disability Services.

For questions regarding services for students with disabilities, contact Disability Services: (mail) Athens State University, Disability Services, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8143; (email) [disability.services@athens.edu](mailto:disability.services@athens.edu). Students may also visit the Disability Services webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/disability-services>. Disability Services is located on the upper-level of the Sandridge Student Center.

## **Adult Degree Program (ADP)**

The mission of the Adult Degree Program (ADP) at Athens State University is to serve the adult working student who has completed some college coursework without completing a baccalaureate degree. To encourage student success the ADP is designed to reduce or eliminate barriers for returning adult students while providing academically sound alternative methods to apply knowledge gained from the integration of work and classroom experience and to assist the student in the timely achievement of their professional and career goals.

The ADP program is an acknowledgement of the philosophy that it is a valid educational practice to recognize and award academic credit for various types of learning attained outside the institution. Such learning may have been acquired through certain educational programs conducted by government, business and industry, the military, and other non-collegiate organizations. In addition, non-traditional academic credit may be awarded for acceptable work experience, and/or technical training, using a method for documenting and evaluating this non-traditional activity known as Prior Learning Assessment.

For questions regarding the Adult Degree Program, contact: (mail) Athens State University, Adult Degree Program, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8281; (email) [felicia.mucci@athens.edu](mailto:felicia.mucci@athens.edu). Students may also visit the ADP webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/adp>. Offices for the Adult Degree Program are located in Chasteen Hall at the corner of Hobbs and Clinton Streets.

## **Career Development Center**

The Career Development Center provides assistance to Athens State students and alumni in career planning, development and job seeking strategies. The Center serves as a major link between students/alumni and potential employers. The Center can assist students in identifying and fulfilling their future goals and aspirations, and students can receive support in creating professional documents (resumes, cover letters, and social media profiles) and learning effective interview and job search techniques. The Center offers a variety of opportunities for students to meet with hiring employers and graduate school recruiters at career fairs, employer workshops, information sessions, and at campus recruiting events.

**Athenian Jobs** is the Athens State online resource for connecting students with employers. This resource provides access to job openings and leads, mock interview practice modules, and information about upcoming career events. To register for **Athenian Jobs** and services, visit the Center webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/career-development-center/> or call 256-233-8140.

## **University Testing Center**

The University Testing Center strives to promote the mission of the University by providing consistent, confidential, and quality educational testing services. The Center offers a variety of exam options including web-based educational, certification, assessment, pre-employment and licensure testing programs. The University Testing Center is certified by the National College Testing Association (NCTA) and adheres to their Professional Standards and Guidelines for Post-Secondary Test Centers. The Center promotes candidate academic advancement by:

- Providing professional testing services that meet the needs of all university stakeholders and reflect positively on the institution.
- Maintaining a testing center that is quiet, has controlled access, and offers appropriate lighting, temperature, and noise restrictions.
- Providing a professional and knowledgeable test center staff that is committed to ensuring that candidates receive informative answers, courteous encounters, and consistent exam experiences.
- Providing superior customer service that meets candidate needs through polite and professional responses and services.

For questions regarding testing, contact the University Testing Center (256-233-6540 or [testcenter@athens.edu](mailto:testcenter@athens.edu)). Candidates may also obtain information from the University Testing Center webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/testing>. The University Testing Center is located in Chasteen Hall at the corner of Hobbs and Clinton Streets.