

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM PARENTS

*Please note that the following questions and answers are based on Arts and Sciences and Double-Degree policies and procedures. The Conservatory policies are mentioned quite briefly as we assume that there will be a special Conservatory-oriented Q&A list. Also, we hope that there will be electronic links to the actual policies and procedures related to the issues discussed below, which is why the answers are meant to be short summaries of the existing regulations.*

### I. ACADEMIC ADVISING

**Q:** What is the academic advisor's role?

**A:** Academic advisors are most often members of the teaching faculty. They help students make decisions about their course choices and sometimes about their major by sharing with them their educational experience, their ideas, and their understanding of the advisees' educational goals. Advisors help students understand the Oberlin College curriculum, as well as the general education and major requirements for graduation. While they may be most knowledgeable about the courses in their own departments, advisors can also help students find information from other sources.

**Q:** How are advisors assigned in the College of Arts and Sciences?

**A:** Arts and Sciences students are assigned a general advisor until they formally declare a major. A student's expressed academic area of interest is taken into account, as much as possible, in the initial assignment of a general advisor. Typically, a student will have the same advisor for the first two years of College. When the student declares a major, a member of the major department will become his/her advisor. If a student declares an individual major, one or more faculty members will supervise the student's progress and serve as advisors.

**Q:** How are advisors assigned in the Conservatory of Music?

**A:** If a Conservatory student is a performance major, his/her principal private study teacher will be the advisor. If a Conservatory student is majoring in music education, music history, electronic and computer music, composition or jazz studies, a faculty member of that department will serve as the advisor.

**Q:** How are advisors assigned for Double-Degree Students?

**A:** Double-Degree students have two advisors. One is a member of the Arts and Sciences faculty, initially in or near the field of expressed interest, and ultimately in the major field. The other advisor is a Conservatory faculty member in the appropriate Conservatory major. Double-Degree students are required to get permission from both advisors before registering for courses.

**Q: Can my son change his advisor and how?**

**A: It is easy to change academic advisors. To do so, the student should pick up a change of advisor card from the Office of the Dean of Studies, Peters 205, have it signed by his/her new advisor and then return it to the Office of the Dean of Studies. If a student needs help in selecting a new advisor, he/she should see one of the deans in the Office of the Dean of Studies.**

**Q: Can my daughter get help with academic issues from sources other than her advisor?**

**A: Sure. Students who need academic help are encouraged to contact staff in one or more of the following offices on campus: the Office of the Dean of Studies, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Academic Services, and/or the Office of the Assistant Dean of the Conservatory.**

## **II. PART-TIME STUDY**

**Q: Is it possible for my daughter to study part-time this semester?**

**A: Oberlin students normally take a full schedule of courses (between 12 and 16 credits for Arts and Sciences students and between 12 and 17 for Conservatory and Double-Degree students) each semester. Under special circumstances, a student may request part-time status for one or more semesters. To do so, Arts and Sciences students should see a dean in the Office of the Dean of Studies, Peters 205, and request permission for part-time study before registration or during add/drop for a given semester. Conservatory students should see the Associate Dean of the Conservatory. Double-Degree students can go to the Office of the Dean of Studies or the Office of the Associate Dean of the Conservatory.**

**Q: What is the cost of part-time study?**

**A: The part-time study cost is adjusted every year. For the 2007-08 academic year it is \$1,500 per credit hour.**

**Q: Are there any other consequences of part-time study we should be aware of?**

**A: Students who receive financial aid from the College, should consult the Financial Aid office, Carnegie 123. Students who have health care coverage or other type of insurance through their families, should consult the appropriate policy to make sure they'll be covered while they're studying part time.**

## **III. OVERLOAD STUDY**

**Q: Is it possible for my daughter to take more than 16 credits per semester?**

**A: Oberlin students normally take a full schedule of courses (between 12 and 16 credits for Arts and Sciences students and between 12 and 17 for Conservatory and Double-Degree students) each semester. Under special circumstances, a student may request permission to take more than 16 credits in a given semester. To do so, Arts and Sciences students should see a dean in the Office of the Dean of Studies, Peters 205, and request the overload permission before registration or during add/drop for a given semester. Conservatory students should see the**

**Associate Dean of the Conservatory. Double-Degree students can go to the Office of the Dean of Studies or the Office of the Associate Dean of the Conservatory.**

**Q: Do we have to pay extra for the extra credit(s)?**

**A: Yes, students must pay extra for each extra credit they take (i.e., each credit above 16 for Arts and Sciences students, and each credit above 17 for Conservatory and Double-Degree students). The extra credit cost is adjusted every year. For the 2007-08 academic year it is \$950 per credit hour.**

**Q: Are there any other consequences of overload study we should be aware of?**

**A: Students who receive financial aid from the College, should consult the Financial Aid office, Carnegie 123, to determine how the cost of the overload might affect their financial aid.**

#### **IV. ACADEMIC STANDING**

**Q: How does the College review my son's progress towards graduation?**

**A: (1) The College of Arts and Sciences monitors each student's academic performance every semester through the Academic Standing process. The minimum satisfactory academic achievement for full-time students is defined as 10 hours for students in their first semester (with fewer than 14 hours of transfer credit), and 12 hours for all other semesters. Students not meeting the minimum standard will be placed on academic probation or suspension.**

**(2) The Conservatory of Music also reviews the academic progress of Conservatory students, including Double-Degree students, at the end of every semester. Conservatory students are expected to be enrolled full time in the Conservatory in each semester of study, to pass a minimum number of course credit hours, and to be working toward completion of one or more Conservatory majors at a rate suggested by the recommended distribution of requirements for each major. Double-Degree students are expected to be enrolled full time in both divisions in each semester of study, to pass a minimum number of course credit hours, and to be working toward completion of majors in both divisions.**

**Q: Who do I contact if I have questions about my son's academic standing?**

**A: Contact Kathryn Stuart, Dean of Studies, if you have questions or concerns about Academic Standing in the College of Arts and Sciences. Contact the Associate Dean of the Conservatory if you have questions about the Academic Standing process in the Conservatory.**

**Q: What are the consequences of probation?**

**A: If a student is placed on probation, it means that the respective Academic Standing Committee has reviewed his/her case and is expressing its official concern on behalf of the faculty. A student will be placed on continued probation if he/she fails to achieve the minimum academic standard in a second semester.**

**Q: What is academic suspension? What are the consequences of suspension?**

**A: Two consecutive semesters of under-achievement in hours will be regarded more seriously – academic suspension is a likely consequence. Academic suspension is possible even if a student has not previously been on probation if less than half of the required minimum number of hours is earned in any semester. A student may be asked directly by a graduate or professional school or prospective employer whether he/she has ever been on probation or suspension.**

**Q: My daughter was suspended for two semesters. Can she appeal to return after one semester of suspension?**

**A: Yes, students can appeal the suspension decision by following a well-defined appeal process within certain deadlines. Please contact Kathryn Stuart, Dean of Studies, for details.**

**Q: My son was suspended for two semesters. It's time for him to return now, what does he need to do?**

**A: Suspended students must submit a Readmission/Reinstatement form to the Registrar's Office for readmission to Oberlin. Under some circumstances, students are asked to submit additional materials prior to action on their applications. Appropriate forms and materials must be received by August 1 for fall semester and by January 2 for spring semester. Students must be cleared for readmission/reinstatement by August 15 for fall semester or January 15 for spring semester in order to enroll for that semester. No exceptions are made.**

## **V. INCOMPLETES**

**Q: My son was ill during the second half of the semester and needs more time to complete his course work. What are his options?**

**A: If a student has fallen behind in one or more classes for legitimate reasons, he/she may request an incomplete to complete the course work. All requests for incompletes in Arts and Sciences courses must be addressed to the Dean of Studies.**

**Q: What is an educational incomplete?**

**A: During his/her career at Oberlin, a student may have a maximum of two incompletes in Arts and Sciences courses—authorized by the course instructor—for educational reasons. Educational incomplete forms (available beginning the first Monday in December for Fall semester and the first Monday in May for Spring semester) must be completed, signed by the course instructor, and returned to the Office of the Dean of Studies by the time of the scheduled final for the course. The incomplete work is due within three weeks after the end of the semester. The due date may not be extended except for emergency reasons. Please note that an instructor may say no to a request for an educational incomplete. Educational incompletes are not available in Conservatory courses.**

**Q: What is an emergency incomplete?**

**A: Emergency incompletes may be authorized by the Dean of Studies for reasons that arise from circumstances beyond the student's control. These incompletes are usually for medical,**

psychological, or life-crisis reasons and must be requested before the scheduled final for the course. Incompletes for medical reasons require a letter from a doctor or a special form completed by a member of the Student Health Services staff. The due date for finishing work is set according to how much time was lost during the semester, up to a maximum of three weeks after the end of the semester.

**Q:** What if my son needs more than three weeks to complete the course work?

**A:** The due date for work under either kind of incomplete may be extended for emergency reasons only. If work is not completed within the specified time, a grade will be recorded based on the extent to which the course requirements have been met. Additional incompletes (beyond two) for educational reasons may also be authorized by the Dean of Studies, but only under very exceptional circumstances.

## **VI. FINAL EXAMS**

**Q:** I want to make plane reservations for my daughter to travel home at the end of the semester. How do I know what day she can leave?

**A:** Students know their final exam schedule from the very start of the semester. The exam period for Fall 2007 semester begins Monday, December 17 and ends Friday, December 21. Final exam dates are included in most course syllabi and are officially posted on the Registrar's office website at the beginning of each semester.

**Q:** Can final exam times be changed to accommodate traveling/personal/family plans?

**A:** An individual student may not take a final exam at other than the scheduled time—not even at the time allocated to other sections of the same course—without special permission from the Dean of Studies (for courses in the College of Arts and Sciences) or the Conservatory Assistant Dean (for courses in the Conservatory). Acceptable reasons for a student to request a final exam schedule change include having two exams scheduled at the same time or having three exams scheduled in a 24-hour period. Travel schedules are not considered a legitimate reason to change exam times.

## **VII. WINTER TERM**

**Q:** What is Winter Term?

**A:** Oberlin provides a Winter Term of four weeks in January to encourage and enable students to discover the value of self-education. This term affords students an opportunity to devise and pursue programs of independent study or research and to undertake, individually or with a group, on or off campus, other projects of educational value that the structured curriculum during the academic year cannot accommodate easily. Winter Term credits are not the same as semester credit hours, i.e., the Winter Term credits are not included in the required 112 Arts and Sciences or 124 Conservatory or 152 Double-Degree semester hours.

**Q:** What are the Winter Term academic regulations?

**A:** In order to graduate from Oberlin, students pursuing a bachelor's degree are required to earn three full Winter Term credits. Credits are earned by completing a project, either

individually or as part of a group. Winter Term projects are rated as half or full and are evaluated as "completed" (Y) or "not completed" (N); no letter grades are given. Students may propose Winter Term projects from one of the following categories: 1. Academic Study: a faculty-sponsored, academically-focused research, study, or performance project that can be conducted on- or off-campus, individually or as part of a group project. 2. Field Experience: a learning activity that could include career exploration, social or political action, community service, or an unpaid internship. 3. Personal Growth and Development: an opportunity to learn a skill, try something new, or pursue subject matter outside of traditional academic disciplines. All three Winter Term credits may be earned from categories one and two. Only one full project (or two half projects) may be earned from category three. All three Winter Term credits may be earned from categories one and two. Student and sponsor together must determine the most appropriate category for a proposed project.

**Q:** Will Winter Term projects be recorded on my son's transcript?

**A:** Yes, Winter Term project titles and credit earned are recorded on students' transcripts.

**Q:** What is the schedule for Winter Term?

**A:** Each fall the Winter Term website is updated with a detailed description of Winter Term procedures, dates, and deadlines, as well as the Winter Term listing of publicized projects. All information is available online at [www.oberlin.edu/wintertm](http://www.oberlin.edu/wintertm).

**Q:** Are students required to stay on campus during Winter Term?

**A:** Students do not have to stay on campus during Winter Term. However, those who choose to pursue their projects on campus can take advantage of the facilities and opportunities that Oberlin offers. Many concerts, theatrical productions, films, lectures, forums, and discussion groups that enliven Winter Term are part of on-campus projects. Typical off-campus projects include (but are not limited to) career exploration, internships, and community service.

## **VIII. ACADEMIC LEAVE OF ABSENCE (OFF-CAMPUS STUDY)**

Students participating in off-campus study options not conducted by Oberlin College itself are classified as being on an academic leave of absence. There are specific limits on credit transfer from off-campus study programs. For the College of Arts and Sciences they are (a) 16 hours per single semester, or (b) 10 hours per quarter or trimester, or (c) 32 hours per academic year or (d) 20 hours per academic year at a quarter- or trimester-based school. For Conservatory of Music and Double-Degree limits, please consult the Conservatory or Double-Degree section of the Course Catalog.

**Q:** How does a student apply for an academic leave of absence?

**A:** Interested students apply by submitting an academic leave of absence application form to the Office of the Dean of Studies, Peters 205. Leaves are processed by the Associate Dean of Studies and granted by the Off-Campus Study Committee prior to a student's departure from Oberlin.

**Q: How is an academic leave of absence approved?**

**A: Academic leaves are approved when students can demonstrate the value of such leaves for their Oberlin education and meet the following criteria: (1) A student must have completed at least two semesters at Oberlin. (2) A student must have declared a major. (3) A maximum of 36 hours of credit transferred toward the graduation requirement will be permitted after a student has enrolled at Oberlin. In addition, an Arts and Sciences student may transfer no more than 56 hours (62 hours for Conservatory majors and Double-Degree students) in total towards the Oberlin degree. (4) A student must carry a minimum of 12 semester hours when on an academic leave of absence. In addition, a student may not be approved for an academic leave of absence if there is an outstanding account balance.**

**Q: When does my daughter need to apply for an academic leave of absence?**

**A: For academic leaves for the fall semester or through the full academic year, students must apply prior to the first Wednesday after Spring Break in the preceding year. For leaves starting in the spring semester, students must apply prior to the first Wednesday after Fall Break.**

**Q: Can my son extend his academic leave of absence?**

**A: It is possible to extend an academic leave if the student hasn't gone over the limit for transfer of credit (i.e. if he/she hasn't transferred more than 36 credit hours after matriculation at Oberlin). The Off-Campus Study Committee considers similar requests on a case-by-case basis. Requests for extensions of academic leaves, including a new application form, must also be received by the deadlines specified above.**

**Q: Is financial aid applicable when a student goes on an academic leave of absence?**

**A: Oberlin financial aid is only applicable to Oberlin-affiliated programs. Federal financial aid is usually applicable to most study-away programs.**

**Q: Is health insurance applicable when a student goes on an academic leave abroad?**

**A: In most cases health insurance is applicable, but might offer limited health care coverage. Please consult your individual health insurance policy for details.**

## **IX. MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**A student may apply for a medical leave of absence from the College when such a leave is necessitated by the student's medical or psychological condition.**

**Q: How does a student apply for a medical leave of absence?**

**A: Students applying for a medical leave of absence must complete the medical leave application form and provide supporting documentation from a health professional stating the reason for the leave and the expected duration of the leave. They must also discuss their situation with the Office of the Dean of Studies before applying.**

**Q: Does my son need special permission to return from a medical leave of absence?**

**A: Yes. In order to be reinstated following an approved medical leave of absence, the student must submit a timely application for return and must provide documentation from his/her treating health professional confirming that the student is able to return.**

**Q: Can a student extend a medical leave of absence?**

**A: Yes. A student on an approved medical leave of absence may request that the leave be extended by submitting a written request to the Office of the Dean of Studies, Peters 205, along with documentation from the student's treating health professional stating the need for an extension and the expected duration of the extension.**

**Q: What happens if a student fails to follow the procedure and the deadlines for return from a medical leave of absence?**

**A: If a student does not follow the procedure for reinstatement at the end of a medical leave and does not request an extension or additional leave, he/she will be withdrawn from the College, effective as of the last day of approved leave. If this occurs, the College will notify the student about the change in status and the procedure for seeking readmission.**

## **X. PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Students who wish to pursue primarily non-academic activities away from Oberlin may apply for a personal leave of absence through the Office of the Dean of Studies. A maximum of six credit hours for a semester or four credit hours for each quarter or trimester of leave may be transferred to Oberlin for work taken at other institutions while on personal leave.

**Q: How and when does a student apply for a personal leave of absence?**

**A: Interested students must apply by submitting a personal leave of absence application form to the Office of the Dean of Studies, Peters 205. Completed applications for leaves beginning the following semester are due the first week in December and the first week in May.**

**Q: Can a student extend a personal leave of absence?**

**A: Yes. Requests for extensions of personal leaves must be received in the Office of the Dean of Studies by the deadlines specified above.**

## **XI. TRANSFER OF CREDITS**

Oberlin College permits credit earned at other fully accredited colleges and universities to be applied to the requirements for the Oberlin degree provided that the following two criteria are satisfied: (1) the student has done C-level work or better; and (2) the course work falls within the scope of a liberal arts curriculum.

Please go to <http://www.oberlin.edu/catalog/college/transfer.html> or contact the Registrar's office for details on the Transfer of Credit policy. Special regulations apply to work done in music, in foreign countries or at non-degree-granting institutions.

**Q: How much time does my son have to transfer credits from another school?**

**A: Students have one calendar year from the completion of coursework or a qualifying event (e.g., receipt of scores from an Advanced Placement exam or an International Baccalaureate) in which to request that the credits be transferred. Graduating students must file a completed request for transfer of credit by the end of the add/drop period in the fall if graduating in May and by the end of the add/drop period in the spring if graduating in December. Allowances will be made for students on leave in the event that the deadline occurs during a leave.**

## **XII. OFFICIAL COLLEGE BREAKS**

The fall and spring breaks are one-week long periods of no classes, which roughly split the 14-week-long semesters into two. Faculty and students appreciate this time off and use it to relax after the midterm exam period (most midterms are administered the week before break).

**Q: Are students expected to leave campus during fall and spring breaks?**

**A: Students may use the time as a vacation or to do research, catch up with academic projects, or just keep working if they have on- or off-campus jobs. Therefore, they can choose to leave campus or stay here.**

**Q: Can students eat in the dining halls during the breaks?**

**A: All on-campus dining facilities are closed during the breaks. Students can cook in their residence hall kitchens or eat downtown.**

**Q: Is it safe for my daughter to stay on campus during the breaks?**

**A: It is perfectly safe for students to stay on campus. About 10% of the students who live on-campus choose to stay during the breaks. A higher number of students who live off-campus (i.e., upperclassmen) choose to stay here too, as well as most of the international students.**

## **XIII. GRADUATION AND MARCHING AT COMMENCEMENT**

**Q: Can my son march at graduation without having completed all degree requirements?**

**A: Students must be registered for work sufficient to complete, by the end of the last semester in residence, all requirements for the degree(s) sought, in order to be eligible to participate in the annual Commencement exercises.**

**Q: My son has completed all degree requirements except for one Winter Term credit. Can he march at commencement?**

**A: No. Students who haven't completed their Winter Term credits will not be allowed to march.**

**Q: My daughter will be finishing her degree away. Can she march at commencement with her class?**

**A: No. Students who have permission to finish their work away from Oberlin may participate in commencement exercises only after all requirements have been completed and the degree awarded. See the Course Catalog for information on Finish Away status.**

#### **XIV. LEAVING OBERLIN COLLEGE**

**Q: My daughter wants to transfer to another school. What does she need to do to withdraw?**

**A: Students withdrawing permanently from Oberlin must apply through the Associate Dean of Studies. Conservatory and Double-Degree students should first consult their principal advisors and the Assistant Dean of the Conservatory. All students who receive financial aid from Oberlin College must consult with the Office of Financial Aid before withdrawing. Please note that if students just want to take some time off from college and plan to return, they are encouraged to request a personal leave of absence, not to withdraw.**

**Q: My son withdrew from Oberlin last year. Can he return now?**

**A: Withdrawn students must submit a Readmission/Reinstatement form to the Registrar's Office for readmission to Oberlin. Under some circumstances, students are asked to submit additional materials prior to action on their applications. Appropriate forms and materials must be received by August 1 for fall semester and by January 2 for spring semester. Students must be cleared for readmission/reinstatement by August 15 for fall semester or January 15 for spring semester in order to enroll for that semester. No exceptions are made.**