

Athens State University

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ACCREDITATION

Athens State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award bachelor's and master's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Athens State University.

The College of Education at Athens State University is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) 2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20036. NCATE is currently collaborating with TEAC (Teacher Education Accreditation Council) to form a new unified accrediting body called The Council for Accreditation of Educator Programs (CAEP).

The College of Business at Athens State University is nationally accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), 11520 West 119th Street, Overland Park, Kansas 66213, (913) 339-9356.

Athens State University is approved by the Alabama State Department of Education for the training of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary school teachers. The Alabama State Department of Education is a member of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education Certification.

The B.S. in Computer Science degree program (excluding the concentration in Information Security) is accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET, <http://www.abet.org>.

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A Non-Profit, State Institution of Higher Learning

This catalog is the annual announcement of the undergraduate academic programs, requirements, and regulations of Athens State University. Students enrolling in the University are subject to the provisions stated herein. The rules, regulations, policies, fees and other charges, courses, programs of study, and academic requirements that appear in this catalog were in effect at the time of its publication and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all information. The contents are published for informational purposes only, and do not constitute a contract between the University and any student, applicant for admission, or other person. Statements regarding courses, programs of study, fees, and conditions are subject to change without advance notice.

Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Statement

Athens State University, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. Athens State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, disability, religion, genetic information, or veteran status in employment, or admissions to or participation in educational programs and activities. Inquiries or concerns may be addressed to the Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs, 300 N. Beaty St., Athens, AL 35611, 256-216-3303.

Accessibility/Disability

Athens State University complies with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 including all updated regulations and guidance. Athens State University strives to provide a dynamic and appropriate instructional environment and workplace to meet the needs of students, employees and citizens of the communities served. It is the policy of the University that a good faith effort shall be made to meet the accommodation requests of persons with disabilities. Athens State University employees and citizens should contact the Office of Human Resources, (256) 216-3314, to complete the procedure for requesting an accommodation. Students with disabilities may contact Accessibility Services (formerly Disability Services), located on the ground floor of McCandless Hall in Room 16, (256) 233-8143.

Harassment and Discrimination

If any person feels he/she has been harassed or discriminated against, the person should follow the University's [Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure](#). Complaints of sexual misconduct should follow the University's [Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#). The University can only take action against alleged offenders and protect the University from future incidents if occurrences of harassment and discrimination are reported in a timely fashion.

Privacy of Student Records - Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

Athens State University complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 as amended. FERPA sets forth the requirements pertaining to the privacy of student records, and the rights of students with respect to their education records. For complete FERPA information, see the Records section of this catalog or the University's online Policy Library.

State Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (STARS)

The State Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (STARS) is a web-based based articulation and transfer planning system designed to inform students who attend public two-year and four-year institutions about approved transfer courses and programs. STARS is an efficient and effective way of providing students, counselors, advisors, and administrators with accurate information upon which transfer decisions may be made. STARS is the information link between the public institutions of higher education in the State of Alabama. The STARS system, if used properly, can prevent the loss of course credit hours, can provide direction for scheduling of course work, and can ease the transition from one institution to another. Transfer guides and additional information can be obtained directly through the [STARS website](#).

CONTENTS

Accreditation	1
Disclosure Statements	2
Introduction and General Information	4
Athens State University Vision, Mission, and Goals	4
Brief History of Athens State	5
Admission to Athens State University	6
Academic Records – Office of the Registrar (Student Records)	11
Academic Policies	14
Tuition and Fees	21
Student Financial Aid	22
Veterans Affairs	26
Services for Students with Disabilities	28
Adult Degree Program	29
Career Development Center	29
University Testing Center	29
College of Arts and Sciences	30
General Information	31
Degree Programs in the College of Arts and Sciences	33
College of Arts and Sciences Certificate Program	129
College of Business	130
General Information	131
Degree Programs in the College of Business	133
College of Business Certificate Programs	161
College of Education	163
General Information	164
Degree Programs in the College of Education	167
College of Education Certificate Programs	198
Minors	200
Course Descriptions	221
Index	282

Introduction and General Information

Athens State University Vision Statement

Athens State University will be the premier destination for transfer students seeking the highest quality education and cutting-edge delivery at the most affordable cost. As the upper division university in Alabama, building on a tradition that began in 1822, Athens State University will be the catalyst for positive change in the lives of its students. (The Vision Statement was approved by the Board of Trustees on April 19, 2013.)

Athens State University Mission Statement

The University advances the best interests of its students and the State of Alabama through teaching, service, research and other creative activities to empower students to make valuable contributions in their professional, civic, educational, and economic endeavors. Through innovative communication and course delivery for high-quality undergraduate and select graduate programs, Athens State University provides a supporting environment for each student, demonstrating the importance of the diverse and interdependent nature of our state and society. Athens State University changes the face of Alabama by changing the lives of its students. (The Mission Statement was approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on March 10, 2015.)

Institutional Goals

1. To emphasize a student-centered approach to teaching, learning, and University life by expanding educational opportunities and social mobility through high quality instructional and student support services that are both accessible and affordable.
2. To promote a sense of belonging that results in lifelong associations with the University.
3. To foster and strengthen effective partnerships with educational, governmental, business, charitable, and civic organizations.
4. To recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff committed to excellence in all University pursuits.
5. To encourage an atmosphere of diversity and to protect the free exchange of ideas.
6. To maintain and improve University facilities and programs through public funds and philanthropic initiatives and to ensure effective stewardship of resources.
7. To conduct University affairs in a manner that is transparent, deliberative, and ethical.
8. To evaluate, support, and effectively utilize emerging technologies.

Learning Goals

1. **Global Understanding**
Graduates of Athens State University will understand human cultures, the natural world, and the connections of a global society in the 21st century.
2. **Effective Communication**
Graduates of Athens State University will read, write, speak, and listen effectively.
3. **Lifelong Learner**
Graduates of Athens State University will desire to learn for a lifetime.
4. **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
Graduates of Athens State University will think critically and creatively, independently and cooperatively, qualitatively and quantitatively.
5. **Ethical Responsibility**
Graduates of Athens State University will engage in moral and ethical reasoning and will be proactive in their efforts to build a more just world.
6. **Human Diversity**
Graduates of Athens State University will recognize and value human difference as well as understand how those differences enrich communities.
7. **Digital Citizenship and Information Literacy**
Graduates of Athens State University will appropriately utilize and embrace emerging and relevant technologies and will demonstrate information literacy that will enhance their personal and professional lives.
8. **Civic Engagement**
Graduates of Athens State University will be prepared to participate effectively in civic, charitable, and governmental affairs.
9. **Disciplinary Knowledge**
Graduates of Athens State University will have an in-depth understanding of a discipline that will prepare them for careers or further studies, showing evidence of applying quality research to real situations.

Brief History of Athens State

Athens State University is the oldest college in the state of Alabama. The institution was founded in 1822 by local citizens who purchased five acres of land, erected a building, and established Athens Female Academy. In 1842, ownership of the institution was transferred to the Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Church. The institution then came under the jurisdiction of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church when the Conference was established in 1870.

On May 10, 1974, the Board of Trustees requested permission from the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church that the institution be allowed to seek affiliation with the State of Alabama. The Conference, at its annual meeting in June, 1974, granted the Board of Trustees permission and authorized the transfer of the institution to the State of Alabama.

In June 1975, the institution was accepted by the Alabama State Board of Education subject to the appropriation of operating funds by the Alabama Legislature. Later that year, the Legislature appropriated funds for the operation of the institution to serve the graduates of state junior, community, and technical colleges/institutes.

Through these changes in governance and purpose, the institution's name has changed several times in its history. Athens Female Academy, upon transfer to the Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Church in 1842, became Athens Female Institute. Then in 1889 after transfer to the newly formed North Alabama Conference, the Institute became known as Athens Female College. In 1931, the College became coeducational and was renamed Athens College. In 1975, when the institution became part of the state educational system, it was renamed Athens State College, marking the initiation of a new era of for the institution as an upper-division institution. In 1998, an act of the Alabama Legislature renamed the College as Athens State University.

By an act of the Alabama Legislature effective October 1, 2012, Athens State University was removed from governance under the Alabama State Board of Education and Department of Postsecondary Education, and from membership in the Alabama Community College System. On that date, an autonomous Board of Trustees assumed all authority over the University.

The long history of service by the University is the foundation upon which the future of the University rests.

Admission to Athens State University

Admission to the University is accomplished by completing the appropriate application form, paying any required application fees, and furnishing the required credentials and documentation. Since Athens State University is an upper-division institution, anyone seeking admission **must have prior college level credit as documented on official transcripts**. More specific requirements for transfer to the University, including requirements for Joint Enrollment or Early Admission, are detailed in the sections that follow.

Admission to certain programs offered by the Colleges of the University may require submission of additional forms or documentation; see the appropriate College's section of this catalog for details.

For questions regarding admission, contact the Office of Admissions: (mail) Athens State University Office of Admissions, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8130; (email) admissions@athens.edu. Prospective students may also visit the Admissions webpage and apply online at <http://www.athens.edu/admissions/>. The Office of Admissions is located on the lower-level of the Sandridge Student Center.

Summary of Admission Requirements

To gain admission to the University, prospective students must demonstrate:

- Completion of at least 60 semester hours of freshman and sophomore college credit with an overall 2.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale, **OR**;
- Completion of a degree from a two-year or four-year institution accredited by a regional accrediting agency, **provided** the student has completed all General Education requirements (Areas I-IV) according to the student's specific major, **OR**;
- Completion of a degree, diploma or certificate from a regionally accredited technical college or institute, **OR**;
- Fulfillment of requirements for Joint Enrollment, Early Admission, or other transfer (see details in sections that follow).

All college credit must be documented on official transcripts sent directly to the Office of Admissions from all institutions where coursework was attempted and/or degrees were completed.

Conditional Admission

If the Office of Admissions does not have all official transcripts by the beginning of a prospective student's first semester or term, the student may be admitted **conditionally** for that term, providing unofficial copies of all transcripts have been submitted. If all official transcripts are not received by the end of the **fifth week** of the student's first semester or term, the student **will not be allowed** to register for any subsequent terms until all official transcripts are received by the Office of Admissions.

Transfer of Academic Credit

As an upper division institution, Athens State University accepts credit from postsecondary institutions accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies for inclusion in the student's records and possible fulfillment of some degree requirements. **Acceptance of credit from institutions accredited by other accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education will be considered only on a case-by-case basis. Official transcripts from institutions accredited by such other accrediting bodies must be submitted for evaluation prior to admission to Athens State.**

The University reserves the right to determine the applicability of any transfer credit toward the fulfillment of a student's degree requirements at Athens State. In order to be applied to degree requirements, transfer credit and coursework must be relevant to the degree or program the student plans to pursue. The content and level of instruction of transfer coursework is evaluated to ensure that student competencies in the coursework are equivalent to those required by the State's general education coursework requirements, or to similar coursework offered at Athens State.

Course credit taken at the graduate level or applied toward a graduate degree will **not** be accepted or recorded on the Athens State University undergraduate transcript. A limited amount of graduate coursework may be accepted for students who are admitted as degree-seeking graduate students at Athens State; see the Graduate Catalog for additional details.

Athens State University **does not accept** continuing education units (CEUs) for academic credit.

Non-Traditional Academic Credit

For information concerning non-traditional credit, contact the Director of the Adult Degree Program (256-233-8281) or refer to the policy document [Non-Traditional Academic Credit](#).

Non-traditional academic credit may be awarded for various types of study or learning achieved outside traditional college formats. Examples of such learning are certain educational programs conducted by government, business and industry, the military, or other non-collegiate organizations. Non-traditional academic credit may be awarded for acceptable work experience, and/or technical training. Degree-seeking students may apply for non-traditional academic credit if the credit is applicable toward their program of study.

Athens State University honors credit earned through the Advanced Placement Program (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) provided acceptable examination scores are achieved. Since AP and CLEP are accepted as non-graded credit, any

credit awarded will not factor in to a student's grade point average. **Credit awarded for AP and CLEP examinations is at the 100-200 level.** Although credit may be awarded by the University, applicability to and fulfillment of pre-professional or professional course requirements in a specific degree program and major is determined by the appropriate faculty advisor(s) in the College offering the program or major. Credit will be awarded only if it does not duplicate other earned academic credit. **Official transcripts of AP and CLEP scores must be submitted directly to the Office of Admissions before any credit is awarded. If official examination transcripts cannot be obtained, no credit will be awarded.**

Credit may be awarded through the completion of DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) under the Defense Activity for Non-traditional Educational Support (DANTES) provided acceptable scores are achieved. Credit will be awarded only if it does not duplicate other earned academic credit. **Official transcripts of DSST examination scores must be submitted directly to the Office of Admissions before any credit is awarded. If official examination transcripts cannot be obtained, no credit will be awarded.**

Minimum exam scores required for credit are determined by the American Council on Education (ACE) and are subject to change without notice when ACE performs an exam review. It is the examinee's responsibility to check the AP/CLEP/DSST/ACE websites to confirm the number of hours and whether upper/lower level credit will be awarded before taking any exams. For more information, contact the [University Testing Center](#) (256-233-6540).

Categories for Admission of Degree Seeking Students

Prospective students applying for admission to the University who plan to pursue a degree must fall into one of the following categories. **Regardless of the category of admission, the University reserves the right to determine the applicability of any transfer credit toward the fulfillment of a student's degree requirements at Athens State.**

Regular Transfer Students

Students who have completed at least 60 hours of freshman and sophomore level college credit at regionally accredited two-year or four-year institutions with an overall GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale may be considered for admission. This category includes students that have earned an associate's degree from a community college.

Joint Enrollment Students

Students currently attending a community college who have completed at least 32 semester hours at the community college with at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale may be jointly enrolled (taking courses at both Athens State and the community college in the same term). **Joint enrollment requires the written permission of the instructional dean of the respective community college.** Courses taken at Athens State University may be used to fulfill community college degree requirements if approved by the community college. (Athens State courses approved for the fulfillment of requirements at the community college will still be transcribed on the Athens State University transcript.)

Early Admission Students

Students who have completed at least 41 semester hours from regionally accredited institutions with an overall GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, **and** who have met all General Education requirements (Areas I-IV in degree program requirements) prior to being admitted to Athens State University, may be considered for admission. This category applies when a student does not plan to receive an associate's degree from a community college and does not need additional courses offered at the community college level. Students seeking early admission are required to submit all official transcripts prior to admission.

Students with Previous 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, may be considered for admission. Students with previous degrees must 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. For additional information see "Second Degrees" in the Academic Policies section later in this catalog.

Students who have previously **completed** a degree or program at a regionally accredited technical college or institute, or at a regionally accredited business or proprietary school, may be considered for admission. **Students must submit official transcripts for review prior to admission.** During the admissions process, each student's previous work will be reviewed to ascertain the entry study level of the student. In general, individual related subject courses and grades may not be directly transcribed. Technical programs completed at Council on Occupational Education (COE) accredited institutions may be potentially creditable; however, such credit may be awarded for a maximum of thirty-nine semester hours of non-graded credit depending on the particular technical program completed and the Athens State degree being pursued. These courses will not affect the total hours residency at Athens State required for the degree program, and credit earned through this method will not be used in determining the student's overall grade point average. Certain courses may be used as substitutions or waivers for specific courses in the Athens State University degree program.

International Students

For information concerning international student enrollment, contact Carolyn Carthen: Carolyn.Carthen@athens.edu (256-233-8271), or visit the International Students webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/international-students>. International students applying for admission as degree-seeking students must meet the requirements for one of the above admission categories, or must

have the equivalent coursework as documented in a course-by-course evaluation performed by an evaluation agency that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services ([NACES](#)). International students transferring from another U.S. college/university must maintain F-1 status and must not have a terminated SEVIS record. In addition to a completed application for admission, prospective international students must provide:

- Official copies of transcripts from each college/university attended in the United States, and/or an official copy of the course-by-course evaluation performed by an evaluation agency that is a member of NACES for any college credit taken outside of the United States;
- A Plan of Study completed by a counselor in the Transfer Student Success Center;
- Official documentation of the completion of TOEFL with a minimum score of 500 (pBT), 62 (iBT) or 173 (cBT) if transferring from outside the United States;
- Official documentation showing proof of health and life insurance while in the United States;
- A letter from a banking institution verifying financial status.
- Copies of visa, I-94, and current I-20;
- A completed Affidavit of Support form;
- A completed Transfer Clearance form.

All documentation must be received at least 30 days prior to the semester of enrollment.

Admission of Non-Degree Seeking Students

A student who does not meet the requirements for one of the above admission categories as a degree seeking student and who wishes to pursue a **limited objective** (see below) may be admitted as a non-degree seeking student. Non-degree seeking students must complete an admissions application. Records are kept of the coursework completed and credits are transferable. **Non-degree seeking students are ineligible for financial aid, veteran benefits, or federal aid funding under Title IV.**

Any student wishing to change from non-degree seeking to degree-seeking must fill out a new application and must meet the requirements for admission as degree-seeking.

Categories for Limited Objectives

Certificate-Seeking – A person who is pursuing completion of one of the certificate programs offered by Athens State may be admitted as a non-degree seeking student and should limit enrollment to courses required for the certificate, or prerequisites for these courses. Official transcripts may be required to document completion of prerequisite courses.

Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field (Currently Employed Teachers Only - formerly *Alternative Baccalaureate-level Certificate "ABC"*) – Employed teachers seeking coursework to meet requirements for the provisional certificate in a teaching field issued by the Alabama State Department of Education **must** provide documentation of employment and teaching subject to permit course registration.

Teacher Certification/Recertification – A student wishing to take courses at Athens State University for the purpose of fulfilling teacher certification requirements, or for renewal of an expired certification, may be required to submit one copy of all **official transcripts** from each institution previously attended. These transcripts are not evaluated or recorded but may be used in determining teacher certification requirements, course options, or completion of prerequisite courses. Students may also need to provide documentation from the Alabama State Department of Education indicating coursework needed or specific credit hours needed for certification or recertification.

Personal Enrichment – A person who wishes to attend Athens State University for personal enrichment or self-improvement will be limited to 6 semester hours per term with credit recorded as for a regular degree-seeking student. Official transcripts may be required to document completion of prerequisite courses. A person wishing to take a course for personal enrichment who cannot demonstrate adequate prerequisites or preparation may require instructor approval to enroll in the course, and/or may only be allowed to enroll in the course on an audit/non-credit basis.

Transient/Visiting Student from Another Institution – A student seeking a degree and in good standing at another college or university can take courses at Athens State for a limited time as a non-degree seeking student. Transient students from another college or university **are not eligible** to receive federal aid funding from Athens State under Title IV. In addition to completing an admissions application, a transient student must:

- Submit an official transient letter, form, and/or official transcripts from the appropriate representative at the home institution:
 - Documenting the student is in good standing at the home institution;
 - Indicating the specific course(s) to be taken at Athens State; and
 - Verifying the student has appropriate prerequisites for the Athens State course(s), and/or confirming that the student accepts responsibility for the outcome if prerequisites cannot be verified.
- Submit a request for official transcripts to be sent directly to the home institution upon completion of the course(s) at Athens State (subject to the transcript requirements of the home institution).

An international student who wishes to attend Athens State as a transient student must also have a transfer clearance sheet from the current foreign student advisor.

Readmission of Former Students in Good Standing

A student who has previously attended Athens State University and is currently in good standing (not on academic probation), including students returning after an absence of more than one semester (excluding summer semester) must submit a readmission form. There will be no additional application fee charged.

Former students who were suspended from Athens State due to unsatisfactory academic performance must appeal to the Admissions Committee in order to be readmitted (see details in sections that follow).

If a returning student plans to seek a degree from Athens State University and has attended another college or university during the absence from Athens State, the student must ensure that **official transcripts** are mailed directly to the Office of Admissions from the college or university attended.

Admission of Students on Probationary Status at Other Institutions

A student on probationary status at another institution must provide **official transcripts** from all colleges or universities previously attended for review prior to admission.

A student who has been **suspended indefinitely** from another institution during the current academic year **will not** be permitted to enter Athens State University. However, a student who has been out of school at least one year after being suspended indefinitely by another institution may be considered for admission.

If a student on probationary status at another institution is admitted and has an overall GPA of less than 2.0, the student will be admitted on **Academic Probation**. Whether probationary status continues depends on the following circumstances:

- If at the conclusion of the semester in which the student admitted on academic probation has attempted a total of 12 semester hours at Athens State and the overall GPA is 2.0 or above, the student's status will no longer be probationary and the student will be in good standing.
- If, at the conclusion of the semester in which the student admitted on academic probation has attempted a total of 12 semester hours at Athens State University and the semester GPA at Athens State is 2.0 or above, but the overall GPA is less than 2.0, the student **will remain on Academic Probation**.
- If, at the conclusion of the semester in which the student admitted on academic probation has attempted a total of 12 semester hours at Athens State University and the semester GPA at Athens State is less than 2.0, the student is **suspended for one semester**. This suspension will be noted on the student's official Athens State transcript.

Appeal to the Admissions Committee

The University Admissions Committee reviews and makes recommendations on the admission of students who do not meet standard admissions requirements, or on the readmission of former students who have been suspended from Athens State University due to unsatisfactory academic performance.

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.

All appeals must use the standard appeals form available through the [Office of Admissions webpage](#), and must include all information and materials as specified on the form. The Office of Admissions must receive the form and any supporting materials by the deadline set by the Office for each semester or term. If the student fails to meet the required deadline, the student will be required to wait until the next semester for the appeal to the Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee meets only once per semester to review appeals.

Every student admitted through the appeal process will have their records reviewed at the end of the term in which they were admitted or readmitted for verification of satisfactory academic performance. For additional details on satisfactory academic performance, see the Academic Policies section of this catalog.

Athens State Students as Transient/Visiting Students at Other Institutions

Students admitted to Athens State as degree-seeking students may occasionally need to attend another institution to obtain coursework when Athens State courses are not available. An Athens State student in **good standing** may request to enroll in a course at another college or university and transfer the credit back to Athens State University. Athens State transient students must:

- Complete a Transient/Visiting Student form available through the [Office of Admissions webpage](#).
- Have official transcripts of the coursework completed at the other college/university sent directly to the Office of Admissions immediately upon completion of course(s) to ensure timely transfer of credit.
- Comply with the processes for transient/visiting students at the college or university providing the course(s), including payment terms.

After achieving junior status or completion of 64 semester hours at the community college level, a student may **not** transfer credit for courses taken at a community college except by prior written permission from the academic advisor. No more than 64 semester hours of community college credit will be applied toward degree requirements.

NOTE – Financial Aid Recipients

Federal Regulations prohibit federal aid from being paid to a student at more than one school for the same period of time. However, Financial Aid funds paid at Athens State may reflect total hours enrolled at two institutions via a Financial Aid Consortium Agreement. The Financial Aid Consortium Agreement form can be found on the Financial Aid forms webpage: <http://www.athens.edu/financial-aid/forms/>.

Not all institutions participate in consortium agreements. A consortium agreement does not make payment to other institutions on the student's behalf, but does allow financial aid to be calculated and paid to the student based on total hours of enrollment for all participating institutions in the agreement.

The Athens State student should contact the Athens State Office of Student Financial Aid for additional information on the Consortium Agreement process (256-233-8122, or email finaid@athens.edu).

Academic Records – Office of the Registrar (Student Records)

For questions regarding academic records/transcripts, contact the Office of the Registrar (Student Records): (mail) Athens State University Office of Student Records, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8131; (email) registrar@athens.edu. Students may also visit the Student Records webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/student-records/>.

Permanent Academic Record

An Athens State student's permanent academic record will consist of the Athens State University transcript, and **may** include the following: admission application, official transcripts from colleges and universities previously attended, graduation application, degree audit forms, documentation which may affect the release of student's records and any disciplinary action that would directly affect the student's enrollment in the institution. Financial records are not considered part of the student's permanent academic record.

Notification of Rights under FERPA

Athens State University complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 as amended. FERPA sets forth the requirements pertaining to the privacy of student records. The law governs the release of education records and access to the records.

Responsibility for the protection of the privacy of education records rests primarily with the University Registrar and the Office of Records. FERPA defines education records to include records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to students and those that are maintained by an educational agency or institution, subject to certain restrictions under the Act.

A student's permanent education (academic) record consists of the Athens State University transcript, and **may** also include the following: admissions application, official transcripts sent to the University from other colleges and universities attended, graduation application, degree audit forms, documentation affecting the release of a student's records, and documentation of any disciplinary action that would directly affect the student's enrollment at the University. Financial records are not considered to be part of a student's permanent academic record.

FERPA affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their education records. An "eligible student" is a student who is 18 years or older or who is attending a postsecondary institution.

These rights include:

- 1.** The right to inspect and review the student's education records, subject to any limitations under the Act, within 45 days after the day the University receives a request for access. Students should submit to the University Registrar/Office of Records an Education Record Review Request Form. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and will notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. The Registrar or designee shall be present during the inspection. If the requested records are not maintained by the Registrar, the Registrar shall advise the student of the correct University official to whom the request should be addressed. Copies of a student's education records may be obtained for a prepaid fee.
- 2.** The right to request the amendment of the portions of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading. A student who wishes to request that the University amend a record should submit to the University Registrar/Office of Records (or other appropriate official) a written statement which clearly identifies the part(s) of the record they want changed, why it should be changed, and any documentation that supports the request. The student will be notified in writing of the University's decision to amend or not amend. If the University's decision is not to amend, the student will be notified of a hearing process that they may initiate regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing process and procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

Note: FERPA was not intended to provide a process to be used to question substantive judgments which are correctly recorded. The FERPA right to request the amendment of records is not intended to allow a student to contest, for example, a grade in a course because the student feels a higher grade should have been assigned.

- 3.** The right to provide written consent before the University discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

FERPA allows disclosure of information **without consent** under the following provisions:

- Disclosures to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A "school official" is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person serving on the board of trustees; a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; a person or company that the University has contracted as its agent to provide a service (such as an

attorney, auditor, or collection agency); or a person assisting school officials in performing their tasks. A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.

- Disclosures of directory information. "Directory information" is information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

If a student does not want directory information disclosed, the student must submit to the University Registrar/Office of Records a Directory Information Opt-Out Form within the first 15 days of the semester. Completing this form and notifying the Registrar/Office of Records covers only the disclosure of directory information from centralized records. Students who are members of individual organizations such as fraternities, sororities, clubs, etc. must also notify those organizations to restrict the disclosure of directory information.

Athens State University has defined directory information as the following:

- Student name
- Permanent and local addresses
- Telephone listing
- Email address
- Major fields of study
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees, honors, or awards received
- High school and other colleges/universities attended
- Participation in officially recognized organizations, activities, and sports

- Disclosures allowed under other exceptions of the Act. The University may disclose information **without** prior consent:
 - To officials of another school, upon request, where the student seeks or intends to enroll.
 - To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State postsecondary authority that is responsible for supervising the University's State-supported education programs. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of the Act, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of personally identifiable information to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf.
 - In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
 - To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the University, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction.
 - To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
 - To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to the requirements of the Act.
 - To a victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense, subject to the requirements of the Act. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceeding with respect to that alleged crime or offense, regardless of the finding.
 - To the general public, the final results of a disciplinary proceeding, subject to the requirements of the Act, if the University determines the student is an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense and the student has committed a violation of the University's rules or policies with respect to the allegation made against him or her.
 - To parents of a student regarding the student's violation of any Federal, State, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the University, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if the University determines the student committed a disciplinary violation and the student is under the age of 21.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

5. The right to review records of requests for disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

Requests for Official or Unofficial Transcripts

Official transcripts may be requested online through the National Student Clearinghouse Transcript Service. Students can choose electronic (only available to students who first attended Athens State January 1996 or later) or mail delivery options, and can specify multiple recipients during a single order session. Processing and other fees vary by delivery type and number of recipients.

To request unofficial or official transcripts directly from the Office of Records, students must complete and submit the standard Athens State transcript request form available through the Office of Records transcript request webpage, and must pay any required transcript fees.

Details on all transcript request options can be found on the [Office of Records transcript request webpage](#).

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.

Academic Policies

Students admitted to Athens State University assume responsibility for being familiar with the academic policies and procedures of the University and the requirements for the degree and major that is being pursued. Additional information and other policies related to academics and educational programs can be found in the online [Athens State University Policy Library](#).

Academic Advising

Student Success Center

Upon admission to Athens State University, all new students are encouraged to meet with a student success coach to understand their starting point which includes: how their transfer credits will apply to their Athens State plan of study (degree and major of interest), what general studies requirements may still be required, an overall understanding of upper-level course requirements, and other degree-specific considerations. Students should utilize the Center as a resource to help plan and navigate their first semester(s) of coursework, explain university policy and total credit hour requirements for graduation, as well as a starting place to be connected with the correct person, resource, or department on campus.

Faculty Advisor

Upon admission to Athens State University, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Students should confer with their advisor at least once each semester. Although each student assumes final individual responsibility for meeting all degree requirements, the advisor will offer guidance in planning the student's academic program. Any adjustments to the program of study require the submission and approval of a Curriculum Adjustment form.

Academic Bankruptcy and Course Forgiveness

Under Academic Bankruptcy, a student may apply to have 1 to 3 entire semesters of Athens State coursework excluded from the calculation of the institutional GPA, provided the student has completed 18 semester hours beyond the term being bankrupted. When academic bankruptcy is granted for a given semester, the grades for all bankrupted courses will still appear on the Athens State transcript, but will have a notation that these courses are being excluded from the institutional GPA. **Academic bankruptcy for a given semester excludes grades for all coursework taken during that semester, regardless of the grade, from the institutional GPA.**

Under Course Forgiveness, a student may apply to have no more than 2 Athens State courses (not to exceed 8 semester hours) excluded from the calculation of the institutional grade point average (GPA). If forgiveness is granted, the grades for all forgiven courses will still appear on the Athens State transcript, but will have a notation that these courses are being excluded from the institutional GPA. For additional details, see the policy document [Course Forgiveness and Academic Bankruptcy](#).

The credit for any courses included in bankrupted semesters or in course forgiveness cannot be used towards fulfillment of program or major requirements. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor before applying for academic bankruptcy or course forgiveness. **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 applying for academic bankruptcy or course forgiveness.**

Implementation of academic bankruptcy or course forgiveness at Athens State does not guarantee that other institutions will recognize such action. This determination will be made by the respective transfer institutions.

Academic Calendar

Athens State University operates on the semester system, with two semesters (fall and spring) comprising the regular academic year. Following the spring semester, the University also offers a summer term comprised of a variety of class sessions and formats. The two semesters comprising the regular academic year (fall and spring) will each be at least 15 calendar weeks in length, excluding pre-registration. The summer term will be at least 10 weeks in length, excluding pre-registration.

Academic Credit

The standard unit of college credit awarded at Athens State University is the semester hour. Course descriptions found in this catalog indicate the number of semester hours which may be earned for a particular course. Transfer credits earned in quarter hours will be evaluated on the basis that one quarter hour equals two-thirds semester hours. (e.g., a five quarter hour course would equal 3.3 semester hours). See the Admissions section of this catalog for additional details on transfer credit.

Academic Honesty

Athens State University, like all institutions of higher learning, can function effectively only when the members of the University community treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. It is the responsibility of every student at Athens State University to be familiar with the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the provisions of the Code related to academic dishonesty and student conduct, and to follow and support the enforcement of the Code.

Academic Honors and Awards

Athens State University recognizes outstanding academic achievement accomplished during a given academic semester, and for outstanding achievement throughout a student's academic career.

- **President's List** – The President's List is published each semester and includes the names of students who have attained an institutional GPA of 4.0 on at least 12 semester hours of course work for that semester.
- **Provost's List** – The Provost's List is published each semester and includes the names of the students who have attained an institutional GPA of 3.50 or above (but below 4.0) on at least 12 semester hours of course work for that semester.
- **Highest Scholastic and Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards** – Graduates with outstanding academic achievements are recognized in the spring semester each year. To be eligible for nomination for these awards students must have completed 18 semester hours credit in residence at Athens State University. All students graduating in a given academic year are eligible for consideration. Students may be nominated by faculty members based on their GPA and other exemplary considerations.
- **Degrees with Honor** – Degrees with honor are based on performance in all academic work completed at Athens State University, with the exception of any coursework excluded by course forgiveness or academic bankruptcy. **To be eligible for a degree with honor, a student must have completed at least 45 semester hours at the University, not including coursework excluded by course forgiveness or academic bankruptcy.**
 - **Summa Cum Laude** – Awarded to graduating students with institutional GPAs of 3.90 to 4.0.
 - **Magna Cum Laude** – Awarded to graduating students with institutional GPAs of 3.70 to 3.89.
 - **Cum Laude** – Awarded to graduating students with institutional GPAs of 3.50 to 3.69.

Audited Courses

Upon the recommendation of the faculty advisor, a student may audit a non-laboratory course. Students auditing a course should participate in the course in the same way as for-credit students, although auditing students are not required to complete course examinations. **No change from audit to credit is allowed.** Placement in a course as an auditing student is on a space available basis.

Change of Program (Changes of Major, Minor, Concentration or Catalog Year)

A student who wishes to make any changes to their current program (changes to declared major, minor, concentration, or catalog year) must complete a Student Request for Change of Program form, available to students online. Students are strongly encouraged to confer with both current and prospective faculty advisors before requesting any changes. **Note:** A change of major requires the student to fulfill the degree requirements for the new major as specified in the catalog in effect on the date of the change request. Addition of majors, minors or concentrations may require moving to a newer catalog if the added major/minor/concentration did not exist under the student's current catalog.

Concurrent Degrees

Students who have not previously completed a baccalaureate degree at Athens State can pursue two degrees of different types (i.e., B.A. and B.S., or B.A. and B.S.Ed., or B.S. and B.S.Ed.) concurrently only if at least 25% of the requirements for one of the degrees are unique to that degree, and are not major, pre-professional, or general education courses for the other degree. In addition, the total hours for both degrees must be at least 155 hours. If 25% is not unique or a total of 155 hours cannot be identified for the two degrees, the student is **not eligible** to earn both degrees, and can only be awarded an additional major (see Second or Additional Majors below).

If 25% is unique and a total of 155 hours can be identified, the student is eligible for and can be awarded both degrees simultaneously upon the completion of all requirements for both degrees and majors. Students wishing to pursue concurrent degrees must confer with their advisor(s), complete the appropriate forms to declare the concurrent degrees, and receive the necessary approvals as indicated by the forms before the concurrent degree declarations are added to the permanent academic record.

Upon completion of the concurrent degrees, the transcript will note the conferral of both degrees, the date conferred, and the majors. For additional details, see the [Second Degrees and Double or Additional Majors](#) policy.

Course Attendance

It is accepted academic philosophy that sustained course attendance is essential to the overall educational value of a course of study in higher education. To achieve the maximum benefits from educational activities, Athens State University expects regular attendance, or online involvement and participation in the case of distance learning, from all students. **Students receiving financial aid or veterans benefits are required to attend classes according to the regulations of the federal government or the Veterans Administration.**

Attendance policies and other requirements for a particular course are published in the course syllabus and are set by the course instructor. It is therefore important that each student secure a copy of the course syllabus and be familiar with the contents. A student's performance in relation to the published requirements and class attendance regulations will affect the grade earned in the course. Any student who must miss an examination has the responsibility for notifying the instructor as soon as is practicable. It is the decision of the instructor whether a missed exam may be "made-up."

Course Cancellation

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 Registrar/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 and pass either the Alabama Prospective Teacher Test (APTT) or Praxis Core Tests, which include three parts focusing on reading, writing, and mathematics. Students must also complete and pass the appropriate PRAXIS II Content Area/Subject Area test(s) prior to admission to TEP. 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. 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. 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 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), renewal of 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. 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.**

Verification Review Policy And Procedures (Federal Regulation Reference: 34 CFR 668.51-61)

Each year the federal processor selects a number of financial aid (FAFSA) applications for a review process called verification. In addition to those selected by the federal processor, the University may also select applications for verification. Before awarding any Federal Student Aid, we require this process be completed and may ask you to confirm the information reported on your FAFSA. If your application is selected, the Financial Aid Office will notify you of the items needed. The Athens State Financial Aid administrator will compare your FAFSA with the information and documentation you provide, and will make any necessary corrections and submit the corrections to the federal processor. The federal processor will then send you and the University an updated information record. The following important information also applies to this process:

- The time period during which you must submit required items begins when you receive notification from the Financial Aid Office of the requirements. **Be sure to check your Athens State e-mail frequently.**
- The DEADLINE for submitting required items is the earlier date of 120 days after your last date of enrollment, or September 1st of the ending year of the aid year (e.g., September 1, 2019, for the 2018-2019 aid year). Failure to complete this process by the deadline date will result in cancellation of your financial aid application for the aid year.
- If the Athens State Financial Aid administrator has reason to suspect an individual has misreported information or altered documentation to fraudulently obtain federal funds, the administrator may report the case to the U. S. Office of the Inspector General for further review.

If you have questions about verification, contact the Office of Student Financial Aid as soon as possible so that your financial aid will not be delayed.

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. 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 withdrawal 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:

$$\text{(Days Enrolled / Days in Term)} \times \text{Title IV Aid Awarded and Disbursed} = \text{Aid Earned}$$

(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

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. 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.

Complaint Policy for Students Receiving VA Education Benefits

For students receiving VA education benefits, any complaint against the school should be routed through the VA GI Bill Feedback System by going to the following link: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp>. The VA will then follow up through the appropriate channels to investigate the complaint and resolve it satisfactorily.

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

Accessibility Services (formerly Disability Services) is the central contact point for Athens State students with disabilities. The goal of Accessibility Services is to ensure that University programs and services are accessible to qualified students with disabilities. Accessibility Services 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 Accessibility Services.

For questions regarding services for students with disabilities, contact Accessibility Services: (mail) Athens State University, Accessibility Services, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8143; (email) disability.services@athens.edu. Students may also visit the Accessibility Services webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/disability-services>. Accessibility Services is located on the ground floor of McCandless Hall in Room 16.

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. 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). 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.