Academic Policies & Procedures

Undergraduate Academic Policies And Procedures

The University of South Alabama’s academic policies and procedures provide the framework for the orderly conduct of its degree programs. They are intended to ensure a thorough and complete education for each of the University’s graduates. Academic programs are administered through the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Office of the Vice President for Medical Affairs.

General Information

University E-mail
Each student admitted to the University of South Alabama is assigned a free, official University e-mail address (@jagmail.southalabama.edu). Most changes in University policies and official University correspondence will be transmitted via the student's official e-mail account. Instructors must also utilize this address to communicate with students. Students are responsible for regularly reading e-mail sent to this address. The official University e-mail address cannot be changed, but students may elect to have official mail forwarded to any other personal e-mail address. To activate your JagMail account, select that link on the University's PAWS website at https://banapp1srv.southalabama.edu:9001/ssomanager/c/SSB.

Academic Terms And Credit Hours
The institutional process for assigning credit hours to courses is based on the minimum academic activity to achieve intended learning outcomes as verified by evidence of student achievement. For traditional classes, a credit hour consists of approximately one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time for semesters of other durations. For classes offered in other formats leading to the award of academic credit, the equivalent amount of academic activity is required.

The University academic terms are two semesters (Fall and Spring) and three terms: a May term and two Summer terms. Semesters normally consist of fifteen weeks of class followed by a final examination week. In some programs of study, courses may be scheduled for parts of terms different from a normal semester. Usually, one semester credit hour is awarded for each 50-minute lecture class per week or 2-3 hour laboratory or studio period.

Each hour of lecture usually requires two hours of outside preparation. Thus, a student carrying sixteen semester hours should be prepared to spend at least 48 hours in class and study per week.

Student Classification
A student’s classification is determined by the number of credits earned toward the degree. A student is classified as follows:

- Freshman 0 - 29 semester hours
- Sophomore 30 - 59 semester hours
- Junior 60 - 89 semester hours
- Senior 90 semester hours or more

Policy For Declaring An Academic Major
Declaring an Academic Major, Non-Transfer Students

Students who enter the university as undeclared or who intend to complete a degree at the university must declare a degree granting major by the time they complete 60 credit hours.

There are two exceptions: Students classified as Business Administration students need to declare their major in the College of Business by 75 credit hours. Students majoring in programs leading to teacher certification in the College of Education and Professional Studies need to enter candidacy, which leads to a degree granting major, by 75 credit hours.

Policy will not apply to second degree seeking or graduate students.
Full-time/Part-Time Enrollment Status
Undergraduate degree seeking students carrying twelve or more credit hours of work each term are considered full-time. However, students must carry at least fifteen hours each term (for eight semesters) to meet requirements for graduation in four academic years. Co-op students who alternate full-time enrollment with employment are considered full-time students for enrollment purposes. Students carrying six to eleven credit hours are considered half-time and students enrolled for one to five credit hours are considered less than half-time.

Full Load Of Course Work In A Semester
Permission of the student's academic dean is required to take more than 19 semester hours.

Registration
Registration (making course selections and enrolling in classes) occurs prior to the beginning of each term. All students obtain registration appointment times ("time tickets") and register utilizing USA's Personal Access Web System (PAWS) at https://paws.southalabama.edu. (See the University Registration Guide for additional information.)

Registration is not complete until all fees have been paid and all admissions documents and examinations furnished. Failure to satisfy any of the admission or registration requirements will prevent registration for subsequent terms. Enrollment status can be found in PAWS website at https://paws.southalabama.edu.

Course Numbering System
Course Number
001-099 Remedial courses which do not carry credit toward graduation
100-199 Freshman
200-299 Sophomore
300-399 Junior
400-499 Senior
500-699 Graduate/Professional
700-799 Doctoral

Attendance And Absences
An individual student is responsible for attending the classes in which the student is officially enrolled. The quality of work will ordinarily suffer from excessive absences. At the beginning of classes, instructors must define their policy on absences, and all cases of illness and emergency shall be promptly reported and verified to the instructor. For excessive absences (two or three consecutive class meetings) due to illness, death in family, or family emergency, the Dean of Students' office should be advised. Absence notices will be sent to each instructor notifying him of the reason for and the approximate length of the absence. This notification does not constitute an excused absence.

Students receiving veterans' benefits are required to attend classes according to the regulations of the Veterans Administration.

All international students on F-1 visas must comply with attendance regulations as dictated by the Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Services. They must remain students in good standing with at least twelve (12) hours per term.

Students attending authorized off-campus functions or required activities shall be excused by the responsible University official through the Office of Academic Affairs. In case of doubt, instructors may consult these lists in that office. Work missed as a result of these excused absences may be made up.

Computer Access Requirement
All students enrolled at the University of South Alabama are required to have access to personal computer. This may be achieved by individual ownership, access to a family computer when residing at home, sharing with a roommate, or other suitable arrangements not dependent on University public computer laboratories. Student personal computer access must include a current version of word processing software appropriate to college-level work, access to the Internet, and access to the university's e-mail system. Individual degree programs and specific courses may have additional requirements appropriate to curriculum needs.
Student Academic Success

The Office of Student Academic Success supports the mission of the University by offering, supporting, and assessing programs and services designed to improve student academic success, including but not limited to retention and graduation. This includes Academic Advising & Transfer Services, Career Services, the Writing Center, freshman learning communities, the university first year experience courses, JagSuccess, and the USA Scholars Initiative, including our Earn Back program. For more information visit https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicsuccess/.

Academic Advising

Academic advising is an important component of a student’s educational experience and success. Faculty, administrators, and professional staff promote academic advising as a shared responsibility with students. Academic advisors at South help students define important choices and offer personal guidance as need each stage of the undergraduate experience. Before attending an advising appointment, students should review the university website and consider academic majors that best suit their educational and career interests. Students are assigned an advisor based on their declared major. All degree-seeking first-year students and transfer students who have earned less than 30 hours are required to meet with an academic advisor. Additionally, first year students are required to meet with their academic advisor in both fall and spring semesters. Generally, students shift to an advisor in their major when they complete between thirty and sixty credit hours. Students are expected to communicate with their assigned academic advisor regularly; however expectations for meetings vary by major and department. Advisors are responsible for particular majors or programs; if a student changes majors, the academic advisor will also change. Students should plan to meet regularly with their academic advisor throughout their enrollment period. More frequent meetings are associated with increased academic success and progress through the curriculum. Students who have earned less than a 2.0 cumulative GPA are required to meet with an academic advisor each semester until in good standing with the University.

Students are ultimately responsible for selecting and registering for courses, meeting course pre-requisites and graduation requirements, and adhering to University policies and procedures.

Learning Communities

Freshman learning communities at South are focused on academic courses. A learning community usually includes two or three classes shared with other students enrolled in that community. Learning communities typically enroll about 25 first year students; generally, all students share their first year experience course. In most communities, students will share one or two additional classes with the same group of 25 students. Learning communities are designed to provide students with the opportunity to meet other students in the same major, to offer the best schedule for the first semester, and to maximize the applicability of courses should a student decide to change majors.

First Year Experience Courses

First year experience (FYE) courses are offered at universities around the world. At USA, this course was constructed by faculty and designed to address areas where first year students need additional development. The course ranges from 2 to 3 academic credit hours (depending on College/School) and includes a peer academic leader called a JagPAL. Currently, first year experience courses are offered in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education and Professional Studies, the College of Engineering, the Mitchell College of Business, the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions, and the College of Nursing.

JagSuccess

JagSuccess, the University’s student-focused academic success office, provides learning resources, peer mentoring, and course-specific tutoring. Tutoring services are located on the second floor of the Marx Library. JagSuccess focuses on improving academic performance by working with students in one-on-one and small group sessions, as well as providing students with support in the classroom.

For more information, please visit the JagSuccess webpage at https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicsuccess/jagsuccess.

USA Scholars Initiative

The USA Scholars Initiative focuses additional attention on USA scholarship students who may be academically at risk. First year students whose fall GPA is below 3.0 may be contacted about additional resources designed specifically to increase academic insight. Included in this program is our Earn Back opportunity. Students who have lost their Freshman Admission Scholarship may be able to earn it back by participating in this program.
Academic Advising & Transfer Services

Students begin their relationship with their advisor during orientation. They are required to meet with their academic advisor each term and are encouraged to meet as often as needed. Generally, students shift to an advisor in their major when they complete between thirty and sixty credit hours. Students are expected to communicate with their assigned academic advisor regularly; however expectations for meetings vary by major and department. For more information visit https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicadvising/.

Students enrolled in Pathway USA meet with transfer advisors during enrollment at their community college prior to transferring to USA. Transfer students outside of Pathway USA are welcome to make an appointment with transfer advisors to discuss transition to USA. Students may also be referred to major advisors as appropriate. For more information visit https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/admissions/pathwayusa/.

Pre-Health advising at the University of South Alabama offers valuable resources to students interested in a variety of graduate professional health programs. In order to prepare students for the rigorous demands of these programs, advisors provide information and guidance on required course work, admission test needs, the application process and non-academic requirements. Pre-health advising is provided as a supplement to academic advising. All pre-health students have an academic advisor who will guide the student in meeting requirements for graduation.

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center provides writing tutoring to students of any discipline, both face-to-face and online. Writing Center tutoring is located on the second floor of the Marx Library. The Writing Center focuses on helping students improve their writing skills, rather than simply editing papers. Students may receive help with any type of writing task at any stage of the writing process, including understanding assignments, brainstorming, organization, development, and revision.

For more information, please call (251) 460-6480 or visit the Writing Center's webpage at https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academisuccess/writing.

Career Services

USA Career Services, located in Meisler Hall, Suite 2100, assists students and alumni in all phases of the career development process. As a comprehensive career services center, the office offers services to support career and academic major exploration, co-op and internship participation, identification and preparation for employment opportunities, and graduate and professional school preparation assistance.

Career Exploration

Career Services guides students in determining career interests and selecting appropriate academic programs to reach career goals. The appropriate selection of a major can impact a student's desire to complete a college education and a student's success in college and the workplace. Career Advisors are trained to assist students in the various aspects of career and academic development. Among the many resources available to students are:

- One-on-one advising appointments with career advising staff.
- Career Resource Center containing information on career and major exploration, job search skills, resume preparation, interviewing, employer information, and more.
- Self-assessments and career inventories.
- Handshake career management system.
- Resources on numerous career fields including entrance requirements and projected employment outlook.
- Graduate and professional school information.

Cooperative Education And Internship Program

The Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Internship Program enables students to combine classroom studies with paid work experience related to their major field of study. Co-op and Internships are designed to supplement classroom experience and
to promote academic and professional development. Students generally complete one year of courses prior to beginning an assignment. Students receive academic recognition through a transcript notation for each term. Students do not earn academic credit hours. Employers and students appreciate this official recognition because it reflects a student's desire to obtain practical work experience while pursuing their degree.

Program Requirements
Undergraduate students must meet general program requirements, including being classified as a full-time student upon participation in the program, completion of 12-24 credit hours depending upon the selected program option, an overall institutional GPA of 2.3 or higher for the Co-op options, and an overall institutional GPA of 2.0 or higher for the Internship option. Graduate students may participate after they are accepted into a graduate program. Program requirements may vary based upon the student's academic college. While the program is open to all academic majors, there are some majors/academic departments in which the curriculum may not support a particular work-schedule option. Students on study visas can participate in the program with prior approval from the Office of Immigration and International Admissions.

Program Options

Alternating Co-op
The Alternating Co-op program option integrates multiple terms of work and academics. Students work in professional assignments directly related to their major. Students on the alternating plan rotate semesters of full-time work with semesters of full-time school. Students are required to meet and maintain an institutional GPA of 2.3 or higher and remain in good standing with the university in order to be eligible. Engineering students must also complete MA 125 and MA 126 prior to participation. Students must meet with Career Services to receive program approval prior to accepting employment.

Parallel Co-op
The Parallel Co-op program option allows nursing students to gain practical, relevant work experience at one of the participating area hospitals. Nursing students may apply to the Co-op program after completing the designated first semester foundation courses with at least a 2.5 GPA. Students must maintain above a 'C' in nursing courses, may not earn an 'F' in any course, and must be designated as full-time to remain eligible for participation. Students accepted into the Co-op program must meet with Career Services to complete the program orientation.

Internship
The internship program offers students a unique educational opportunity to participate in either a part-time or full-time work experience to complement their major field of study. Participants are required to meet and maintain an institutional GPA of 2.0 or above and remain in good standing with the university in order to be eligible. The partnership between the student, the employer, and the university is a collaboration structured to maximize the value of an internship. Prior to accepting employment, students should meet with a Career Services advisor to review the internship duties and discuss program requirements.

Career Services support internships completed for academic credit. These opportunities may be paid or unpaid. Students interested in earning academic credit should consult with their academic department to determine eligibility for credit. For assistance initiating, an internship search or help with the approval process, please contact Career Services.

Job Search And Graduate School Assistance
Career Services assists students in multiple ways. Students seeking career-related employment, planning to pursue graduate or professional school, or those that need a job to supplement income while completing their degree, are encouraged to utilize Career Services' resources. Handshake, an online career management system, is just one of the resources students are encouraged to use when seeking a job, internship, or co-op. From Handshake, students can share their profile, submit employment applications, upload and have resume documents reviewed. In addition, career advisors are available for individual appointments at a student's request. Career Services provides additional assistance by offering seminars, job search and networking programs, career, graduate, and professional school fairs, on-campus interviews, employer information sessions, and other career-related events.

Mathematics Placement Exam
Students will be permitted to enroll in mathematics classes based on their prerequisite course grade(s), Math-ACT score, Math-SAT score, or the Mathematics Placement test score as described on the following website: https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/mathstat/placementinfo.html
Students who transfer credit for MA 112 or higher with a grade C or better and who plan to take subsequent mathematics courses are not required to take the Mathematics Placement Exam. Nevertheless, they are encouraged to take the exam to help evaluate their level of preparation. If a student chooses to take the Mathematics Placement test, it must be completed before enrolling in any mathematics course other than MA 110 or ST 210.

Students who transfer credit for MA 110 or higher and who DO NOT plan to enroll for any other mathematics courses are not required to take the Mathematics Placement Exam. Note that MA 110 does not fulfill prerequisite requirements for most mathematics courses.

The Mathematics Placement test is a computer-based test administered in a computer lab. A Texas Instruments TI-30XIIs calculator is allowed during this exam. No other resources are permitted during this exam. Students should complete the exam at least 24 hours prior to coming to campus for orientation. Students without any transfer credit for pre-requisite course(s) will be blocked from registering for most mathematics and some statistics courses. Questions concerning the Math Placement Exam should be directed to the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (MSPB 325, (251) 460-6264). Dates when the Math Placement Exam is given and information on how to sign up for it can be found on the webpage:

https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/mathstat/placementschedule.html.