



Policy Statement: Degree Evaluation and Graduation Clearance Guidance
Effective: Spring 2014
Approved: Dean Office, College of Liberal Arts

All College of Liberal Arts (CLA) students must satisfy each requirement before they are cleared at the Dean's level in order to participate in commencement exercises, along with the specific requirements of their major(s), minor(s), concentration(s) and/or specialization(s), prior to their intended graduation date. We recommend that you check with your departmental academic advisor minimally twice per semester on your progress towards completing degree requirements and utilizing the degree evaluation processes in place to measure your completion of all requirements. If after your advising and degree evaluation you still have questions, the Office of Success, Transition, Advising & Retention (STARS) is happy to assist.

UNDERGRADUATE GUIDANCE

Critical Graduation Information

No student shall be allowed to participate in the Commencement ceremony without meeting the following requirements.

The following are minimum requirements for all bachelor's degrees awarded by Jackson State University. Some majors and minors require more than the minimum in or more of the areas below.

1. Complete a minimum of 124-128 semester hours of work.
2. Satisfactorily complete the curricular requirements in the major field.
3. Satisfactorily pass the Undergraduate English Proficiency Examination (UEPE) before 60 hours of credit is earned. No exceptions or waivers are granted.
4. First-time, first-year students must satisfactorily complete 120 hours of community service as approved by the University. Transfer students must satisfactorily complete 60 hours of community service as approved by the University.
5. Earn a cumulative academic average of not less than 2.00 ("C") in all courses.
6. Earn a cumulative average of not less than 2.00 ("C") in all courses attempted in the major field.
7. Take all examinations required by the college and/or department for the student's major in the 1st semester of earning senior status (by credit hour). If a student fails the departmental

exam it must be retaken and results submitted by Feb. 15 (dates for test retake will be established by the departments).

8. An incomplete "I" grade must be satisfied one semester prior to filing an Online Application for Degree
9. File an Application for Degree electronically via the Online Graduation Clearance Process schedule.

College Requirements

The college-wide requirements for graduation are: (1) a cumulative and major grade point average of 2.00 and (2) successful passing the Undergraduate English Proficiency Exam. Effective July 1, 2013, the College no longer requires the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). However, academic departments may still require the GRE as graduation requirement. In this case, it will not be waived by the Dean's Office.

Academic Department Requirements

Academic departments may require standardized or specialized examinations (i.e. GRE, MAT, Praxis, etc.), undergraduate theses or senior projects in the department major. These requirements will be reflected in the "Other Departmental Requirements" section on the *CLA Uniform Advising Form*.

Undergraduate English Proficiency Examination (UEPE)

Effective spring 2014, the Undergraduate English Proficiency Exam must be taken and passed (or ENG 399-Functional Writing must be passed if the UEPE is failed) at least one semester before a student is given a Graduation PIN to apply for graduation.

The Dean of the College will no longer clear students who are scheduled/planning to take the UEPE or currently enrolled in ENG 399 in the same semester in which they graduate. Rationale/Justification: Every student is expected to take and pass the UEPE or ENG-399 so that scores are posted before the closing date of the online Graduation Clearance Application.

ONE EXCEPTION RULE (Fall 2013)

Students who plan to graduate in fall 2013 and who are simultaneously scheduled to take the UEPE or enrolled in ENG 399 as a result of failing the UEPE must have their scores on file with the Dean's Office no later than November 22, 2013. For students scheduled for the October 29, 2013 test date, passing or failing will be on record in the Dean's Office by the deadline. However, for students enrolled in ENG 399 during fall 2013, Department Chairs are required to have a list of their names' to the Dean's Office no later than October 15, 2013. Students on these lists will be verified and a memo will be sent to the instructor of record requesting that final grades for the course (pass or fail) be on record in the Dean's Office by November 22, 2013.

CLA Uniform Advising Form

Please be reminded the CLA Uniform Advising Form is the official document for all academic departments to use when advising students and conducting degree evaluations effective fall 2013. This means, that all degree evaluations for this fall and beyond must be recorded using the new CLA Uniform Advising Form.

A copy of this document must be submitted to the Office of STARS thirty (30) days before graduation clearance is approved in the Dean's Office. Therefore, all forms must be completed, signed and on file in the Office of STARS no later than November 8, 2013 if students plan to graduate December 2013.

Distribution of Graduation PINS

Academic Department Chairs need to make sure that every student who is eligible for graduation in December 2013 and May 2014 have met with a departmental and/or transfer advisor to complete degree evaluations using the CLA Uniform Advising Form before students are given a Graduation PIN Number. The queue for eligible December 2013 graduates to begin completing the online Graduation Clearance Application opens September 4 and will close on October 8. NO student should be given an Graduation PIN to apply for fall graduation without going through the degree evaluation process and completion of the new CLA Uniform Advising Form. Any student given a PIN by a department chair or departmental advisor who has not fully completed the degree evaluation process (and no paper work is filed in the Office of STARS as verification) will not be cleared in the Dean's queue to graduate.

Requests for special consideration from the Registrar or Provost's Office will not be made to extend the online graduation registration deadline for late students, advisors and chairs who fail to complete these steps in the process. Every effort to contact students should be thoroughly documented as evidence of good faith to reach the individual on behalf of the advisors. Chairs should send to the Office of STARS a list of students who have not completed the degree evaluation process by September 30. The Office of STARS will follow up where necessary with these students only as a courtesy.

GRADUATE GUIDANCE

As for the Graduate Divisions deadlines and processes, these are included fully in the attached document. Department Chairs, Graduate Coordinators, and Theses/Dissertation Directors are asked to adhere to the following deadlines provided by the Division of Academic Affairs and the Graduate Division.

The Dean's Office will not, as in the case of undergraduate students, clear graduate students for graduation if all of the stated deadlines and reports have not been filed by the requested dates. This means that graduate students and their graduate committees need to be mindful of the hard dates and timelines.

Academic Department Chairs and Graduate Coordinators must arrange a degree evaluation process within their respective departments which will track every students' time to degree completion. If students are not making satisfactory progress towards the requirements and graduate committees are not being proactive to move students through the appropriate phases of their degree programs, then we need to effectively communicate to the students and their committees the importance of timelines and deadlines.

It is extremely important that we foster an environment of accountability within our students and the faculty with whom they study and learn. In many instances during the past fall and spring semesters, it became clear that some faculty and staff advisors and faculty committees were equally responsible for not adhering to processes and deadlines. One way to be responsive to these unfortunate situations is to hold individuals accountable.

The Dean's Office will follow through with each department chair. In turn, Department Chairs are responsible for sharing this message or sections of this message with departmental and transfer advisors, graduate program coordinators, graduate faculty directors (theses and dissertations), and administrative assistants who are responsible for generating many of the forms associated with the degree evaluation process.

In the end, we must move from a place of being poised to do great things and into a position of actively managing degree evaluation as a serious effort in the overall matriculation and educational experience of our students. Retention is an important part of the work that we do as a department, College, and University. Good practice begins with clarity and expressed expectations regarding guidelines and process which have been established. My hope is that Department Chairs view these duties of faculty members as an important part of the annual review process and that you share with your faculty your expectations of their being committed to our priorities associated with "elevating excellence" in the College of Liberal Arts.