



# **Simmons** UNIVERSITY



## **Department of Behavior Analysis** **Campus Student Policy Handbook & Program Information**

**2021-2022**

**Revised July 2021**

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## HANDBOOK OVERVIEW

The Department of Behavior Analysis Student Policy Handbook and Program Information is the student's guide to the Department of Behavior Analysis Masters and Doctoral programs.

Students are responsible for knowing the policies and procedures in this document, as well as Simmons University of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences (CNBHS) policies and the Policies of Simmons University, which are available on the Simmons University Website.

The information in this document is subject to change. The Simmons CNBHS and Department of Behavior Analysis reserve the right to change any policy or procedure without notice.

## DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SIMMONS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### Faculty

- Lepaine Sharp-McHenry, Dean of the College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences
- Paul Geisler, Associate Dean of the College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences; Professor
- Noelle Neault, Associate Professor of Practice and Chair, Department of Behavior Analysis
- Russell Maguire, Associate Professor,
- Ronald Allen, Director of the Doctoral Program, Associate Professor of Practice
- Gretchen Dittrich, Director of Mentoring, Associate Professor of Practice
- Judah Axe, Associate Professor
- Kylan Turner, Associate Professor of Practice, BA@S Program Director
- Claudia Campos Fleitas, Associate Professor (NTT), Director of BA@S Fieldwork

## ADMISSIONS

### Program Admission Criteria

- Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, achieving at least a B (3.0) average; it is desirable that applicants have a balanced liberal arts education on the undergraduate level with evidence of successful completion of natural science courses.
- Relevant experience through summer employment, volunteer work during/after college, and/or

- full-time employment in the human services field after college graduation is required.
- Applicants must show a commitment to the science and profession of behavior analysis and be willing to uphold the values of the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts, evidenced in the applicant's Statement of Professional and Educational Intent, and the applicant's letters of recommendation.
- No standardized test scores are required.
- An interview is not required; however, under certain circumstances the school may require an interview with the Director of Admission after application review.
- No course credit is given for life or work experience.

## Process and Procedure for Evaluating Applicants

Application files are read by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Each applicant's file is reviewed against the criteria for admissions. Based on the evaluation of application materials, an applicant is accepted or rejected. On occasion, an applicant may be offered conditional admission.

## Other Admissions Requirements

### Final Transcripts

Accepted applicants who are in the process of completing a degree program must send a transcript with final grades in order for the acceptance to be finalized.

## ADVISING

### Academic Advising

The Academic Advisor is the Chair of the department. provides guidance in regards to concerns or conflicts that might arise with course sequence grids (plans of study,)and leave(s) of absences. In addition, the Academic Advisor might assist with clarification of your learning styles and needs, along with guidance with materials found in any of the student handbooks. The Academic Advisor serves as an advocate during a student's tenure as a graduate student and helps to connect students with academic and other supports.

### Intensive Practicum/Fieldwork Advising

Students are responsible for proposing an appropriate experience site prior to the onset of the first intensive practicum course. Upon receipt of the proposed site information, the Director of Mentoring will work with students and prospective sites to ensure that the experience site meets both the BACB and Simmons University requirements for Mentoring and Supervision. Students may also meet with the Director of Mentoring by appointment. Once enrolled in intensive practicum/fieldwork courses, the Director of Mentoring will also serve as the primary point of contact regarding any student progress concerns or issues that may arise at approved practicum sites.

## ATTENDANCE

### Classroom Attendance

Instructors are permitted to and will consider individual class attendance when determining a student's final grade for a course. In addition to lowering a grade, excessive absences may justify a failing grade for the entire course. Each course is aligned to the content hours required by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB), thus absences may result in a student not meeting these required content hours. Although excessive absence is typically defined as missing more than 3.5 hours (1 class) individual instructors are the final arbiter for each course.

## Classroom Etiquette

All students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior and mutual respect for teachers and colleagues. Some general guidelines:

- **Respect confidentiality.** To facilitate shared communication in a teaching and learning environment and to respect privacy, refrain from disclosing private information.
- **Adhere to standards of behavior.** Be polite, sincere, and respectful of others. Avoid gossiping about others.
- **Show respect for your colleagues and for dialogue among classmates.**
- **Share expert knowledge.** Be willing to share your expertise.

## Audits

Auditing classes is not permitted in Behavior Analysis courses.

## Religious Observance/Student Absence

Simmons University abides by the Massachusetts law on Religious Observances. Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in an examination, class, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study, or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work they may have missed consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151c, Section 2b. That law states:

Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or a denominational education or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his/her availing himself of the provisions of the sections.

A student should inform the instructor prior to missing a class if they expect to miss class as a consequence of their religious observances.

Students in intensive practicum should consult the Director of Mentoring or relevant syllabus for procedures and policies governing the request of release time for religious holidays.

Students who need to be excused from practicum placement attendance due to religious observance should make arrangements with their site prior to the anticipated absence.

Questions about absences for religious observances should be directed to the Associate Dean or the Office of Student Life.

## GRADING

### Students enrolled prior to January 2020:

The Behavior Analysis Master's degree requires 40 credit hours, consisting of 32 credit hours of classroom courses and 8 credit hours of intensive practicum placement (which includes 750 experience hours).

### Students enrolled on or after January 2020:

The Behavior Analysis Master's degree requires 42 credit hours, consisting of 32 credit hours of classroom courses and 10 credit hours of fieldwork placement (which includes 2,000 experience hours).

Students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) grade average throughout their program. Courses are graded using the A-F grading system. The numerical equivalent for each grade is as follows:

### Grading Scale

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>GPA equivalent</b>	<b>Point scale equivalent</b>
A	4.0	100-94
A-	3.67	93-90
B+	3.33	89-87
B	3.0	86-84
B-	2.67	83-80
C+	2.33	79-77
C	2.00	76-74
C-	1.67	73-70
D+	1.33	69-67
D	1	66-64
D-	.67	63-60
F	0	59 or below

### Grade Appeal of Final Course Grade

Students have the right to be awarded grades that are calculated correctly and assigned based on a fair evaluation of work. Students have the right to understand how a grade was calculated and why the faculty member evaluated the work as s/he did.

The University is guided by the principles of academic freedom and respects the integrity, expertise, and professional judgment of its faculty in the evaluation of students' academic work. Faculty members' right and obligation to evaluate students' academic work and determine student grades

are fundamental to this principle.

Faculty members have the right to set grading standards in their courses and the responsibility to advise students of their grading standards at the outset of the course; to use their best judgment in applying those standards; and to assign grades based on methods of evaluation they deem appropriate so long as those methods are not arbitrary or capricious or the product of prejudice or discriminatory animus.

Simmons faculty are strongly encouraged to advise students in writing of their grading methods and standards at the beginning of each term in each course they teach, preferably as part of the course syllabus. Students are encouraged to raise questions about how the instructor will calculate the final grade at the beginning of the semester.

#### *Discussion with Instructor*

Students should talk to their instructor about any grade concerns or questions *before* initiating the Grade Appeal Process described below. At this stage, the course lead may also be consulted in addition to the section instructor.

Within **one week** of the posting of the course grade, students should meet (or speak on the phone/email) with their instructor and express their concerns about their course grade, providing information the faculty member would need to reconsider the grade. If the faculty member agrees to change a grade, s/he will complete the Registrar's Change of Grade form. If, after the discussion, the faculty member decides to let the grade stand, a student may wish to initiate a formal grade appeal.

#### *Basis of Grade Appeal*

Simmons formal grade appeal process addresses situations in which a student believes a grade has been assigned for one of the following reasons:

- Computational error;
- Arbitrariness or capriciousness (including where grading criteria have changed after assignment submission and without explanation);
- Unlawful discrimination.

If a student believes that one of these reasons applies to a grade they have received, they should follow the procedures and timelines outlined below.

Only the final grade in a course is subject to this process. As a result of the process, the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same. No new or revised course work can be requested by the student or accepted by the faculty member as part of the grade appeal process.



## **Grade Appeal Process**

### *Overview*

As noted above, before initiating a formal grade appeal, students are encouraged to meet with their faculty member and discuss their concern and/or ask questions about the grade. Grade concerns are frequently resolved through these “informal” (i.e., before formal appeal) discussions, most often when there is a computational error.

A grade appeal at Simmons has two stages: to the CNBHS Appeals Committee; and to the Dean.

The CNBHS Appeals Committee is composed of Program Chairs from each department (or their designee), the Associate Dean, the Director of the Dotson Bridge and Mentoring Program, and an at-large-faculty member appointed by the Dean for a two-year term. The Assistant Dean shall be an ex officio member of the committee. The Committee has regularly scheduled meetings throughout the academic year.

Grade appeals must be submitted to the Associate Dean or designee **within two (2) weeks of posting of the grade** that is the subject of the appeal. At each level of appeal, a denial of the appeal means that the grade will not be reviewed or changed. Granting of an appeal may mean the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same.

### *Process and Deadlines*

If the student’s discussion with the instructor has not reached a satisfactory conclusion, the following process and timeline are to be followed for a formal grade appeal:

#### **Step 1: Appeal to the CNBHS Appeals Committee**

Obtain the Grade Appeal Form from the Academic Advisor, complete it, and submit the form with any supporting information (including the faculty’s response to the student’s original inquiry) to the Associate Dean or designee.

- Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their advisor, in preparing their appeal form and planning for their appearance, in front of the CNBHS Appeals Committee.
- The Associate Dean or designee
- will place the student’s appeal for consideration at the next available CNBHS Appeals Committee meeting. The committee will make reasonable efforts to consider appeals in a timely manner.
- Prior to meeting with the student, the committee may choose to consult with faculty or others involved in the case.
- The student will be invited to appear at the CNBHS Appeals Committee meeting, where their case is being heard. Students are allowed to have their faculty advisor attend the meeting with them if they choose.
- The student will be notified, in writing, of the Committee’s decision, within 10 business days of the meeting, at which their appeal is heard. Notification of the decision will also be sent to the Dean and the Department Chair.
- In the event that the Appeals Committee grants an exception to a policy, the matter will be

referred back to the department responsible for determining how to implement an appropriate plan for student progress.

- The Dean will be the final arbiter.

## **Step 2: Appeal to the Dean**

If the student is not satisfied with the response from the CNBHS Appeals Committee Committee, within **10 business days** of receipt, s/he may appeal to the Dean of the College of Natural, Health and Behavioral Sciences (or the Dean's designee). The Grade Appeal Form, faculty response, and CNBHS Appeals Committee Committee outcomes are then forwarded to the Dean.

Within **two weeks**, the Dean will decide the appeal. An appeal will only be reviewed if the appeal is made on the basis of bias, an error in the application of policy, or for lack of due process. If the Dean determines the appeal is being made on the basis of bias, an error in application of policy, or lack of due process then the appeal will be reviewed. The decision of the Dean shall be communicated to the student in writing and is the final decision.

If the appeal results in a change of grade, the course instructor will be notified and will complete and submit a Change of Grade form to the Registrar.

The grade appeal policy respects the privacy of students and faculty. All parties are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

## **Bias Response Protocol**

Simmons University is committed to inclusive excellence in all aspects of an individual's community experience. Our values, vision and mission mandate that we strive to create an environment that is free of bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful acts. Individuals who believe they have experienced or encountered bias, harassment or discrimination can utilize the Simmons bias response protocol to have their concern addressed. Information about protocol can be accessed at <http://www.simmons.edu/about-simmons/why-simmons/diversity-and-inclusion/bias-response-protocol/>

## **Extensions for Assignments**

Students are expected to complete coursework assignments on time; instructors should clearly articulate policies regarding extensions on the course syllabus and their grading policy for work/assignments passed in after the deadline. An extension must be requested by a student prior to the due date of the assignment and a revised date for submission of work must be approved by the instructor. A student who submits work late even with the instructor's permission, may nonetheless receive a lesser grade from the instructor to reflect the missed deadline. Unless the extension of time is sought as a religious accommodation (which must be granted), the decision to grant an extension or to accept work late rests in the discretion of the faculty member.

No extensions can be granted for final assignments except in the case of an instructor-approved full-course incomplete.

## REGISTRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Course Sequence Grids

When registering for classes each term, students must follow the course sequence grid provided to them by their Academic Advisor.

In the Behavior Analysis program, courses are tiered. Students must complete all courses in one tier prior to progressing to the next tier.

It is the student's responsibility to be certain they are in the proper courses. take the course again at a later date.

### Transfer Credit

Students seeking transfer course credit from another institution must submit a Transfer Credit Interest form for consideration. At the Chair's discretion, up to two courses (or 8 credits) may be accepted for transfer credit provided the course content is comparable to content addressed in course offered by the program. If transfer credit is approved, it is the student's responsibility to review BACB standards for course transfer credit. Note: Acceptance by the Department of Behavior Analysis of course work for transfer not necessarily mean that the BACB will accept the transferred content.

### Registration

A representative from the Graduate Office of Admissions will register all students for their first semester courses. Student will register themselves for courses for all subsequent semesters via AARC, the Simmons University online registration system. Students should consult with their Academic Advisor about course selections and course sequencing, the Simmons Service Desk (617-521-2222) for AARC technical issues, and the Registrar's Office (617-521-2111 or [aarcsupport@simmons.edu](mailto:aarcsupport@simmons.edu)) regarding AARC registration error codes and registration issues. Other questions should be directed to their Academic Advisor.

### Waitlist Policy

Students may be placed on the AARC automatic waitlist system or a closed/full class. Regardless of the waitlist, students will always be enrolled in the courses they are scheduled to take, according to their course sequence grid.

### Add/Drop

Prior to the start of classes and until the end of the second week of the term, students may add or drop by e-mailing the Office of the Registrar. Students are responsible for informing the instructor and for making up any missed course work in an added class. For courses dropped after week two, students must complete and submit a Course Withdrawal Form. Students may not add a class after week two. Courses dropped after the second week of the term will appear on the student's transcript with a grade of "W."

Students who change their schedule by dropping or adding a course should consult with their Academic Advisor to ensure that they will continue to meet degree and graduation requirements. Students should also consult with the Student Financial Services to be fully apprised of the impact of course changes on their financial aid.

### Withdrawal from a Course

Student transcripts will show a "W" grade for "withdrawn" for any courses withdrawn from the beginning of the third week and up to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week. No withdrawals are permitted after week 8; the instructor will record the grade the student has earned. Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once.

Students must meet with their Academic Advisor and must submit the relevant form before withdrawing from a course.

### Incomplete Policy

Required coursework must ordinarily be completed by the last day of final examinations. In extenuating circumstances, students may request an "incomplete" by obtaining approval from the course instructor and Chair of the department. The student will complete the Petition for Incomplete Grade form. The form must be completed and submitted in order for the student to be officially granted an incomplete grade in the course. Once the form is submitted, a grade of "I" will be entered by the Office of the Registrar. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their progress and complete all work so that the instructor can submit a final grade by the date set. Students can only extend their final grade with an incomplete until one week before the beginning of the following term. If a student does not submit required work by the new due date, the instructor will grade the student based on work done up until that point. The grade earned will be assigned accordingly on the due date listed. Grades not submitted by the instructor to the Office of the Registrar on the approved deadline will automatically be converted to a grade of "F."

Incompletes for intensive practicum may be extended beyond the typical deadline with Practicum Director or Program Director approval.

### Students with Disabilities

Simmons University is committed to the full participation of all students in its programs and activities. Although Simmons University has no academic program specifically designed for students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified for admission, Simmons University is committed to providing support services and reasonable accommodations when requested by students who qualify for them.

If a student has a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, it is the student's responsibility to register with the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible to ensure that requested accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information or to request academic accommodations, contact the Accessibility Services Office, [caa@simmons.edu](mailto:caa@simmons.edu). Please visit the Accessibility Services website at <http://www.simmons.edu/student-life/student-services/disability-services> for contact information and additional information regarding disability services. Students can seek assistance in contacting Accessibility Services by meeting with their instructor or the Chair of the department. Students are encouraged to inquire about these services if they are interested in learning more about accessing services.

## LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND WITHDRAWALS FROM SIMMONS

### Voluntary Leave of Absence

From time to time, students may take a voluntary leave of absence from their studies as a result of medical, mental health, or other personal matters that compromise their ability to continue in an academic program. A student may apply for a Leave of Absence (LOA) at any time after enrolling at the University. The maximum duration of a leave of absence is one year. To request a Leave of Absence, students should contact their Academic Advisor and consult the process listed on the [Registrar's web page](#).

If the student chooses to take a voluntary leave of absence in order to receive intensive clinical health care treatment, the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee will assist with processing this request. In some instances the student may be asked to complete the Process for Returning from an Involuntary Leave of Absence as a requirement of returning to the University.

### Involuntary Leave of Absence

Simmons is committed to the safety and well-being of its community members and to the integrity of our

living and learning environment. Our goals therefore are to maintain the health and safety of every member of the Simmons community and to enable all enrolled students to participate fully in the life of the community.

As noted above, we recognize that from time to time, students may take a voluntary leave of absence from their studies as a result of medical, mental health, or other personal matters that compromise their ability to continue in an academic program. However, we also recognize that sometimes it will be necessary for Simmons University to require a student to take an *involuntary* leave – a leave, which Simmons University has concluded, is in the best interest of the student but which the student may object to.

In instances where a student's mental, emotional, or medical health pose a threat to themselves and/or others, or where health circumstances or conditions become a barrier to appropriate or prescribed levels of self-care, or when a student's health condition causes significant disruption to the activities of the University community, students may be required to take an involuntary leave of absence from the University for a specific period of time.

In instances when a student's mental, physical or emotional health may pose a direct, imminent, threat to the safety and well-being of the Simmons community, or the student has been admitted to a healthcare setting to undergo medical or psychological treatment (hospitalization, intensive outpatient or inpatient program), the Associate Dean of Students or designee, as an interim measure, can place the student on an involuntary leave of absence from the University. When applicable, the student will be informed in writing of the actions that lead to her/him being placed on leave and direct the student to the process for return. The student's parent/guardian/emergency contact person may also be notified that the student is in a potentially dangerous situation.

In circumstances when the student has not met direct threat/inpatient criteria, the Associate Dean of Students or designee may, based on observable/recorded behavior, still require a student to undergo an individualized psychological and/or medical assessment to make an informed decision regarding the student's ability to meet the academic, social, and emotional requirements of a Simmons student. This evaluation can be conducted by a member of the Simmons clinical staff, or by an external health care provider who is treating the student. The student will be required to sign a release that gives permission to the designated clinical personnel at Simmons to speak with her/his external evaluating health care provider and to allow for the release of any relevant medical reports as part of the assessment. If the student chooses not to engage in the process above, then she/he will be required to take an involuntary leave of absence and if applicable, an immediate removal from the residence halls.

If, following the evaluation, a leave is deemed unnecessary, the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee may impose other conditions and/or requirements which the student would be required to comply with as a condition of continued enrollment.

In any instance in which a leave is required, the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee will provide written notice to the student, including the specific requirements that must be met as a condition of eligibility for re-enrollment, the timeline for initiating and completing the return process, as well as the procedure for appealing the decision. When appropriate, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student will be included in this notice. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the need for a voluntary or involuntary leave with their parent(s) or guardian(s) or significant other prior to and during the leave process.

The duration of the leave is typically no fewer than six months, although the specific length of the leave will be based on the individualized assessment and determined by the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee on a case-by-case basis. The Program Director will be consulted about the duration of the leave. When a student takes a leave before the end of a semester, whether voluntary or involuntary, Simmons' standard tuition refund schedule applies.

### **Process for Returning to Simmons After an Involuntary Leave**

Simmons University students who have been placed on an Involuntary Leave of Absence will be required to undergo an individualized assessment to be cleared to return to Simmons, prior to their return to the

University. They are also required to sign an authorization form that enables the hospital, treatment facility, and/or all pertinent external healthcare providers to release information necessary for the review process. The review process will involve an interview with the appropriately licensed Simmons clinical staff member as well as the Dean of Student Life or designee.

Following the interview with the clinical staff, a recommendation based the student's report, his/ her treatment history, information gathered from the external treatment facility, and/or a student's personal health care provider, will be shared with the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee regarding the student's readiness to return. Then, on a case-by-case basis the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee will make a determination if the student shall be permitted to return to the Simmons community. If it is determined that the student can return, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee to establish a plan to return to the University and identify community resources. The appropriate academic program administrator (Dean, Associate Dean or Program Director) will be consulted for purposes of establishing the plan to return to active student status. As a condition of continued enrollment and, if applicable, as a condition of re-admittance to the residence halls, the following criteria must be met:

1. The consulting health care provider must find that the student has maintained a significant level of physical, mental, or emotional stability along with the skill set necessary to successfully engage in the student's academic program, including clinical and professional internships, field placements, teaching practica and all activities associated with being a Simmons student.
2. The student and the consulting Simmons clinical staff member, in conjunction with all relevant external health care providers, must establish and agree upon a plan for continued managed care after returning to the University.
3. The student must commit to follow the recommended and established treatment plan.

If, after reviewing all pertinent information, the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee denies a student's request to return from an involuntary leave of absence, or the student disagrees with the conditions established as part of the return process, the student can appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

Students who withdraw from Simmons should first meet with their Academic Advisor for an exit interview as part of the withdrawal process. Recipients of financial aid should also notify the Office of Student Financial Services. Students who withdraw from school and who wish to seek re-admission at some later time must apply for readmission through the standard Admissions process applicable to all candidates seeking admission. Admission once does not guarantee that admission will be granted a second time.

### **Mode of Delivery Transfer Policy**

Simmons University offers both on-campus and online Master's degree options in Behavior Analysis. Students admitted into the online program who are interested in transferring to the on-campus program must first consult with the BA@S Program Director for more information. Student requests for a transfer across either program option must be approved by both respective Program Directors. Student requests to transfer are not guaranteed.

### **Program Completion Policy**

All degree requirements must be completed within five years of matriculation. At five years or more prior academic coursework must be repeated.

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID**

To be eligible to continue to receive federal student aid, students must make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) by achieving and completing their program of study as measured using qualitative (GPA) and

quantitative (completed credits) standards.

- *Qualitative Standard:* Students enrolled in a graduate degree program must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
- *Quantitative Standard:* A graduate student must complete at least 50% of all credits attempted. This is calculated by dividing the total credits earned by the total credits attempted.
- Graduate students are required to complete within the timeframe established by Simmons. All credits attempted will count towards this timeframe. Graduate degree candidates should consult their program as the number of credits required varies per program
- Note: Withdrawals after the add/drop period count as attempted but not completed credits.

For more information on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), please see the complete information and policies on the [Student Financial Services Website](#).

## TUITION REFUNDS

### Tuition Refund Schedule

Please consult the Student Financial Services representatives or see online at <http://www.simmons.edu/admission-and-financial-aid/student-financial-services/student-accounts/course-refunds> for the exact dates for all semesters and a description of the financial implications. Please note: The schedule differs from semester to semester.

## SIMMONS UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

All students are expected to adhere to the Honor System of Simmons University, which can be found at: <https://www.simmons.edu/student-life/handbook/rights-responsibilities/honor-system>

### Honor Code Violations

Violations of the Simmons University Honor Code, specifically, academic dishonesty, plagiarism and cheating are referred to the Associate Dean for Student Life and the University Honor Board. Also referred are situations involving sexual misconduct the damage or destruction of University property, and conduct that endangers the health or safety of any student, employee, or campus visitor.

### Behavior Analysis Professional Standards

***Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*** (<http://bacb.com/wpcontent/uploads/2016/03/160321compliancecodeenglish.pdf>).

Students are expected to adhere to the BACB's *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*, in their workplace and classroom. The BACB's code of ethics outlines behaviors and responsibilities expected of behavior analysts. Students are considered behavior analysts in training and as such as subject to this code of ethical behavior. Students should obtain a copy of the BACB's *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts* and become familiar with its contents.

Failure to meet generally accepted standards for professional conduct, ethics and personal integrity requisite for professional social work practice, as outlined in the *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*, may constitute grounds for a Level Three Review or a referral to the Simmons University Honor Board and could result in dismissal or other academic sanctions.



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ISSUES**

The University is committed to supporting student success and the achievement of academic and practice proficiency while also upholding professional standards and the expectations set forth by the University-wide code of conduct. A three-level review process is used to address student academic performance and professional conduct issues. The specific level of review depends upon the severity of the concern. Information shared by the student with faculty and school administrators related to the concerns being reviewed will not be treated as confidential if the information shared raises concerns about professional performance or student safety. Students are advised that faculty or administrators will share pertinent information with each other on a need to know basis for the purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about those issue and concerns. A student will be reviewed at the level (1, 2 or 3) that is appropriate to the concern.

### **Reviews of Students can occur under any of the following circumstances:**

- To identify need for academic support
- To determine a remediation plan for an Honor Board violation
- If a student fails to meet or maintain academic requirements
- If a student is terminated from a practicum placement either by the experience setting or by the department due to performance issues
- If a student is rejected by three agencies during the field placement process in one term
- If a student exhibits behavior judged by faculty to be in violation of professional ethics and/or Simmons University and CNBHS policies
- If a student exhibits consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior in the classroom or in field placements

### **The Three Levels of Review**

There are three levels of review to address student academic performance and conduct issues. A student can be reviewed at any level, and consecutive level reviews are not required. Specifically, a student may have undergone a Level 1 review and then may be asked to engage in a Level 3 review, without having engaged in Level 2 review.

#### **Level 1: Student/Instructor Consultation**

A Level 1 review involves a consultation between a faculty member and a student, typically at the request of the faculty member. When a faculty member has concerns about a student meeting any of the academic criteria, whether related to professional behavior or academic performance, that faculty member will:

- Discuss those concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the difficulties.
- Apprise the Academic Advisor of the concerns
- Summarize plans and or recommendations in an email to the student

If a problem arises in an external practicum site the intensive practicum mentor (i.e. supervisor) is expected to discuss promptly concerns directly with the student and with the Director of Mentoring. It is the responsibility of the mentor to apprise their department contact of the concerns.

The purpose of the Level 1 review is to provide the student an opportunity to receive feedback from their instructor about of areas of concern and suggestions for addressing the concerns.

The outcome of many Level 1 consultations is that, together, the faculty and students resolve the concerns and no further reviews are desired or required. Examples of situations triggering a Level 1 review are attendance issues, a poor grade or missed assignment.



## **Level 2**

A Level 2 meeting can be convened when concerns have not been resolved at Level 1 or when a student appears to be developing a pattern of not following academic or program standards, policies, or procedures. All students on academic probation will have a Level 2 review meeting.

A Level 2 review usually involves a meeting with the appropriate faculty member, student, and appropriate program administrator and the Chair of the department.

The student will be informed of the Level 2 review by their instructor. In preparation for the Level 2 meeting, the instructor and/or Chair will gather information about the nature of the concern. The meeting will be used to discuss the concerns and to develop a Corrective Plan to address that concern. If the outcome of the meeting is that no further action is needed, the meeting will be documented to the student and the Chair but no Corrective Plan will be created. When a Corrective Plan is determined to be appropriate next steps, the Corrective Plan may address the need for the student to modify his or her behavior and/or seek appropriate help or academic assistance. All parties to the Level 2 meeting, including the student, shall receive a copy of the Corrective Plan.

The purpose of a Level 2 review is to assist students in fully understanding and addressing the academic or behavioral concerns that are negatively impacting their success in the program. Examples of issues that may lead to a Level 2 review are repeated attendance problems, poor grades, other difficulties meeting the standards and expectations of a course

The administrator overseeing the Level 2 review may consult with the Dean or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to determine if the Level 2 assessment is sufficient or whether it would be in the Student's and Simmons's best interests to conduct a more comprehensive review, pursuant to Level 3.

## **Level 3**

A Level 3 review involves the Dean (or designee) and the Chair, members of the Academic Standards Committee and the student. Generally, the Level 3 review is called when serious or complex problematic patterns are identified with students or when the issues are serious enough to require formal consultation with faculty and the student. The Dean, in consultation with the committee, decides whether or not a Level 3 meeting shall be convened. The Dean informs the Simmons University Associate Dean for Student Life about the decision to convene a Level 3 review.

A Level 3 review may be conducted when concerns have not been fully resolved at prior Level 1 or Level 2 meetings; when a student continues to not meet the criteria for academic performance or when a student exhibits unprofessional or unethical behaviors in a classroom, field placement or other clinical setting.

When a Level 3 review is called, the Dean will convene a meeting with the appropriate faculty and the student. Information will be provided by the student and by appropriate faculty to determine the nature of the problem and to identify alternatives for its remediation.

The student will be notified in writing of the concerns and meeting date by the Dean, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting. If a student chooses not to attend, a finding can be made with the available information in the student's absence.

Once an understanding has been reached, the student will be excused from the meeting. Faculty conducting the Level 3 review will confer and agree on recommendations, which will then be made to the Dean who will implement a course of action based on the recommendations.

The Dean or designee will inform the student of the decision, which can include one of the following:

- Continue the student in the program with no conditions.
- Establish written conditions for the student's continuance in the program.
- Consult with or referral to the Simmons University Associate Dean for Student Life

- Dismiss student from the program

In any Level 3 review, there must be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that the concerns have been discussed with the student and attempted to be ameliorated when appropriate. Students must be notified of the decision in 10 business days of the review.

### **Level 3 Reviews and Referral and/or Consultation with the Simmons University Associate Dean for Student Life**

In some instances, depending on the nature of the problem, the Simmons University Associate Dean for Student Life may be consulted to determine whether a Level 3 Review or a referral to the Simmons University Associate Dean for Student Life, and/or Honor Board is the most appropriate course of action.

After consultation, if it is determined that a referral to the Associate Dean for Student Life and/or Honor Board is appropriate, the student will be notified in writing about the nature of the concern and that the referral is taking place. Situations that may result in referral to the Associate Dean for Student Life and/or Honor Board include: academic dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating, gender-based misconduct (which includes unlawful harassment), damage or destruction of University property, and conduct that endangers the health or safety of any University student, employee, campus visitor or member of the Simmons community and conduct that disrupts the functioning of the University as an open, educational community.

Cases that are referred directly to the Honor Board and/or the Associate Dean for Student Life may be referred back to the Associate Dean for the purpose of developing an implementation plan (Corrective Plan) for sanctions that have been determined by the Honor Board or Associate Dean for Student Life. The Associate Dean may consult with the Academic Standards Committee for guidance in the sanctions implementation plan.

### **Mid-Semester Academic Review**

Faculty who have concerns about a student's academic or field performance, attendance or professional behavior will first discuss these concerns directly with the student and may notify the student's Academic Advisor. If the concern or difficulty persists, the student's Academic Advisor must be informed.

Mid-semester academic reviews will take place regularly, during which faculty will be asked to identify any student who is experiencing field or academic difficulties. If a faculty member intends to include a student's name in the mid-semester academic review, the faculty member must inform the student and the student's Academic Advisor. The concern will be "flagged" for further exploration. The advisor will be in contact with the student, and generally a Level 2 review, convened by the student's Academic Advisor, will follow.

## **ACADEMIC STANDING AND DISCIPLINE**

*Note: Some of the policies below are new beginning September 2017. Unless noted otherwise, all policies below apply to all students regardless of when they entered the program.*

### **Course Grades below a "B"**

Any student earning a grade lower than a B in a course is required to have a Level 2 review, no later than the first day of the subsequent term, and is required to retake the class and earn a B or better. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the grade, the reasons for the low academic performance, and to develop a Corrective Plan, which will be sent to the student. A student's failure to attend this meeting will result in the administrative withdrawal of the student's registration.

### **When a Student Is Required to Retake a Class**

When a student is required to retake a class, both grades remain on the transcript and are accounted for in the GPA. All students are required to earn the requisite number of unique degree credits to graduate.

A student is allowed to repeat a maximum of two courses in which they have earned a grade of below a B. The same course cannot be enrolled in more than twice. A student is not permitted to re-submit any work submitted in the prior class. This includes asynchronous work as well as written papers and exams. Students required to retake a class will do so at their own expense.

### **Academic Probation**

Poor academic performance, and poor performance in external internships are grounds for a student to be placed on academic probation. For the purposes of academic probation, poor performance is defined as: two grades below a B or a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0. A student on academic probation will have a Level 2 review no later than the end of the first week of class of the subsequent semester. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a Corrective Plan. A copy of the plan, written by the advisor, must be forwarded to the appropriate program administrator. A student's failure to attend a Level 2 review meeting and to develop such a plan may result in the administrative withdrawal of the student's registration.

### **Removal from Academic Probation**

To be removed from academic probation, a student must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher by the following term. A student will be informed by the Program Director or Academic Adviser when they are removed from academic probation.

### **Program Progression**

A student is allowed to repeat a maximum of two courses in which they have earned a grade below a B. The same course cannot be enrolled in more than twice. Students who have utilized their repeat allowances and then go on to earn a grade below a "B" will be dismissed from the program. Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once. Students must complete the program in five years.

Students who do not register for classes in consecutive terms and are not on an official leave, or have not officially withdrawn, will be administratively withdrawn by Simmons. A new admissions application is required to be considered for return to the active student status.

### **GPA Required for Graduation**

Students must achieve a cumulative point average of B (3.0) to be eligible for graduation.

### **Academic and Conduct Issues Leading to Dismissal**

#### **Dismissal Due to Academic Performance**

The following circumstances lead to dismissal:

- Earning a cumulative GPA falling below a 3.0 for two consecutive terms
- When it is determined that a student cannot return their cumulative GPA to at least a 3.0 at the conclusion of the following term
- Earning three grades below a B
- Failure to progress as described in course progression policy
- In the case of conditional admission, failing to meet the conditions determined.

#### **Dismissal Due to Conduct Issues**

- Simmons University Honor Board violation leading to dismissal
- Behavior judged to be in violation of Simmons University Policies
- Behavior that is deemed unprofessional per the BACB's *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*
- Any threat or attempt to harm someone else inside or outside of the Simmons community
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice, occurring during the course of

study at Simmons or occurring prior to admission to Simmons and becoming known after admissions

#### **Notification of Dismissal**

A student who is dismissed will be informed in a letter from the Program Director or designee. The reasons for the dismissal will be outlined in the letter.

#### **Appeal of Dismissal**

A written appeal must be received within ninety (90) days of the date of the letter from the Program Director or designee. The written appeal must be sent to the Associate Dean or designee and the appeal will be reviewed by the CNBHS Appeals Committee.

The CNBHS Appeals Committee is composed of Program Chairs from each department (or their designee), the Associate Dean, the Director of the Dotson Bridge and Mentoring Program, and an at-large-faculty member appointed by the Dean for a two-year term. The Assistant Dean shall be an ex officio member of the committee. The Committee has regularly scheduled meetings throughout the academic year.

This appeal does not constitute a new review process. Rather, it is a request from a student to have the CNBHS Appeals Committee review the original record of the dismissal on either one or more of the following three grounds: (1) one or more errors in the dismissal process; or (2) new evidence or information material to the case that was not available at the time of the dismissal process; or (3) a substantive error occurred because the decision maker misinterpreted evidence used in the dismissal process. The appeal letter should include an explanation regarding the grounds for appeal and should reference one or more of the three grounds for appeal listed in this policy. The student should provide to the CNBHS Appeals Committee all documentation necessary for the appeal to be considered.

#### **Dismissal Appeal Process:**

- Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their advisor, in preparing their appeal form and planning for their appearance, in front of the CNBHS Appeals Committee.
- The Associate Dean or designee will place the student's appeal for consideration at the next available CNBHS Appeals Committee meeting. The committee will make reasonable efforts to consider appeals in a timely manner.
- Prior to meeting with the student, the committee may choose to consult with faculty or others involved in the case.
- The student will be invited to appear at the CNBHS Appeals Committee meeting, where their case is being heard. Students are allowed to have their faculty advisor attend the meeting with them if they choose.
- The student will be notified, in writing, of the Committee's decision, within 10 business days of the meeting, at which their appeal is heard. Notification of the decision will also be sent to the Dean and the Department Chair.
- In the event that the Appeals Committee grants an exception to a policy, the matter will be referred back to the department responsible for determining how to implement an appropriate plan for student progress.

- The Dean will be the final arbiter. Students who are terminated from the program and have been denied reinstatement by the Appeals have the right to appeal this decision in writing to the Dean of the College of Natural, Behavioral and Health Sciences within 10 business days of the decision. The decision of the Dean is final and cannot be appealed further.

## **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Each course is evaluated by students by the end of the last class meeting. The evaluations can be reviewed by the instructor only after student grades have been submitted. Evaluations are reviewed by the instructor, the Department Chair, the Program Director and or Associate Dean, and the Dean.

## **GRADUATION INFORMATION**

The Faculty and the Board of Trustees grants degrees six times per academic year. The dates are the last business days of January, April, July, August and October, and the third Friday in May. The University has one on-campus graduation ceremony, held in May on the third Friday. In addition, an online graduation ceremony is twice per calendar year, in March and September. The exact dates and additional information will be sent to eligible graduates.

### **Diplomas**

For all students graduating in August, October, January, March, and July, diplomas will be mailed directly to the address listed in AARC approximately four to six weeks after degree conferral. It is important that the student's address is correct on AARC.

For students graduating in May, your diploma will be available for pick up at Commencement. For students who do not attend Commencement or claim their diploma, it will be mailed in mid-June to the address listed in AARC. It is important that the student's address is correct on AARC.

Replacement diplomas can be ordered through the Registrar's Office. Diplomas will not be ordered for students who do not return completed Petitions to Graduate. Late petitions may delay the availability of your diploma.

### **Transcripts**

Transcripts can be ordered through the Registrar's Office at any time after the conferral of degrees. To order, log onto AARC, click "transcript requests" and follow the directions.

AARC will remain operational for students until approximately two months after graduation and transcripts will be free during this period. If you need to order transcripts after that time, visit the Simmons [Registrar's web page](#) and follow the directions listed there. There will be a fee depending on your choice of options, such as expedited service.

### **Graduation Requirements**

Students are responsible for tracking their own credit requirements. Regular meetings with Academic Advisors and review of AARC transcripts are encouraged to keep track of credits completed and needed.

## **OTHER SIMMONS UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

Information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) can be found at

<http://www.simmons.edu/academics/registrar/resources/student-record-privacy>.

Please visit <http://www.simmons.edu/student-life/handbook/> for University Policies on the following topics:

- [Honor System](#)
- Prohibited Conduct
- Judicial System
- University Policies & Procedures
- [Notice of Non-Discrimination and Grievance Procedures](#)
- [Accessibility Services](#)
- [Hazing Policy](#)
- [Gender-based Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Student Rights and Responsibilities Statement](#)
- Policy on Valuing Diversity
- Clery Report and Crime Statistics