

# Registration Procedures and Degree Requirements

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Registration for graduate courses must be approved by a graduate adviser. Only those students who have been officially admitted may register for classes (see Admission to Graduate Study).

TCNJ offers students an online registration system. T.E.S.S. (The Electronic Student Services) is a Web application accessible worldwide via the Internet at <http://tess.tcnj.edu>.

For assistance or more information, please contact the Office of Records and Registration at 609.771.2141.

## Change of Registration

Students with adviser approval may change their registration before the registration process is terminated. Add/Drop continues through the first week of classes, after which only withdrawals are permitted.

## Change of Program of Study

Students who contemplate changing their program of study should consult the Office of Graduate Studies for guidance. All requests for change of program must be signed by the graduate coordinator of the previous program, and approved by the graduate coordinator in the new program and the dean of the student's academic school. Students should remember that entrance requirements vary from one program to another and that there may be space limitations. Forms are available at [www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/form.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/form.html), <http://www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/forms/index.html>, or in the Office of Records and Registration, Green Hall 112.

## Graduate Enrollment in Undergraduate Courses

Graduate students may obtain approval to take certain undergraduate courses for personal or academic reasons. Such courses do not normally count toward the graduate degree. Students should consult their graduate program advisers for guidance. Graduate students enrolling in undergraduate courses will be billed at the graduate tuition rate.

## Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Courses

Undergraduates may petition to enroll in graduate courses if they have a grade point average of 3.0 or above or are exceptionally qualified to take a course; have accumulated 96 credit hours or unit equivalents at the undergraduate level; have been recommended to take the course by the undergraduate adviser and the coordinator of the graduate program in which the course is offered; and have the approval of the academic school dean. Undergraduate students are not permitted to enroll in courses above the 500 level.

These courses may not be applied to both the graduate and the undergraduate degree. If the credits are counted toward the undergraduate degree, they may not be transferred to a graduate program at this college. Approval forms are available in the Office of Graduate Studies, Paul Loser Hall 109.

## Summer Session

Students who are interested in registering for summer courses should consult the TCNJ summer sessions Web site at [www.tcnj.edu/~summer](http://www.tcnj.edu/~summer). The Web site provides complete course listings, procedures, and policies for registering that may differ from those for fall and spring semesters. The summer course schedule is available on the Web at TCNJ's summer sessions Web site and through T.E.S.S.

For further information, contact the Office of Summer Programs, Green Hall 111, 609.771.2575.

## Release of Transcripts and Disclosure of Educational Records

In order to comply with federal regulations, TCNJ has adopted institutional policies and procedures to be followed with regard to the disclosure of information from the education records of current and former students. The student record policy of TCNJ conforms to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-380). Copies of Public Law 93-380 may be found in the Office of Records and Registration. This policy gives a student the right to inspect his or her educational record within a reasonable length of time, to ask for interpretations, and to request that any inaccuracies be corrected.

Copies of the student's official transcript are released only on the written request (or request via T.E.S.S.) of the student and only after all obligations to the College, financial and otherwise, have been fulfilled. Requests for transcripts should be made to the Office of Records and Registration or requested via T.E.S.S. There is no charge for this service. Transcripts are issued within one week of receipt of the written request, except during the beginning and ending weeks of each semester, when more processing time may be required. Transcripts received from other schools are the property of the College and are not copied or released.

Grades and personally identifiable financial information cannot be released to parents, guardians, or other interested parties without the specific permission of the student. Forms are available in the Office of Records and Registration and must be completed every semester for which a student wishes to release educational records to third parties.

With the exception of directory information, TCNJ does not permit access to or the release of education records without the written consent of the student. Records-release exceptions will be made to the following: (a) to TCNJ officials, including faculty and administrators who require such records in the proper performance of their duties; (b) in connection with the student's application for or receipt of financial aid or Veterans Affairs benefits; (c) to organizations conducting studies for educational and governmental agencies (in which case individual students are neither identified nor identifiable); (d) U.S. government agencies as listed in Public Law 93-380; (e) parents of a dependent student as defined in the Internal Revenue Code of 1954; (f) accrediting agencies; (g) to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; and (h) appropriate persons in connection with an emergency if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of a student or any other person.

Directory information is defined as: student's name, e-mail address, date and place of birth, classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate), major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, photograph, degrees and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution previously attended by the student. Students who do not wish their information released outside TCNJ or published in the campus directory must give written notice to the Office of Records and Registration annually by the day before the beginning of the fall semester.

TCNJ assigns an eight-digit number as the Student Identification Number. This number must be used in lieu of a student's Social Security number.

## TCNJ Notification of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day that TCNJ receives a request for access. Students should submit to the director of records and registration written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The TCNJ official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the TCNJ official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the TCNJ official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is defined as a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, or support-staff position (including campus police and campus-wellness-center persons); a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a student serving on an official school committee such as the All-College Academic Integrity Board; or a person assisting another school official in performing his or her 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 responsibility.

4. TCNJ considers the following as directory information and will release the following information upon request:

Name  
E-mail addresses  
Telephone listing  
Degrees and awards received  
Major field of study  
Classification  
Date and place of birth  
Dates of attendance  
Photograph  
Most recent previous school  
Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

To prevent the release of the above-referenced directory information, the student must file the Directory Information Release Form with the Office of Records and Registration each year.

5. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by TCNJ 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, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

## Cancellations

Students should assume that classes will be held unless notice of cancellation is given. When an instructor fails to appear and no notice of cancellation is evident at the start of a class, it is recommended that students wait a reasonable time before assuming that the class is canceled.

## Degree Requirements

### Academic Advisement/Supervision

Students are encouraged to develop a collaborative relationship with their program advisers and/or graduate coordinators early in their graduate careers. Advisers help students plan their courses of study, comply with program requirements, and assess academic progress. They are also available for broader consultation and discussion. In instances when formal approval is required (some of which are identified below), students will need to obtain formal approval from their adviser before actions may be taken.

### Prerequisites

All courses listed in this bulletin are graduate courses that require competent preparation at the undergraduate level. Certain courses—typically at the 600 level—require that specific prerequisites (or their equivalents) be met. Students should consult individual course descriptions in this bulletin and confer with their graduate advisers to plan appropriate course sequences.

## Credit Load

A full-time graduate student load is nine credits during the fall or spring semester. A graduate student may register for a maximum of 12 credits during the fall or spring semester. Graduate students may register for a maximum of nine credits for the summer semester. If a program requires more than the maximum load during a given semester, students must submit written permission from their academic adviser with approval from the dean of the student's academic school at the time of registration.

## Grading System

A student's academic standing in every subject is reported at the end of each semester in the form of a letter grade. Grades are assigned by the faculty member of record.

Grade	Weight	Description
A	4.00	
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	
C-	1.67	
F	0.00	
P*	Not calculated	Passed (for transfer purposes, a P is considered a B or better)
U*	Not calculated	Unsatisfactory
I	Not calculated	Incomplete work
W	Not calculated	Withdrew from course before the end of the ninth week of the semester
WD	Not calculated	Withdrew from college before the end of the ninth week of the semester
WF	0.00	Withdrew from college before the end of the ninth week of the semester, failing
WP	Not calculated	Withdrew from college before the end of the ninth week of the semester, passing
CR	Not calculated	Requirement met by examination
AU	Not calculated	Audit
IP	Not calculated	In progress

\*Used only for courses graded on a Pass/Unsatisfactory basis.

## Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades may be given only when a student is unable to complete a course because of illness or other serious problems.

A grade of Incomplete may be awarded where appropriate but must be removed by the following semester. Incomplete grades granted in May or August must be completed by October 15 of the following fall semester. Incomplete grades granted in December must be completed by March 1 of the following spring semester. Incomplete grades granted in the summer session must be completed by the end of the fall semester.

If these deadlines are not met, the grade automatically becomes an F. To give an Incomplete grade, the instructor should file an Incomplete Grade Form with the Office of Records and Registration. This form will indicate the reason for giving the Incomplete, the requirements the student must meet in order to complete the course, and the deadline for completion. The student is responsible for making any necessary contact with the instructor.

The In Progress (IP) designation applies only to certain courses, such as Department Project and Thesis, requiring more than one semester to complete (see also Retention Standards).

## Calculation of GPA

A student's grade point average (GPA) is based only on courses taken at The College of New Jersey. Not included in the calculation of the grade point average are courses transferred from other institutions. The grade point average is calculated by dividing a student's total quality points by her/his total quality hours. Quality points are calculated by multiplying the number of credits for a course by the weight of the grade (see Grading System) in that course. Quality hours are the sum of credits a student attempts (regardless of whether the courses are passed) at TCNJ in letter-graded courses.

At the end of each semester, a student can view and print a grade report showing a cumulative grade point average as well as a grade point average for that semester on The Electronic Student Services (T.E.S.S.) Web site (<http://tess.tcnj.edu>).

## Change of Status from Non-Matriculation to Matriculation

Non-matriculated students who wish to matriculate into a graduate degree or certificate program must submit a formal application online for matriculation and forward all supporting documentation to the Office of Graduate Studies in accordance with announced deadlines. An applicant should become familiar with the completion requirements of each program or program option. Non-matriculation status does not imply or guarantee acceptance into any degree or certification program.

## Transfer of Credit

A maximum of six graduate credits may be transferred for degree programs with less than 45 credits. For graduate programs with 45 or more credits, nine graduate credits may be accepted pending departmental approval. Transfer courses must be applicable to the student's current program of study and have been completed at a regionally accredited graduate institution within the last six years with a grade of B or higher to be eligible for approval. They cannot duplicate any graduate or undergraduate work for which credit has been given at The College of New Jersey and cannot have been applied to an academic degree at any other institution.

## Transfer of Prior Course Work

Students wishing to apply for transfer of previously completed graduate credits must do so during their first year of enrollment as a matriculated student. Transfer of credits shall be understood to apply to credits previously earned at The College of New Jersey as well as at other regionally accredited graduate institutions. Forms are available in the Office of Records and Registration, Green Hall 112, or online at [www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/forms.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/forms.html).

## Approval of Future Course Work for Transfer of Credit

Matriculated students must obtain written approval from their graduate coordinators before enrolling in graduate courses that are to be transferred for credit to the College. Only courses that are to be completed at a regionally accredited graduate institution shall be eligible for such approval. Forms are available in the Office of Records and Registration, Green Hall 112, or online at [www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/forms.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/forms.html).

## Course Auditing

A student who audits a course will receive a grade of AU. The same information will be placed on the student's record.

Students with graduate status at the College who wish to audit a graduate course must have the permission of the instructor or the approval of the graduate coordinator for the program in which the course resides. Instructors determine the degree of class participation required of auditors in their classes.

Audit courses may not be counted in determining enrollment status or graduate-assistant eligibility. Audit grades may not later be converted to any other grade.

### Withdrawing from a Course

Students may withdraw from a course up to the end of the ninth week of the fall and spring semesters. The Records and Registration Web site documents specific dates for each semester and for summer school. To withdraw, a student must file the appropriate form in the Office of Records and Registration. Students withdrawing from courses within the withdrawal period will automatically receive a grade of W, which has no effect on the student's grade point average. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from a course. Failure to withdraw formally may result in failing grades and dismissal. Failure to withdraw from a course during the 100-percent-refund period will result in financial obligations.

### Withdrawing from the College

A student who wishes to leave the College and withdraw from all courses must complete and sign an Intent to Withdraw form before the last four sessions of the course. Students who neglect to follow this procedure will receive a failing grade for any course they cease to attend.

Students who withdraw from the College before the midpoint of the semester will be given a grade of WD in all courses. Withdrawal after that will result in the instructors' assigning the grades of WP or WU (which do not affect a student's GPA), or WF (which is calculated as an F in a student's GPA). A student may not withdraw from the College in the last three weeks of a semester.

College Intent to Withdraw forms are available in the Office of Student Life, Brower Student Center 214. The forms are also available online at [www.tcnj.edu/~studlife/withdraw/](http://www.tcnj.edu/~studlife/withdraw/). Eligibility for refunds will be determined by the date on which the completed Intent to Withdraw form is received. The amount of the refund is based on the date of withdrawal. Dates for the end of each semester's withdrawal period are listed in the College's Schedule of Classes and on the Office of Records and Registration Web site.

**It is the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from the College. Failure to withdraw formally may result in failing grades, dismissal, and additional financial obligations.**

### Readmission

Students who have been dismissed from a graduate program may apply for readmission after one calendar year from the time of dismissal. The matriculation application is to be used for readmission. In addition to the essay, students must cite the reason for dismissal and explain why they believe they will be able to perform successfully if readmitted. Readmission must be approved by the department and endorsed by the dean of the student's academic school.

### Independent Study

Students who wish to supplement departmental course work by investigating a particular topic may do so under the direction and guidance of a faculty member who is considered an expert in the field. A final paper reporting the findings of the study must be submitted to the faculty member.

Requests for independent study must be submitted for approval to the faculty member and the department chair or designee. The resulting contract will describe the study, specify the format, length, and scope of the final paper, and determine the number of credits—from one to six—to be awarded.

No more than nine credits of independent study may be taken in any one graduate program.

Note: Independent study will not be approved as a substitute for an existing graduate course. If under extraordinary circumstances it becomes evident that the conferral of the student's degree will be significantly deferred because a required course is not available, that course should be waived and another course of comparable content be used to fulfill the requirement. The student must seek permission for the substitution from the coordinator of his or her graduate program, who will forward it (if approved) to the department chair and the dean of the school for final approval.

### Department Project

Students enrolled in master's programs may elect to do a department project, with the approval of the student's adviser, and will be awarded three credits upon completion of the project. Advisement is usually three credit hours for one semester. Those whose projects are In Progress (IP) will register for three credits of project advisement each semester until the project is completed. Students should consult this bulletin for descriptions of department projects offered.

### Thesis or Creative Project

In the Master of Arts, Master of Education, or Master of Science in Nursing programs, a thesis or creative project may be elected for six credits for any semester in which advisement is desired. A student must be registered to receive thesis advisement.

Students wishing to write a thesis should apply to the Office of Graduate Studies for the rules, regulations, and standards governing submission of the thesis. Please be advised that a thesis is not accepted in place of the comprehensive examination.

### Retention Standards

Students have six years from the time of matriculation to complete a graduate program. Petitions for extension will be considered by the dean of the student's academic school on merit.

Any student whose grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation. At the end of the probationary semester, the student will be dismissed if an overall GPA of 3.0 is not achieved. Students may appeal dismissal according to the procedures provided with the notification of dismissal.

### Comprehensive Examination

Every candidate for a graduate degree must take a comprehensive examination. (Only programs that offer an approved culminating experience are exempt from the comprehensive examination.)

The comprehensive examination may be taken no earlier than the final semester of program course requirements, except the internship or practicum, thesis, or project. All Incomplete and In Progress grades must be cleared. The comprehensive examination requires the candidate to synthesize and apply knowledge acquired throughout the program. Therefore, should the candidate fail the examination after the first attempt, the entire examination must be retaken.

Candidates who fail the comprehensive examination are permitted to retake it a second time at the next or a subsequent scheduled offering within the six-year limit from the candidate's matriculation date into a program.

Candidates who are ill or who have an emergency that interferes with their ability to take the examination should take it at the next scheduled offering.

Comprehensive exams are scheduled during each semester: fall, spring, and summer. Students must register for the comprehensive exam during registration periods for each semester. Specific exam dates may be obtained from the appropriate department.

## **Application for Conferral of Degree**

Candidates for the master's degree must file an Application for Conferral of Degree with the Office of Records and Registration, Green Hall 112.

Degrees are conferred in December, May, and August. For deadlines, students may access the Registration Calendar online at [www.tcnj.edu/~ccr/calendars/academic.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~ccr/calendars/academic.html), or contact the Office of Records and Registration. The Application for Conferral of Degree is available online through T.E.S.S.

## **Graduation**

Commencement exercises are held in the spring of each year. Students are not required to attend but are encouraged to do so, including those whose degrees were conferred after the date of the previous commencement. Individual ceremonies in several departments are held immediately following the main event of the day.

## **Obligations**

Obligations to the College (e.g., tuition, fees, outstanding library books, parking fines) which have not been fulfilled will result in a student being prohibited from registering for courses or in the withholding of a student's transcript and diploma. Delinquent loans (federal, state, or college) also may result in the withholding of the student's transcript. Students may view their financial obligations and registration "holds" on T.E.S.S. (<http://tess.tcnj.edu>).