

# ACADEMIC TERMINOLOGY

## Course Definitions

**Course Numbers:** Academic departments use specific abbreviations for each general subject area (for example, MATH for Mathematics). These three- or four- letter abbreviations (subject codes) are followed by a three-digit code, which signifies course level:

100-499	Undergraduate courses.
500-599	Graduate level courses that are available to post-baccalaureate students and provide broad based disciplinary knowledge in preparation for more advanced graduate work. 500-599 courses sometimes are cross-listed with upper-level undergraduate courses. A maximum of three 500-level courses may be counted towards the graduate degree requirements.
600-699	Graduate level courses that are available to post baccalaureate students and provide in-depth exploration of specialized disciplinary knowledge. 600-699 level courses sometimes are cross-listed with 400 level undergraduate courses.
700-799	Graduate courses available only to fully admitted graduate students.
800-899	Graduate research and thesis courses.
900-999	Doctoral research and dissertation courses.

- **Hybrid Course:** instruction occurs both on-campus and online to the same group of learners. *At TU, 10-90% of the instruction in a hybrid course must occur online.*
- **On-campus (in-person) course:** classes consist of synchronous instruction occurring with the learner(s) and the instructor(s) in the same location at a university site. *At TU, up to 10% of the instruction in an on-campus (in-person) course may be conducted online.*
- **Online (distance education) course:** all instruction must occur synchronously or asynchronously online. *At TU, 100% of the instruction in an online course must occur online. However, on-campus meetings/activities are permitted for orientation, testing or academic support services.*
- **Unit:** The value given generally to one 50-minute class (or its equivalent) meeting weekly for a term. This means that a class meeting Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9-9:50 a.m. or Tuesday and Thursday from 8-9:15 a.m. will be a 3-unit course. Most classes fit this format. Classes that require laboratory or studio time in addition to lecture time will usually merit an extra unit, becoming 4-unit courses, just as those requiring less class time will merit fewer units. The course description section of the catalog lists the number of units each course carries. **Faculty expect students to spend at least three hours reading, writing, and engaged in scholarship and other learning activities outside of class for each hour spent in class.**

- **Unit Load:** In a regular fall or spring term, full-time graduate students take a minimum of 9 units; full-time doctoral students take a minimum of 6 units. The precise number is determined by the program of study. In Minimester, graduate students may take a maximum of 4 units. Students may register for a maximum of 9 units during the summer.
  - To be considered full-time, graduate students must take a minimum of 9 units each regular term (fall and spring); doctoral students take a minimum of 6 units each regular term (fall and spring).

## Program Definitions

- **Concentration (MHEC approved):** A concentration is a sequential arrangement of courses representing a specialized area of study within a program. A graduate-level concentration requires a minimum of 12 units and should have enough unique units to distinguish it from another concentration or a track. No course can be common to all tracks and concentrations within the program. A concentration will appear on the student's transcript.
- **Prerequisites/Corequisites:** Prerequisites are requirements imposed by an academic program for certain courses within its curriculum. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to, other courses. Prerequisites also may include successful completion of screened requirements, where applicable, or successful completion of a specific test or examination, either departmental or standardized, where applicable. Prerequisites also may include department or instructor permission in addition to, or in lieu of, a specific course, testing or class standing requirements.
  - Programs specify the grade a student must earn for the course to meet the conditions of the prerequisite; this grade typically is minimum of a B. For courses transferred from another institution, the grade must be a B or better.
  - Corequisites are courses that must be taken together; for example a lecture course that has a related lab course. Occasionally a requirement may be stated as either a corequisite or prerequisite and the student may decide whether to take the courses concurrently or complete the requirement prior to enrolling in the other course.
  - Most enrollment requirements (prerequisites and corequisites) are enforced automatically when the student registers; however, it is ultimately up to the academic department to enforce enrollment requirements. Some departments make the determination after registration and students not meeting the requirements will be notified to drop the class. Therefore, students should carefully read course descriptions before registering to make sure they have met any prerequisite or corequisite requirements. Failure to meet published requirements or to withdraw from the course by the published deadline is not a basis for petitioning the Registrar's Office for an exception to academic policy.
- **Program Modality (COMAR definitions):**
  - **Distance education:** a program that is comprised of 100% online (distance education) courses. Requirements for in-person orientation, testing or academic support are permitted in distance education programs.
  - **On-campus:** a program that is not a distance education program.
  - **Both:** a program that is offered in both distance education modality and on-campus modality

- **Time Limit:** Graduate students must complete all degree requirements in a specified period of time. All requirements for a certificate or master's degree must be completed within a seven-year period. All requirements for terminal or doctoral degrees must be completed within a 10-year period. The seven- and 10-year time clock begins with the earliest course applied toward the degree program. The time limitation cannot be extended for transfer units within a degree program.
- **Track (Towson University approved):** A track is a sequential arrangement of courses representing a specialized area of study within a program. A graduate-level track requires between 9 and 11 units and should have enough unique units to distinguish it from another concentration or a track. No course can be common to all tracks and concentrations within the program. A track will appear on the student's transcript.

## Term Definitions

- **Winter minimester:** An intensive condensed term in January that allows students to take courses that lend themselves to a highly focused format (15 hours of instruction each week) to discuss ideas that interest students or that may fill a gap in their requirements. Students may take a *maximum* of 4 units in this term.
- **Semester:** A term composed of 15 weeks of instruction, including final examinations during the spring and fall. Most courses in a semester run for 15 weeks however, there are two 7 week, sequential sessions within each semester for a smaller number of courses.
- **Summer:** A term composed of four sessions of varying lengths that allow students to complete regular course work in a shorter period of time and fulfill degree requirements sooner.
- **Term of Study:** Each term in which students register and do not cancel or withdraw during the change of schedule period counts as a term of study.