

Syracuse University

College of Visual and Performing Arts

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

GUIDELINES FOR VPA MINIMUM GPA POLICIES

VPA programs may implement policies requiring students (majors) to earn a minimum GPA within courses in the major in order to remain in good standing in their program of study. Such policies must be approved by the Office of Academic Affairs and must appear in the current online graduate or undergraduate catalog, as appropriate.

*To meet the annual due date for revisions to the University's online Graduate or Undergraduate Catalog, proposals for new or revised minimum GPA policies should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs no later than **March 1st** of the year prior to when the policy is to go into effect.*

In writing a minimum GPA policy, the following guidelines, established by the VPA Faculty Council should be considered, and will serve as criteria for review of proposed policies by the Office of Academic Affairs:

GUIDELINES:

1. The policy should clearly specify what the minimum GPA is and how many courses the student must have completed before a minimum GPA is calculated. For instance, it makes little sense to apply the minimum GPA standard when only one course has been completed;
2. If a minimum GPA policy is to be applied, students must have clear expectations of what the performance standards, as articulated in the course assignment and grading rubrics published in each course syllabus within the major;
3. Consequences for not meeting the minimum GPA should be clearly laid out within the policy statement. Will students be placed on probation for one or more semesters before they are dismissed from the program? Will students be encouraged to flag and retake course(s) in which they did not perform well in order to raise their GPA?

OTHER QUESTIONS FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION:

1. Will the department/school provide proactive advising to help students understand the performance standards within the major before it becomes an issue?
2. Will there be clear alternative degree options (within reason) for students who are dismissed from the program (e.g., B.S. option for B.F.A. programs?), and will it be clear to students what the differences in career potentials are between the current and alternative degree options? The goal in asking and answering this question is based on the assumption that most students who struggle in a given major is a result of their skill-level not being a

'good fit' with the program's requirements rather than that the student is simply not applying him/herself. Under reasonable circumstances, the lack of a good fit should not result in a student not being able to change majors and graduate within the typical four-year plan. Thus, it is imperative on the department/school to be proactive in assisting students in recognizing the lack of a good fit early on so that they can explore alternative options.

3. Will care be taken when advising students about alternative degree options, such that those options are not seen as inferior to the current program? It does not serve the college or University well to have any program perceived as a "dumping ground" for students who cannot "cut it" in another major.