

5. ACADEMIC POLICIES

5.1 Grading Policy

The progress and quality of a student's work in the degree program is measured by a system of letter grades and grade percentages as shown below. Evaluation may be measured by means of written tests, projects, reports, term papers and clinical performance. The final grade is a composite of all evaluation measures taken.

5.2 Grading Standards – Degree Program

The grading standard is according to the following system:

Theory

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Score (%)</u>	<u>Grade Explanation</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>
A	100-96	Excellent	4.00
A-	95-92	Very Good	3.85
B+	91-89	Good	3.50
B	88-86	Above Average	3.15
B-	85-83	Average	3.00
C+	82-80	Below Average	2.70
C	79-77	Poor	2.30
C-	76-74	Unsatisfactory	2.00
F	Below C-	Failing	0.00

All numerical grades are rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g. 69.51 rounded to 70%). "I" may be made up upon arrangement with the instructor.

Faculty Mentors return grades and grading feedback within 7 days of submission. Resubmission of assignments but be approved by Faculty Mentors.

Clinical

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Score %</u>	<u>Grade Explanation</u>
Pass	100 to 83	Complete Clinical Objectives & Satisfactory Clinical Evaluation
Fail	Below 83	Incomplete Clinical Objectives & Unsatisfactory Clinical Evaluation

Additional codes include:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Explanation of Code</u>
RP	Repeat a Course
AU	Audit
R	Remediation

5.2.1 Academic Integrity

Rhombus University expects its students to conduct themselves honestly in their personal and academic lives. If evidence arises of academic dishonesty, the dean of the program will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

Offenses Against Academic Integrity:

Cheating: Cheating is never tolerated at RU.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism can occur intentionally or inadvertently. Intentional acts of plagiarism involve knowingly and willingly treating another person's work as one's own original work. It includes copying or imitating the words, sentences, outlines, or ideas of another person. Inadvertent plagiarism can occur when a student fails to properly cite original sources. Plagiarism will not be tolerated at RU. Therefore, all offenses of plagiarism will be reported to the dean of the program in which the offense occurred and an investigation will be made to determine what disciplinary action should be taken.

Aiding or Conspiring in the Commission of Plagiarism. Helping someone commit plagiarism is viewed as equally dishonest as plagiarism, for all participating parties.

Multiple Submissions: This offense occurs when a student submits a paper that was written for another course as if it were an original paper satisfying the requirements of the present course. Attempting to submit such work is deceptive and a form of academic dishonesty. On the occasion that a student's previous work has some potential for expansion, improvement, or to serve as a starting point for another line of thought (as with Doctrinal Summary/Synopsis) the student will be advised by the professor to what extent a particular previous work may be permitted. The professor may require that a copy of the previous work be submitted with the later work.

Consequences for Offenses Against Academic Integrity:

As a broad policy, the first attempt of an offense against academic integrity will result in a warning and clarification on plagiarism, or the offense, as well as the student needing to redo the assignment. Any subsequent identified offenses against academic integrity will result in dismissal as a student, unless administrative leadership has a reason for allowing alternative corrective actions. Offenses against academic integrity are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the course of action.

5.2.2 Populi Proctoring Policy and Procedures

All Rhombus University students are required to select a proctor. This person will be approved by the University to proctor the examinations that students take while at the school. This is necessary to preserve the integrity of the examination process because not all exams are open book.

The proctor cannot be a relative of the student and cannot be a student enrolled at Rhombus. Some examples might include a college or university administrator or faculty member, a school superintendent or principal, a school or public librarian, a ministry director, or a pastor. Once the student has identified a proctor, the University will send that person an application form.

1. The proctor should complete the proctor application form as soon as possible in the term, no later than two business days before the exam is to be taken.
2. If the proctor is approved, they will receive the password for the exam by email.
3. The student must arrange with the proctor a time and place for the examination to be administered. The proctor must be present in the room (physical or zoom with webcam and sharing full screen) with the student during the entire time the

examination is being taken. The proctor must ensure that the student does not use textbooks, notes, study guides, or the Internet to look up answers to test questions.

4. At the time of the exam, the proctor must ask the student to show a government-issued ID to verify that the person taking the test is indeed the student whom they had signed up to proctor.
5. Then, the student will log into our Populi LMS and click on the link to the exam.
6. The proctor will enter the password they received by email in step #2, and the student may begin the exam. The proctor should be sure not to share the password with the student or let them see it. You may watch a detailed video of steps 5 & 6 [here](#).
7. The proctor should remain present until the student has finished the exam to ensure the student doesn't cheat on the exam.
8. Most exams are automatically graded so the student will see their grade immediately. If the exam has essay or short answer questions, the professor will need to grade those, so the results will not be displayed immediately. The student will receive an email notification when these exams are graded completely.

If you need help with the proctoring process, please email registrar@rhombus.edu

Populi Proctoring

Test proctoring lets you require your students to take tests with an observer present as a guard against cheating. Here's how it works:

1. You set up your test to require proctoring, or you add an exception to an unproctored test to require proctoring for specific students (see [below](#)). Students may also be required by the registrar to be proctored for all online tests.
2. When the student takes the test, Populi asks the proctor for contact information, including a mobile phone number.
3. Populi sends the proctor a check-in code via SMS. After the proctor enters it, the student can take the test.
4. After the student submits the test, Populi sends the proctor a check-out code via SMS. The proctor must enter the code and check to verify that he did not observe any cheating.
5. If the proctor doesn't check out, the test is flagged for your review in the [test history](#).
6. Proctored tests show you the contact info for the proctor and links it, if possible, to people already entered in Populi. This helps you contact the proctor to verify his identity.

All you need to do is to require proctoring for the test or individual students.

- You can require proctoring for all students by checking the box when setting up the test assignment or by setting *Proctored* on the test's page to *Yes*.

- To require proctoring for individual students, add a proctoring exception (below).

Exceptions

You can add exceptions for individual students for test availability, time limit, and proctoring by changing the settings on the right column of the test's page.

Availability exceptions

If a student needs to take a test outside the availability window—say, he missed it due to illness—you can open up a time for just him to take the test.

1. Under *Availability*, click **Add an exception**.
2. Select the student from the drop-down.
3. Enter the new availability dates/times.
4. Repeat the above steps as often as you need.
5. Click to remove a student's exception.
6. Click **Save**.
7. To edit these exceptions, click **manage exceptions**.

Once you save, Populi will email the student about the new test window; he'll also see an alert on his dashboard about it when the time comes.

Time limit exceptions

If a student needs a different time limit than what you've set up for the test, you can add a time limit exception. You can add exceptions whether or not you've set up a time limit for this test.

1. Under *Time limit*, click **Add an exception**.
2. Select the student from the drop-down.
3. Select the new time limit setting from the drop-down.
4. Repeat the above steps as often as you need.
5. Click to remove a student's exception.
6. Click **Save**.
7. To edit these exceptions, click **manage exceptions**.

Once you save, Populi will email the student about the new time limit.

Proctoring Exceptions

If you wish to require proctoring for certain students or would like to excuse other students from being proctored, add a proctoring exception. You can add exceptions whether or not you've required proctoring for this test.

1. Under *Proctored*, click **Add an exception**.
2. Select the student from the drop-down.
3. Check *Yes* to require proctoring for that student or *No* to excuse him from being proctored.

4. Repeat the above steps as often as you need.
5. Click to remove a student's exception.
6. Click **Save**.
7. To edit these exceptions, click **manage exceptions**.

Proctor Requirements

Mastery of a course is determined by the successful completion of written work and two examinations: a mid-term and a final. Students should complete all assignments for the fourth class session before attempting to take the mid-term examination. The final examination should not be taken until all projects and assignments for the course have been submitted.

To assure the integrity of the courses, mid-term and final examinations must be taken in the presence of a proctor who has been approved by Rhombus.

The proctor cannot be a relative of the student, and cannot be a student enrolled at Rhombus. Some examples might include a college or university administrator or faculty member, a school superintendent or principal, a school or public librarian, ministry director, or a pastor.

To become an approved proctor, follow the steps below:

1. Complete the online application form, providing us with your name, the student's name for which you are proctoring, and your qualifications as proctor.
2. You will be notified via email when your proctor application has been approved.
3. Once you have been approved, you may follow the instructions linked here to proctor students' exams in our learning management system. You will also receive these instructions by email.

Proctor Name and Email:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Student Name:

First Name:

Last Name:

How do you know the student and what is your relationship with him or her?

Are you related to the student?

Yes No

The line below constitutes your electronic signature.

By signing, you certify that all the information on the form is accurate, and that you will follow all the duties of the proctor, as listed above and [here](#).

Signed by: _____ Date: _____

5.3 Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and Good Academic Standing

Rhombus University is responsible for measuring and enforcing satisfactory academic progress to ensure student progress towards graduation. To be eligible for ongoing enrollment, a student must be in good academic standing and must be making satisfactory progress towards the completion of a degree within a maximum timeframe. All enrolled students are evaluated after each semester to ensure that the minimum requirements are being met. Students who do not meet the minimum requirement will face expulsion from the program.

Maximum Time to Complete a Degree

Rhombus students are required to complete all degree requirements within a percentage of the minimum credits required to degree completion. The maximum time-frame allowance is 150% of the published program length of the student's currently enrolled program of study. If a graduate degree requires completion of 36 credit hours, the reasonable length of time will be $36 \text{ hours} \times 150\% = 54$. The student would be within their reasonable length of time during their first 54 hours of attempted course work but not beyond that. Students who exceed their maximum allowable time to completion face expulsion from the program.

Quantitative Standard: Academic Completion Rate

Students are required to maintain a minimum quantitative Completion Rate, based on their degree program to remain eligible for ongoing enrollment. The Completion Rate is calculated by dividing a student's total earned credit hours by the student's total attempted credit hours. An attempted credit hour is defined as any credit hour the student remains enrolled in after the Census Date, including units that the student withdraws from. All students must successfully complete at least 67% of all credits attempted. Course grades of I, F, UF, PR and W represent credits attempted, but do not count towards the measure of credits satisfactorily completed.

Example A: If a student attempted 32 credits and successfully completed 26 of those credits (dropped 3 credits and failed 3 credits) the completion rate will be 26 credits earned divided by 32 attempted credits = 81.2% completion rate, therefore meeting the measurable progress component of this requirement.

Example B: If a student attempted 32 credits and successfully completed 20 of those credits, and dropped, failed, had an incomplete in, or withdrew from the other 12 credits, the completion rate would be 20 divided by 32 = 62.5% completion rate, and therefore does not meet the completion rate requirement and would not be eligible for ongoing enrollment or financial aid assistance.

Qualitative Standard: Academic Standing

Students are required to maintain a fixed qualitative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.00 to remain eligible for both ongoing enrollment and Financial Aid. University policy requires that students maintain a cumulative 3.00 GPA throughout all course work.

Repeated Courses

Repeated courses will be counted as credit hours attempted but not earned when calculating the percentage of courses completed.

Repeated courses will affect the qualitative, quantitative, and time-frame measurements used to determine ongoing enrollment status.

Appeals

Students who are dismissed from the program for failure to meet any of the requirements above may present an Extenuating Circumstances appeal to the Office of the Dean within one (1) week of notification. Appeals must be based on Extenuating Circumstances that seriously affected the student's academic performance.

Examples of Extenuating Circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Death in the family.
- Disabling illness or injury to the student or immediate family member (that required the student's care).
- Emotional or mental health issue of the student that required professional care.
- Other extenuating circumstances that were beyond the student's control

Examples of supporting documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- Obituary/Death Certificate
- Documentation from the student's (or family member's) medical provider
- Statement from a third-party that is familiar with the circumstances (preferably in a professional capacity)

Appeals will not be accepted for any of the following reasons:

- Lack of knowledge/understanding of the SAP Policy at Rhombus
- Medical appeals for illness/injury/hospitalization that do not coincide with the semester(s) of sub-standard progress
- Work/Scheduling conflicts (including voluntary overtime)
- Acclimation issues with regard to being in a university setting
- Student has submitted a previous Extenuating Circumstances appeal, regardless of reason, and the student is still not meeting academic progress or good standing requirements
- Student is repeating courses to increase the student's GPA or the student is taking courses for degree requirements outside the student's current program
- Student is taking pre-requisite(s) for a degree program in which the student is not currently enrolled

The Dean will convene an Appeals Committee of two (2) faculty members who will thoroughly review each appeal. If the Appeals Committee needs clarification or additional information, the Dean will contact the student directly. Any requested documentation is to be submitted as soon as possible. Appeal decisions are final and

will be emailed to the student within two (2) weeks of submission. Students are encouraged to submit their appeals and documentation as early as possible to avoid any further interruption of their studies.

A student who is readmitted on appeal will be placed upon Probation under an Academic Plan which will require monthly monitoring of their ongoing progress by their Academic Advisor. The Academic Plan will consider the student's GPA, faculty or clinical supervisor evaluations, rubrics demonstrating mastery of course competencies, etc., and quantitative measures such as maximum time frame, rate of progress, and/or time remaining to complete the program (see above).

If a student fails to abide by the terms of their Probation and Academic Plan, that student will be permanently dismissed from the program by the Academic Dean.

5.4 Non-Punitive (credit/no credit) grades

Specified clinical courses have a credit/no credit grade and are competency based, measured by a set of criteria communicated to students at the beginning of the course. If a student fails the course, it does not count against the cumulative GPA, but the student may not be able to continue courses until successful completion. More information about these courses are located under the specific degree information.

5.5 Auditing a Class, Non-Credit Courses and Repeating a Class

RU does not charge for auditing a course or for any course in which a grade assigned is not used in computing requirements for graduation. This does not apply to repeats of required courses which the student has failed. The right to audit and the extent of auditing differs from class to class and between instructors. Not all classes may be audited.

5.6 Failure to Complete the Program

There are four possible results if students fail to complete the program as originally enrolled. Failure to take the appropriate steps can lead to an F in the student's permanent records.

Withdrawal

It is the student's responsibility to process an official withdrawal from class either in person or in writing to be sent to the Registrar. For the official record to identify as class as W for withdrawal, the student must withdraw by the end of the second week of classes.

Leave of Absence

A LOA status can be granted once during a student's academic career. The leave cannot exceed a maximum of 180 calendar days. Please refer to the Leave of Absence (LOA) policy (5.13) for further information.

Incomplete

After the second week of class, a withdrawal from class receives an incomplete grade. Incomplete grades may be made up upon arrangement with the instructor. Students are entitled to a prorated refund (see 4.6 Refund Policy).

Fail

A student whose grade is below C fails the course, receiving an F. A student may retake a course for a higher grade and is responsible for all normal tuition and fees for the duplicate course.

5.7 Withdrawal from Program

Any student who finds it necessary to interrupt his/her attendance by withdrawing from RU can complete the official withdrawal process by contacting the registrar representative. The official withdrawal form will assist RU in a timely withdrawal processing so that no additional services are rendered or charges incurred.

5.7.1 Withdrawal Date

A student's withdrawal date varies depending on the type of withdrawal.

At Rhombus University, a student's withdrawal date is:

1. the date the student officially notified the Admissions and Registrar's Offices of his/her intent to withdraw, or
2. the date the Admissions and Registrar's Office verifies the student's intent if informed from another source.

5.7.2 Official Notification Provided by the Student

A student is considered officially withdrawn only when the Admissions and Registrar's Offices have been notified of the intention to withdraw by the student in writing. If a student sends written notification of intent to withdraw, the withdrawal date is the date the letter is received via fax, electronic mail, or postal mail.

The student will receive a refund based upon the date of withdrawal (see 4.6 Refund Policy).

5.7.3 Official Notification Provided by the School

If a student ceases attendance without providing official notification, the withdrawal date will be the last day of attendance at an academically-related activity, if documented by RU. In cases where an official notification was not provided by the student because of circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., illness, accident, grievous personal loss or other circumstances), the date related to the onset of that circumstance will be used as the withdrawal date. The date will be determined by the Director of Academic Affairs.

If a refund is warranted, RU shall notify the student in writing of the refund date, the amount of the refund, the method of calculating the refund and the name and address of

the entity to which the refund was sent within 10 days of the date on which the refund is made. Refunds will be made within 30 days of the determined date of withdrawal.

5.8 Transfer of Credits Policy to Other Schools

NOTICE CONCERNING TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS AND CREDENTIALS EARNED AT OUR INSTITUTION

The transferability of credits you earn at Rhombus University is at the complete discretion of an institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the degree you earn in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology program is also at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. If the credits or degree that you earn at this institution are not accepted at the institution to which you seek to transfer, you may be required to repeat some or all of your coursework at that institution. For this reason, you should make certain that your attendance at this institution will meet your educational goals. This may include contacting an institution to which you may seek to transfer after attending Rhombus University to determine if your credits or degree will transfer.¹

Articulation Agreements

Rhombus University has not entered into an articulation or transfer agreement with any other college or university but will notify students if any are put into place in the future.

Challenge Exams and Achievement Tests

Rhombus University does not award credit based upon challenge examinations or achievement tests.

5.9 Transfer of Credits Policy from Other Schools

Rhombus University (RU) considers credit from other institutions accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (DOE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

Credit toward curriculum requirements may be given to students if the following requirements are met:

1. The previous education must have been completed within the last five years and completed with a passing grade of B or better.
2. Official transcripts from a previous institution must be submitted before credit is granted.
3. Courses accepted for transfer must have evidence of matching a minimum of 75% course content with the RU course it will replace.
4. A maximum of 20% of the degree credits can be transferred from other institutions and any credit granted is always at the discretion of school administration.

¹ CEC 94909(a)(15)

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5.10 Experiential Learning

Rhombus University does not credit prior experiential learning for the graduate courses in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology.

5.11 Attendance Policy

Rhombus University is an online educational institution, allowing flexibility and diverse learning platforms. Education consists of a combination of learning platforms, including, but not limited to, live/synchronous video collaboration, recorded video lectures, reading materials, supplemental online learning methods, discussion board activity, interactive applications of learning, and more. Submissions are done in a consecutive manner in which all assignments of the first lesson are submitted before the second lesson is attempted and so forth for each lesson. This means that students must complete lessons in consecutive order within a course. Attendance is evidenced by submission of an assignment in Populi. An absence is recorded when no assignment has been submitted via Populi for a student from Monday to Sunday of a particular week.

There are two options for course completion, which a student will choose at the time of enrollment of each course.

	<u>7-Week Plan</u>	<u>14-Week Plan</u>
Course Completion:	7 Weeks	14 Weeks
Maximum Absence(s):	One	Two

If the maximum absence(s) is exceeded, the result will be an administrative drop from the class. The student may petition to be placed back into the course (re-enrolled), and the situation will be considered by the Academic Affairs Committee before re-enrollment is granted. The \$150 re-enrollment fee will apply and must be paid along with any other outstanding tuition and fees prior to the reinstatement in the course which must take place no more than 30 days from the administrative drop. The number of weeks in the 7-week or 14-week plan will resume to the week where the drop occurred. For example, if the student was dropped on week 4, upon re-enrollment they would resume on week 4. The student must complete the course within the allotted time frame of their course completion plan (e.g., 7-week/14-week). No further absences are allowed after re-enrollment. If the student does not complete within the allotted time frame, a grade of "W" will be applied to the student's transcript and the student will retake the course and pay all applicable fees.

In the event reinstatement does not take place within the 30 days from the administrative drop, a grade of "W" will be applied to the student's transcript and the

student will be responsible for tuition and fees according to the withdrawal policy. The student will retake the course and pay all applicable fees.

5.12 Expulsion Policy

Students may be expelled from the university when their conduct is deemed unacceptable or for the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain satisfactory grades
- Failure to achieve satisfactory clinical performance
- Failure to represent Rhombus University in a professional and ethical way
- Failure to maintain financial responsibility

5.13 Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

A leave of absence (LOA) is a temporary interruption in a student's program of study. A LOA refers to the specific time period during a program when a student is not in attendance.

A LOA status can be granted once during a student's academic career. The leave cannot exceed a maximum of 180 calendar days within a continuous 12-month period. Students who do not return to full-time status at the end of their leave are considered to have withdrawn from Rhombus University.

- I. One (1) LOA will be allowed for emergency, illness or pregnancy. Students will be required to continue their instruction in the next available class at the point where their studies were interrupted, at the discretion of the academic advisor.
- II. The LOA must not exceed a total of 180 calendar days within a payment period or period of enrollment.
- III. The time taken for a LOA will not be counted against the maximum allowable time for program completion. Hours of the program will resume when the LOA is officially completed.

Requesting LOA Procedure:

1. Students must outline the reason for their leave in writing and submit it to the registrar representative who will present the request for approval to the academic advisor.
2. The Registrar will notify students approved for leave with a letter.

Returning from a LOA Procedure:

1. Students on personal leave must meet with their academic advisor prior to resuming studies.
2. Any conditions set for a return from leave, such as a letter of clearance from the student's physician for medical leave of absence, that are specified in the letter of approval from the academic advisor must be met before the student may resume his/her studies.

3. Copies of said forms must be forwarded to the registrar representative.

Effect on Financial Aid Eligibility

Rhombus University does not offer federal financial aid but is important for students with previous and/or current student's loans to clarify the impact a LOA may have on a current loan deference.

5.14 Graduation Requirement

Students enrolled the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology degree will be considered "graduates" after meeting the following requirements:

- Must maintain satisfactory grade point average, above 3.0.
- Must be in good financial standing with the college.
- Complete all courses required for degree.
- Pass Practicum courses with completion of 280 hours of supervised clinical experience (see Practicum description for further details).
- A Degree will be awarded for graduates of the Degree programs offered.
- Pass a comprehensive exam with a minimum of 70%.

5.15 Licensure Process

The MACP degree at Rhombus University meets educational requirements of the California Board of Behavioral Science toward pursuing the licenses Marriage and Family Therapy and Professional Clinical Counseling. Upon graduation, a student would submit a complete application with the California Board of Behavioral Sciences, including a Program Certification completed by RU and the official transcript to receive an intern number. Before receiving a license, the graduate must demonstrate completion of a total of 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience, as well as pass two licensing exams, one for Law & Ethics, and a clinical exam. Please note that the licensure requirements may change, and the students and graduates are responsible for reviewing changes and understanding the requirements of licensure. Students are encouraged to verify licensure requirements periodically at www.bbs.ca.gov.

5.16 Transcript Requests

Transcript requests from graduates of Rhombus University should allow up to five business days to process. The first transcript is free, followed by a \$5.00 fee for each additional transcript.