



## **Grading & 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

<b><u>Grade</u></b>	<b><u>Score (%)</u></b>	<b><u>Grade Explanation</u></b>	<b><u>Grade Point</u></b>
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 must be approved by Faculty Mentors.

#### Clinical

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

#### Additional codes include:

<b><u>Code</u></b>	<b><u>Explanation of Code</u></b>
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**

#### a. Proctoring Guidelines

The weekly proctoring schedule is a set day(s) and time(s) that students join the proctor (a university staff member or a faculty mentor) in a designated Zoom room through the university. Here the student must show his/her valid ID and communicate with the proctor for the required access (see Proctoring Procedure, below). The proctor session is a two-hour session and if more time is needed to take a test, arrangements must be made before the proctoring session (see Time exemptions). If a student is not able to

attend the scheduled proctoring session, he/she needs to communicate with his/her faculty mentor and reschedule another session. Students are encouraged to attend the regular proctoring schedule as exceptions to the schedule cannot be provided on a regular basis.

All Rhombus University students are required to take proctored tests with a university staff member or mentor. No outside proctors are allowed. This is necessary to preserve the integrity of the examination process because all exams are open book.

#### b. Proctoring Procedure

1. On the scheduled proctoring date, the student will meet the proctor (university staff member or mentor) in a designated Zoom room through the university. The proctor must be present in the Zoom room, with webcam and speaker on. The proctor must ensure that no one is in the room with the student. The student is allowed to use textbooks, notes or study guides to look up answers to test questions.
2. 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 the student whom they are proctoring.
3. The student enters Populi on their computer, requests to take the test on Populi, and is directed to obtain the proctor's contact information (proctor's name, school address, mobile phone number, and email address). The proctor gives the information to the student who enters it in Populi.
4. Once the proctor's information is in Populi, a check-in code is sent via SMS (text) to the proctor who will give it to the student to access the test on Populi. The proctor should remain present throughout the test to ensure the student is alone and the only one taking the test.
5. At the end of the test, Populi will send a check-out code via SMS (text) to the proctor who will give it to the student to exit the test. A test score will be generated in Populi and shown to the student.
6. The proctored session details which include the date, time, and contact information of the proctor and student are emailed to the proctor to verify the session. The proctor sends this information to the registrar who files it in the proctoring file. If the student has questions about the proctoring process, they can ask the registrar via email.

#### c. Populi Proctoring Set Up

All tests require proctoring for students. Proctoring is set for all students in Populi by checking the box when setting up the test assignment or by setting "Proctored" on the test's page to "Yes." This procedure has been instituted by the administration for all classes within Populi which relieves the faculty from setting up the procedure in Populi.

d. Availability Exceptions

If a student needs to take a test outside of the scheduled proctoring time, they will set up a proctoring session with their mentor or other university staff member who will act as the designated proctor. This person will meet the student in one of the assigned Zoom rooms through Rhombus University. They will meet in the virtual lobby of Zoom and will be moved by the host to a private room for proctoring. The proctoring procedure will follow the same method as mentioned in 5.2.2b (Proctoring Procedure).

e. Time limit exceptions

There is no time limit set for a test session in Populi. However, there is a two-hour limit for the scheduled proctoring session. If a student needs an extended time for test taking, they will arrange the extended session with their mentor or university staff member who will proctor the session per the proctoring guidelines in the above section.

f. Proctoring Modifications

All students are required to take proctored tests. If a student has difficulty following the proctoring procedure because of a physical or cognitive disability, accommodations will be made by a university staff member or mentor to assist the student. The proctoring procedure will be instituted as closely as possible to the proctoring guidelines.

### **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.

If a student falls below a 3.0 GPA, he/she will be placed on Academic Warning for up to one trimester. If the student's GPA is then brought above 3.0, the Academic Warning is removed. If a student remains on Academic Warning for one trimester, the student is placed on Academic Probation for one trimester, and either brings the CGPA above 3.0 or is dismissed from school. Also, 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. If the student cannot successfully complete the course, the student may not be appropriate for the degree and may be dismissed from the school.

### Maximum Time to Complete a Degree

Rhombus students are required to complete all degree requirements within a percentage of the minimum credits required for 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 60 credit hours, the reasonable length of time will be 60 hours X 150% = 90. The student would be within their reasonable length of time during their first 90 hours of attempted coursework 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 60 credits and successfully completed 50 of those credits (dropped 5 credits and failed 5 credits), the completion rate will be 50 credits earned divided by 60 attempted credits = 83.3% completion rate, therefore meeting the measurable progress component of this requirement.

Example B: If a student attempted 60 credits and successfully completed 40 of those credits, and dropped, failed, had an incomplete in, or withdrew from the other 20 credits, the completion rate would be 40 divided by 60 = 66.7% 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 issues 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 is located under the specific degree information.

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

An audit fee will be charged 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**

At the end of the student's Course Completion Plan (CCP), the student will receive the grade earned for the entire course based on assignments submitted. A student who has not completed all assignments within the allotted timeframe risks receiving a failing grade for the course. If the student wishes to petition for an extension, this must be processed with the registrar's office prior to the end of the student's CCP. The Academic Petition fee of \$50 must be paid immediately, and if the extension is approved will expire four weeks from the CCP's end date. Only one course extension may be granted. If the student does not complete the course within the extension time, the earned grade at that time will stand.

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 may 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.

#### 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.

#### 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 in put into place in the future.

**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.

Each course is to be completed within a minimum of 7 weeks to a maximum of 14 weeks for 7-lesson courses, and 14 weeks for 14-lesson courses (practicum courses).

The maximum number of absences (a week with no written assignments) is two per course. After the first absence, the student will be reminded of the policy. After the second absence, the student will be reminded that they are in jeopardy of being dropped from the course if there is a third absence.

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 Course Completion 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. 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 deferment.

**5.14 Graduation Requirement**

Students enrolled in 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 the degree.
- Complete 20 hours of Individual Counseling (at student’s expense).
- 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](http://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. Additional fees will be applied for mailing of transcripts which incur costs for rush, overnight, etc. processing.

Catalog: 5.