STUDENT HANDBOOK
WASHINGTON ACADEMY ONLINE
2021-2022

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1. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Application Process:
Students must successfully complete the Application Process in its entirety before gaining access to the learning platform and their coursework.

<u>Step 1:</u> Application
- □ Complete *Online Application Form*
  - o Including student's historical academic transcripts

<u>Step 2:</u> Acceptance
- □ Students will be notified of their acceptance via an acceptance packet sent to their email address which will include:
  - o *Acceptance Letter*
  - o *Course Selection Sheet*
  - o *Tuition Invoice*

<u>Step 3:</u> Enrollment Finalization
- o Submit *Course Selection Sheet*
- o Submit *Tuition*

<u>Step 4:</u> Student Record and Orientation
- □ Once the items above are submitted, students will receive a *Student Record* and *Orientation* access.
  - o Student Record:
    - ▪ Log-In Credentials
    - ▪ Start Date of Course(s)
    - ▪ Confirmation of Course(s) and Enrollment Type
  - o Orientation:
    - ▪ When students log-in for the first time, they will need to complete the Orientation course pre-loaded on their learning platform.
    - ▪ Within 2 days of gaining access to their platform, students should expect full access to their coursework and an email from their instructor.

2. ENROLLMENT TYPES

- **Single Course**
  - o Students successfully completing a single course or several single courses will be entitled to a transcript for each completed course. However, these students will not eligible to qualify for a diploma.

- **Dual Enrollment**
  - o Students must attend an accredited or locally-approved academic program within their local or regional jurisdiction abroad.
  - o Students must complete a minimum of six (6) approved credits within the Washington Academy Online dual-enrollment program course listing. Credits must include an upper-level English course, a U.S.-centric Social Studies course, and four (4) electives.
  - o Students shall not be allowed to receive original credit for courses previously completed for similar credit at their local school or school district.

- **Dual Enrollment for J-1 Students**
  - o This program is specifically for students who have successfully, or plan to successfully complete a J-1 academic year in the United States.
  - o Students must complete a minimum of six (6) credits within the "Program" in order to successfully complete the "Program".
  - o Credits completed within the "Program" must include an Upper-level English course, a U.S.-centric Social Studies course, and four (4) electives.
  - o Students shall not be allowed to take electives courses which they have already completed and received a similar credit from their school or school district abroad for the course.
  - o Students are eligible to transfer a maximum of 2 credits from their J-1 transcript as qualifying credits into the "Program".
  - o Students in the "Program" must complete a minimum of 4 approved courses on the Washington Academy online platform, in addition to the 2 approved credits from their J-1 transcript.
  - o In order for a credit to be eligible for transfer from their J-1 transcript into the "Program," the credit(s) must be:
    - ▪ a minimum grade of "C" or higher;
    - ▪ issued by a public school approved for J-1 programs in the United States;
    - ▪ one of the following courses: English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12, English Composition, Public Speaking, Preparation for TOEFL, Business Math, Personal Finance, Coastal Ecology, Marine Biology, Engineering, Robotics, U.S. History, World History, Sociology, Psychology, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, International Business & Economics, Law, Civics (½ credit), Health (½ credit), Physical Education (½ credit), Personal Health & Fitness (½ credit), Cultural Dance & Movement, Chinese I-III, Spanish I-III, Art 1, Art 2, Digital Design + Animation, Introduction of Computer-Aided Design, Band, Chorus, Guitar, Computer Programming, Culinary Arts, Marketing/Entrepreneurship, International Business & Economics Yearbook Modern Day Apprenticeship, AP

Biology, AP Calculus AB & BC, AP Chemistry, AP English Literature & Composition, AP Physics I & II, AP Spanish, AP Studio Art, and AP U.S. History.

- **Full-Time**
  - In order to receive a diploma from Washington Academy, students must earn and/or transfer a minimum of 23 credits in required courses. A minimum of 6 approved credits must be earned within the Washington Academy Online system in order for a student to receive a diploma.
  - Required Courses - 23 Credits:
    - 4 English
    - 4 Math
    - 3 Science (1 must be Biology and 1 credit in Chemistry)
    - 3 Social Studies (1 must be U.S. History)
    - ½ Personal Health & Wellness
    - ½ Personal Finance
    - 1 Physical Education
    - 1 Fine Arts
    - 6 Electives
  - Students must fulfill all graduation requirements, as outlined and defined above and by Washington Academy, to receive a diploma. Please note that many WA students surpass the minimum number of credits required to graduate.
  - Students should also keep in mind separate college entrance requirements and plan accordingly.
  - Any student transferring into Washington Academy Online from another school, whether abroad or another U.S. high school, must complete a total of 6 credits over the course of an academic year (10 months) at Washington Academy Online to receive a diploma.
  - Transfer credits will be awarded based on information gathered at the time of transfer from student records, course descriptions and syllabi, and any other documentation as requested.

3. **COURSE SELECTION**

- **New Students**
  - Students must submit a course selection sheet to officially enroll, as noted in the school's Admission Requirements. The school retains the right to deny a student entrance into a particular course for any reason, including, but not limited to:
    - Student does not qualify for course based on language or historical grades. This may be determined at the school's discretion;
    - A pre-requisite for enrollment in the course is required;
    - Course enrollment is at capacity;

- Course has been discontinued, either permanently or temporarily.

- **Re-Enrollment**
  - In order to officially re-enroll, a student must submit an updated Course Selection Sheet. The student shall make the school aware of the *type of enrollment* on the Course Selection Sheet by choosing "Re-Enrollment." Upon submission, students shall also receive an updated tuition invoice for the upcoming academic year.
  - The school retains the right to deny a student entrance into a particular course for the same reasons outlined above.

4. COURSE COMPLETION

- All coursework must be completed no later than the "end of enrollment date" established during registration.
- Once a final grade report for a course is issued, students may not submit additional work for that course. Furthermore, no course enrollment period can extend beyond the original end date without an extension request. Each course includes a pacing guide with target due dates to help students manage their pacing. In addition, weekly reports and communication help ensure that students meet their target dates.
- If any coursework is not completed by the end of the semester, and no extension has been requested, the student shall receive a zero for each incomplete item, and those zeroes are included in the student's average when final grades are calculated.

5. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- All students must complete the program's coursework in its entirety prior to their 20th birthday in order to qualify for graduation.
- All coursework required for graduation must be submitted by June 1st of the current academic year, in order for the student to graduate and receive a diploma from Washington Academy that same June. If courses are not completed by June 1st, then students will receive an incomplete (I) and should request an extension. If the student successfully completes the incomplete coursework prior to August 31st, then the incomplete designation shall be replaced with the current grade and the student shall receive their diploma on December 1st.
- Any student who fails a required course for graduation in a core area must repeat the course at WA Online before the next course in sequence may be taken. Failure in an elective course will not automatically dictate a make-up course. However, the course would have

to be repeated if it is a prerequisite for another course the student wishes to take or if the student would not meet the graduation requirements for electives.

6. GRADING SCALE

The basis for grades is the teacher's evaluation of the student's academic performance and work ethic in a class. Grade reports are sent every week to provide notification of the student's academic progress.

The basis for grades in academic work is:
- A. (93-100) This is a high honor mark indicating outstanding performance in homework, coursework, tests, and preparation.
- B. (85-92) This is an honor mark indicating very good test scores, consistent performance, and continued above-average work.
- C. (76-84) This is an average mark indicating satisfactory performance in coursework and on assessments.
- D. (70-75) This is a below-average mark indicating lack of student interest, lack of ability to perform certain tasks, and/or poor performance with little or no work.
- F. (below 70) This mark indicates academic failure for which no credit is given. This grade is caused by lack of student work, poor effort and/or performance.

7. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All members of the Washington Academy student body are expected to exhibit honesty and integrity at all times. Academic work submitted by a student must be original. Copying or allowing other students to copy outside classwork; plagiarism of other people's words or ideas, including failure to cite written, electronic, or verbal sources; cheating on exams; or the theft, distribution, or unauthorized use of testing materials will not be tolerated.

Violations of this Academic Integrity Policy are subject to the following disciplinary consequences:

Level 1 - Copying or allowing work to be copied
- Penalty - Zero on the assignment

Level 2 - Plagiarism on reports, term papers, and projects, cheating on exams, repeating a level 1 offense.
- Penalty - Zero on the assignments and official notification to Agent and parents electronically.

Level 3 - Distribution /receipt of test questions, habitual level 1 & 2 violation
- Penalty - Zero on the assignment, notification to Agent and parents electronically. Possible expulsion from the course and/or program.

7. COURSE PAUSING POLICY

Excused or unexcused absences that produce a lag in student pacing of more than 25% should be reported to the mentor/advisor. Course pauses will be deemed permissible for the following reasons (all but illness or death must be reported prior to the absence) and at the discretion of the program's administration:
- Illness: A doctor's excuse note should be provided;
- Extreme illness or death of a family member;
- Maternity leave;
- Extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control as reviewed and approved by a program administrator.

8. STUDENT PACING REQUIREMENTS

Washington Academy Online students are expected to submit work regularly and continuously throughout the semester, following the pacing guide for each course. The pacing guide, which can be found on the student's learning management platform, requires students to log in and complete work on a daily basis. Teachers have access to student activity data and can easily identify which students have not logged in regularly enough. If a student is not actively participating in coursework or falls behind in the pacing guide, a teacher may reach out to that student—and to the student's parents or guardians—to help get the student back on track.

An academic advisor and/or observer shall be assigned to each student. This advisor/observer will monitor the students' academic progress and can provide important information about the students' academic status to a teacher, counselor, program administrator, or parent.

9. COURSE EXTENSIONS

A course extension—a change to the student's end of enrollment date—may be granted after a request from the student, student's parent, or designated mentor is submitted via the extension process. Once a final grade report for a course is issued, students may not submit additional work for that course. Furthermore, no course enrollment period can extend beyond the original end date without an extension request. Each course includes a pacing guide with target due dates to help students manage their pacing. In addition, weekly reports and communication help ensure that students meet their target dates. If any coursework is not completed by the end of the semester,

and no extension has been requested, the student shall receive a zero for each incomplete item, and those zeroes are included in the student's average when final grades are calculated.

Extensions may continue up to eight weeks beyond the original end date. Such extensions are granted for extenuating circumstances only and at the discretion of the school.

The definition of "extenuating circumstances" is strictly limited to the following:
- Bereavement (due to the death of a close relative or significant other);
- Serious short-term illness or accident;
- Worsening of a long-term chronic health problem;
- Other exceptional circumstances (such as a natural disaster, severe weather, military service of a family member or civil unrest).

The following situations are not considered extenuating circumstances that qualify for an extension:
- A student claims to have a medical problem but has no evidence or documentation, such as a doctor's note;
- The student's deadline has already been adjusted once already;
- Events or circumstances which a reasonable person would have been able to foresee and plan to avoid or workaround;
- Minor illnesses for which someone would not normally take sick leave;
- Holidays, festivals, or private celebrations (including weddings);
- A student's failure to back up work or manage his or her time effectively.

When an extension is granted, the following rules apply:
- At least 50% of a student's work must be completed before requesting an extension. Students are expected to work consistently and to make adequate progress with regular logins and progression during enrollment;
- No more than one extension will be considered per course per student;
- Extension requests must be submitted at least two weeks before the student's enrollment end date;
- If the course requirements are not met by the end of the extension, a final grade will be issued based on work completed, with zeroes for incomplete work;
- Fees may be charged for approved extensions.

10. GRADE APPEAL

- A student may appeal the final grade for a course if:
  - The student believes the final grade does not accurately reflect his or her work in a course;
  - The student can demonstrate that an inaccurate grade was assigned as a result of clerical or technical error;

- Students may not appeal grades for individual assignments or assessments—only for the final grade in a course. To submit an appeal, the student must be able to substantiate a claim that his or her **final** grade represents unfair treatment due to arbitrary grading practices, prejudice, and/or error. (These will be considered the only legitimate grounds appealing a grade.) In the absence of compelling reasons like these, the grade assigned by the instructor is to be considered final.
    Students should take these steps to appeal a final grade:
    - Review the final grade with at least one of the following: instructor, observer, counselor, WA administrator, or local school administrator;
    - Submit a written grade appeal to the instructor within 30 days of completing the course.
- Within 30 days, a program administrator will notify the student by email of the appeal's outcome.

11. ADD/DROP COURSE POLICY

- **Asynchronous Courses:** During the first 7-days of a student's enrollment into a Self-Paced course, students retain the right to drop and/or change a course without financial or academic penalty. Students must submit official documentation of this request on the WA Online website for this procedure to apply to the request.
- **Synchronous Courses:** Once the first synchronous meeting is completed for the course, the student may not drop the course without incurring a financial or academic penalty.

12. COURSE RE-TAKES & GRADING POLICIES

- Students should expect teacher-graded assessments to be delivered within 5 business days following submission. At no time will delay in the delivery of grading inhibit the student's ability to proceed in the course.
- Assessment resets and re-submissions policy:
    - There are three (3) types of assessments: quizzes, assignments, and exams.
        - QUIZZES: Students will automatically be granted the ability to retake quizzes and exams one time (1 time).
        - ASSIGNMENTS: Students will not be allowed to resubmit or re-take assignments once the grade is assigned by the instructor.
        - EXAMS: Students will not be allowed to resubmit or re-take exams once the grade is assigned by the instructor or computer.

- EXTRA-CREDIT: Teachers may deem certain assessments or quizzes as extra-credit. This decision is strictly at the discretion of each course instructor.
  - For both synchronous and asynchronous courses, the teacher also retains the right to assess participation grades.
  - Teachers retain the right to adjust the grading distribution and weights per category, i.e., quizzes, assignments, participation, and exams.
  - Students may only request assignment or exam reset if there are technical glitches or special circumstances. Requests must be submitted by though the Student Support ticket system.

13. ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

- Course assessments are graded by the teacher, by the computer system, or through a combination of computerized scoring and manual grading by a teacher.
- Students may use the learning management system tools to check their immediate progress for computerized scored assessments.
- Teachers provide grade assessments and feedback using commenting features and/or PDF markup tools. The assessment with feedback included is then returned to the student through the learning management system (LMS).
- For synchronous assessments, such as benchmark tests or oral assessments, the student receives feedback in real-time, and the teacher also records feedback with the LMS grade book. The student may then refer back to the feedback as needed.
- Teachers may also use the LMS grade book to provide more general feedback, using the "comments" section of each assignment.
- All feedback is captured and stored within the LMS, and this information remains accessible to the student even after the enrollment period has ended.

14. STUDENT & TECHNICAL SUPPORT REQUESTS

Technical support requests include, but are not limited to, the following:
- *Technical Support*: Account resets, password resets, and general technical issue with your account, the learning platform, or the WA Online website.
- *Curriculum*: Exams, assessments or course content issue which require fixing, including broken links, incorrect quiz bank, download speeds, etc.
- *Enrollment*: Assistance with initial enrollment or re-enrollment in the program including tuition confirmation or issues, missing forms, delay in response, etc.

All technical support requests should be submitted using the process outlined below:

- Submit a support 'ticket' on the waonline.org website.
- Within 1-2 business days, you shall a response to your designated email address outlining the issue and the course of action.
- If further assistance is required, you may either respond directly to the resolution email or submit a second ticket. If you submit a second ticket, please note the original and the proposed solution offered.

15. SYNCHRONOUS (Live) COURSE POLICIES

- Students are expected to arrive on-time to their scheduled, synchronous sessions. If a student is more than 10 minutes late to a synchronous session, the teacher retains the right to mark the student absent from the session.
- Students shall exhibit respectful behavior towards their teacher and fellow classmates at all times. The teacher retains the right to remove any student whom they consider to be distributive or exhibiting inappropriate behavior during the sessions.
- Students are expected, but not required, to keep their cameras on during the session.
- Cancellation / Reschedule Policy:
  - Cancellations are at the discretion of the teacher; however, the teacher shall provide at least 24-hour written notice with a suggested reschedule date/time.
  - For synchronous courses with an enrollment of only one student:
    - Students must provide 24-hour, written notice to their teacher in order to reschedule a class. This notice must be sent to your teacher via email. If a student does not provide a 24-hour written notice, then the synchronous session shall not be eligible for reschedule.
    - Students are allowed to reschedule a maximum of 2 sessions throughout the duration of their course.
    - Teachers retain the final approval on reschedule dates and times.
    - Class meetings will be cancelled for the following reasons:
      - The student does not join the class within 30 minutes of its scheduled meeting time.
      - The student does not provide 24 hours' notice of their absence.
  - For synchronous courses with enrollment of 2 or more students:
    - Students who cancel and/or miss the live meeting will receive a recording of the missed session, but they will not receive an individualized, rescheduled session.
    - Students that provide 24-hour notice of their absence shall not be penalized for missing the session.
    - Students are allowed to miss up to two synchronous sessions per course without penalty if proper notice is given for each absence.

16. TRANSCRIPTS

- WA Online shall only send official student transcripts by electronically to any institution requesting such information. Transcripts can be requested through our online Transcript Request tab on the program's website. Transcripts must be ordered and processed through a secure, third-party provider called Parchment.
- Students retain the right to request a transcript at any point, regardless of whether they are a current or former student.
- Official Transcripts will not be updated until a student completes the course and a final grade is issued. Transcripts will also not be updated until the end of the academic year.
- In order for a transcript to be deemed "Official," it must be securely sent directly from Parchment to another school or college. Any transcript which breaks this protocol shall be considered and marked as "Unofficial."
- Transcript Revision Policy: A student may request a revision of an official transcript if:
    o The student has received notification of a change of grade based on an appeal.
    o There is a documented discrepancy between electronic records of final grades in the learning management system and the official transcript.
    o The student shall submit such an appeal to a WA Online Academic Advisor, counselor, or program administrator. Appeals should not be made directly to the teacher. The appeal shall clearly state the reason for the request for revision as well as include evidence of the error or discrepancy or provide documentation of the successful grade appeal. Upon receipt of the request for revision of the transcript, a program administrator will review and notify the student of the result of the request within 30 days.
        ▪ *Students may not request a revision of an official transcript for a grade dispute without first filing a grade appeal. Only when a student receives notification of a grade change will a transcript revision request be accepted for that purpose.*

17. STUDENT RECORDS

Student records are maintained throughout a student's enrollment with Washington Academy Online and up to 7 years following their graduation. These records contain confidential information, so they are not available for inspection by the student's Agent or parents. A request for access to a student's file must be submitted to online through the school website by the student. Once this request is received and reviewed the requestor will be notified by a program administrator as to the approval or disapproval of the access request. If the access request is approved, the administrator will notify the requestor by email. The requestor will be provided with login information to access the student's record. The email must contain the student's name, DOB, enrollment date, enrolled course name(s), intended date of graduation. Once the request is reviewed by a program administrator and reviewed, a program administrator will send the student the requested records.

18. ANNUAL NOTICE OF STUDENT RECORDS AND INFORMATION RIGHTS

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") provides certain rights to parents and eligible students (18 years of age or older) with respect to the student's education records. When a student turns 18 years of age, the written consent must be obtained from the student, and the rights previously accorded to the parent are according to the student.

19. INSPECTION OF RECORDS

Parents/eligible students may inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of making a request. Such requests must be submitted to the program's website and must identify the student's record(s) to be inspected. A program administrator will notify the parent/eligible students electronically via email of the student record login information. This login will be active for 3 days.

20. AMENDMENT OF RECORD(S)

Parents/eligible students may ask a program administrator to amend education records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right to privacy. Such requests must be submitted to the administrator in writing via email, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the administrator decides not to amend the record as requested, the parent/eligible student will be notified of the decision in writing via email. *Disclosure of Records:* A program administrator must obtain a parent/eligible student's written consent via email prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable and confidential information contained in the student's education records except in circumstances as permitted by law.

21. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

In accordance with federal law and USDA Policy, Washington Academy Online does not discriminate in the educational and employment policies, programs, and practices which it operates and will honor all appropriate laws relating to discrimination in regard to: race/color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, physical/mental handicap. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410, or call 1-800-795-3272 voice or 202-720-6382 TDD USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The state and federal laws affecting this policy are: 5 M.R.S.A. #4451, and #65, Civil Rights Act of

1964, Title VI, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; and Educational Amendments, 1972, Title IX.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; and Educational Amendments, 1972, Title IX.