

# ACADEMIC RULES & REGULATIONS

The Smith College faculty has oversight of the curriculum and has legislated various regulations about academic life. In addition there are policies about community behavior. **The college requires each student to familiarize herself with these rules and regulations and to take personal responsibility for them.**

The rules range from legislation about dropping a course without penalty (the “free drop”), to the requirement that house parties be registered. College policies, procedures and guidelines are found in: The 2003-04 Catalogue, the Handbook (online), and the Academic Planner. Keep these handy for ready reference.

Here are some key highlights about those academic policies which are most often relevant for Adas.

## DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC PLAN: WATCH YOUR CREDITS!!

**Once matriculated, you may check your transcript on BannerWeb for Students at any time. Keep your own record of courses taken and credits earned. Your graduation requirements are: 128 credits; a major; 64 credits outside the department of the major.**

**Similarities and Differences ACs and Traditional Students.** Ada Comstock Scholars and traditional students are treated the same at Smith by faculty and staff; however, the faculty has legislated some differences in the regulations for Adas. These differences can sometimes cause confusion for students, advisers and staff. All Smith students need 128 credits to graduate. Traditional students may take as many credits as they want but they must complete their degree in 8 semesters. Ada Comstock Scholars normally graduate with 128 credits, but they have unlimited time in which to do so. AC students may **only** take 128 credits. Although they may petition the Administrative Board for permission to take more than 128 credits, these petitions are almost never granted.

**One Mistake Rule.** An Ada Comstock Scholar with financial aid is allowed One Mistake. A mistake is defined as a failed course, or a course from which she withdrew between the Ada course billing deadline [the 15<sup>th</sup> day of classes] and the traditional student deadline, or a course with a “W” on her transcript. In these cases, the student will be funded for 4 additional credits.

**Drop Deadline for ACs.** The drop deadline for billing and aid for Adas is different from the drop deadline for traditional students because Adas are billed by the credit and not by the semester. The drop deadline for Ada Comstock Scholars is the **15<sup>th</sup> day of the semester**. Although the college announces that the drop deadline for courses is the end of the fifth week of classes, that rule has different consequences for Ada Comstock Scholars. After the 15<sup>th</sup> day of classes and before the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> week, ACs may drop a course but Adas with financial aid will incur their one “mistake” by doing so.

**The Free Drop.** The faculty has legislated that all Smith students have the right to drop (actually remove) a course from their transcript at 2 different times. They may do so once in their first year and they may do so once (only) in their subsequent years at Smith. This option may not be used twice in the first year, and if it is not used in the first year it may only be exercised once after that year. And, although ACs have the right to use the Free Drop option twice to eliminate a course from their transcript, there are financial consequences to this decision for Ada Comstock Scholars on financial aid. ACs on financial aid will only be allowed one occasion in which the number of credits they attempted as of the 15<sup>th</sup> day of classes is more than the number of credits completed. Any additional credits necessary for graduation must be made up at the student's expense.

**The Free Drop Deadline.** This deadline is the last day of the ninth week of classes, the same as the S/U deadline. Please disregard what you might hear as the deadline used to be different.

**Minimum Number of Credits.** No financial aid is available for course programs of fewer than 8 credits in any given semester.

**12 Credit Program Required.** Students must be enrolled in at least 12 credits each semester to live in college housing, including 150 Elm, Yale House and the apartments on Bedford Terrace. Students who drop below 12 credits must leave campus housing in the semester following the one in which they did not follow a 12-credit program. Exceptions to this rule must be addressed by petition to the Administrative Board, and to the Housing Coordinator.

**Partial Credit Courses.** Exercise and Sports Studies, Dance and January term courses taken for credit will affect overall course planning and financial aid, so use them sparingly.

**January Courses.** The faculty approved Smith transfer credit for January courses taken at other institutions. Up to 12 credits of the total of 64 transfer credits allowed can be in January courses. Note that Continuing Education courses at UMass in January are not paid for under the agreement of the Five College Exchange and count as part of the total of transfer credits.

**Year-long language courses.** The faculty has legislated that year-long courses have special regulations. If the S/U option can be exercised it must be done by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> week of the first semester of the course. Check the *Catalogue* for each department for more details.

**Full-year course credits.** Full year courses, whether eight credits or otherwise (some Honors theses, EDC 345d, some introductory language courses, some Music performance courses) carry half of the total credit in each semester.

**Variable Credit.** Some science classes and certain classes in other departments (American Studies, Astronomy, Computer Science, Philosophy, and Women's Studies) earn from 1 to 5 credits. In some departments, Special Studies has variable credit and in some these courses earn 4 credits. Check the *Catalogue* carefully.

**Any student contemplating a change in credits from one semester to the next, or a change in graduation date should check with the dean of the program to discuss possible academic and financial consequences before doing so.**