

College Regulations

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Registration

In order for a student to be granted credit for a class, the student's name must appear on the official class roll. Students registered for a class must receive a grade for that class unless the class is deleted by the College or dropped by the student. The phrases listed and explained below refer to important elements of the registration process and the status of a registered student.

Enrollment

Timely registration for (or enrollment in) a Gadsden State class means that the student must complete the registration process before the enrollment deadline, which is widely publicized by the College.

Non-Payment of Fees

Students who owe a debt or fee to the College will not be permitted to register until the obligation is satisfied.

Credit Hour Definition

The Alabama Community College System requires institutions to operate on a semester system. Semester hours of credit are then based upon the average number of hours of instruction weekly during a 15-week period, with an hour of instruction defined as not less than 50 minutes of instructor/student contact. A semester system is defined as a fall semester, spring semester, and a summer term. A variety of class meeting schedules that fall within this structure may be present within the institutions. The ratio of weekly contact hours to credit hours varies with the type of instruction being used. There are six general categories of types of instruction: (1) Theory (1:1), (2) Experimental Laboratory (2:1 or 3:1)*, (3) Practical Application Laboratory (2:1 or 3:1) *, (4) Clinical Practice (3:1), (5) Preceptorship (5:1 or 3:1), and (6) Internship (5:1).

*Programs of study for which accreditation and/or licensing bodies require a different ratio must comply with discipline-specific time-to-credit criteria.

Prerequisites and Corequisites

Prerequisites are other courses or competencies that must be completed or attained before registering for some courses. Corequisites refer to other courses that the student must be registered for simultaneously with the course in question.

Course Load

The student course load for a full-time student at GSCC is 12 to 19 credit hours per fall, spring and summer semesters. Credit hours above 19 semester hours constitute a student overload. The appropriate chief instructional officer must approve a student overload. No student will be approved for more than 24 semester credit hours in any one semester or term for any reason.

Independent Study

Students may request to enroll in independent study courses. This privilege is available to those students who have been unable to schedule courses in any other manner. Independent study is done with the permission of and at the convenience of the instructor. Independent study requires the approval of the administrator of the instructional area involved.

Schedule Change (Add/Drop)

After registering for classes, students may make changes in their schedule by adding and/or dropping classes either online through www.my.gadsdenstate.edu or changes are requested on the proper form(s) before the deadline for add/drop. Completed add/drop form(s) must be received in the Admissions/Records Office for processing during normal business hours.

Identification and Library Card

Students are required to have an identification card, commonly referred to as ID, made at orientation or within the first two weeks of classes. IDs are made in One Stop Center, East Broad Campus, in the Pierce C. Cain Learning Resource Center at Ayers, at the McClellan Center Library, at Gadsden State Cherokee Library and in the Valley Street Library. The ID is to be in the student's possession at all times while the individual is on campus or participating or attending College events and must be displayed when requested by Campus Security or other College officials.

The ID also serves as a library card, which enables students to check out materials (e.g. books, videos, etc.) from any Gadsden State Library and to access the Library's webpage and online resources. A replacement card can be issued at each campus once the student has paid the replacement fee of \$5.00 at the Business Office.

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Attendance Policy

Class attendance is important to student success. A student's academic success is proportional to his or her engagement in the class, with course materials, course texts, the instructor, and other students. Withdrawal from class is the student's responsibility.

1. Students who fail to attend classes for any reason should withdraw from class(es). Students should see [withdrawal policies and procedures](#) (page 48) outlined in the college catalog.
2. **A student is responsible for repaying any portion of unearned financial aid which would result from a withdrawal or from lack of attendance.**
3. Make-up work is left solely to the discretion and convenience of the instructor and is not required of the instructor. Make-up work does not have to be in the form originally presented. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor to make up work.
4. Material missed by the student due to absences will not be re-taught by the instructor.

Academic Advising Policy

All students are encouraged to receive academic advising at GSCC. Before and during registration, students should meet with advisors to learn about college and program requirements, discuss their educational plans, and select courses. GSCC follows a two-tier advising model. In the first tier, first year/ first semester, students meet with Admissions Counselors for advising. The second tier provides an opportunity for students who are general studies or undecided to meet with GSCC professional Counselors and those who have declared a major course of study, to meet with their program area advisor.

Students are responsible for speaking with an advisor who will work with them in planning courses for the upcoming semester(s). The advice and recommendation of advisors does not constitute a promise or a contract ensuring a student's graduation on schedule, or the completion of specific requirements.

Academic Honesty Policy

To satisfy the expectations of those institutions to which some of its students ultimately transfer, as well as meet obligations to students, the Alabama Community College System, and the general public, Gadsden State expects all its students to conform to the College's Academic Honesty Policy. Any student who fails to comply with the Academic Honesty Policy may be charged with a violation.

Since the courts give an educational institution considerable discretion with respect to academic transgressions, instances of academic misconduct by students at GSCC will be handled by the instructor involved, the academic director involved, and the appropriate supervising instructional dean.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating—using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information or unauthorized copying or collaboration in the preparation of any assignments or in the taking of any tests or examinations; looking on another student's paper during a test or examination or communicating in any way with anyone other than the test administrator
2. Plagiarism—representing the words, data, works, ideas, computer program or output of someone else as one's own (The student should be aware that an electronic means may be used to discover plagiarism and cheating.)
3. Misrepresentation—falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other material related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts
4. Violating explicit rules in clinical activities

Penalty for Violating the Academic Honesty Policy

If a student has violated the Academic Honesty Policy, the student may receive a grade of "F" for the course, overriding a student withdrawal from the course. The appropriate supervising instructional dean may refer the matter to the Academic Standards Committee or may issue the following disciplinary sanctions if this is not the student's first violation:

1. Disciplinary admonition and warning
2. Disciplinary probation with or without the loss of privileges for a definite period of time
3. Suspension from the College for a definite period of time (i.e., suspension of the privilege to attend Gadsden State for a definite period of time)
4. Expulsion from the College (i.e., removal of the privilege to attend Gadsden State).

If a student is found to be in violation of the Academic Honesty Policy with regards to misrepresentation—falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including grades, schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts—the appropriate supervising instructional dean or his/her designee may impose any one or a combination of the following depending on the severity and frequency of the violation:

1. A verbal or written warning

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2. Disciplinary admonition and warning
3. Disciplinary probation with or without the loss of privileges for a definite period of time
4. Suspension from the college for a definite period of time (i.e., suspension of the privilege to attend Gadsden State for a definite period of time)
5. Expulsion from the College (i.e., removal of the privilege to attend Gadsden State)
The Supervising Instructional Dean may appoint an Academic Standards Committee to serve as a special due-process committee to hear any case and to make recommendations, but the final decision with respect to the charge rests with the Supervising Instructional Dean and the President of the College. Only these two officers have the authority to dismiss a student from a program or from the College for academic misconduct.

Unsatisfactory grades and inadequate grade point average also fall within the bounds of academic misconduct, for which a student can be dismissed from a program or from the College. The student who fails to meet the published requirements of GSCC or of a program has no right of appeal.

Withdrawal from a Class

Students receiving financial aid who withdraw from class or stop attending class could have their financial aid decreased. **Students who never attend class are not eligible for federal financial aid.**

From the end of the drop/add period until the withdrawal deadline, which is published in the College calendar, students may withdraw from all but one class online. To withdraw from the last remaining class, students must go to the Admissions and Records Office on any campus to complete the withdrawal form. Withdrawn grades ("W") will be assigned for classes in which students officially withdraw during that time. This process will help to ensure that students are made aware that if they withdraw from all classes before 60% of the semester is over, they may owe money back to the college. The 60% dates are published on the College calendar. Should students fail to complete the withdrawal process, failing grades ("F") will be assigned.

- Financial aid awards will be based on enrollment and class attendance, as reported by instructors.
- The amount of financial aid for which students are eligible is determined based upon enrollment and attendance as of the 10th day of the full semester.
- If students add classes after the 10th day, the financial aid award amounts **are not guaranteed to increase.**
- If students withdraw prior to the 10th day, or add one or more classes after the 10th day, those classes **may not be included when determining the amount of financial aid for which students are eligible.**
- If students withdraw prior to the 10th day, financial aid **may be decreased.**

If financial aid awards are decreased, students may have to repay the College and/or the Department of Education all or part of their financial awards. Nonpayment of balances will prevent students from enrolling at Gadsden State or any other institution. In addition, students may be referred to a collection agency. For more information on the impact of withdrawals in respect to financial aid eligibility, please contact the Financial Aid Office.

NOTE: Athletes and Health Sciences students must have department approval prior to withdrawing from any class.

Withdrawal from the College

The student may withdraw completely from GSCC at any time through the last day to withdraw, specified in the College calendar. Forms can be obtained on any campus from the Admissions/Records Office. Once the complete withdrawal has been processed, the student will not be allowed to register again during the term of withdrawal. Should a student abandon any classes without officially withdrawing from the classes or from the College, the grade of "F" will be assigned.

A Return of Title IV calculation will be required for students receiving or eligible to receive financial aid. Refer to the section "Treatment of Financial Aid for Complete Withdrawal" (page 30) for more information.

Administrative Withdrawal or Drop from a Course or the College

The College may drop or withdraw students from any course for the following reasons:

1. Failure to complete registration properly
2. Failure to fulfill conditions of registration if allowed to register on a conditional basis
3. Failure to pay applicable fees
4. Disciplinary action
5. Misrepresentation of required information
6. Failure to attend class

Repetition of Courses

A student may repeat any course for which he/she was previously registered. For graduation purposes, if the student repeats a course, only the last grade for this course will be included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA). A course may be used only once to satisfy the credit-hour requirements for graduation. **NOTICE:**

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This repetition will not remove the first course from the student's transcript. See "Repeat Course Forgiveness."

Course Work Expiration Policy

Most general education courses do not have an expiration date; examples of those courses at Gadsden State would include written and oral communication, humanities, social science, fine arts, most business courses, and government and public policy courses.

Specific course work for programs leading to certificates or degrees in technical or health science programs must be aligned with course content and standards. Some older courses are not aligned with current standards and may not be appropriate to count in a student's program. Students who completed certain technical or science courses more than **five years** preceding completion of the program may be required to repeat the course or demonstrate proficiency related to current course content.

Decisions about older courses proposed to satisfy certificate or degree requirements will be made on a case-by-case basis by the division chair. A student may appeal the decision to the appropriate Instructional Dean. The Dean's decision is final.

When there are changes in certification requirements, students seeking certification may be required to modify their programs of study to meet the new requirements.

Academic Bankruptcy

The Academic Bankruptcy Policy may be implemented prior to graduation for a student whose previous academic performance has resulted in probation or suspension. A student may request in writing to the Registrar to declare academic bankruptcy under the following conditions:

1. If fewer than three (3) calendar years have elapsed since the term for which the student wishes to declare academic bankruptcy, and if the student has satisfactorily completed at least eighteen (18) semester hours of coursework at GSCC the bankruptcy term, the student may request that academic bankruptcy be granted for that **one term**;
2. If three (3) or more calendar years have elapsed since the most recent term for which the student wishes to declare academic bankruptcy, and if the student has satisfactorily completed at least eighteen (18) semester hours of coursework at Gadsden State since the most recent bankruptcy term, the student may request that academic bankruptcy be granted for as many as **three terms**.

All coursework taken the term(s) for which academic bankruptcy is declared will be disregarded in the cumulative grade point average.

Once academic bankruptcy has been granted, the term "**Academic Bankruptcy**" will be reflected on the transcript for each semester/term affected. Declaration of academic bankruptcy will not remove courses from a student record. Terms marked "Academic Bankruptcy" will be ignored only in the computation of the Gadsden State GPA. A student may declare academic bankruptcy only once. Bankruptcy at this institution does not guarantee that other institutions will approve such action. This determination will be made by the respective transfer institutions. For more information, students may contact the Registrar, Records Office, One Stop Center, P.O. Box 227, Gadsden, AL 35902-0227; 256.439.6911, or email jjobson@gadsdenstate.edu

Repeat Course Forgiveness

A student may request in writing to the Registrar to declare repeat course forgiveness under the following conditions:

- a. When a student repeats a course once, the second grade awarded (excluding a grade of W) replaces the original grade in the computation of the cumulative grade point average. The grade point average during the term in which the course was first attempted will not be affected.
- b. When a student repeats a course more than once, all grades for the course, excluding the first grade, will be used to compute the cumulative grade point average. Official records (transcripts) at GSCC will list each course with the grade earned.
- c. A course may be counted only once toward fulfillment of credit hours for graduation. This Course Forgiveness Policy applies to courses taken at GSCC only; respective transfer institutions may or may not accept the adjusted cumulative GPA. That determination will be made by the respective transfer institution.

*****Course Forgiveness may impact your Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for financial aid eligibility and your continued eligibility. Students should contact their program advisors prior to requesting Course Forgiveness as it could negatively impact program admission or successful transfer to other college/university programs.*****

Grading System

The letters below are generally used to indicate grades and enrollment status, although certain programs may use a different scale for the numerical values of grades.

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A (excellent)	90-100	S	Satisfactory
B (good)	80-89	U	Unsatisfactory
C (average)	70-79	W	Withdrawal
D (poor)	60-69	AU	Audit
F (failure)	0-59		
I	Incomplete		

Satisfactory grades are **A**, **B**, and **C**. Some senior colleges and universities may not grant credit for a course in which a **D** has been awarded. The **W** (**Withdrawn**) is assigned when the student officially withdraws from class(es) by the end of the last class day of the term in which he/she is enrolled for the class(es). The **AU** (**AUdit**) is used to indicate that the student is enrolled in a course for which credit will not be granted. Credit hours for audited courses will not be averaged into the grade point average. An "Audit" student should attend class regularly but is not required to take exams, participate in class discussion, or undertake assignments. A student must declare "audit" status by the end of the registration period, and the status may not be changed thereafter. Health Sciences courses are not eligible for audit.

The "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned when a student has fulfilled the following requirements:

- Has completed at least 50% of the coursework with passing grades.
- Is prevented by illness or other justifiable cause from completing the required work or from taking the final exam.
- Has submitted an Incomplete Grade Request Form to the instructor and received approval by the time grades are due for that semester.

Students receiving an "I" during the fall semester have until the last class of the following spring semester to complete the missed coursework. Students who receive an "I" for the spring or summer term have until the last class of the following fall semester to complete the missed coursework. The "I" grade will be changed to an "F" when the missed assignments and/or examinations are not completed in the prescribed time allotted by this policy.

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the appropriate instructional dean.

Developmental Mathematics Course(s) Grading Scale

Math 090 Basic Mathematics and Math 098 Elementary Algebra - Students must achieve a 70% or higher in this course to proceed to the next level Mathematics Course. Any Grade below 70% will result in a grade of "F" which indicates failure of the class. Letter grades are assigned for all Mathematics Developmental courses as stated below:

<u>Percentage Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
90-100	A.
80-89	B.
70-79	C.
70-Below	F

Grade Changes

Grades may be changed only for the purpose of correcting a College error or removing an "I." Grade changes are initiated by the instructor who assigned the original grade and approved by the academic director and the appropriate instructional dean. Incomplete grades that have converted to an F are not eligible for a grade change.

To evaluate the academic standing of students, the College calculates each student's quality-point average (**QPA**) or grade point average (**GPA**) by assigning quality (or grade) points to grades according to the following system: **A** = 4 quality points; **B** = 3 quality points; **C** = 2 quality points; **D** = 1 quality point; **F** = 0 quality points. For academic honors and continued residency, the quality point average (**QPA**) or grade point average (**GPA**) is calculated by dividing the total quality points earned by the total hours attempted. For graduation purposes, only those hours that count toward graduation are calculated to determine student eligibility for awards.

State of Alabama Policy on Standards of Academic Progress

In order to avoid academic probation, a student is required to achieve the following **minimum levels of progress** as measured by the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA): A student who has attempted

1. **12-21** semester credit hours at Gadsden State must maintain a **1.5** Cumulative Grade Point Average;
2. **22-32** credit hours at Gadsden State must maintain a **1.75** Cumulative Grade Point Average; and
3. **33** or more credit hours at Gadsden State must maintain a **2.0** Cumulative Grade Point Average.

The **standards of progress** are applied as follows:

1. If a student's cumulative GPA is at or above the requirements listed above, the status is **CLEAR**.
2. If a student's cumulative GPA is below the required standard and the GPA for the semester is below 2.00, the student will be placed on **ACADEMIC PROBATION**.

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- A. If, while a student is on academic probation, the student's cumulative GPA remains below the required standard but the GPA for that semester is 2.00 or higher, the student will remain on **ACADEMIC PROBATION**.
 - B. If, while a student is on academic probation, the student's cumulative GPA remains below the required standard and the GPA for that semester is below 2.00, the student will be **SUSPENDED FOR ONE SEMESTER**. The transcript will be stamped "**SUSPENDED – ONE SEMESTER**."
 - C. If, while a student is on academic probation, the student's cumulative GPA reaches at least the minimum standard of progress appropriate to the student's situation based on the number of hours attempted, the status will once again be **CLEAR**.
3. If a student has been suspended for one semester, he/she may appeal for re-admission. (An explanation of the appeal process appears below). If the student is re-admitted on appeal without having served the one-semester suspension, the transcript will be stamped "**SUSPENDED – ONE SEMESTER/READMITTED UPON APPEAL**." Whether re-admitted because of appeal or by serving the one-semester suspension, the student will re-enter Gadsden State on **ACADEMIC PROBATION**.
 4. If a student has re-entered after having been suspended for one semester, whether through appeal or through serving out the suspension, without having attained **CLEAR** status, and if the cumulative GPA falls below the required standard but the GPA for that semester is 2.00 or higher, the student will remain on **Academic Probation**. If, however, the student has re-entered after having been suspended for one semester, whether through appeal or through serving out the suspension, without having attained a **CLEAR** status, and if the cumulative GPA falls below the required standard and if the GPA for that semester is also below 2.00, the student will be suspended for one calendar year. The transcript will be stamped "**SUSPENDED – ONE YEAR**."
 5. If suspended for one year, the student may appeal for re-admission (as indicated in the "Appeal Process" section below). If the student is re-admitted on appeal, the transcript will be stamped "**SUSPENDED – ONE YEAR/READMITTED UPON APPEAL**." Whether re-admitted because of appeal or by serving the one-year suspension, the student will re-enter Gadsden State on **ACADEMIC PROBATION**.
 6. All pertinent academic designations except **CLEAR** will appear on the student's transcript.
 7. Financial Aid Standards of Academic Progress differ.
See http://www.gadsdenstate.edu/financial_aid/satisfactory-academic-progress

Admissions Appeals

A student who has been suspended may **appeal for re-admission** without contesting the facts leading to the suspension, as follows:

First, the student must submit to the Admissions Committee a written request to be considered for re-admission within a designated time period after notification of the suspension. Second, he/she should present a rationale and/or a written statement of mitigating circumstances in support of the petition for immediate re-admission. The Admissions Committee meeting is not a due-process hearing but rather a petition for re-admission to the college. Third, the Admissions Committee's decision, together with the materials that are presented, shall be placed in the student's official record along with the Committee's written decision. Finally, the student shall be notified of the Committee's decision directly after the Admissions Committee meeting. The Committee will strive to reach its decision with special attention to equity, reasonableness, and consistency.

Exceptions to the Appeal Process

1. Gadsden State programs that are subject to external licensure, certification, and/or accreditation or that require fewer than four semesters for completion may have higher standards of progress than those listed above for the College in general.
2. Some transfer students will be placed on academic probation when admitted to Gadsden State; these students must "transition" to the College's standards of academic progress.
3. Special standards of academic progress have been established for those students enrolled in "institutional credit only" courses that carry optional grades and for those students who wish to remain eligible to receive Title IV financial aid.

If a student is placed on **ACADEMIC PROBATION, ONE TERM ACADEMIC SUSPENSION, OR ONE CALENDAR YEAR ACADEMIC SUSPENSION**, Gadsden State officials may institute intervention measures for student success, including, but not limited to, restricting the course load, requiring the student to enroll in a study skills course, and/or prescribing other specific courses responsive to the individual's needs.

Transcripts

A transcript is an exact copy of a student's permanent academic record at the time it is issued. It can be either an *official* or an *unofficial* transcript, with the latter usually issued directly to and only for the personal information of the

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student concerned. Partial transcripts are not issued. A Gadsden State transcript includes the student's complete record at GSCC.

Transcripts covering a student's secondary and previous college education that have been submitted to Gadsden State to meet a requirement for admission become part of the Registrar's official file. The College does not reissue or certify copies of transcripts from other institutions. The student concerned must order any required transcripts directly from other institutions where the coursework was taken.

The official permanent academic records for all Gadsden State students are maintained by the Records Office. This information is protected by federal law and released only in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Only the student may request a copy of his or her academic record. Friends and family are not permitted access to a student's record without the written permission of that student.

If the student wishes to request or pick up a transcript from the Records Office, he/she should come to the Gadsden campus and be prepared to show a photo ID. Transcripts are issued only at the written request or authorization of the student concerned. When the student requests a transcript, the following must be included: name (including any names used while at GSCC), student number, date of birth, dates of attendance, daytime phone number, name and address of recipient, and signature. **NOTICE: Transcripts will not be processed without proper signature.** Requests for transcripts will normally be processed within 3 business days. However, a longer period of time may be needed for processing at the end of each semester or during registration. Transcripts are not issued for those students who are indebted to the College until such indebtedness is satisfied. Requests for transcripts must be made in writing, either in person, email (admissions@gadsdenstate.edu), by fax (256.549.8466), or by mail to: The Records Office, Gadsden State Community College, P.O. Box 227, Gadsden, AL 35902-0227. ***The preferred and most efficient method for requesting a transcript is online through <https://my.gadsdenstate.edu>. *** There is no charge.

Final Examinations

Students may be given comprehensive final examinations in any courses in which they are enrolled. A final examination schedule is published on the website and in the online class schedule.

Academic Honors

Gadsden State recognizes in a variety of ways the academic achievements of its students. At the end of each semester, the College publishes in area newspapers the President's List and the Dean's List. Students who are eligible for honors recognition but prefer that their names not be published should notify the Public Relations and Marketing Office (Joe Ford Center, East Broad Campus) within two weeks after the first day of classes.

President's List

A President's List shall be compiled at the end of each term. Requirements for the President's List shall be a semester grade point average of 4.0 (with all A's) and a completion of the minimum semester course load of 12 semester credit hours of college-level work. Developmental (pre-collegiate) courses carrying letter grades will not be calculated in the semester GPA. Developmental courses will count toward the minimum course load requirement or GPA for Financial Aid.

Dean's List

A Dean's List shall be compiled at the end of each term. Requirements for the Dean's List shall be a semester grade point average of 3.5 or above but below 4.0 (with all A's and B's) and a completion of the minimum semester course load of 12 semester credit hours of college-level work. Developmental (pre-collegiate) courses carrying letter grades will not be calculated in the semester GPA. Developmental courses will count toward the minimum course load requirement or GPA for Financial Aid.

Graduation Honors

Degree Recipients

At the time of graduation, the College uses the following designations to recognize the academic accomplishments of students who earn degrees:

Cum Laude	3.50 to 3.69 GPA
Magna Cum Laude	3.70 to 3.89 GPA
Summa Cum Laude	3.90 to 4.00 GPA

In order to be eligible for a graduation honor, the student must have completed a minimum of one-half (50%) of the semester credit hours at Gadsden State.

Certificate Recipients

At the time of graduation, the College uses the following designations to recognize the academic accomplishments of students who earn certificates, except the recipient of the short-term certificate:

With Distinction	3.50 to 4.00 GPA
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In order to be eligible for a graduation honor, the student must have completed one-half (50%) of the semester credit hours at Gadsden State.

Graduation Requirements

AA, AS, or AAS Degree Requirements

A student may be awarded the **Associate in Arts Degree**, the **Associate in Science Degree**, or the **Associate in Applied Science Degree**, upon satisfactory completion of the requirements of the specific program as specified by the College and the Alabama Community College System.

1. The student must satisfactorily complete not less than **60** semester hours (or the equivalent quarter hours) of college credit (from courses numbered 100 or above) in an approved program of study, including prescribed general education courses.
2. The student must earn at least a **2.0** cumulative grade point average (GPA) in all courses attempted at the College. (The calculation of the GPA for graduation shall not include grades earned in institutional credit courses. A course may be counted only once for purposes of meeting graduation requirements.)
3. The student must **complete** at least one-fourth (**25%**) of the semester credit hours at Gadsden State.
4. The student must meet all requirements for graduation within a calendar year from the last semester of attendance.
5. Any transfer credit applicable toward graduation must come from one or more regionally accredited institutions and/or from one or more of the institutions comprising the Alabama Community College System; a minimum grade of **C** is required for any course that is transferred. Exceptions are listed in the "Transfer Credit" section in this catalog.

To receive a diploma or participate in the commencement exercises of the institution, a student must comply with formal procedures for graduation in accordance with the College policies as follows:

- Submit an **Application for Graduation** online on or before the published deadline.
- Fulfill all financial obligations to Gadsden State.
- Satisfy those requirements either as stated in the current College catalog at the time of graduation, or as stated in any of the catalogs from the four (4) previous academic years.

Certificate Requirements

A student may be granted an award other than a degree upon completion of the requirements of the specific program as specified by the College in accordance with policies of the Alabama Community College System.

1. The student must complete satisfactorily an approved program of study.
2. The student must earn a **2.0** cumulative grade point average (GPA) in all courses attempted at the College. (The calculation of the GPA for graduation shall not include grades earned in developmental courses. All grades in repeated courses shall be averaged into the grade point average; however, a course may be counted only once for purposes of meeting graduation requirements.)
3. The student must complete at least one-half (**50%**) of the total semester credit hours at Gadsden State.
4. The student must meet all requirements for graduation within a calendar year from the last semester of attendance.
5. Any transfer credit applicable toward graduation must come from one or more regionally accredited institutions and/or from one or more of the institutions comprising the Alabama Community College System; a minimum grade of **C** is required for any course that the student transfers. Exceptions are listed in the "Transfer Credit" section of this catalog.

To receive a diploma or participate in the commencement exercises of the institution, the student must comply with formal procedures for graduation in accordance with the College policies as follows:

- Submit an **Application for Graduation** online on or before the published deadline.
- Fulfill all financial obligations to Gadsden State.
- Satisfy those requirements either as stated in the current College catalog at the time of graduation, or as stated in any of the catalogs from the four (4) previous academic years.

Graduation

A student may elect to graduate under any Gadsden State degree plan in effect during his/her enrollment, the date of the earliest degree plan not to exceed four years prior to the date of anticipated graduation. Some programs, such as nursing, have policies that are more rigid. These exceptions appear under the degree requirements listed for each program.

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For a student to graduate from GSCC with the **Associate in Arts Degree**, the **Associate in Science Degree**, or the **Associate in Applied Science Degree**, the following are required:

1. The student must satisfactorily complete not less than **60** semester hours (or the equivalent quarter hours) of college credit (from courses numbered 100 or above) in an approved program of study, including prescribed general education courses.
2. The student must earn at least a **2.0** cumulative grade point average (GPA) in all courses attempted at the College. (The calculation of the GPA for graduation shall not include grades earned in institutional credit courses. A course may be counted only once for purposes of meeting graduation requirements.)
3. The student must **complete** at least one-fourth (**25%**) of the semester credit hours at Gadsden State.
4. Any transfer credit applicable toward graduation must come from one or more regionally accredited institutions and/or from one or more of the institutions comprising the Alabama Community College System; a minimum grade of **C** is required for any course that is transferred. Exceptions are listed in the "Transfer Credit" section in this catalog.
5. The student must comply with formal procedures for graduation in accordance with Gadsden State policies, which include submitting an **Application for Award** form online at least one semester prior to graduation. (i.e. A student graduating in the Spring semester should apply during the Fall semester.)
6. The student must fulfill all financial obligations to the College.

For a student to graduate from GSCC with a **certificate** or any other formal award except a degree, the following are required:

1. The student must complete satisfactorily an approved program of study.
2. The student must earn a **2.0** cumulative grade point average (GPA) in all courses attempted at the College. (The calculation of the GPA for graduation shall not include grades earned in developmental courses. All grades in repeated courses shall be averaged into the grade point average; however, a course may be counted only once for purposes of meeting graduation requirements.)
3. The student must complete at least one-half (**50%**) of the total semester credit hours (or the equivalent quarter hours) at Gadsden State.
4. Any transfer credit applicable toward graduation must come from one or more regionally accredited institutions and/or from one or more of the institutions comprising the Alabama Community College System; a minimum grade of **C** is required for any course that the student transfers. Exceptions are listed in the "Transfer Credit" section of this catalog.
5. The student must comply with formal procedures for graduation in accordance with Gadsden State policies, which include submitting an **Application for Award** form online at least one semester prior to graduation. (i.e. A student graduating in the Spring semester should apply during the Fall semester.)
6. The student must fulfill all financial obligations to the College.

Policies for Students Who Receive VA Benefits

Through the Veterans Affairs Office, GSCC cooperates with the Department of Veterans Affairs and with students who receive VA educational benefits to ensure that the objectives of the VA are pursued to the fullest advantage of all parties. The policies and procedures followed by the College are explained in the "College Regulations" section of this catalog. Information on the Alabama GI Dependents' Scholarship Program is also presented under the "Financial Assistance" section in this catalog.

Veterans Educational Assistance Programs

1. Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1606 of Title 10, U.S. Code)
2. Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1607 of Title 10, U.S. Code, is no longer available if not enrolled before November 25, 2015.)
3. Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 30 of Title 38, U.S. Code)
4. VA Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31) -- This program provides educational assistance to disabled veterans who are in need of vocational rehabilitation. To be eligible, a veteran must have a service-connected disability entitling him/her to these benefits. An award authorization must be received from a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor/Specialist before benefits can be used.
5. Post-Vietnam Veterans Educational Assistance Program/VEAP (Chapter 32 of Title 38, U.S. Code)
6. Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33, Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008)
7. Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 34 of Title 38, U.S. Code)

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8. Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S. Code)
9. The following individuals shall be charged the in-state/in-district rate, or otherwise considered a resident, for tuition purposes:
 - A Veteran using educational assistance under either chapter 30 (Montgomery G.I. Bill – Active Duty Program) or chapter 33 (Post-9/11 G.I. Bill), of title 38, United States Code, who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
 - Anyone using transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits (38 U.S.C. § 3319) who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of the transferor's discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
 - A spouse or child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (38 U.S.C. § 3311(b)(9)) who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of the Service member's death in the line of duty following a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
 - Anyone described above while he or she remains continuously enrolled (other than during regularly scheduled breaks between courses, semesters, or terms) at the same school. The person so described must have enrolled in the school prior to the expiration of the three year period following discharge or death described above and must be using educational benefits under either chapter 30 or chapter 33, of title 38, United States Code.

GSCC recommends that students receiving educational benefits from the VA adhere to college attendance policies as explained in the "College Regulations" section of this catalog. The College will report promptly to the VA if a student withdraws or drops classes for which the student was certified. Such a change in enrollment could lead to an overpayment situation for the student.

Selection of Program

In consultation with an admissions counselor or an academic advisor, each student receiving VA benefits must select and plan a program in accordance with Gadsden State's catalog. A change of program requires the student to contact the Veterans Affairs Office. All programs of study must be deemed approved by law, the State Approving Agency, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in order to be certified by VA for payment of benefits.

Certification of Courses

The student will not be certified to receive benefits for any course that does not fulfill a requirement for his/her declared program. Each student approved for VA education benefits must notify the Gadsden State School Certifying Official each semester after his/her registration is complete to request submission of an enrollment certification. Certifications will be submitted online via VA-Once beginning the day after add/drop ends, or as time permits prior to this date. Courses that award audit credit, continuing education units, or no credit cannot be certified. Courses that award only institutional credit in required remedial or developmental subjects may be acceptable if such subjects are measured on the same basis as regular college credit courses and if these courses are determined by the College to be necessary for one to reach his/her academic objective. If the student changes from credit status to audit or non-credit status in a course prior to completing that course, the student must have enrollment certification amended, effective the day the semester began, so that the actual number of semester hours for which the student can receive credit is accurately reflected. Course substitution must be approved by the academic advisor in writing for the VA student's file. **NOTICE: "I" (incomplete) is not considered a grade by the VA.** VA students having "I" grades will be changed to "F" grades when required coursework is not completed in the prescribed time allotted by the policy outlined under Grade Reports in the "College Regulations" section of this catalog.

Repeat Courses

VA students failing a required course may repeat that course with pay. However, the student cannot repeat a course just to improve a grade and receive payment through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Course Load

A full-time course load for a student receiving veterans' benefits is twelve semester hours or more, a three-quarter time load is nine semester hours, and a one-half time load is six semester hours. If a student is enrolled in an accelerated course (weekend, mini, summer, etc.), adjustment of enrollment status may be made according to VA policies. The student should contact the Veterans Affairs Office for additional information.

Withdrawal Policy

Students who receive veterans' benefits must notify the Veterans Affairs Office when dropping or adding courses or when withdrawing to avoid payment problems. Each withdrawal or change in course load must show the effective date of the change. The withdrawal policies of Gadsden State also apply.

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Standards of Academic Progress

To remain eligible for VA benefits, the student is required to achieve the minimum levels of progress as outlined in the "[College Regulations](#)" section (page 51) of this catalog. Failure to make satisfactory progress as defined by these requirements will be reported to the VA.

Overpayments

Each student receiving veterans' benefits should be aware that it is the responsibility of the student to comply strictly with the policies and procedures that govern the receipt of educational benefits. Any overpayment created through non-compliance with veterans' policies is subject to repayment, and such overpayment can cause a delay in the payment of further benefits. **NOTICE: The student must visit the VA Office at the One Stop Center or Ayers Campus each semester to present and confirm his/her schedule for certification of benefits. For more information, students should call 256.549.8207 or 256.835.5467.**

Safety and Security

The Office of Safety and Security is responsible for security and emergency response on all GSCC campuses. Safety and Security (which includes security, mail, transportation, Alabama Department of Emergency Management reporting and severe weather monitoring) is an important component of the educational environment at GSCC.

Officers patrol the campuses and provide safety and security services through the deployment of vehicle and foot patrols. To achieve the highest degree of safety and security at all campuses, centers, and sites, the Office of Safety and Security encourages community members to recognize the importance of following good safety practices. Community members should also understand that safety is their responsibility, not just that of those officially and formally charged with enforcing the laws, policies, and rules. This community responsibility includes using the escort service available by calling the duty (security) number posted on each campus, locking valuables, and reporting suspicious/criminal activities. The Office of Safety and Security takes a leadership role by providing educational programs on campus safety, preventative patrols, incident investigation and reporting, fire safety and prevention, and crime prevention. In addition, the Office of Safety and Security is responsible for monitoring, maintaining, and/or enforcing GSCC alarm systems, parking services, property/evidence collection, officer training, and crime reporting. Safety and Security officers receive training in security and emergency care. The Office of Safety and Security is located in the Joe Ford Center on the East Broad Campus. The office phone number is 256.549.8628, and the 24-hour phone number is 256.312.2132. The primary objective of the Office of Safety and Security is to provide a safe college environment wherein its community members can work and study and personally and professionally develop, both intellectually and socially. GSCC has the Campus Safety Committee, whose mission is to ensure that appropriate health and safety standards are maintained and that the appropriate Federal and State statutes are observed.

1. **Crime Reporting and Timely Warnings:** Numerous and diligent efforts are made to advise members of the campus community about crime-related problems. The College's duty to inform students of threatening situations is taken seriously, and as a result, information related to crime and criminal activity is provided to the community in an accurate and timely fashion. Because awareness is essential to effective crime reduction, the College will release information that can be used by students and other College community members to reduce their chances of becoming victims. The Office of Safety and Security will issue timely warnings or safety alerts to campus community members informing them of incidents/crimes impacting the College community and/or surrounding property. This information is disseminated to the College community members via use of electronic mail messages, electronic sign, information flyers posted at highly visible locations throughout campus, Cardinal Alert and crime prevention presentations by Safety and Security personnel, Freshman Focus, all campus orientations, and on-line orientations required of all students.
2. **Reporting of Criminal Actions or Emergencies:** To report a crime or emergency, community members should call your campus security number **or** 911. To obtain information or request an escort or for any other security service, community members should call your campus security number. Safety and Security personnel also have the ability to notify county emergency dispatchers regarding emergency situations occurring on campus.
3. **Campus Enforcement Authority:** All students and employees are encouraged to report promptly all on-campus crime and suspicious activities to the Office of Safety and Security. While off campus, students and employees are encouraged to contact the local law enforcement authorities. Security officers have no arrest authority beyond that of an ordinary citizen; however, they may address offenses and refer them to the local law enforcement authorities. The Office has a good working relationship with the local police and sheriffs where campuses are located. The College and this office diligently cooperate with law enforcement agencies to maximize the effectiveness of police services to the campus community. The Associate Dean of Student Services at GSCC coordinates disciplinary action for matters that are violations of College rules.
4. **Sexual Assault Prevention Program and Procedures:** GSCC will act swiftly to protect the rights of all its members. In the event of sexual assault, various campus and area resources are available to victims. The College supports the victim's right to choose which avenues of assistance are best for the individual. These resources include the following: The Office of Safety and Security, where all crimes, including sexual

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assaults, should be reported (a designated employee is assigned to assist victims of sexual assault); the Associate Dean of Student Services; the Title IX Coordinator; the local police agency with jurisdiction; and the Emergency Department of the local hospital. An individual who has been sexually assaulted has the following rights:

- A. An opportunity to contact the local law enforcement authorities. GSCC will assist the student in this notification;
- B. Transport to the nearest medical facility approved for the collection of rape evidence;
- C. Awareness of pastoral and professional mental health counseling on campus or in the community;
- D. Alternative academic and living arrangements if requested and reasonably available.

Due to the severity of incidents of sexual assault, the College strongly encourages individuals who have been sexually assaulted to contact the police. Reporting the incident to the police immediately will greatly increase the possibility of successful prosecution if criminal charges are brought. Preserving all evidence of a sexual assault is extremely important.

An individual who has been sexually assaulted will be offered the opportunity to make a formal complaint against the offender through the College's disciplinary process pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct. The College may pursue charges regardless of whether any criminal charges are filed. The College will initiate internal proceedings in incidents of sexual assault when a student requests such proceedings and/or when subsequent investigation produces evidence of a violation of College policy.

Individuals have the right to have any questions about College policy and the College judicial process answered. If an individual who reports a sexual assault is harassed by anyone in connection with the incident in question, the harassment should be reported immediately. An individual has the option to have a victim's advocate and/or any other advisor with them at all times throughout such procedures. The accuser and the accused are entitled to the same opportunities to have others present during judicial disciplinary proceedings. Both the accuser and the accused shall be informed of the institutional disciplinary proceeding (the College's final determination and any sanction against the accused) brought alleging a sex offense.

5. **Sexual Offender Registry and Access to Related Information:** In accordance with the Campus Sex Crimes Act of 2002, institutions of higher education are required to issue a statement advising the campus community where information about registered sex offenders may be obtained. It also requires sex offenders already required to register in a state to provide notice, as required under state law, of each institution of higher education in that state at which the person is employed, carries on a vocation, or is a student. In the State of Alabama, information regarding registered sex offenders may be obtained from local municipal police departments, the county sheriff's office, or the Alabama Highway Patrol. This information can also be found online if one visits <http://dps.alabama.gov/Community> and searches under the Sex Offender Registry.
6. **Access to College Facilities:** Most of the College's buildings and facilities are accessible to members of the college community, guests, and visitors during normal business hours, (Monday through Friday), except holidays. Faculty and staff who wish to enter any facilities after hours should notify the Office of Safety and Security.
7. **Guidelines for Violence Threat Response:** Employees who believe they have been subjected to acts of violence, threatened acts of violence, including hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, or possession of weapons or dangerous materials of any kind, or who witness or have knowledge of any actions that could be perceived as violent should immediately report the incident to the President, Director of Physical Plant or other appropriate administrator. Students should report such actions to the Associate Dean of Student Services or the Director of Physical Plant. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.

Employees or students who are witnesses to a violent act are advised to resist personal involvement in the situation, to leave the immediate area, and to immediately report the event to a Security employee.

The President, along with the Director of Physical Plant, will evaluate what has occurred and will proceed with an internal investigation.

Pending the circumstances under investigation, the President, along with the Director of Physical Plant, may need to remove from the premises employees or students who are involved in a physical or verbal altercation.

The President must notify the General Counsel of the Alabama Community College System upon the occurrence of or upon the report of an incident under this policy and must keep the General Counsel informed as to the progress of the investigation and its outcome.

It is the intent of the Alabama Community College System and the President of Gadsden State Community College to provide a safe workplace and a safe educational environment, free of acts or threatened acts of violence, including hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, or possession of weapons or dangerous materials of any kind on College property or while one is conducting College business. This policy applies to employees, contractors, students, visitors, or anyone else. Additionally, this policy provides a planned and immediate response to such incidents. Violence or threats of violence will not be tolerated.

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Third Party Influences: Contractors, and/or visitors purposefully threatening the safety of others on College premises are subject to immediate removal from the premises and/or prosecution under the law.

Employees: To ensure both safe and efficient operations, the Alabama Community College System expects and requires all College employees to display common courtesy and to engage in safe and appropriate behavior on the job at all times. Any involvement in acts or threatened acts of violence, including hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, or possession of weapons or dangerous materials of any kind is considered unacceptable behavior that violates this standard of appropriate behavior in the workplace and in the educational environment.

Employees are responsible for their conduct on College premises, whether they are on or off duty. Alabama Community College System and institutional rules of conduct and behavior expectations also apply when employees are traveling on College business, as well as any time employees are working for or are representing the Alabama Community College System away from the premises.

The College will promptly investigate any physical or verbal altercation, threats of violence, or other conduct by employees that threatens the health or safety of other employees or students or the public or otherwise might involve a breach of or departure from the conduct standards in this policy. A search of property may be conducted, under appropriate circumstances. All incidents of physical altercations or threats of violence are treated as gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for employees and disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for students.

Retaliation in any form against an individual who exercises their right to make a complaint under this policy or who provides information in the investigation of a complaint is strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for employees and appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for students.

8. **Cardinal Alert:** Cardinal Alert is an emergency notification service that will allow Gadsden State to contact all enrolled students and employees via cell phone, text message, home phone, and e-mail. For follow-up emergency information to the College community, all of the above media to include postings on our web site, television, and radio will be utilized. The service will be used only when there is imminent danger to the campus, i.e., tornado warnings, chemical spills, orders to evacuate or shelter in place, and active shooters.

Parking and Traffic Regulations

A student, faculty, or staff member – whether full-time or part-time, whether in a special course or in a regular course – who intends to operate an automobile or other vehicle on any Gadsden State campus, whether or not he/she is the owner, must comply with the following parking and traffic regulations:

1. The campus parking, traffic, and safety regulations in effect at Gadsden State Community College, as well as all applicable state laws and city ordinances, will be **enforced by the Campus Security at all times**. These regulations, laws, and ordinances apply to ALL persons while they are on a Gadsden State campus. If a vehicle is properly registered with the College, a student may park in any designated parking place except those having **blue, yellow, or white** curbing. White curbs are reserved for faculty and other staff members only, blue curbs are for handicapped parking with a permit, and yellow curbs are no parking at any time.
2. **Motor Vehicle Registration:** All students, faculty and staff using a motor vehicle on any Gadsden State campus must register it with the Safety and Security Office. The student vehicle registration fee is included in the tuition fee. The driver will be issued a hanging tag ("hangtag"), which is to be hung from the inside rearview mirror of the vehicle. Only one free hangtag will be issued to each person. It is the driver's responsibility to keep this hangtag available for use in the vehicle that is driven on campus. However, the hangtag may be moved from one vehicle to another vehicle if necessary. If a hangtag is lost or stolen, the driver must purchase a new one. The fee for an additional hangtag is \$10.00.
3. **Types of Hangtags:** Two types of hangtags are issued by Safety and Security on all campuses: the *Faculty/Staff* and the *Student*. If the driver is disabled or if the driver is driving for a disabled person, the vehicle may be parked in a space reserved for the disabled (blue curb) so long as the vehicle bears both a student hangtag and a decal for the disabled. This decal may be obtained through the Office of the Revenue Commissioner, Etowah County Court House. All student hangtags expire on August 31 of year indicated on hangtag.
4. **General Regulations:** When issued a hangtag, the owner of the hangtag will be held responsible for any violation in which the vehicle bearing this hangtag is involved. In the event of mechanical failure of a vehicle, the owner should inform the Information Desk of the vehicle's location; the owner will be responsible for its removal as soon as available services will permit. The Office of Safety and Security may cancel the registration of any vehicle.
5. **Regulations of Moving Vehicles and Fees Assessed:** The following are violations of the College's traffic regulations, with the fee assessed for each violation noted:

A. Exceeding 15 mph on campus	25.00
B. Failing to stop at a STOP sign	25.00
C. Failing to YIELD	25.00

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D.	Going the WRONG WAY on a one-way street	25.00
E.	Making an illegal U-turn	25.00
F.	Reckless driving	100.00
6.	Parking Violations and Fees Assessed: The following are violations of the parking and safety regulations, with the fee assessed for each violation noted:	
A.	No hangtag	15.00
B.	Parking in inappropriate space:	
	i. White curbs-Reserved for Faculty/Staff only	15.00
	ii. Blue curbs-Handicapped only with permit	50.00
	iii. Yellow curbs-No Parking at any time	25.00
C.	Backing into a parking space or pulling through	25.00
D.	Improper parking	15.00
E.	Improper display of hangtag	15.00
F.	Giving false information on the application form	25.00
G.	Removing vehicle boot immobilizer	25.00
H.	No parking on grass	15.00
I.	Parking in fire hydrant restricted area	25.00
J.	Parking in visitor only (no students allowed)	15.00
K.	Allowing other students to use your hangtag	15.00
	(Plus any fines they may incur)	

NOTE: All assessed fees listed in Items 5 and 6 above will be doubled if they are not paid within seven (7) calendar days of the assessment. Students should also see Item 8 below.

7. **Vehicle Boot Immobilizer:** Violations of these regulations may result in the vehicle being immobilized with an auto boot. In case of vehicle immobilization, do not attempt to move the vehicle. Contact Campus Security.
8. **Additional Penalties:** Students receiving more than three (3) citations in a 24-months period will have their fines doubled on all subsequent fines.
9. **Appeal Procedure:** Anyone desiring to appeal traffic or parking citations may appeal to the Campus Security (256.549.8200) within seven (7) days after receiving the citation. The decision of the Campus Security Department may be appealed in writing within five (5) days to the Traffic and Parking Committee, appointed by the College President. The decision of the Traffic and Parking Committee is final.
10. GSCC assumes **no responsibility for damage** to any vehicle brought to campus.

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Student Grievance

The College recognizes the importance of students being able to submit legitimate complaints relating to courses, programs, and personnel. Students should submit complaints using the following steps:

1. Students are encouraged to seek to resolve the matter by discussions with the relevant College personnel most associated with the matter. College personnel with whom a concern is raised by a student is expected to deal with the matter in an open and professional manner and take reasonable and prompt action to try to resolve it informally. The student should consult with the relevant College personnel in person or in writing, within the semester that the grievance occurs.
2. If the student is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved, the student should submit a written complaint with the appropriate supervisor of the College personnel. Complaints will be acknowledged by the director/division chair/dean within five working days upon receipt of the complaint. The supervisor will work with the parties in an attempt to resolve the complaint. The resolution process may include meetings with relevant College personnel and the student, but should take no longer than 5 working days.
3. If the matter is not resolved by the supervisor, then the supervisor will forward the complaint to the appropriate dean. The resolution process may include meetings with the relevant College personnel, the student, and the supervisor in an attempt to resolve the complaint, but should take no longer than 5 working days. The Dean will render a written decision to the student.
4. If the student is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved, then the student should submit a written appeal to the President. The President will issue a final written determination within 10 days of receipt of the student's appeal.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the President's final determination, the student may appeal to the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) by utilizing the System's official Student Complaint Form which is available online at the ACCS website (https://www.accs.cc/default/assets/File/DPE_ISS/Student%20Complaint%20Process%20FINAL.pdf). Complete instructions for filing of the complaint are located on this website.

*Time lines may be extended at the agreement of all parties.

*This policy does not apply to complaints of harassment and discrimination, violations of the Americans with Disability Act, admission decisions, academic and non-academic conduct and other student grievance policies addressed in the catalog and the student handbook.

Student Code of Conduct and Discipline – Non-Academic

The Student Code of Conduct and Discipline is the College's policy regarding non-academic misconduct and discipline of students. It is not designed to rehabilitate students who will not abide by the policy. Any disciplinary actions taken are designed to protect and preserve the educational environment of the College. If the environment is threatened by student behavior, it may be necessary to impose sanctions.

A student may be accountable to both civil authorities and the College for action which violates both the law and the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and may have to face both criminal charges and disciplinary charges. The findings in one area will not necessarily be an acceptable challenge to the findings in the other. **For a comprehensive list of actions that define non-academic misconduct, students should see the section below, entitled "Procedure for Bringing a Charge of Non-Academic Misconduct Against a Student."**

Procedure for Bringing a Charge of Non-Academic Misconduct Against a Student

Any member of the College community may file a complaint against a student or group of students for non-academic misconduct affecting the College or its operations. With the exception of Residence Hall violations, the following procedure should be followed:

Complaints shall be prepared in writing and directed to the Associate Dean of Student Services. Any complaint should be submitted as soon as possible, preferably within fifteen (15) days of the occurrence but no more than one (1) year. The Associate Dean of Student Services shall investigate and charge students or members of any College-sponsored organization with misconduct when there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of the Code of Conduct or other applicable law or regulation may have occurred as alleged in the complaint. The Associate Dean of Student Services must make a preliminary investigation by consulting the primary parties involved to determine whether the complaint has merit and/or if it can be disposed of informally without the initiation of disciplinary proceedings. All charges shall be presented to the accused student in written form by the Associate Dean of Student Services and shall contain a short summary of the actions or complaint of misconduct. The Associate Dean of Student Services may suspend the student pending consideration of the case when the Associate Dean of Student Services determines that the presence of the student presents a continuing danger to any person or property or an ongoing threat of disruption of the institution or its operations. In such case, a hearing must be held within three (3) business days of the student's suspension, unless the student makes a request for an extension in writing.

The Associate Dean of Student Services may issue a summons for any student or member of a College-sponsored organization to appear for discussions about a case or for a hearing in a pending case. The summons may be

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delivered by U.S. Mail, the Security Office, e-mail or a combination of the three to give the student appropriate notice of the complaint or charges being brought. The summons may also include an order to produce records, which may be helpful in the course of an investigation or in the prosecution of a case. However, upon findings of the investigation, the Associate Dean of Student Services may find that the initial charges need to be amended or additional charges need to be issued to the accused.

Charges may be disposed of by an informal process with resolution agreed upon by the student, the complainant, and the Associate Dean of Student Services. Specific charges include:

1. Dishonesty or knowingly furnishing false information to the members of the College faculty or to other officers or employees of the College in pursuit of their official duties
2. Lewd, obscene, licentious, indecent, or inappropriate dress
3. Any form of gambling
4. Being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or non-prescribed, controlled drugs on College property or at a student or College-sponsored function
5. Smoking, chewing, dipping, or other use of tobacco products in College-owned or College-controlled property, except in designated areas
6. Filing a false report or knowingly making a false statement about or interfering with the investigation of any situation described in this Student Conduct and Discipline Code and the annual campus safety and security publication
7. Trespassing or unauthorized entry or use of Gadsden State premises
8. Placement, establishment, or maintenance of any mobile, impermanent, or temporary living quarters on property of the College, which shall include, but not be limited to, tents, mobile homes, camping devices, trailers, vans, and motor homes and/or use of sanitary facilities on a regular daily basis
9. Disruptive devices such as tape players, radios, cell phones, pagers, iPods, or other electronic devices in the student center, hallways, lecture rooms, classrooms, library, or any other place where such devices might interfere with the normal activity of the College
10. Unauthorized use or possession of all electronic devices (i.e., cell phones, laptops, tablets, MP3 players, etc.) in the classroom (Emergency authorization must be requested in advance of class, in writing, to the Department Chair.)
11. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of College documents, records, or identification
12. Failure to comply with the authority of College officials acting within the capacity and performance of their positions
13. Violation of written College rules, policies and regulations
14. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, other College activities, or other activities on College premises by either College or non-College persons or groups
15. Destruction, damage, or misuse of College public or private property (The student(s) or member(s) of any College organization is responsible for any damage done to College property.)
16. Conduct in violation of federal law, state statutes, or local ordinances, which threatens the health and/or safety of the College community or adversely affects the educational environment of the College, specifically excluding violations relating to sexual harassment and discrimination, which are referred to the Title IX Coordinator.
17. Conviction of any misdemeanor or felony, which adversely affects the educational environment of the College
18. Obtaining College services by false pretenses, including, but not limited to, misappropriation or conversion of College funds, supplies, equipment, telephone system, labor, material, space, facilities, or services
19. Hazing, which is any mental or physical requirement or obligation placed on a person by a member of any organization or by an individual or by a group of individuals, which could cause discomfort, pain, or injury or which violates any legal statute or College rule, regulation, or policy ("Hazing" is defined "as the striking, laying open hand upon, treating with violence, or offering to do bodily harm to a person with intent to punish or injure the individual or other treatment or tyrannical, abusive, shameful, insulting or humiliating nature." Hazing is an action taken or situation created to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Hazing also includes the creation of a situation that results in or might result in mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule, including servitude often called "personal favors.")
20. Lewd, obscene, licentious, or indecent conduct or the verbal or written threat of such action against another person
21. Harassment, intimidation, bribery, physical assault, or any other means, implied or explicit, to influence the proceedings or outcome of the Student Discipline Committee, including witnesses, faculty members, staff members, and students, before, during, or after a hearing (College-sponsored organizations shall be responsible for actions of their individual members, alumni, advisors, etc.)
22. Possession, while on College-owned or controlled property, of weapons, firearms, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, or other dangerous devices
23. Possession, sale, and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or non-prescribed, controlled drugs on College property or at a student- or College-sponsored function
24. Unauthorized manufacture, sale, delivery, or possession of any drug or drug paraphernalia defined as illegal under local, state, or federal law

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25. Unauthorized sale, delivery, or possession of prescribed, controlled drugs defined as illegal under local, state, or federal law
26. Theft, accessory to theft, and/or possession of stolen property
27. Physical or verbal abuse, threat of violence, intimidation, and physical or mental harassment
28. Entering false fire alarms, tampering with fire extinguishers, alarms, or other equipment
29. Disruptive or disorderly conduct that interferes with the rights and opportunities of those who attend the College to utilize and enjoy educational facilities
30. Use of College computer terminals and personal computers or telecommunications equipment on College-owned or College-controlled property in any manner other than for College-authorized use or for purposes of obtaining pornographic or sexually explicit information
31. Threatening, harassing, lewd, obscene, or violent communications through e-mail, fax, or other methods of data/information transmission
32. Terrorist threat to or from GSCC, College-owned property, or College-controlled property
33. Software tampering, espionage, sabotage, and criminal mischief
34. Engaging in any acts that constitute sexual harassment or discrimination (Complaints of sexual harassment and discrimination will be referred to the Title IX Coordinator as provided in the College's Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination.)
35. Any other activity or conduct not specifically stated herein that impairs or endangers any person or property or the educational environment of the College

After the initial investigation, the Associate Dean of Student Services may decide what disciplinary action is required. The Associate Dean of Student Services will notify the student and the party bringing the charge(s). The student and the charging party may seek a hearing before the Student Discipline Committee or the Associate Dean of Student Services may determine that the alleged misconduct must be referred to the Student Discipline Committee.

If the matter is referred to the Student Discipline Committee, the Associate Dean of Student Services will inform the accused, in writing, of the formal charge(s), including specific violations of the Student Conduct and Discipline Code. The Associate Dean of Student Services will also send a copy of the charge(s) and the investigation report to the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee.

Except for cases involving a temporary suspension or a no-trespass, the Chairperson must set a time and date for a hearing within 10 (ten) calendar days from the receipt of the charges. The Chairperson must notify all parties, in writing, of the time, date, and location of the hearing.

Student Discipline Committee

The Student Discipline Committee, consisting of one (1) student, three (3) faculty members, one (1) administrator, one (1) recording secretary and three (3) alternates (one student and two faculty/staff), is responsible for both safeguarding the rights of the accused student and maintaining a climate of integrity and safety for all members of the College community. The Student Government Association advisor must select the student member and alternate of the Committee; the President of the College must select the faculty members, administrator, and alternates. Each member will serve a term of one year on the Committee. Any member's term may be extended by the President. The Chairperson will be selected by the Committee members and should be a member who has served on the Committee previously. A tape recording or a written record of the hearing and the decision (not the deliberations) will be kept in the Office of the Associate Dean of Student Services for the requisite record retention duration. The record shall include a summary of the evidence upon which the Committee based its decision. Tape recordings or written records of the hearings cannot be made available to anyone except members of the Student Discipline Committee, the Associate Dean of Student Services, and the President due to confidentiality of student records. However, students have the right to the specific provisions concerning themselves and may, by submitting a written request to the Associate Dean of Student Services, obtain a transcript with the confidential information of other students redacted. The student must pay for the transcript before it will be released to him/her.

Procedure for Conducting the Hearing on Non-Academic Misconduct

The procedures of the Student Discipline Committee need not conform to the strict behavior and practice of a civil courtroom; however, the student(s) shall be treated fairly and shall be given the opportunity to respond to the accusation(s). The procedure for conducting a hearing must contain the following elements:

1. The Student Discipline Committee shall receive from the Associate Dean of Student Services charges to be imposed upon a student who has allegedly violated the Student Conduct and Discipline Code.
2. No less than seventy-two (72) hours before the hearing (excluding weekends), the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee must notify, in writing, the student charged with misconduct that a hearing will be held by the Committee and must inform the student of the date, time, and location of the hearing. (The student may request, in writing, an extension of time for good cause, which may be granted by the Committee.)
3. The hearing must be conducted in such a way as to afford due process to all parties involved.
4. The hearing must be private and confidential, except by consent of all parties. Gadsden State Security shall be present during hearing proceedings at the discretion of the Chairperson.

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5. The Chairperson will state the charge(s) and define the evidence based on the investigative report. The student charged must have an opportunity to examine evidence, question witnesses, offer witnesses on his/her own behalf, and respond on his/her own behalf. Any evidence or statements obtained or received by the Associate Dean of Student Services shall be made available for inspection by the accused at least twenty-four (24) hours before the hearing in a controlled, secured environment.
6. Any student (the accuser and accused) involved in the proceedings (except for witnesses) is permitted to have one representative present. However, only the student may address the Committee or witnesses directly and only with prior approval from the Chairperson. Representatives are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any hearing before the Committee. In the case of an International student or a student with a disability, such as a hearing or speech impairment, the Chairperson will determine the appropriateness of allowing a representative to speak on behalf of the student.
7. Either party may offer the testimony of witnesses. Both parties and the members of the Student Discipline Committee have the right to question all witnesses as to matters which are relevant to the proceedings.
8. In the event that any party involved in the hearing becomes disruptive or refuses to abide by hearing procedures, the committee chairperson may suspend the hearing and have the person removed from the hearing by Gadsden State Security and proceed without him or her.
9. The burden of proof rests with the person(s) bringing the charge(s).
10. If the student charged fails—without good cause, in the judgment of the Chairperson of the Committee—to appear at the designated time of the hearing, the Chairperson may conduct the hearing without the presence of the accused upon majority vote of the committee members. However, no student may be found to have violated the Student Conduct and Discipline Code solely because the student failed to appear before the Student Discipline Committee.
11. The Committee members must deliberate in confidential discussion and vote on all decisions of innocence or guilt strictly upon the evidence presented and on any sanctions. A simple majority shall be required for the Committee's recommendation.
12. Within seventy-two (72) hours of the hearing (excluding weekends), the Chairperson will notify the student(s) and the Associate Dean of Student Services, in writing, of the decision of the Committee.
13. The Associate Dean of Student Services will notify any member of the College community as appropriate of the decision.

Sanctions to Be Imposed for Non-Academic Misconduct

If the Committee finds the accused guilty of non-academic misconduct, it may impose any of the following sanctions:

1. Warning - a statement to the offender that he/she has violated College regulations and that he/she will be subject to more stringent disciplinary action in the event of a future violation. Any further non-academic violations will result in immediate suspension and possible expulsion from GSCC.
2. Disciplinary Probation - a statement to the offender that he/she has violated College regulations and is being placed on disciplinary probation for a specified period of time with the stipulation that any form of non-academic misconduct by the offender during this period will result in immediate suspension and possible expulsion of the offender
3. No Trespass – a requirement indicating that the student may not participate in or be present at a particular event or location on campus or may be banned from the entire campus and sites for a specified length of time
4. Suspension - exclusion of the offender from all College activities, including classes and extracurricular functions for a specified period of time, not to exceed one calendar year
5. Expulsion - termination of the offender's status as a student at GSCC
6. Probation at the Residence Hall – If the non-academic misconduct involves the violation of one or more residence hall rules, the resident may be placed on probation for a specified length of time. Any further violation of policy could result in expulsion from the residence hall.
7. Expulsion from the Residence Hall - If the non-academic misconduct involves the violation of one or more residence hall rules or repeat violations, the resident may be expelled from the residence hall.

The President will be consulted concerning all cases prior to suspension or no trespass of a student from the College.

Appeals Board

In the event that a student seeks to present new evidence, he/she shall present a detailed summary of the new evidence to be presented. Based upon said summary, the Chairperson of the Appeals Board shall make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held for the formal presentation of the new evidence. New evidence shall be allowed only to the extent that said evidence was not available to the student at the time of the hearing before the Student Discipline Committee. Unless a hearing is granted as specified above, the appeal shall be limited to a review of the record and evidence presented to the Student Discipline Committee. In such case, the student shall not have the right to be present for said review.

The Appeals Board, consisting of the President of the Student Government Association (or another officer of the SGA), one faculty member, and one administrator (with the latter two appointed by the President of the College), shall hear and act on appeals only. The function of the Appeals Board is to consider all sides and all evidence/testimony and to render a decision on the appeal. The administrator will serve as Chairperson of the Appeals Board and will be

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responsible for scheduling and conducting the appeal, for informing the student and the Associate Dean of Student Services of the Board's decision, and for keeping an accurate record of the appeal.

Procedure for Appeal

A student accused of non-academic misconduct may appeal the decision of the Student Discipline Committee by following the procedure explained below.

The accused must appeal the decision, in writing, to the Associate Dean of Student Services, who will forward the appeal to the Chairperson of the Appeals Board. The appeal must be submitted within fifteen (15) days following receipt of the decision by the Committee.

The accused must demonstrate to the Chairperson that (a) certain relevant evidence was not reviewed, (b) new evidence is available, or (c) the penalty was too harsh in relation to the infraction.

1. The appeal is limited to a review of the full report of the Student Discipline Committee or to the hearing of new evidence. If new evidence presented effects a change of decision, the Appeals Board may amend the decision or order a new hearing before the Student Discipline Committee.
2. Within five (5) days of the receipt of the appeal, the Appeals Board Chairperson must set a time, date and location for the meeting of the Board.
3. Within two (2) days after reviewing the appeal (excluding weekends), the Appeals Board shall send written notice of its decision to the student, the Associate Dean of Student Services, and the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee.

If a new hearing is required, the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee will follow the steps outlined in "**Procedure for Conducting the Hearing on Non-Academic Misconduct.**"

If, after following the procedure outlined above, the student still seeks redress, he/she may appeal directly to the President of the College. This appeal to the President must be in writing, must set forth the reason(s) for the appeal, and must be submitted within two (2) days of receipt of notice by the student(s) of the decision of the Appeals Board or Student Discipline Committee, respectively.

The decision of the President is final. The President may approve, overturn, or amend the prior decision(s). The President shall notify, in writing, the student, the Student Discipline Committee, the Appeals Board, and the Associate Dean of Student Services of the decision(s) rendered.

Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination

Introduction

The College is committed to providing both employment and educational environments free of harassment or discrimination related to an individual's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Any practice or behavior that constitutes harassment or discrimination shall not be tolerated on any campus or site or in any division or department by any employee, student, agent, or non-employee on college property and while engaged in any College sponsored activities. It is within this commitment of providing a harassment-free environment and in keeping with the efforts to establish an employment and educational environment in which the dignity and worth of members of the College community are respected, that harassment of students and employees is unacceptable conduct and shall not be tolerated at the College.

A nondiscriminatory environment is essential to the mission of the College. A sexually abusive environment inhibits, if not prevents, the harassed individual from performing responsibilities as student or employee. It is essential that the College maintain an environment that affords equal protection against discrimination, including sexual harassment. Employees and students who are found in violation of this policy shall be disciplined as appropriate to the severity of the offense. Employees and students of the College shall strive to promote a college environment that fosters personal integrity where the worth and dignity of each human being is realized, where democratic principles are promoted, and where efforts are made to assist colleagues and students to realize their full potential as worthy and effective members of society. Administrators, professional staff, faculty, and support staff shall adhere to the highest ethical standards to ensure a professional environment and to guarantee equal educational opportunities for all students.

For these purposes, the term "**harassment**" includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

Slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Harassment also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment of employees or students by non-employees is also a violation of this policy. Any employee or student who becomes aware of any such harassment shall report the incident(s) to the Title IX Coordinator, or to the Staff Member of the area in which the incident or the alleged Incident occurred.

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The employees of the College determine the ethical and moral tone for the College through both their personal conduct and their job performance. Therefore, each employee must be dedicated to the ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships. Relationships between College personnel of different ranks which involve partiality, preferential treatment, or the improper use of position shall be avoided. Consensual amorous relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances are inappropriate when they occur between an instructor and any student for whom the instructor has responsibility, between any supervisor and an employee, or between a College employee and a student where preferential treatment results. Further, such relationships may have the effect of undermining the atmosphere of trust on which the educational process depends. Implicit in the idea of professionalism is the recognition by those in positions of authority that in their relationships with students or employees there is always an element of power. It is incumbent on those with authority not to abuse the power with which they are entrusted.

All personnel shall be aware that any amorous relationship (consensual or otherwise) or any otherwise inappropriate involvement with another employee or student makes them liable for formal action against them if a complaint is initiated by the aggrieved party in the relationship. Even when both parties have consented to the development of such a relationship, it is the supervisor in a supervisor-employee relationship, the faculty member in a faculty-student relationship, or the employee in an employee-student relationship who shall be held accountable for unprofessional behavior. This policy encourages faculty, students, and employees who believe that they have been the victims of discrimination or sexual harassment to contact the Title IX Coordinator at the institution. Any reprisals shall be reported immediately to the Title IX Coordinator or to the Cabinet Member of the area in which the incident or alleged incident occurred.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for employees and under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 for students. Sexual harassment does not generally refer to a single sexual joke, offensive epithet or request for a date. Instead, it is conduct and/or behavior of a sexual nature which rises to the nature that it interferes with the work or education of its victims and their co-workers or fellow students. Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either sex against a person of either sex.

Sexual harassment can be verbal, visual, or physical. It can be overt, as in the suggestions that a person could get a higher grade or a raise by submission to sexual advances. The suggestion or advance need not be direct or explicit; it can be implied from the conduct, circumstances, and relationship of the individuals involved. Sexual harassment can also consist of persistent, unwanted attempts to change a professional or educational relationship to a personal one. Sexual harassment is distinguished from consenting or welcome sexual relationships by the introduction of the elements of coercion; threat; unwelcome sexual advances; unwelcome requests for sexual favors; other unwelcome sexually explicit or suggestively written, verbal, or visual material; or unwelcome physical conduct of a sexual nature.

There are two kinds of sexual harassment: Quid Pro Quo and Hostile Environment. Quid Pro Quo describes a situation in which a student or employee is confronted with sexual demands to keep his or her job or to obtain a promotion or raise, a higher grade, or an educational benefit and occurs when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational opportunities, or when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting that individual. Hostile Environment typically involves sexually offensive conduct that makes it difficult or unpleasant for an employee or a student. It occurs when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Examples of verbal or physical conduct prohibited within the definition of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical assault or unwanted touching;
2. Direct or implied threats that submission to or rejection of requests for sexual favors will affect a term, condition, or privilege of employment or a student's academic status;
3. Direct propositions of a sexual activity;
4. Subtle pressure for sexual activity;
5. Repeated conduct intended to cause discomfort or humiliation, or both, that includes one or more of the following: (i) comments of a sexual nature or (ii) sexually explicit statements, questions, jokes, or anecdotes;
6. Repeated conduct that would cause discomfort and/or humiliate a reasonable person at whom the conduct was directed, including one or more of the following: (i) touching, patting, pinching, hugging, or brushing against another's body; (ii) commentary of a sexual nature about an individual's body or clothing; or (iii) remarks about sexual activity or speculations about previous sexual experience(s);
7. Intimidating or demeaning comments to persons of a particular sex, whether sexual or not; and
8. Displaying objects or pictures which are sexual in nature and that would create a hostile or offensive employment or educational environment and serve no educational purpose related to the subject matter being addressed.

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It is important to point out that the conduct should be judged from an objective standard in that the facts will be judged on the basis of what is reasonable to persons of ordinary sensitivity and not on the particular sensitivity or reaction of a specific individual. All students and employees should report any harassment and/or discrimination that they may experience and/or observe. No student or employee should assume that an official of the College knows about his or her particular situation.

Resolution of Harassment and Discrimination Complaints

Procedure for Reporting Complaints

1. Any member of the College community who believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment or illegal discrimination should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Title IX Coordinator, or to any academic or administrative officer, dean, director, supervisor, or advisor, who will then forward the complaint to the Title IX Coordinator or the person designated by the President to coordinate the investigation of such complaints. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall meet and interview the complainant. During this initial meeting, in addition to gathering the additional information needed to initiate an investigation into the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall explain the procedure and shall present a copy of this Harassment and Discrimination Policy. The President shall be promptly notified of the complaint.
2. The complainant should present the complaint as promptly as possible after the alleged sexual harassment or discrimination occurs. The complainant should submit a written statement of the allegations.
3. It is the intention of this policy to resolve complaints of sexual harassment and illegal discrimination as promptly as possible after the complaint and/or report is made. All complaints and/or reports will be investigated and resolved within forty-five (45) days of receipt; except in extraordinary cases that require more time for completion of the investigation. Both the complainant and alleged offender shall be given periodical updates as to the status of the investigation.
4. The investigation record shall consist of formal and informal statements from the alleged victim, the alleged offender, witnesses identified by the victim or offender, and others deemed by the investigator to have pertinent knowledge of the facts involved in the complaint. The investigation will afford the accused a full opportunity to respond to the allegations.
5. Complaints may be resolved through informal or formal procedures. Informal means are encouraged at the beginning point, but the choice of where to begin rests with the complainant. If the Title IX Coordinator, or the person designated by the President to handle the complaint, believes that the matter is sufficiently grave because of the nature of the alleged offense or because the complainant seeks to have a sanction imposed, then formal procedures shall be initiated.

Informal Procedures

1. The Title IX Coordinator may notify the alleged offender of the complaint and take whatever steps deemed appropriate to affect an informal resolution that is acceptable to both parties.
2. The parties may choose to participate in mediation. If the complaint is resolved informally, no record of the complaint will be entered in the alleged offender's personnel file or student record. However, the Title IX Coordinator will keep a record of the complaint and the resolution. All such records will remain confidential.
3. If the results of the investigation and informal resolution of the complaint are accepted by the alleged victim and he or she desires no further action against the alleged offender, then no further action be taken. The alleged offender will receive a statement explaining the resolution of the investigation as conducted under this policy and procedure.
4. Some reports of sexual harassment and discrimination may not be appropriate for informal resolution and may require a formal investigation at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, or the person designated by the President to coordinate the investigation of the complaint. Substantial weight will be given to the wishes of the complainant when determining whether to investigate a complaint. However, GSCC may investigate a complaint without the complainant's and/or alleged victim's consent when circumstances so warrant.

Formal Action

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the formal complaint procedure will be implemented. The issues involved in the complaint should not be changed once the charge has been made. However, administrative procedures may be revised to accommodate issues arising during the investigation which were not known to the complainant or the institution when the initial complaint was filed.

1. If the formal complaint is against an employee of the College, the Title IX Coordinator will investigate the complaint and determine the disposition pursuant to applicable law and grievance/discipline procedures.
2. If the formal complaint is against a student, not acting in an instructional or other employment capacity, the Associate Dean of Student Services shall refer complaint to the Title IX Coordinator for disposition pursuant to applicable law and grievance/discipline procedures.
3. If the formal complaint is against a person not considered an employee or student of the College, it shall be directed to the Title IX Coordinator for disposition pursuant to applicable law and grievance/discipline procedures.
4. If conflicts of interest exist with the Title IX Coordinator handling the formal complaint, the complaint may be filed with the President.

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5. In the event of complaints against employees, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the accused in writing of the complainant's decision to take formal action. Formal action will consist of the Title IX procedures as set forth:
6. The original and two copies of Grievance Form A must be filed with the Title IX Coordinator within 30 calendar days following the date of the alleged violation(s). The alleged violation(s) must be clearly and specifically stated. **Form A** must be used for the report. The complainant is advised to keep a copy of all forms. **NOTICE: Forms are available at the end of this document.**
7. The Title IX Coordinator will investigate, hold a formal hearing, and make a written report of findings to complainant/alleged offender within 30 calendar days following date of receipt of Grievance Form A. Copies of Form A must be provided to the President by the Title IX Coordinator.
8. The complainant/alleged offender has 15 calendar days following receipt of the findings, to file an objection to the findings. The objection must be filed with the President and Title IX Coordinator using **Form B**. Complainant/alleged offender must state clearly and specifically on Form B the objections to the findings and/or decision. If an objection is not filed by the end of the 15th calendar day following receipt of the findings, the right to further appeal will be forfeited. **NOTICE: Forms are available at the end of this document.**
9. The President will have 30 calendar days following date of receipt of complainant's/alleged offender's notice of appeal to investigate and submit a report of findings to the complainant/alleged offender.
10. Complainant/alleged offender must, within 15 calendar days following receipt of President's report, file with the President and Title IX Coordinator a written notice of appeal of the report. If notice of appeal is filed, appeal **Form C** must be used. Complainant/alleged offender must state clearly and specifically on **Form C** the objections to the findings and/or decisions of the President. Copies of **Form C** must be provided to the Title IX Coordinator and the Chancellor. If complainant/alleged offender fails to file notice of appeal by the end of the 15th calendar day following receipt of the President's report, the right to further appeal will be forfeited. If the last day for filing the notice of appeal falls on either a Saturday, Sunday or a legal holiday, complainant/alleged offender will have until the close of business the first day following the 15th calendar day to appeal. **Notice: Forms are available online at the end of this document.**
11. If the complainant/alleged offender is not satisfied with the President's report from Form C, the student may appeal to the Alabama Community College System by utilizing the System's official Student Complaint Form which is available online at the ACCS website:
(https://www.accs.cc/default/assets/File/DPE_ISS/Student%20Complaint%20Process%20FINAL.pdf).
Complete instructions for filing of the complaint are located on this website.

Harassment and Discrimination Review Committee

The Committee shall review the Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination and training programs annually and make recommendation for changes to the Title IX Coordinator.

Confidentiality and Assurance Against Retaliation

Every effort possible shall be made to ensure confidentiality of information received as part of an investigation. Complaints will be handled on a "need to know" basis with a view toward protecting the interest of all parties involved. The College will do everything consistent with enforcement of this policy and with the law to protect the privacy of all parties involved and to ensure that all involved are treated fairly.

This policy seeks to encourage students, faculty, and other employees to express freely, responsibly, and in an orderly way, opinions and feelings about any problem or complaint of harassment and discrimination. An employee or student bringing a complaint or assisting in investigating a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms of conditions of employment or enrollment. Any act of reprisal, including internal interference, coercion, and restraint, by a Gadsden State employee or by one acting on behalf of the College, violates this policy and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Sanction

A conclusion that harassment or discrimination has occurred shall subject the offender to appropriate disciplinary action and may result in, but is not limited to, his/her suspension, discharge, dismissal, or a "no-trespass" warrant. It is the intent of this policy to provide for a prompt and thorough investigation of any complaints. The time limits set forth within these guidelines are subject to change as needed to ensure a satisfactory conclusion to the investigation.

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**HARASSMENT DISCRIMINATION
GRIEVANCE FORM A**

TO: _____ DATE: _____
Title IX Coordinator

FROM: _____, Grievant

HOME ADDRESS: _____

SUBJECT: Alleged Violation

DESCRIPTION OF ALLEGED VIOLATION: On _____, 20 _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
Grievant

DATE FORWARDED: _____

RESPONSE TO GRIEVANCE:

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Copy – President

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**HARASSMENT DISCRIMINATION
GRIEVANCE FORM B**

TO: _____ DATE: _____
President

FROM: _____, Grievant

HOME ADDRESS: _____

GRIEVANCE: _____

APPEAL STATEMENT(S): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
Grievant

DATE OF APPEAL RECEIVED: _____, 20 _____

DATE OF RESPONSE: _____, 20 _____

RESPONSE TO APPEAL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Copy – Title IX Coordinator; ACCS Chancellor

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**HARASSMENT DISCRIMINATION
GRIEVANCE FORM C**

TO: _____ DATE: _____
President

FROM: _____, Grievant

HOME ADDRESS: _____

GRIEVANCE: _____

APPEAL STATEMENT(S): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
Grievant

DATE OF SECOND APPEAL RECEIVED: _____, 20 _____

DATE OF RESPONSE: _____, 20 _____

RESPONSE TO APPEAL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Copy – Title IX Coordinator; ACCS Chancellor

Policy on Sexual Misconduct

This policy prohibits all forms of sexual or gender-based harassment, discrimination or misconduct, including sexual violence, sexual assault, and stalking and intimate partner violence. Misconduct of this nature is contrary to Gadsden

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State's institutional values and prohibited by local, state and federal laws, College policies, and the policies of the Alabama Community College System. Any individual who is found to have violated this policy may face disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion or termination of employment.

All College community members are strongly encouraged to report information regarding any incident of sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking or intimate partner violence directly to the Safety and Security and the Title IX Coordinator. The College cannot take appropriate action unless an incident is reported to a "responsible employee" of the College. Upon receipt of a report, the College will take prompt and effective action by: providing interim remedies and support for individuals who make a report or seek assistance under this; conducting a review of the conduct under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; addressing the safety of individuals and the campus community; and as warranted, pursuing resolution through informal measures or formal disciplinary action against the accused.

Retaliation against any person who makes a complaint or participates in the complaint process is a violation of College policy, and should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. A finding of retaliation may result in disciplinary action independent of any sanctions imposed as a result of the underlying allegations of discrimination and/or harassment.

Scope of Policy

The policy applies to all College community members, including students, faculty, administrators, staff, volunteers, vendors, independent contractors, visitors and any individuals regularly or temporarily employed, studying, living, visiting, conducting business or having any official capacity with the College or on College property.

This policy applies to conduct occurring on College property or at College-sanctioned events or programs that take place off campus. In situations in which both the Complainant and Respondent are members of the College community, this policy will apply regardless of the location of the incident. In particular, off campus conduct that is likely to have a substantial adverse effect on, or poses a threat of danger to, any member of the College community or College is covered under this policy.

Privacy vs. Confidentiality

The College is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals involved in a report of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and stalking or intimate partner violence. All College employees who are involved in the College's Title IX response receive specific instruction about respecting and safeguarding private information. Throughout the process, every effort will be made to protect the privacy interests of all individuals involved in a manner consistent with the need for a thorough review of the report.

Privacy and confidentiality have distinct meanings under this policy.

Privacy: Privacy generally means that information related to a report of misconduct will only be shared with a limited circle of individuals. The use of this information is limited to those College employees who "need to know" in order to assist in the active review, investigation or resolution of the report. While not bound by confidentiality, these individuals will be discreet and respect the privacy of all individuals involved in the process.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality means that information shared by an individual with designated campus or community professionals cannot be revealed to any other individual without the express permission of the individual. These individuals are prohibited from breaking confidentiality unless there is an imminent threat of harm to self or others.

When a report involves suspected abuse of a minor under the age of 18, the College is required by law to notify local law enforcement and the local agency for child protective services.

Request for Confidentiality: Where a Complainant requests that his/her name or other identifiable information not be shared with the Respondent or that no formal action be taken, the College will balance this request with its dual obligation to provide a safe and non-discriminatory environment for all College community members and to remain true to principles of fundamental fairness that require notice and an opportunity to respond before action is taken against a Respondent. In making this determination, the College may consider the seriousness of the conduct, the respective ages and roles of the Complainant and Respondent, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment or misconduct against the Respondent, and the rights of the Respondent to receive notice and relevant information before disciplinary action is sought.

The College will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request for confidentiality or request not to pursue an investigation, but its ability to do so may be limited based on the nature of the request by the Complainant. Where the College is unable to take action consistent with the request of the Complainant, the Title IX Coordinator or a member of the Title IX team will inform the Complainant about the chosen course of action, which may include the College seeking disciplinary action against a Respondent. Alternatively, the course of action may also include steps to limit the effects of the alleged harassment and prevent its recurrence that do not involve formal disciplinary action against a Respondent or revealing the identity of the Complainant.

Prohibited Conduct and Definitions

The College prohibits all forms of sexual and gender-based harassment, including sexual violence and intimate partner violence. Each of these terms encompasses a broad range of behavior. In general, sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to incapacitation. Intimate partner violence refers to any act of violence or threatened act of violence, sexual or otherwise, against a person who is or has been involved in a sexual, dating, domestic or other intimate relationship with that person.

Within these broad categories, the College prohibits the following specific conduct:

- A. **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
1. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, evaluation of academic work, or participation in any aspect of a College program or activity;
or
 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual; or
 3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance, i.e. it is sufficiently serious, pervasive or persistent as to create an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, demeaning, or sexually offensive working, academic, residential, or social environment under both a subjective and objective standard.

A single isolated incident of sexual harassment may create a hostile environment if the incident is sufficiently severe. The more severe the conduct, the less need there is to show a repetitive series of incidents to create a hostile environment, particularly if the harassment is physical.

Sexual harassment also includes gender-based harassment, which may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex stereotyping, even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment as defined above may include a severe, persistent or pervasive pattern of unwelcome conduct of one or more of the following:

- Physical conduct: Unwelcome touching, sexual/physical assault, restraining or blocking movements, unwanted sexual advances
- Verbal conduct: Making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs or humor, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations
- Visual conduct: Leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of suggestive objects or pictures, cartoon or posters, severe, visual displays of suggestive, erotic, or degrading sexually oriented images
- Written conduct: letters, notes or electronic communications containing comments, words, or images described above
- Quid pro quo conduct: Direct propositions of a sexual nature between those for whom a supervisory or other authority relationship exists, offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors, making submission to sexual advances an actual or implied condition of employment, work status, promotion, grades, or letters of recommendation, including subtle pressure for sexual activity with requests for private meetings with no academic or work purpose

- B. **Sexual Assault:** Having or attempting to have sexual intercourse with another individual:
- By force or threat of force;
 - Without effective consent; or
 - Where that individual is incapacitated.
- C. **Sexual Exploitation:** Occurs when an individual takes non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for one's own advantage or benefit, or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited. Examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to: *observing another individual's nudity or sexual activity or allowing another to observe consensual sexual activity without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved; non-consensual sharing or streaming of images, photography, video, or audio recording of sexual activity or nudity, or distribution of such without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved; exposing one's genitals or inducing another to expose their own genitals in non-consensual circumstances; knowingly exposing another individual to a sexually transmitted disease or virus without his or her knowledge; sexually-based stalking and/or bullying; and inducing incapacitation for the purpose of making another person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity.*

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- D. **Stalking:** A course of physical or verbal conduct directed at another individual that could be reasonably regarded as likely to alarm, harass, or cause fear of harm or injury to that person or to a third party. Stalking includes cyber-stalking, a particular form of stalking in which electronic media such as the Internet, social networks, blogs, cell phones, texts, or other similar devices or forms of contact are used to pursue, harass, or to make unwelcome contact with another person in an unsolicited fashion.
- E. **Intimate Partner Violence**
Intimate partner violence is often referred to as dating violence, domestic violence or relationship violence. Intimate partner violence includes any act of violence or threatened act of violence against a person who is, or has been involved in, a sexual, dating, domestic or other intimate relationship with the Respondent.

Coordination with Law Enforcement

The College encourages Complainants to pursue criminal action for incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence and intimate partner violence that may also be crimes. The College will assist a Complainant in making a criminal report and cooperate with law enforcement agencies if a Complainant decides to pursue the criminal process to the extent permitted by law. Neither law enforcement's determination whether or not to prosecute a Respondent, nor the outcome of any criminal prosecution, are determinative of whether a violation of this policy has occurred. Proceedings under this policy may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings off campus.

Investigation

The College will seek to complete the investigation within 20 (twenty) business days of receiving the complaint, but this time frame may be extended depending on the complexity of the circumstances of each case. Information gathered during the investigation will be used to evaluate the responsibility of the Respondent, provide for the safety of the Complainant and the College campus community, and impose remedies as necessary to address the effects of the conduct cited in the report. Where there is sufficient information set forth that, if proven, would constitute a violation of policy, the College will have the discretion to institute Formal Resolution proceedings against the Respondent. At the conclusion of the investigation, the College will notify all parties that the investigation is complete and provide information about next steps in the process.

Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is designed to eliminate a hostile environment without taking disciplinary action against a Respondent. Where the Title IX assessment concludes that informal resolution may be appropriate, the College will take immediate and corrective action designed to eliminate a hostile environment. Informal resolution may not be used in cases involving sexual violence or assault.

Participation in informal resolution is voluntary and either party can request to end informal resolution at any time.

Formal Resolution

Disciplinary action against a Respondent may only be taken through Formal Resolution procedures. Because the relationship of students, staff, and faculty to the College differ in nature, the procedures that apply when seeking disciplinary action necessarily differ as well. Each of the procedures, however, is guided by the same principles of fundamental fairness and respect for all parties, which require notice, an equitable opportunity to be heard, and an equitable opportunity to respond to a report under this policy.

Time Frame for Resolution

The College seeks to resolve all reports within 45 days of the initial report. All time frames expressed in this policy are meant to be guidelines rather than rigid requirements. Extenuating circumstances may arise that require the extension of time frames, including extension beyond 45 days. Extenuating circumstances may include the complexity and scope of the allegations, the number of witnesses involved, the availability of the parties or witnesses, the effect of a concurrent criminal investigation, any intervening school break or vacation, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Formal Resolution

Formal resolution of a complaint under the Sexual Harassment and Assault Policy will occur through the use of a Hearing Panel.

A. Hearing Panel

The hearing panel consists of the deputy Title IX Coordinators. The Hearing Panel is supported by the Coordinator, who is present at hearing panel meetings, but is not a voting member of the panel. The Coordinator will meet with all involved parties prior to the hearing, be present during the hearing to serve as a resource for the hearing panel on issues of policy and procedure, and to ensure that policy and procedure are appropriately followed throughout the hearing.

B. Advisors, Support Persons, and Attorneys

In any hearing, the Complainant and Respondent may choose to be assisted by an advisor. The advisor may accompany the student to any College investigative, administrative or adjudicative meeting, including the panel hearing. The advisor may not speak to the panel during the hearing.

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A Complainant or Respondent may choose to seek the advice and assistance of an attorney but the attorney may not participate in investigatory interviews, informal resolution proceedings, or formal resolution via administrative hearing or Hearing Panel. Similarly, the College will not recognize or enforce agreements between the parties outside of these procedures.

C. Pre-Hearing Procedures

1. Notice of Charges

following the determination that there is sufficient information to move forward with a hearing, the Coordinator will send letters to both the Complainant and the Respondent. The letter will provide a brief summary of the conduct at issue and the specific provision of the policy violation(s) that are alleged to have taken place.

2. Pre-Hearing Meeting with Complainant and Respondent

The Coordinator will contact the Complainant and Respondent to schedule separate meetings to explain the hearing process. If the Complainant and/or Respondent have elected to have advisors throughout the hearing process, the advisor is encouraged to accompany the Complainant/Respondent to this initial meeting.

3. Notice of Hearing

Once each party has met with the Coordinator, a Notice of Hearing is sent to the Complainant and the Respondent. The hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) business days of the date of the Notice of Hearing. Under extenuating circumstances, this time frame may be extended.

4. Pre-Hearing Review of Documents

The Complainant and the Respondent will each have the opportunity to review all investigative documents, subject to the privacy limitations imposed by state and federal law, at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing.

5. Witnesses

The Complainant, Respondent, and the hearing panel all have the right to call witnesses. Witnesses must have observed the conduct in question or have information relevant to the incident and cannot be called solely to speak about an individual's character.

D. Hearing Panel Procedures

1. Attendance at Hearing

If a party does not attend a hearing for any non-emergency or compelling reason, the hearing may be held in his/her absence.

A Respondent will not be permitted to withdraw from the College prior to the conclusion of an investigation or formal resolution under this policy. If a Respondent chooses not to participate, the College will move forward with the hearing and imposition of sanction, if any, in absentia. The Respondent's academic transcript will be marked Withdrawal Pending Disciplinary Action, or, if finally resolved in absentia, with the final outcome in accordance with regular practice under this policy.

2. Participants in Hearing Procedures

The hearing panel is a closed hearing; it is not open to the public. The individuals who may appear before the hearing panel are: the Complainant; the Respondent; any individual serving as an approved advisor or support person; and any individuals appearing as witnesses.

3. Hearing Panel Procedures

The hearing is an informal proceeding not comparable to a criminal trial; it is the mechanism by which the College assesses, and as appropriate, takes formal disciplinary action regarding a violation of College policy. These procedures are entirely administrative in nature and are not considered legal proceedings. Neither party may audio or video record the proceedings, nor is formal legal representation allowed.

The hearing panel must review all pertinent information regarding the incident in question prior to the date of the hearing panel. Relevant information supporting the violation(s) alleged may be offered in the form of written statements, documents, items, or oral information from the Complainant, the Respondent, and witnesses.

At the conclusion of the presentation of all witnesses, the Complainant and Respondent will each be given a brief final opportunity to address any outstanding issues of fact. .

4. Deliberation

After all of the information has been presented, all parties will be dismissed and the hearing will be formally concluded.

The panel members will conduct their deliberations in private. The panel must complete their deliberations within two (2) business days, but every attempt will be made to complete the deliberations promptly. The Coordinator may remain for deliberations, but may not participate in the deliberations and may not vote.

If the panel finds the Respondent responsible, the panel will then recommend appropriate sanctions. The Coordinator will review the recommendations and impose an appropriate sanction.

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The findings of the hearing panel will be reduced to writing. The findings will detail the findings of fact and the basis/rationale for the decision of the hearing panel, making reference to the evidence that led to the finding.

E. **Sanctions**

A hearing panel that finds a Respondent responsible for a violation of this policy may recommend appropriate sanctions that may include:

1. **Warning:** Notice, in writing, that continuation or repetition of prohibited conduct may be cause for additional disciplinary action.
2. **Censure:** A written reprimand for violating the Code of Student Conduct or other College policy. The student is officially warned that continuation or repetition of prohibited conduct may be cause for additional conduct action including probation, suspension, or expulsion from the College.
3. **Disciplinary Probation:** Exclusion from participation in privileged activities for a specified period of time. Additional restrictions or conditions may also be imposed. Violations of the terms of disciplinary probation or any other College policy violations may result in further disciplinary action.
4. **Restitution:** Repayment to the College or to an affected party for damages resulting from a violation of this Code. To enforce this sanction, the College reserves the right to withhold its transcripts and degrees or to deny a student participation in graduation ceremonies and privileged events.
5. **Suspension:** Exclusion from College premises, attending classes, and other privileges or activities for a specified period of time, as set forth in the suspension notice. Notice of this action will remain in the student's conduct file. Conditions for readmission may be specified in the suspension notice.
6. **Expulsion:** Permanent termination of student status and exclusion from College premises, privileges, and activities. This action will be permanently recorded on the student's academic transcript.
7. **Withholding Degree:** The College may withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the completion of the process set forth in this Code, including the completion of all sanctions imposed, if any.

The hearing panel may deviate from the range of recommended sanctions, based upon a full consideration of the following factors: (1) the Respondent's prior discipline history; (2) how the College has sanctioned similar incidents in the past; (3) the nature and violence of the conduct at issue; (4) the impact of the conduct on the Complainant; (5) the impact of the conduct on the community, its members, or its property; (6) whether the Respondent has accepted responsibility for his actions; (7) the need to deter similar conduct by others; and (8) any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances, including the College's values.

The imposition of sanctions will take effect immediately and will not be stayed pending the resolution of the appeal.

F. **Outcome Letter**

The outcome of the hearing panel will be final and communicated to the Complainant and Respondent in writing, usually within four (4) business days from the date the hearing is concluded. The notification of each party should occur at or near the same time.

For reports involving sexual violence, the Complainant will be fully informed of any sanctions. For all other reports under this policy, the Complainant will be informed of only those sanctions that directly relate to the Complainant, consistent with FERPA and other applicable law.

The College reserves the right to notify parents/guardians of dependent students regarding any health or safety risk, change in student status or conduct situation, particularly alcohol and other drug violations. The College may also notify parents/guardians of non-dependent students who are under age 21 of alcohol and/or drug policy violations. Where a student is not dependent, the College will contact parents/guardians to inform them of situations in which there is a significant and articulable health and/or safety risk. The College also reserves the right to designate which College officials have a need to know about individual conduct complaints pursuant to FERPA requirements.

G. **Appeals**

Either party may appeal the decision of the hearing panel to the President. The appeal must be in writing and filed within five (5) business days of receiving the outcome letter. The appeal shall consist of a plain, concise and complete written statement outlining the grounds for appeal and all relevant information to substantiate the basis for the appeal.

Each party will be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the other party's appeal. Any response by the opposing party must be submitted to the President within three (3) business days from receipt of the appeal.

Sanctions imposed are implemented immediately unless the President stays implementation pending the outcome of the appeal. In cases where the appeal results in reinstatement to the institution or of privileges, all reasonable attempts will be made to restore the student to their prior status, recognizing that some opportunities lost may be irretrievable in the short term.

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The President will render a written decision on the appeal to the Complainant and Respondent within ten (10) business days from the date of the submission of all appeal documents by both parties. The President's decision is final.

H. Records

The Title IX Coordinator will retain records of all reports and complaints, regardless of whether the matter is resolved by means of Title IX assessment, informal resolution or formal resolution. Complaints resolved by means of Title IX assessment or informal resolution are not part of a student's conduct file or academic record or of an employee's personnel file.

Affirmative findings of responsibility in matters resolved through formal resolution are part of a student's conduct record and an employee's personnel record. Such records shall be used in reviewing any further conduct, or developing sanctions, and shall remain a part of a student's conduct record or an employee's personnel file.

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Policies on Computer Use and Internet Access

Acceptable Use Policy for Technology Resources

The College provides technology resources for use by students, faculty, staff, and the general public. This technology includes but is not limited to, all College computing equipment, software, systems, networks, electronic mail, website, and Internet access. These resources are the property of the College and are provided to the campus community to support the College's mission and institutional goals. The College reserves the rights to grant, restrict, or deny privileges and access to technology resources.

Use of the technology resources must be consistent with the stated mission, goals, policies, procedures, and priorities of the College. Use of College resources is a privilege and requires that users agree to abide by all relevant College policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Users are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and ethical manner at all times.

Any use of College technology resources for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities, is prohibited. Respect for intellectual property or copyright, ownership of data, security measures, and personal rights and privacy must always be demonstrated.

It should be clear that all personal use of computers to access pornographic websites will result in appropriate disciplinary action and may result in civil and criminal penalties for users. Personal use of computers for business purposes is prohibited and may constitute violation of the Alabama Ethics law. It is illegal to download music through the College computer network system. Employees who are found to be illegally downloading music will be subject to federal and state laws pertaining to such acts.

Email Monitoring

GSCC may monitor all information stored, transmitted, received, or contained in the College email systems. Workplace files, Internet use, and email may be monitored by the College. Information flowing through or stored on computers within the network is not considered confidential and is subject to monitoring by network administrators.

Personal Blogs and Websites

This policy is also applicable to content that you publish on the Internet (e.g. your contributions to blogs, message boards and social networking or content-sharing sites) even if created, updated, modified or contributed to outside of working hours or when using personal IT systems.

When you post content to the Internet that identifies you as an employee of the College and discusses your work, the College, or employees of the College, it is expected that you will conduct yourself appropriately and in a manner that is consistent with the policies of the College and the Alabama Community College System.

If you already have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that you work for the College, or you intend to create a personal blog or website that will identify you as an employee of the College, you should report this to your immediate supervisor. Any blog or posting that clearly identifies that you work for the College in which you express any idea or opinion should also include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed are personal and do not represent the views or opinions of the College. Online publications which do not identify the author as an employee of the College and does not mention the College and are purely concerned with personal matters will normally fall outside the scope of this policy.

Violation of College and Alabama Community College System policies on Internet sites is subject to investigation and sanctions within this policy and other applicable policies.

Computer Hardware/Software

Any personally-owned computing property or peripheral equipment (including wireless devices) brought to the College cannot be connected to the College network without the approval of the employee's Supervisor and Computer Services. Personally-owned software cannot be loaded onto a College-owned computer unless it is directly related to the job position and is approved by the Supervisor. If any approved personally-owned computer software is loaded onto a College-owned computer, the license and documents must remain with the College computer on campus in the event of an audit. Computer software may be audited by Computer Service and others.

Security and Privacy

Immediately report any suspected breach in the security of the network to appropriate College personnel (e.g. an instructor, lab assistant, or system administrator). Users of campus networks are responsible for safeguarding their user IDs and passwords and for all activity generated from their accounts. Users are expected to comply with system administrator requests for information about computing and IT activities.

The College complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of educational records without student permission. The College takes reasonable measures to protect the security and privacy of its computing resources and accounts assigned to individuals but cannot guarantee security

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and privacy. The College is a public institution and subject to the Alabama Open Records Act. Communications and other documents created by means of College technology resources may be released to appropriate authorities, and all information stored electronically may be made available in administrative or judicial proceedings.

Users should be aware that privacy and security cannot be guaranteed in any networked environment. The College reserves the right to monitor network traffic generally and individual traffic if necessary.

The President or his/her designee may authorize access to employee or student e-mail or computer files if it is believed necessary to prevent or correct improper use, satisfy a legal obligation, or ensure proper operation of the electronic resources.

College Website Disclaimer

The College makes no guarantees that the services of the website will be error-free or uninterrupted or that it will meet the needs of the user. The College cannot be responsible for loss of service or data due to events such as computer failure, loss of power, or security violations. By using the website, the user agrees to abide by all College policies and by state and federal laws. The information offered represents the offerings and requirements of the current catalog, but the right is reserved to make necessary changes in course offerings, curricula, and academic policies. The material obtained from the College website is not intended to create a contract between the user and the College.

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation of democracy. Freedom of expression includes both freedom of speech and the right to receive information. The College will not deny access to a medium that provides free speech as long as it does not infringe upon the rights of another person or violate any state or federal laws or any policies of the College.

The College website provides links to sites of interest and use on the Internet. The College makes no warranties about the accuracy or currency of any information on its website(s) that may be accessed from its services. The College bears no responsibility for material accessed through news groups, chat rooms, bulletin boards, or other web resources not sponsored by the College. All liability is disclaimed for data, information, or opinions expressed through these mediums.

Policy on Copyright and Fair Use

Copyright is the ownership and control of the intellectual property in original works of authorship. The laws of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) provide protection to the owner of copyright. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works. Public Law 94-553, section 6, generally gives the owner of copyright the exclusive right to, and to authorize others to: reproduce in copies, prepare derivative works, distribute copies, perform publicly, and display publicly the copyrighted work.

Copyright law governs any print or non-print reproduction of copyrighted material. It is illegal for anyone to violate any of the rights provided by the copyright law to the owner of copyright. One major limitation, however, is the doctrine of "fair use". Whether use of copyrighted materials falls under the "fair use" exception depends on these four factors: purpose of the use, nature of the work, amount of copying, and effect of the copying on the potential value of the work. Another limitation can be a "compulsory license," which permits limited uses of copyrighted works in return for the payment of fees or royalties.

Faculty, staff, and students of the College must comply with the provisions of the state and federal intellectual property laws, such as the Copyright Act. Procedures for obtaining copyright permissions for course materials have been established and should be followed. Copies of this procedure and other information explaining the Copyright Act as it pertains to copying both course materials and material for personal use are available in campus libraries and on the College web page.

Summary of Civil and Criminal Penalties for Violation of Federal Copyright Laws

Copyright infringement is the act of exercising, without permission or legal authority, one or more of the exclusive rights granted to the copyright owner under section 106 of the Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). These rights include the right to reproduce or distribute a copyrighted work. In the file-sharing context, downloading or uploading substantial parts of the copyrighted work without authority constitutes an infringement.

Penalties for copyright infringement include civil and criminal penalties. In general, anyone found liable for civil copyright infringement may be ordered to pay either actual damages or "statutory" damages affixed at not less than 4750 and nor more than \$30,000 per work infringed. For "willful" infringement, a court may award up to \$150,000 per work infringed. A court can, in its discretion, also assess costs and attorneys' fees. For details, see Title 17, United States Code, Sections 504, 505.

Willful copyright infringement can also result in criminal penalties, including imprisonment of up to five years and fines of up to \$250,000 per offense.

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For more information, please see the Web site of the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov , especially their FAQ's at www.copyright.gov/help.faq.

Reporting Copyright Infringement

Under direction of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), the designated agent of the College to receive notice of alleged copyright infringement is the Head of Library Services, whose office is located in Meadows Library, P.O. Box 227, Gadsden, AL 35902-0227.

Digital Millennium Copyright Act Policy

Statement

GSCC complies with the provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) and respects all rights that exist in any material protected by the copyright laws of the United States while also encouraging usage of the material that furthers the educational mission of the College. This site provides guidance to faculty, staff, and students on the usage of copyrighted materials.

Federal law (Title 17 of the US code and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act), contains provisions that prohibit the downloading, uploading, or distribution of copyrighted material in any form without permission or a license to do so from the copyright holder except in accordance with the exemptions provided under the copyright law. Gadsden State neither condones nor supports in any way the use of copyrighted material in ways that are contrary to copyright law. For more information, please read the College's Copyright Policy.

Designated Agent

In accordance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), an agent must be designated to receive notification of claimed copyright infringements. Gadsden State's designated agent is Michael Gibson, Public Services Librarian.

Claims

The DMCA specifies that all infringement claims must be in writing (either electronic mail or paper letter) and must include the following:

- A physical or electronic signature of the copyright holder or a person authorized to act on his or her behalf;
- A description of the copyrighted work claimed to have been infringed, or, if multiple copyrighted works at a single online site are covered by a single notification, a representative list of such works at that site;
- A description of the material that is claimed to be infringing or to be the subject of infringing activity, and information reasonably sufficient to permit the service provider to locate the material;
- Information reasonably sufficient to permit the service provider to contact the complainant, such as an address, telephone number, and, if available, an electronic mail address;
- A statement that the complainant has a good faith belief that use of the material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law; and
- A statement that the information in the notification is accurate, and under penalty of perjury, that the complainant is authorized to act on behalf of the owner of an exclusive right that is allegedly infringed.

Procedure to Resolve the Matter

Complaints involving students:

The designated agent will meet with the student whose computer contains the information that is the subject of the complaint. The student will be informed of the College's Copyright, Computer Use, and DMCA policies and asked to produce proof that they have explicit permission or license to use the material in the manner described in the complaint.

If the student does not produce the proper documentation, the student will be instructed to remove the specific material and other similar material from his or her computer. When the student complies with this request, the student will sign a document acknowledging removal of the copyrighted material.

If the student does not comply with the request, access to the student's College's email account and use of the College's computer technology will be blocked and the student will be referred to the Associate Dean of Student Services under the Student Code of Conduct and discipline-Non Academic Policy.

Complaints involving employees:

The designated agent will meet with the employee whose computer contains the information that is the subject of the complaint. The employee will be informed of the College's Copyright, Computer Use, and DMCA policies and asked to produce proof that they have explicit permission or license to use the material in the manner described in the complaint.

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If the employee does not produce documentation, the employee will be instructed to remove the specific material and other similar material from his or her computer. When the employee complies with this request, the employee will sign a document acknowledging removal of the copyrighted material.

If he/she refused or does not comply with the designated agent's request, the employee's access to or from the employee's College's account or computer will be blocked and the action will be referred to the employee's supervisor or Cabinet Member.

The designated agent will notify the complainant of how the issue was resolved.

The designated agent will retain records for three years from the date of receiving the complaint.

Commonly Asked Questions

- **How does the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) affect me?**

The distribution of copyrighted material from your computer, including music, games, and videos, for which you do not have owner's permission is a violation of federal law (DMCA) and college policy. A purpose of copyrighted law, including the DMCA, is to encourage creative work by giving creators exclusive rights (with some limits) to distribute their products.

- **What do I need to know about downloading music, videos, games, and other media?**

In April, 2003, four college students paid fines ranging from \$12,000-\$17,500 in a settlement of a file-sharing suit brought by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). The RIAA complained that the students were illegally distributing copyrighted music, sharing thousands of copyrighted MP3 music files.

Downloading files puts you at risk personally if you are found to possess copyrighted material that you have not obtained legally. It may also result in harm to your system if you download a malicious computer program disguised as a movie or other media. The widespread use of file-sharing programs to download and distribute media for recreational purposes has generated a high volume of network traffic and damaged the performance of other applications used for college work. To preserve bandwidth, the college uses a technique called "bandwidth shaping" to limit network traffic for specific peer-to-peer programs.

If you are using a peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing program (1) or have set up an ftp server, make sure that you are not "serving" copyright-protected materials to the world. If the College is notified by policing organizations such as RIAA, MPAA, or their agents (2) that you are serving copyright-protected materials from your computer, you will be requested to appear at College's Discipline Office to discuss the complaint. Failure to appear could result in deactivation of your college privileges.

- **Is it okay to use a peer-to-peer service legally to download files that aren't protected by copyright?**

Many music, games, and videos downloaded through file-sharing programs fall into the category of copyright infringement. That is, the users downloading the files do not have the permission of the copyright owner. In addition, peer-to-peer file-sharing programs do not determine whether requests for media files are requests for copyright-licensed or freely-sharable materials. This means that if you copy music to your computer from a CD you purchased and are signed on to a peer-to-peer service with file-sharing enabled; you are making the copyrighted music you purchased available to others. YOU are distributing copyrighted material and the copyright owner can hold you liable for a copyright violation.

Copyright owners frequently hire agents to scan college networks for copyright materials that are available to others from computer systems on the college network. The College receives many notices from these organizations alleging copyright infringement. They focus on college campuses because of the high level of file-sharing activity. The DMCA makes Internet Service Providers (ISPs) liable if they do not act to ensure removal of infringing materials when they receive notice of copyright infringement. The college is an ISP for many at the college who use campus network services.

The DMCA provides procedures that may be used by ISPs in dealing with claims of copyright infringement. A member of the college community learns that s/he has been named in a notice of copyright infringement when the college IT account access is denied. The deactivation message contains instructions to contact the campus Discipline Officers to discuss the copyright infringement. Access to a college account is reinstated after the meeting with the college Discipline Officer has taken place and the allegedly infringing material has been removed. The college is sensitive to the academic work that results from deactivating account in response to copyright infringement notices.

- **Does the DMCA make the use of peer-to-peer services illegal?**

It is not against the law or campus policies to use peer-to-peer file-sharing programs or to swap materials that are not copyright-protected. It is against the rules to download and/or distribute copyright-protected material. If you are using a peer-to-peer file-sharing program, make sure that you are not "serving" the copyright-protected materials to the world.

Most file-sharing programs have worldwide file sharing turned on by default when they are installed. If you have copyright-protected materials on your computer, you need to disable file sharing so that the programs are no longer serving these materials from your computer.

There are other good reasons to disable file-sharing. File-sharing sites often covertly package Spyware software that gathers personal information without your knowledge. This means that you may be giving hackers access to your

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personal files and programs when you use file-sharing services. As stated above, the college network staff restricts P2P traffic to preserve bandwidth for college work.

• I don't like the DMCA: What can I do?

There is a great deal of debate about the DMCA and copyright law in the digital age. If you disagree with the law, learn more about it and become involved in trying to change the law. A Digital Media Consumers' Right Act was re-introduced in Congress in January, 2003. This act would make "fair use" exceptions to the DMCA. Supporters of this act include Intel, Verizon, Philips Electronics North America Corporation, Sun Microsystems, Gateway, the Consumer Electronics Association, Computer and Communications Industry Association, the Association for Computing Machinery, the Computer Research Association, and a variety of trade associations representing technology companies, the American Library Association, the American Association of Universities, the National Humanities Alliance, the Digital Future Coalition, the Consumers Union, the Home Recording Rights Coalition, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Public Knowledge, the National Writers Union, and other organizations representing the public interest and the consumers of digital media.

Policy on Student Communication

It shall be the policy of GSCC that all forms of student communication that are shared with persons outside the College shall adhere to community standards of decency. These forms of student communication may include, but are not limited to, spoken and written communication in any medium, musical and dance performances, and art displays. It shall be the responsibility of the instructor, club sponsor, or program director to review all communications prior to display or presentation to ensure that the sensibilities of all people in our service area are considered. Further, College personnel who instruct or supervise students who display works or engage in performances within the College are directed to exercise similar caution. Student work products in the classroom should not be obscene or offensive to other students, College employees, or visitors to campus.

This policy is not intended to stifle creativity in the classroom or freedom of speech. However, it is important that we consider the community standards and comfort level of all students within the College Community.

Policy on Alcohol and Drugs

The possession, use, manufacture, sale, or distribution of any controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined by federal or Alabama law is prohibited on Gadsden State property. College property includes buildings, grounds, roads, parking lots, and residence hall facilities and rooms.

Commission of any of the following acts relating to possession or use of any controlled substance(s) and/or alcoholic beverage(s) is prohibited: (1) possession or consumption of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage anywhere on Gadsden State property, including Fowler Hall; (2) public intoxication on Gadsden State property, including Fowler Hall; and (3) driving on Gadsden State property while under the influence of any controlled substance or alcohol.

The College reserves the right to notify local law enforcement officers if College officials have reason to believe that the Gadsden State policies and/or State and Local laws concerning alcohol and drugs are being violated.

In addition, any student who desires to participate in intercollegiate athletics at the College will be required to submit to random individual and/or random team drug testing, which will be a urinalysis for amphetamines, cocaine, THC, opiates, and PCP.

Any and all information regarding or relating to violations of the College policy on alcohol and drugs will be surrendered to the proper authorities for investigation and use as they see fit. GSCC is committed to being and remaining a drug-free campus and will fully cooperate with law enforcement authorities against any and all offenders under this policy.

Policies and Procedures on Fund-Raising Activities

GSCC requires that all fund-raising activities clearly relate to the overall mission of the College. Gadsden State will comply with all pertinent State and Federal regulations, legislation, and procedures. The College shall in no way compromise its commitment to maintain appropriate legal and administrative practices, as well as accreditation criteria.

All requests to conduct fund-raising activities—whether by individuals, groups of students or employees, or the Foundation—must be submitted to the Office of Institutional Advancement, 107 Allen Hall. This is also the office in which the **Gadsden State Fund-Raising Activity Request Form** may be obtained, or it can be found online at <http://www.gadsdenstate.edu/sites/default/files/u34/Handbook/AppendixFFRevisedJune%202016.pdf>. The form must be completed by the applicant and approved by the Dean of Financial and Administrative Services, the Associate Dean of Institutional Advancement, and the President of the College. A copy of the approved request form will be given to the applicant (originator), and the original form will be filed in the Office of Institutional Advancement.

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Policy on Sales and Solicitations

To fulfill its responsibility of providing and maintaining an environment conducive to teaching and learning, GSCC has the obligation to restrict, regulate, and prohibit on-campus sales and solicitations, especially by individuals and groups not affiliated with the College. For information about the Gadsden State policy on sales and solicitations, those interested may contact the Office of the President at 256.549.8221.

Policies and Procedures on Work Orders

Gadsden State students or employees may request work to be performed by some vocational/technical programs. The item to be repaired must be personal property and must not be intended for resale. Similarly, the job to be performed must be to and/or on the student's or employee's personal property.

To request that such work be performed, obtain a Work Order Request form from the Business Office located on the East Broad Campus or on the Ayers Campus. (This form can also be accessed on the College website.) Submit the completed form to the program instructor. Because work is performed as part of the vocational/technical training program, the program instructor has the right to accept or refuse work. If a job is estimated to cost more than \$2500, the Dean of Technical Education and Workforce Development will confer with the President before accepting the job. Work that is accepted is performed on the following priority basis:

1. students enrolled in courses of the program that is to perform the work;
2. the College;
3. Gadsden State employees;
4. active/retired public employees/officials;
5. other Gadsden State students; and,
6. tax-supported or charitable organizations.

If after 90 days the Work Order Request has not been accepted, it will be void.

If the requested work is to be performed, the student/employee must make payments to the College to ensure that amounts due will not exceed \$200.00 at any time. If charges are less than \$5.00, a minimum fee of \$5.00 (plus tax) will be due, and payment must be made before the owner can receive the property. If the student/employee fails to honor the obligation for payment of amounts due, including penalties and fines, the College will use every legal means to collect the amounts due. In addition, the student/employee will be responsible for collection costs and attorney's fees.

The College is not held responsible for work performed. College students and employees may operate—at the risk of the person requesting the service—the person's vehicle if it is being worked on for the purpose of inspecting repairs. The College is not responsible for any stolen items. Any completed live-work project that is not paid for and picked up within 90 days after the College's initial notification of completion, the property will be deemed abandoned and considered property of the College.

Policy on Social Media

Introduction and Objective

Many current and future students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors are utilizing mediums, such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *LinkedIn*, and *YouTube*, to stay connected. GSCC believes that having a presence in these areas will allow the College to interact more effectively with students and the community. In order to operate within these mediums effectively, GSCC has developed a social media policy to ensure that any and all interactions on behalf of GSCC represent the College's best interests.

The GSCC Social Media Policy only applies to social media accounts created to represent GSCC's groups, departments, programs, entities, classes, etc., and does not apply to an individual student, faculty, or staff member's personal (non-professional) account.

College Officially Recognized Social Media Accounts

In order to be recognized by the College as an official social media account, the account administrator(s) must seek approval from the office of the supervising cabinet member.

The Public Relations and Marketing Office will review all social media applications and/or accounts to ensure that the proposed site adheres to the College's social media policy. Once the social media account has been approved, any questions with regard to college wide publications should be referred to the Public Relations and Marketing Office. Once a social media account has been officially recognized, the group can request to be listed on the official GSCC *Facebook* page under the "likes and interests" section.

Individual Professional Accounts

GSCC does not discourage individuals from creating individual professional social media accounts (i.e. *Facebook* pages for an instructor's class); however, if a member of the faculty or staff creates an individual page related to the

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role that he or she represents at the College, a disclaimer statement must be clearly displayed on the page as indicated in the disclaimer section below.

Disclaimers

All officially recognized social media accounts must include the following disclaimers.

Disclaimers Related to Specific Types of Accounts:

- *Group, Division, or Program Accounts:* "The comments and postings on this site are those of the site administrator(s) and do not necessarily reflect GSCC opinions, strategies, or policies."
- *Individual Professional Accounts:* The disclaimer is as follows: "The views and opinions expressed here are those of _____ and not those of GSCC. The intended use is not for advertising or endorsement of personal opinions, products, causes, or political candidates or ideas."

Other Disclaimers that Must Be Displayed On Officially Recognized Pages:

- **User-generated Content and Disclaimer**
GSCC accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, music, sound, photographs, images, video, messages, or any other materials or content generated by users and publicly posted on this page.
- **Inappropriate Content**
Anyone who believes this page includes inappropriate content should report it to the site manager first, then to the Public Relations and Marketing Office.
- **Disclaimer for content on linked sites**
GSCC accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for the contents of any target site linked from this page.
- **Terms of Use**
By posting content on this page, you represent, warrant and agree that no content submitted, posted, transmitted, or shared by you will infringe upon the rights of any third party, including but not limited to copyright, trademark, privacy; or contain defamatory or discriminatory or otherwise unlawful material. GSCC reserves the right to alter, delete or remove (without notice) the content at its absolute discretion for any reason whatsoever.
- **Copyright**
The content on this page is subject to copyright laws. Unless you own the rights in the content, you may not reproduce, adapt or communicate without the written permission of the copyright owner nor use the content for commercial purposes.

Personal (Non-Professional) Accounts

With regard to personal (non-professional) social media accounts for students, faculty and staff, the College is not responsible for monitoring any material or content posted or interactions that take place within in the social media environment. However, if any violations of student or employee conduct are brought to the College's attention, the individual(s) could be subject to the appropriate sanctions as listed in the student and employee handbooks.

Officially Recognized Account Administrators

All social media accounts officially recognized by GSCC must have a GSCC faculty or staff member as an administrator at all times.

Should an official GSCC account administrator leave the College for any reason or no longer wish to be an account administrator, the supervising cabinet member will designate another Gadsden State employee to be an account administrator. The Public Relations and Marketing Office must be notified when a new administrator takes over.

GSCC employees identified as administrators of accounts are held responsible for managing and monitoring content of their officially recognized accounts.

General Guidelines

- All content on officially recognized pages must be in accordance with all policies outlined in the Student and Employee Handbooks including those related to personal information, privacy laws, and intellectual property.
- Representation of personal opinions as being endorsed by the College or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited.
- The GSCC name or logo may not be used to promote any opinion, product, cause, or political candidate.
- Any content posted to any social media site must be owned or otherwise under the control of the person posting that content. All content posted is protected by fair use policies.
- Misleading or false information will not be posted and the College is not accountable for any claims resulting from such content.
- GSCC has the right to remove any content for any reason from officially recognized pages, i.e., content that the College deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.

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- Citations must be included when using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos with a link provided to the original material, if applicable.
- All information and activities posted must be in compliance with policies of the Alabama Community College System, the College, and local, state, and federal laws. Issues of non-compliance must be immediately reported.

Contact Information

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Public Relations and Marketing Office.

Policy on No Smoking and Tobacco Use

It is the official policy of Gadsden State Community College that smoking and the use of tobacco is prohibited within, buildings, structures, and vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the College, and also within 30 feet of buildings owned, leased, or rented by the College. This includes instructional sites, centers, building entrances, and common areas.

What do we consider “tobacco”?

Under this policy tobacco is any lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, and any other smoking product, as well as smokeless or spit tobacco products, sometimes referred to as dip, chew, or snuff.

What do we consider “smoking”?

Under this policy, smoking is defined as carrying or holding any lit or ignited pipe, cigar, cigarette, electronic cigarette, or any other lit or battery operated smoking equipment or device.

(ACCS Policy 514.01)

Policy on No Trespass & Appeal Procedure

Gadsden State Community College is a public institution of higher education that is open to the general public. However, the College retains the right to restrict access to College property and College-sanctioned activities due to safety considerations relating to its students, faculty, staff and visitors. This policy describes the circumstances under which access to or presence on College property or at College-sanctioned activities or events may be restricted and the procedures for issuing a No Trespass Notice (“Notice”).

When it is determined that an individual presents an ongoing threat to the College, the College may issue a No Trespass Notice restricting that person from any property owned or controlled by the College.

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When it is determined that an individual presents an ongoing threat to the College, the College may issue a No Trespass Notice restricting that person from any property owned or controlled by the College.

Consistent with their responsibility to ensure that College property remains safe, all Security Officers are authorized to issue a No Trespass Notice to anyone under the following circumstances:

- An individual has committed a crime;
- An individual has violated a College policy or procedure;
- An individual is engaged in threatening or disruptive behavior;
- An individual is found in a location at a time or under circumstances that causes concern for the safety of persons and/or property on campus;
- An individual is the subject of an existing Protection Order or Restraining Order;
- Following a request from a College administrator or other member of the College community where, after review by a Security Officer, the request is deemed to be warranted.

A No Trespass Notice advises a person that he/she is not authorized to be on College property, or any portion thereof, or at a College-sanctioned event or activity and may be subject to arrest without further warning if he or she refuses to leave the property or returns at any time in the future.

No Trespass Notices are permanent and remain in full force and effect unless revoked by the appeal process. All No Trespass notices will be placed on the Gadsden State Community College’s Website and linked to the Safety and Security webpage.

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APPEALS PROCESS

A person who has been issued a No Trespass Notice may appeal the decision to the Director of Physical Plant. The appeal process is not applicable to any criminal charge(s), which are resolved through the appropriate court system.

- A. The Notice must be appealed in writing to the Director of Physical Plant. Appeals should be mailed to:
- Director of Physical Plant
 - Gadsden State Community College
 - P. O. Box 227
 - Gadsden, AL 35907-0227

Appeals should include:

1. Appellant's contact information, including address, telephone number and email address.
 2. Date of issuance of the Notice and location.
 3. Reason for being on College property at the time of the incident.
 4. Future need to be on College property.
 5. Any other information appellant wishes to be considered to demonstrate that their presence on Campus or at College-sanctioned activities will not be disruptive or a threat.
 6. Whether a hearing is requested.
- B. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director of Physical Plant will gather all appropriate information and forward all documents and information to the CARE Team for review.
- C. Whether to hold a hearing is within the Team's discretion. In the event that a hearing is held, the CARE Team will conduct a hearing within 3 days for an enrolled student and within 10 days for a non-enrolled student. If a hearing is held, the appellant will be given an opportunity to present or dispute relevant information. Appellants should report to the Safety and Security office, in the Joe Ford Center on the East Broad Campus in Gadsden, and will be escorted to the hearing.
- D. The CARE Team will sustain, rescind, or modify the No Trespass Notice in a written decision that will be mailed to the address provided in the written appeal.
- E. If an appeal is filed, the restrictions set forth in the No Trespass Notice will remain in effect until the appeal process is completed. If the No Trespass Notice is sustained and the subject of the Notice returns to a restricted area, he or she will be subject to arrest.
- F. If, after following the procedure outlined above, the individual still seeks redress, he/she may appeal directly to the President of the College. This appeal to the President must be in writing, must set forth the reason(s) for the appeal, and must be submitted within (3) days of receipt of notice by the C.A.R.E. Committee.
- G. The decision of the President is final. The President may approve, overturn, or amend the prior decisions(s). The President shall notify, in writing, the student, and the C.A.R.E. Committee of the decision(s) rendered.

Policy on Registered Sex Offender Notification

Persons required by law to register as sex offenders (registered sex offenders) will be required to notify Campus Security of his/her intent to enroll and will be required to meet with Campus Security to review the notification procedure and conditions of enrollment. If a registered sex offender registers for classes and becomes a student before the college receives such notification, the student will be immediately informed that he/she is being dropped from classes and will receive a refund of any fees that have been paid.

Gadsden State Community College reserves the right to deny, or revoke the admission of registered sex offenders in accordance with College policy. The College reserves the right to evaluate the circumstances of each case and to refuse admission if it is determined that the applicant is a threat to the safety or security of the College community.

When the College is notified by a corrections or law enforcement agency that a registered sex offender has enrolled or intends to enroll, or a registered sex offender self-reports to a College official, the CARE Committee will determine whether such individual will be allowed to attend classes.

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Notification to the College Community will be consistent with any recommendation of an informing law enforcement agency.

Level I - Risk to the Community

- Offender name and Risk Level will be on file with Campus Security.
- Notify appropriate College officials.

Level II - Risk to the Community

- If available, background information on the offender supplied by the reporting law enforcement agency will be on file with Campus Security. This information normally includes: offender name, picture, and descriptive information about the offender and the offense.
- Notify faculty teaching classes in which the offender has enrolled.
- Notify the Early Childhood Education Programs and child development programs, and any other program that involve the presence of minors.

Level III - Risk to the Community

- Same notification as for Level II.
- Notify all campus employees and students via college email systems.
- Post information, including picture and name, to campus bulletin boards.

Appeal Process for Denial of Admission or Withdrawal for Registered Sex Offender

When a registered sex offender is denied admission to, or is administratively withdrawn from classes, he/she will receive written notice from the Associate Dean of Student Services of his/her denial of admission or administrative withdrawal from classes. After receiving the notification, he/she may invoke the following appeal process:

- A. Within seven (7) calendar days, write a letter of appeal to the Associate Dean of Student Services in which he/she provides the following information:
 - Disclosure of the nature of the offense to which he/she pled guilty or was convicted;
 - Justification for consideration of admission/reinstatement;
 - Statement acknowledging his/her understanding that his/her identity and status as a registered sex offender will be publicized by the College.
- B. The CARE Committee will review the information submitted and make a decision within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the letter of appeal.
- C. Notification of the decision of the Committee will be sent by letter from the Associate Dean of Students.
- D. The decision of the committee shall be final.

Guidelines for Assessing Registered Sex Offender Enrollment Status and Request

What is a registered sex offender?

A person who has been convicted of a crime involving a sexual act where the federal, state or local laws require them to be placed on the Sexual Offender Registry after they have served their criminal sentences or when they have been released on parole.

The tier to which an offender is assigned only corresponds to the plea or conviction, which may not be representative of the crime committed. Also, depending upon the plea or conviction, the offender may only be required to register, without any restrictions of residency.

Tier I Offenses – typically of a non-violent nature with persons of the age of majority; minimum of 15 years on the registry

- Public indecency (lewdness)
- Voyeurism
- Possession of child pornography (could include teen sexting)
- Sexual contact without consent

Tier II Sex Offenses – are typically also of a non-violent nature, but involve minors; minimum 25 years on the registry

- Any new offense perpetrated by a Tier I sexual offender
- Trafficking of minors for the purposes of sexual activity
- Transportation of minors for the purposes of sexual activity
- Using intimidation to elicit sexual activity
- Using bribery to elicit sexual activity
- Any sexual acts with persons between the ages of 12-15
- Any sexual contact with persons between the ages of 12-15
- Any sexual offenses where the offender has position for authority over the victim, such as a parent or guardian, or those with temporary custody of the child, such as a babysitter or teacher
- Prostitution of minors
- Production or distribution of pornography that includes minors
- Any plan to commit or attempt to commit any of the above

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Tier III Sex Offenses – most serious sex offender, includes those convicted of violent and non-violent acts, with minors or adults; lifetime on the registry

- Any new offense perpetrated by a Tier II sexual offender
- Most sexual assaults
- Sexual acts where force was used on the victim or the victim was under duress
- Sexual acts where the victim is rendered unconscious or impaired through the use of drugs or alcohol
- Sexual acts where the victim is under the age of 12
- Sexual acts where the victim is unable of consenting to the act due to mental impairment or disability
- Sexual acts where the victim is unable to physically decline the act
- Sexual acts where the victim communicates their unwillingness to participate in the sexual act
- Any plan to commit or attempt to commit any of the above

Policy on Email as Official Communication for Students

Effective immediately, the Gadsden State Community College (GSCC) email system is deemed the official method of communication whereby students are notified of College-related matters: cancelled/dropped classes, admission status, financial matters, announcements, and general information exchange. Official College communications demand attention, and often a timely response. Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, acting upon, and/or responding to official college related communications sent to their GSCC student email address.

Faculty members may require the use of email, Blackboard, the My Gadsden State Portal or other forms of electronic communication for course content delivery, class discussion, or synchronous chat. It is recommended that faculty specify these requirements in their course syllabus. Faculty may expect that students access and read notices sent to their official GSCC student email address.

Students who forward their GSCC email to another email address (e.g. username@aol.com) do so at their own risk. GSCC cannot ensure the delivery of its official communications by external service providers. Forwarding email does not relieve the receiver from the responsibilities associated with electronic communications sent to the GSCC email address.

Students are expected to check email frequently. It is recommended that email be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. Regular email management will also minimize the risk that the inbox will be full, causing the email to be returned to the sender with an error. Undeliverable messages returned due to either a full inbox or use of a "spam" filter will be considered delivered without further action required of the College.

Faculty, staff, and student sponsored organizations must request approval of the Director of Public Relations to have batched student messages sent through the GSCC student email system. Only meaningful and relevant information will be allowed.

Policy on Children on Campus

Gadsden State is an institution of higher education. While Gadsden State welcomes and invites the presence of children on campus, it recognizes that its campuses and events may not always be an appropriate environment for children.

The purpose of this policy is to promote the health, safety, and well-being of children on campus and children who participate in College events and to clarify the College's rules with respect to children and minors on campus and at College-sanctioned events. This policy applies to employees, students, campus visitors, and individuals or Organizations engaging in or conducting activities associated with the College.

For the purposes of this policy, the terms "child," "children," "minor," and "minors" refer to individuals under the age of 18.

- Responsibility for Children.** In recognition of the family needs and responsibilities, students, faculty, and staff may bring their child(ren) to campus for limited periods of time while the employee or student is engaged in work or educational activities; with approval by the appropriate supervisor. In doing so, the needs of other College community members for a quiet and productive work and educational setting must be respected. No facility or office on campus is to be used regularly in lieu of child care or for unsupervised recreation for children. The adult responsible for a child is also responsible for the child's behavior and actions, and is expected to ensure that the child's behavior is compliant with College policies.
- Risks.** The adult responsible for bring a child to campus and College events will also be responsible for any and all injuries or damages sustained to or by the child or any other child accompanying them while on campuses or any properties owned or leased by the College. The College will not be responsible or liable for any such injuries or damages.

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- C. **Revocation.** Allowing employees and students to bring their child(ren) to campus is a privilege extended by the College and may be revoked at the discretion of the College. The College may also prohibit an employee or student from bringing a child(ren) to campus if a member of the College community provides a reasonable objection.
- D. **College-Sanctioned Events.** Gadsden State hosts a number of events that are open to children. In order to ensure their safety and that of other guests, the College requires the parent, legal guardian, or other adult responsible for each child to comply with the following provisions:
 - 1. The College will not be responsible for the supervision of any children who attend a campus or College-sanctioned event unless the event sponsored specifically states in a written announcement that supervision by College will be provided.
 - 2. Children must remain in the area of campus where the event is located.
 - 3. The adult responsible for a child is also responsible for the child's behavior and actions and for any damage caused by a child.
 - 4. If a child attending an event or program needs an accommodation for a disability or other special need, it is the responsibility of the adult to request such an accommodation, in advance of the event, to ensure that the accommodation is in place or that the accommodation is one that can be extended by the College.

Policy on Hoverboards/Skateboards

Due to safety concerns associated with hoverboards and skateboards and the potential impact to the safety of our students, employees, and the College community, these devices are banned from all campuses.