

Orientation for New and Returning Russian Students

Welcome

Welcome to UMGC's Online Orientation for new and returning Russian students. Our goals for this orientation are:

1. To provide you with helpful information about UMGC to make your experience with the university the best possible.
2. To give you an opportunity to discuss the specific challenges faced by non-U.S. students who take online courses through a U.S. university.
3. To create a convenient place where you can access all the relevant resources to help you succeed in your education at UMGC.

We hope this orientation will be helpful to you as you complete your UMGC studies.

UMGC and American Education

As a UMGC student you are learning not only about UMGC and our learning model, but also about American education and the American classroom. Our goal is to help you learn to think critically, to research effectively, to analyze problems, and to become an independent learner.

UMGC has designed a number of tools to help you succeed at UMGC and to assist you with all aspects of your education: technology, writing, academic integrity, navigating the student center, and administrative processes such as registering for graduation. You can find these tools on the UMGC Web site (**www.umgc.edu**), in your online classroom (**campus.umgc.edu**), and in the MyUMGC student center (**my.umgc.edu**). Many are available 24/7.

You can find many useful tips for success by going to www.umgc.edu/getstarted. Please also see the document Getting Started at UMGC on how to navigate the UMGC classroom and these resources. We have also provided you with a list of Web resources in the document:

Find Information and Get Help. At the same time, please be assured that faculty and staff are here to assist you.

The U.S. Classroom: Expectations and Behavior.

In your classroom, you will be interacting directly with your instructors and your fellow students. American professors want you to interact with them so that you are fully engaged in your learning and they will respond to you directly. Make sure you communicate frequently with your online faculty member before problems arise. If you are having difficulties, let your instructors know right away so that they can find you the support you need. If you are not able to hand in your work by the deadline, contact your professor beforehand to discuss the situation.

You will be posting your own ideas in the classroom and commenting on those of others. You will find that your American colleagues will often speak in the first person, I think.....I acted. Americans can also be very direct and may say: Get to the Point! The exchange among students and professors is a good way to learn and benefit from your colleagues as they will learn from you.

In your classroom you will find a variety of assignments. Sometimes your professors will assign you a group project that you must work on with other students. But you will also be assigned assignments that you are to complete yourself. UMGC expects that you will complete all **graded** assignments on your own. Working on these assignments in a group is a violation of policies on academic honesty and plagiarism as discussed below.

General Expectations

Grading, Academic Standards, and Academic Levels of Progress

UMGC's Policy 158.00 -- Academic Levels of Progress for Undergraduates-- can be found at: <https://www.umgc.edu/policies/academicpolicies/aa15800.cfm>

UMGC's Policy 158.01—Academic Standing Status for Graduate Students – can be found at: <https://www.umgc.edu/policies/academicpolicies/aa15801.cfm>

Academic Standing for Undergraduate Students

UMGC's system to evaluate academic progress is different from that in place in Russia. There are four levels of academic standing for undergraduates: satisfactory (good academic standing), academic warning, academic probation, and dismissal. **Academic standing is determined by a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA).** In the Undergraduate School (TUS) grading method, students earn grades of A, B, C, D, F, or FN on the basis of their performance in meeting the academic requirements of each course. Each of these grades has a number of quality points assigned to it. <http://www.umgc.edu/policies/academicpolicies/aa20506.cfm>

GRADE	QUALITY POINTS
A	4
B	3
C	2
D	1
F or FN	0

The GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality "points" that you earned by the total number of credit hours you attempted in that term. The quality points are on a scale in which the highest grade, "A," equals 4.0 points down to "F" = 0.0 points. The FN grade signifies a failure in a course because the student has ceased to attend and participate in course assignments and activities. The FN grade is treated as an F in calculating the grade-point average.

For example, let's suppose that you took two UMGC courses this term: WRTG 394 and BMGT 330. Each course is "worth" 3 credit hours, for a total of 6. Suppose you earned a final grade of "A" (4.0 X 3 credit hours = 12 quality points) in WRTG 394 and "B" (3.0 X 3 credit hours = 9 quality points) in BMGT 330. Your total number of grade points is 21. Therefore, your Grade Point Average is 21 quality points divided by 6 credit hours = 3.50. (Withdrawal – W does not count towards the GPA.)

A student whose cumulative GPA is 2.0 (C) or higher is in good standing. Students who are on academic warning or probation will receive email notification of their status from UMGC. This notification will tell you what you need to do to improve your status. The letter to students who are dismissed from the university will explain the terms under which you can apply for readmission and the deadlines.

Academic Standing for Graduate Students

There are three levels of academic standing for graduate students: good academic standing, academic probation, and dismissal. **Academic standing is determined by a student's term (semester) and cumulative grade point average (GPA).** In the Graduate School (TGS) grading method, students earn grades of A, B, C, F, or FN on the basis of their performance in meeting the academic requirements of each course. Each of these grades has a number of quality points assigned to it. <http://www.umgc.edu/policies/academicpolicies/aa20506.cfm>

GRADE	QUALITY POINTS
A	4
B	3
C	2
F or FN	0

The GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality "points" that you earned by the total number of credit hours you attempted in that term

For example, let's suppose that you took two UMGC courses this term: MGMT 650 and FIN 615. Each course is "worth" 3 credit hours, for a total of 6. Suppose you earned a final grade of "A" (4.0 X 3 credit hours = 12 quality points) in MGMT 650 and "B" (3.0 X 3 credit hours = 9 quality points) in FIN 615. Your total number of quality points is 21. Therefore, your Grade Point Average is 21 grade points divided by 6 credit hours = 3.50. (Withdrawals - W - does not count towards the GPA).

You need to maintain a GPA of 3.0 at a minimum (B or better) for the term (semester) and overall (your cumulative GPA). You cannot have an F or a FN. If you do not meet these requirements you are on Academic Probation

How is your letter grade calculated in a class?

You receive in your class a numerical grade according to the course's graded activities (participation, assignments, projects, etc.) that is transformed into a letter grade. This is how grades are calculated in TGS:

Class Numerical Grade	Course final letter grade	Your academic standing
90-100	A	Good
80-89.9	B	Good
70-79.9	C	Below standards
0-69.9	F	Academic Probation

This means that if in your class your average is below 80, you have a C. If you have a C, and you do not have another class with a grade of A, you have a GPA below 3.0, which means you are on Academic Probation. If you get an F or FN, you are automatically on Academic Probation. The FN grade signifies a failure in a course because the student has ceased to attend and participate in course assignments and activities. The FN grade is treated as an F in calculating the grade-point average.

If you are placed in Academic Probation **YOU NEED TO RETAKE THAT COURSE IN THE NEXT SEMESTER IN WHICH YOU ENROLL.** (You may take breaks between semesters.)

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

UMGC's policy on Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism can be found online at <http://www.umgc.edu/policies/academicpolicies/aa15025.cfm>

UMGC considers academic dishonesty and plagiarism to be extremely serious matters. If you look at section VII, Part A of the policy, you will see that the penalties for a student who commits academic dishonesty or plagiarism are severe.

Many of the actions that constitute academic dishonesty are what students and teachers usually refer to as "cheating." Plagiarism, however, is a particular kind of academic dishonesty. Here is the definition of "plagiarism" in UMG's academic policy:

“The intentional or unintentional presentation of another person's idea or product as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: copying verbatim all or part of another's written work; using phrases, charts, figures, illustrations, or mathematical or scientific solutions without **citing the source**; paraphrasing ideas, conclusions or research without **citing the source**; or using all or part of a literary plot, poem, film, musical score or other artistic product without **attributing the work to its creator**.”

Please note that, according to UMG's policy, plagiarism can be either ***intentional or unintentional***. This means that a UMG student who commits plagiarism cannot defend himself or herself by claiming "I didn't intend to plagiarize" or "I didn't know I was committing plagiarism." Students must take active steps to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

Fortunately, UMGC has a very simple tutorial on the Web site that will assist you in understanding this policy. In its virtual “Effective Writing Center” you will find a number of resources to help you with your written assignments including the tutorial:

<http://www.umgc.edu/writingcenter/plagiarism/> I highly recommend that you choose the interactive version. The tutorial will provide examples of how to cite sources correctly, or paraphrase texts. The Effective Writing Center also includes a number of other aids.

Another important aid for you is turnitin.

(<http://www.umgc.edu/library/libresources/turnitin.cfm>). Turnitin provides you with the possibility of reviewing your own work prior to submission to check for any text that is a match with existing sources.

Working and sharing results with students in your class on graded assignments falls under the category of academic dishonesty. We encourage students to share ideas and help each other. If you do not understand a particular concept you should definitely work with others and ask for help, including from faculty members. But that kind of work is very different from sitting together to complete a graded assignment and coming up with a set of answers that you then present as your own or a set of examples that you share.

The important thing to keep in mind is that everyone wants you to succeed. If you are unsure about something, ask.

Repeating Courses:

All of us are interested in maximizing your success and we are all here to help you do so. Unfortunately sometimes a student does not get the required passing grade in a course and will need to retake it. UMGC policy is that an undergraduate student can only take a course 3 times. After this you will be required to petition for an exception to this policy.

Drop, Withdrawal and Refund Policies:

For various reasons, such as too much work, personal issues, illness, etc., you may decide that you cannot continue in a course. There are two options for you to get out of a course **without** impacting your academic standing. These are: **Dropping** a course or **Withdrawing** from a course.

What does it mean to drop a course? To drop a course means that you disenroll from the course without any academic or financial penalties. **This has to be done during the first FEW days of the course (this is referred to as the ‘drop period’). The drop period is five days for undergraduate courses and seven days for graduate courses.** If you drop a course, you will not receive any notation on your transcript and you will not be charged for the course.

Withdrawal from a course is something you do after the drop period has ended. Official withdrawal from a class must occur before **65 percent** of the total number of days in a session has expired. The deadlines for withdrawals can be found at: <http://www.umgc.edu/calendar>. Go to full academic calendar and choose undergraduate or graduate calendar.

Students who withdraw from a course will receive a grade of W. This grade does not enter into calculation of your GPA. A grade of W is therefore preferable to a failing grade.

Depending on when you withdraw from a course, you may be entitled to a partial refund of your tuition. If you review the withdrawal policy you will see that there are different deadlines that determine whether or not your tuition is refunded and by how much.

<http://www.umgc.edu/current-students/finances/payments/refunds/>

Tuition Refund Schedule for Undergraduate Students

Tuition Refund	8-Week Course
100%	Drop initiated through calendar day 5
75%	Withdrawal initiated on calendar day 6 to 9
50%	Withdrawal initiated on calendar day 10 to 17
0%	Withdrawal initiated on or after calendar day 18

Tuition Refund Schedule for Graduate Students

Tuition Refund	12-Week Course
100%	Drop initiated through calendar day 7
75%	Withdrawal initiated on calendar day 8 to 13
50%	Withdrawal initiated on calendar day 14 to 25
0%	Withdrawal initiated on or after calendar day 26

In special circumstances, such as illness, students may request an exception to the refund policy. Information is on the refund page.