

Policy on Requirement Terms

When students are admitted to the University, they follow the requirements outlined in the academic catalog according to the year of their admission. For administrative purposes, this is known as the student's "requirement term" in PAWS, and it dictates their academic plan and degree audit.

1. Students who wish to opt into a different requirement term must receive the approval of their school/college via a signed request form. If new school/college requirements compel students to change their requirement term, the school/college must receive acknowledgment from the student.

The requirement term for re-entry students will be that of the term of re-entry. Students may appeal to their school/college to revert back to a prior requirement term.

Background and Context

Recommendation of the Academic Policy Committee to Create the Policy on Requirement Terms

When students are admitted to the University, they essentially sign a contract agreeing to follow the requirements outlined in the academic catalog according to the year of their admission. For administrative purposes, this is known as the student's "requirement term" in PAWS, and it dictates their academic plan and degree audit.

Program requirements and curriculum change frequently, and students will either opt-into new requirement terms or be compelled to depending on the situation. At present, this is done informally through communication with academic advisors who simply change the requirement term in PAWS on the student's record.

In addition, while there is no written policy, current practice dictates that re-entry students (those who were once degree-seeking UWM students but have not attended for a full academic year) are held to the requirement term from their original date of admission when they re-enter. For example, a student who was first admitted in 1992, has not been enrolled since 1994, and applies for re-entry in 2023 will be held to the 1992 requirement term. This poses many problems in terms of course offerings, updates in the discipline, and academic advising, just to name a few. A recent poll of other campuses in UW System showed that we are the only campus who treats re-entry students this way.

Finally, we treat some re-entry and returning adult students differently in terms of GER requirements as well. These are the current exceptions:

- Students who entered UWM as freshmen and/or earned transferable credit as a college student prior to September 2013 are not responsible for the Oral and Written Communication Part B or the Quantitative Literacy Part B.
- Students who entered UWM as freshmen and/or earned transferable credit as a college student prior to September 1999 are not responsible for the GER foreign language

competency. However, individual schools and colleges may require completion of higher-level foreign language courses; students are strongly encouraged to check with their advisors and/or review their Academic Requirements report on PAWS.

- In general, second-degree candidates from an accredited institution and students whose first semester in a degree program at an accredited institution predates September 1986 are not subject to the General Education Requirements.

It is assumed these exceptions coincide with major changes to GER policy. However, aside from that for second-degree candidates, the other exceptions seem outdated, unnecessary, and hard to manage. One could also argue they threaten the integrity of a current UWM degree. We propose to strike these GER exceptions from the catalog, except for the one related to second-degree students. This will align with the new requirement term policy for re-entry students that is being proposed.