

Special Offerings

Gadsden State offers several special categories of courses and programs designed to meet the specific academic and career needs of students.

Cooperative Education (CO-OP)

Cooperative Education is a powerful educational tool that merges in-class instruction with job-training experiences. The Cooperative Education experience is an arrangement whereby an integral part of the student's education is actual work experience.

To enter the program, the student must have declared a program area of study, be able to receive a favorable recommendation from the program area instructor, and have successfully completed at least one semester (12 semester hours) within his/her chosen field of study with an overall grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. Arrangements with a prospective employer must be worked out to the satisfaction of both the employer and the program advisor.

The student may receive from one to three semester credit hours, depending on the number of hours per week worked in an approved cooperative education experience. State policy permits Gadsden State to award one (1) semester hour of credit for each five (5) hours of work per week. The student should refer to the appropriate portions in the Degree/Certificate Programs and Course Descriptions chapters of this catalog to be certain that cooperative education credits are applicable toward the requirements for his/her degree program.

Students interested in the Cooperative Education Program may visit the Career Services Office located in Inzer Hall on the Wallace Drive Campus and in the Learning Resource Center on the Ayers Campus. Interested parties may also call 256.549.8605 or email careerservices@gadsdenstate.edu for more information.

Developmental Studies

Gadsden State offers courses in English, mathematics, and reading designed specifically for those students who need to improve their ability in order to benefit from higher education. These courses produce institutional, non-transferable credit only and will not satisfy the requirements for degrees, certificates, and diplomas. These courses allow students to begin studying at their own level in order to develop the skills and knowledge that they will need to attempt regular credit-bearing courses. Descriptions of these courses (ENG 099; ENR 098; MTH 098, MTH 099, MTH 109, and MTH 111) appear in the Course Descriptions chapter of this catalog. For more information about developmental studies, individuals should contact the appropriate academic department.

Distance Learning

Gadsden State Community College is a leader in the Alabama Community College System in the wide variety of distance learning courses and programs offered. Gadsden State is committed to continuing the growth and development of our distance learning offerings to provide more flexibility for students to help them achieve their goal of earning a college degree. Distance learning is defined as a formal educational process in which all or the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when

student and instructor are not in the same place. Distance learning focuses on utilizing technology and teaching methods to provide instruction to students outside the regular classroom and thereby increase flexibility and scheduling options. There are two types of distance learning courses at Gadsden State: hybrid and online.

Hybrid courses include both in-person class time and online instructional requirements. Hybrid courses have days, times, and locations listed in OneACCS Self-Service Banner. Instructors teaching hybrid classes may replace no more than 40-60% of scheduled in-person class time with asynchronous online learning tools. Hybrid courses are clearly identified in the course schedule on OneACCS Self-Service Banner.

An online course is one in which 100% of instruction takes place online through the college's learning management system (Blackboard). While the vast majority of Gadsden State's online courses require no on-campus physical attendance of any kind, students may have the option of taking exams on campus. Online classes are clearly identified in the course schedule on OneACCS Self-Service Banner. **IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATED TO ONLINE COURSES:** Per SACSCOC and Federal Department of Education requirements, online exam proctoring software are used to verify the identity of students participating in online courses. Also, per Federal requirements, attendance is measured by "active participation" in the course. Active participation is defined as completing an attendance verification activity (as identified by the instructor) for each online course in which the student is enrolled. Simply contacting the instructor via telephone or email or just accessing the course will not count as attendance to satisfy requirements of federal financial aid.

For more information on Gadsden State's distance learning course/program offerings or software applications, please visit the Teaching & Learning Center's website at <https://www.gadsdenstate.edu/students/student-resources.cms>.

Honors Courses

Students with a special academic interest or motivation may "contract" for a course to have an "H" (honors) designation. A student may contract one or several courses. The individual instructor may allow "H" credit or not, but the committee and director of the Honors Scholar Program will develop guidelines and will work with instructors to encourage "H" credit.

Typically an "H" designation requires approximately one (1) additional credit hour's work in a three- or four-hour course. The "H" designation may involve special project(s) or additional breadth or depth in the course material. "H" designation is NOT designed to make the course more difficult but to result in learning outside of the normal coursework. A student will receive the grade that he or she would otherwise earn in the course, plus "H" designation.

NOTICE: A student does not need to be admitted to the Honors Scholar Program to contract for individual honors credit.

Honors Scholars Program

The Honors Scholars Program is for high-achieving students who seek a more intellectually challenging and creative college experience. Students must apply to and be admitted to the Honors Scholars Program by completing an Honors Scholars Application. (To be considered for a scholarship, a student should also complete the Scholarship Application.) For more information contact the Honors Scholars Program at 256.549.8416 or dmurdock@gadsdenstate.edu.

Applicants

Applicants will be accepted into the program based on high school or lifelong achievement, test scores, and community or school activities and leadership. The following test scores will be used as benchmarks for admissions, but students may be admitted based on other exceptional achievement or service:

1. A high school ranking in the top 15% of the graduating class;
2. A grade point average of 3.50 or above;
3. A score of 1200 or above on the SAT (math & verbal) or a composite score of 24 or above on the ACT.

Other Students

1. High school graduates who did not rank in the top 15% of their respective high school classes **OR**
2. High school graduates from non-accredited high schools **OR**
3. Students who completed a G.E.D. **OR**
4. Students who are returning to school after an extended period are eligible to apply for the HONORS SCHOLARSHIP if they have scored exceptionally high on the Placement Test.

Honors Students

1. Will take a minimum of three (3) "H" designation courses, including at least one HONORS SEMINAR (HUM 298);
2. Will attend the HONORS ORIENTATION before starting the freshman year; **and**
3. Will be expected to attend a minimum of two HONORS EVENTS during each academic year, including lectures, concerts, and other designated events.

Advantages

1. **Gadsden State Scholarships** - A maximum of 20 continuing Gadsden State scholarships will be awarded annually to students who will be designated as HONORS SCHOLARS.
2. **Diploma Designations** - Students who fulfill the requirements will be designated as "HONORS SCHOLAR" on the graduation diploma.
3. **Personal Mentoring and Advisement** - HONORS SCHOLARS will be paired with special faculty mentors. Mentors will be Gadsden State faculty or administrators, and pairings will reflect a student's interests and goals. The mentors will serve as special advisors for student schedules, academic mentorship, professional mentorship, internships, etc.
4. **Commencement Regalia** - HONORS SCHOLARS will be presented with special commencement regalia to wear during graduation exercises.

Independent Study

An Independent Study (IS) is a course for academic credit which offers a student an individualized educational experience. An IS is an option only when students are unable to take a regularly scheduled course that is required in their plan of study. Students must have at least a 2.5 GPA. An IS is at the discretion of the instructor and must be approved by the division chair.

Service Learning

Service Learning is an academic program that combines community service with classroom instruction, focusing on critical, reflective thinking, as well as a personal and civic responsibility. Various instructors offer service learning options in select courses, and students who enroll in the program then have an opportunity to take their classroom knowledge and/or technical skills into their community to work with service agencies, private non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, and schools. The service must be directly linked to course content.

Service Learning provides hands-on, practical experience and allows students to work with professionals at a variety of sites. This experience affords some career exploration while students become more aware of their community and its problems as well as ways to alleviate them. Service Learning emphasizes civic engagement, and, as students become involved with agencies and/or schools in their community, they realize the importance of giving back to the community through service. Since students receive credit for their service experience, each instructor incorporating service learning in a course may require a specific type of reflection activity: journals or logs, written or oral reports, group discussions—all based on the student's service activities.

For more information, students should contact the Director of Advising and Retention Center at 256.549.8307.