

# High School Academics

*Martin Ferrell, Dean*

## I. Overview

The primary mission of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts is to train young artists for professional careers in the arts. However, from its beginning, the School has had a strong commitment to providing a sound, supporting curriculum of academic studies to ensure the broader education of the artist. Vittorio Giannini, UNCSCA's Founding President, put it this way as he spoke in 1963 of his plans for the School:

*"It is not enough to be trained as an artist, but as a person. As an artist you will express yourself as a person, and the richer you are as a person the better your expression will be. So, in this framework, you will have academic study."*

The High School Academic Program provides young artists in grades 9-12 with a broad, challenging, and engaging curriculum and offers rigorous instruction in the core disciplines of English, Mathematics, Foreign Language, Science, Social Studies, and Wellness. Faculty and administration value a spirit of free inquiry and mutual respect in the classroom and promote a community that provides equal access and support for all students. The High School Academic Program is devoted to developing thoughtful, ethical, compassionate, creative, responsible life-long learners. Students who successfully complete the program are awarded the University of North Carolina School of the Arts High School Diploma.

## II. Specific Admissions and Transfer Requirements

The High School Academic Program reviews all high school admissions applications after applicants have been recommended for admission by the Schools of Dance, Drama, and Music and the Visual Arts Program. The High School Academic Program may agree to admit or deny admission to UNCSCA high school applicants.

The High School Academic Program transfers new students' prior course credits to UNCSCA transcripts. Once a student has been accepted to UNCSCA, no course credit may be transferred to UNCSCA, except for the courses in progress at the time of the student's initial admissions review, without the permission of the High School Academic Program. No coursework taken before the ninth grade may count toward the UNCSCA high school graduation requirements.

Home-school courses submitted for transfer credit are also subject to a review by subject-area faculty before credit is granted. If transfer credit is denied for one or more home-school courses, the student must take the course(s) in question while enrolled at UNCSCA.

At the discretion of the High School Academic Program, math, science, and foreign language credits earned in a home school, private school, or other school where course content is unclear may be transferred only after the student has taken a UNCSCA placement test in those subjects prior to the first day of classes.

## III. High School Policies

### A. Registration

Registration takes place at the beginning of each semester. Students must show evidence of payment of tuition and fees prior to enrolling in courses. All students are required to register and will not be granted entry to classes without having done so. New students will receive instructions regarding times and places of registration, orientation and placement testing during the summer before their arrival at the School.

While UNCSEA high school students enroll in year-long courses at the beginning of each academic year, all students are required to register at the beginning of each semester. High school students are required to attend classes continuously and are not permitted to miss classes at the beginning of the semester. Arrangements for payment of tuition and fees for high school students must be made on a timely basis each semester, and students must be cleared by the Bursar's office for class attendance by either:

- presenting a receipt to reflect that all tuition and fees have been paid at the time of registration;
- in exceptional cases, making arrangements with the financial services office to pay the tuition and fees on a schedule to be determined in consultation with Director of Business Affairs.

High school students who fail to make the necessary arrangements within one week after the beginning of classes in any semester may be asked to withdraw, and will not be able to receive credit for classes.

Significant arts and academic class work begins on the first day of each semester. Therefore, students are expected to be present for registration and to attend classes as scheduled on that day. Students who register or start classes late may not make up the academic work they miss as a result of their late arrival, and no one will be permitted to register as a full-time student after the completion of the fourth day of classes in a given semester. If a student's late arrival on campus results from circumstances clearly beyond the student's control, an appeal from the student's parent or legal guardian may be made in writing to the Dean of the High School Academic Program and to the student's arts school dean. This written appeal must be received by noon of the second day of classes. Vacation plans and attendance at summer programs do not constitute grounds for appeal.

## **B. Attendance Policy**

### **General information on class attendance**

Academic class attendance is a student obligation. UNCSEA expects all students to regularly and punctually attend all classes in which they are enrolled. Each academic teacher submits a daily report of attendance, and the official attendance record for each student is kept in the High School Academic Program office.

If a student has an excused absence from a class, the teacher will permit the student to make up the work missed. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for make-up work in consultation with the teacher within two days of the student's return to school if the excused absence was unplanned (e.g., for illness). Make-up work for planned absences that are excused ahead of the event (e.g., for off-campus auditions) should be arranged with teachers at least 24 hours **before** the student leaves campus.

While teachers are available to assist with make-up work for excused absences, they are not expected to do so when an absence is unexcused, except to provide information about the work missed. It is the student's responsibility to know whether an absence is excused; if in doubt, the student should check with the High School Academic Program office. Notices of unexcused absences are sent by email to students' campus email addresses and copied to their parents. However, a student's failure to receive a notice does not relieve the student of personal responsibility regarding all absences.

A student who misses nine (9) or more classes in a course during a single semester, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused, will incur a "one-step" grade reduction penalty per absence (for instance, an A on a student's transcript, regardless of percentage, would be lowered to an A- on the ninth absence from the course). Second semester seniors may miss up to twelve (12) classes in a course during that semester before incurring this penalty. Such grade deductions will be tracked by the Academic Office, with notifications being sent to the parents, student, and teacher at regular intervals as absences accumulate. On the ninth absence (13<sup>th</sup> for second semester seniors), the student, parents, and teacher will be notified that:

1. the student has crossed the absence threshold and will incur a one-step grade deduction penalty to be assessed by the teacher at the end of the semester;
2. for each subsequent absence, the student will incur an additional one-step grade penalty; and
3. the student may submit a written appeal (email is acceptable) contesting the application of the grade penalty to the Dean of the High School Academic Program with supporting documentation.

**A student who misses 15 or more class meetings in a course during a single semester, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused, will not receive credit for the course that semester.** The Associate Dean of the High School Academic Program will notify a student and the student's parents of a violation of this rule. A student has the right to appeal the loss of credit to the Dean of the High School Academic Program. Appeals should be submitted to the Dean in writing with any relevant documentation. Email is acceptable.

Please note that, while excused tardies and early dismissals do not affect a student's absence total, a student who misses more than 15 minutes of a class period will be considered absent from that class for attendance purposes.

If a teacher is absent, each student in the class is responsible for following the procedures established by the teacher for that day, whether or not a substitute instructor is present.

Class cancellations or delays as a result of inclement weather will be announced by the Office of the Chancellor for the UNCOSA campus as a whole and broadcast on local media outlets.

A parent/guardian who picks up a student from UNCOSA during the school day must notify the High School Academic Program office (336-770-3245, stillerk@uncosa.edu). Residential students must also sign out and back in from the High School Residence Life office (in the residence hall connector building).

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES-UNPLANNED (ILLNESS AND EMERGENCIES)**

### **Procedures for Residential Students**

When residential students are too ill to attend class, they must report to the Wellness Center in the Hanes Student Commons Building **prior to** the beginning of the class for which they need to be excused. Students who are too ill to walk to the Wellness Center should immediately notify a residence hall staff member. **Parents or guardians of residential students may not call or write to excuse a student from classes because of illness unless their son or daughter is at home with them at the time the illness occurs (e.g., during a weekend visit home).** A visit to the Wellness Center, however, does not automatically excuse a student from class. Only those students who are reported by the Wellness Center staff as "Confined" to their residence hall room because of illness will be excused from classes. Confined students who "break" confinement by leaving their dorm room without permission will have their class absences for that day changed from excused to unexcused (see section on unexcused absences below).

### **Procedures for Commuter Students**

Parents or guardians of commuter students who become ill at home, or who are out of school for any other reason that was not prearranged, must call or e-mail the High School Academic Program office **prior to** their daughter's or son's first academic class to report the absence to Ms. Stiller **each day** that the student is out (336-770-3245, stillerk@uncosa.edu).

Commuter students who are reported by their parent/guardian as ill in the morning **may not attend arts or academic classes for the rest of the day.** Students who come to campus later in the day after being reported ill by a parent/guardian will have their earlier absences recorded as unexcused.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES – PLANNED**

## Procedures for reporting planned absences

The parents/guardians of students who will miss classes for scheduled commitments (e.g., off-campus medical appointments, auditions, or family events) must notify the High School Academic Program office **in writing at least one (1) week before the anticipated absence**. The notice must include the reason for the absence(s) and the dates and times of the student's departure and return. The notice may be e-mailed to Ms. Kim Stiller (stillerk@uncsa.edu). The High School Academic Program office will let parents and students know if there are any concerns regarding the requested absence(s), or if further information is necessary. Although scheduled absences are typically excused when families follow the above procedure, the parent/guardian and the student will be notified if the planned absence(s) will not be excused.

## The student's responsibility in preparing for planned absences

While it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the Academic Program office of a student's upcoming absence, it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the student's academic teachers at least 24 hours prior the student's departure from campus in order to schedule any make-up work and to collect any assignments the student must complete while away. To help ensure that these conversations take place, a student must submit a completed Planned Absence Form with signatures from each of the student's academic teachers to the Academic Office **by noon on the school day prior** to the absence. The failure of a student to communicate with the student's teachers in this way prior to departure will result in the reclassification of the absences as unexcused. See the section on unexcused class absences below.

If a student misses a class in which there is an assessment scheduled or an assignment due, but attends other classes on the same day, the student is expected to submit the assignment or take the test that day unless the teacher and student work out a different mutually agreed upon time. If such arrangements are not made, the student will incur a 10% grade reduction late penalty per school day until the assignment is submitted or the test taken.

## Medical appointments

Students are expected to schedule non-emergency medical treatment, including appointments with the counselors or athletic trainers in the UNCSA Wellness Center, at a time when they do not have a scheduled class. If a class absence is unavoidable, the following procedure must be followed:

- Medical appointments provided by the UNCSA Wellness Center will be documented on a daily report to the High School Academic Program office, but the student is still responsible for notifying the High School Academic Program office **before the day of the appointment** if the student finds that a class absence is unavoidable in making a Wellness Center appointment.
- Students who do not clear their conflicting Wellness Center appointments with the High School Academic Program office will not be excused from class.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for letting the High School Academic Program office know about personally-arranged off-campus medical appointments at least one week in advance if possible. Students must also present a doctor's note upon their return to campus to document all off-campus medical appointments that result in class absences.

## Personal Reasons

Absences for personal reasons, such as religious holidays or family events, will be considered on an individual basis upon the presentation of a written request from a parent or guardian. The written request should be submitted to the High School Academic Program office **at least one (1) week prior to the proposed departure date**. Please note: UNC policy allows each student a maximum of two (2) excused absences each academic year for religious observances.

## Arts-related Absences

Arts-related absences, including those for activities sponsored by UNCOSA, are not automatically excused.

**UNCOSA-sponsored activities:** The student's art school will notify the High School Academic Program office in writing at least one (1) week in advance if a student is to be absent from class for UNCOSA-sponsored activities. **Students are not automatically excused from academic classes for UNCOSA rehearsals, costume fittings, on-campus auditions, private lessons, juries, or other arts activities.** (Note: All art school notifications must come from the arts school dean or the dean's designee.)

- Personally-arranged arts activities: If a student chooses to be absent from class to attend a non-UNCOSA-sponsored arts activity such as a concert, competition, or summer program audition, the student must follow the planned excused absence procedures above. Failure to properly notify the High School Academic Program office may result in unexcused absences.

## College visits and off-campus auditions

High School seniors who wish to be excused from class to visit colleges or participate in off-campus auditions or interviews should complete the planned excused absence process described above. A written request from a parent/guardian identifying the college or audition location, with the dates and the times of the scheduled departure and return, must be sent to the High School Academic Program office at least one (1) week prior to the student's departure. Seniors are expected to schedule college visits and auditions to avoid being out of academic classes for more than two consecutive class days. Seniors are allowed a maximum of six (6) total absences in one academic year for college visits or auditions. Students in grades 9-11 are allowed a maximum of two (2) total excused absences in one academic year for off-campus auditions (e.g., for summer programs). Should a senior request more than six absences, the student's teachers, the Guidance Counselor, and the Associate Dean of the High School Academic Program will evaluate the request in light of student's performance in class, the number of days already missed, and other considerations, to determine if the absences will be recorded as excused or unexcused. **Please remember that a student who misses 15 or more class meetings in a course during a single semester, for any reason, may not receive credit for the course that semester.**

## Requests for early departures at holiday breaks and other school breaks

Students who find it necessary to leave campus before the official end of classes prior to a holiday break or other school break (such as fall or spring break) must have a parent/guardian notify the High School Academic Program office at least one (1) week in advance of the absence. **However, vacation or general travel plans are NOT acceptable reasons for early departures, and absences for these reasons will be recorded as unexcused. Please pay attention to the academic calendar and plan your travel itineraries accordingly.**

## Requests for early departures at the end of the spring semester

Students who find it necessary to leave campus before the official end of spring semester must follow special clearance procedures (below). Early departure requests must be approved, as missing the last days of the spring semester will mean that a student misses final academic exams. Teachers are not always able to reschedule final exams for individual students, nor are they expected to. **Vacation or general travel plans are NOT acceptable reasons for early departures, and absences for these reasons will be recorded as unexcused. Please pay attention to the academic calendar and plan your travel itineraries accordingly.**

1. The parent or guardian must notify the High School Academic Program office in writing at least two (2) weeks before the first day of final exams, stating the date and reason for the early departure.

2. If the request is approved, the Academic Program office will process the Early Departure form, which will document the student's rescheduled exam times. Students who leave campus without full clearance will receive unexcused absences and potentially receive failing grades on their final exams.

## **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

When a student acquires, during a single semester, a first unexcused absence in a course, the High School Academic Program office will notify the student, the parents, the teacher, the arts school dean, and the High School Residence Life staff via email.

After the first unexcused absence, each subsequent unexcused absence will count twice (in effect, as two absences) toward the total absence threshold of eight (8) for the semester (the threshold for second semester seniors is 12). As noted previously, once a student crosses this threshold, the student will incur the one-step grade deduction penalty for each additional class missed. It is up to the teacher's discretion whether to allow a student to make up work missed from such an absence or to impose a grade penalty on the assignment. Individual teacher guidelines for make-up work will be published in course syllabi.

Please note, too, that an accumulation of three (3) instances of unexcused tardiness to class will result in the recording of one (1) unexcused absence on the next class date following the third unexcused tardiness. Unexcused tardiness to class in excess of 15 minutes counts automatically as one full unexcused absence in that class for that day.

## **C. High School Academic Integrity Policy**

All work, unless cited or credited where appropriate (such as a research project) is to be solely a student's own work. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise presenting the work of others without appropriate credit or acknowledgment will result in a penalty for that assignment, to be determined by the teacher. (Penalties can range from a verbal warning in minor instances to an 'F' for that assignment, with a requirement to redo said assignment for no credit.) Additionally, incidents of dishonesty in one's coursework will be documented by the teacher and filed with the Academic Office as part of the student's record, and the student will be required to meet with the appropriate Program Director, Associate Dean, or Dean. Parents or Guardians of the student will be notified of the violation and its attendant consequences. Repeated incidents of dishonesty in one's coursework may result in the student being placed on probation, removal from a class, or dismissal from the High School. Administrative sanctions from the appropriate Program Director, Associate Dean, or appropriate Dean may be appealed in writing to the Provost's Office for review.

## **D. Academic Probation**

Because a high school student's graduation from UNCSEA is contingent upon the successful completion of required academic courses, the High School Academic Program may place newly admitted or currently enrolled students on academic probation. The probation policy can be found in the Institutional Policies section of this academic bulletin.

## **E. Long-Term Absence for Medical Reasons**

A student who must leave school for medical reasons, either by order of the UNCSEA Wellness Center or by choice (with a physician's written recommendation), may remain enrolled in High School Academic Program courses with excused absences for up to a total of twelve (12) consecutive academic class days. Arts Wednesdays will not count against these twelve days. During this time, the student's academic teachers will make reasonable efforts to send home the student's academic coursework and assignments. After missing twelve consecutive academic class days, however, a student on medical leave will be withdrawn from UNCSEA and UNCSEA will assist the student in the process of transferring to another school by providing documentation of academic work completed while enrolled at UNCSEA. A student withdrawn from UNCSEA after an extended medical leave will be allowed to re-apply for admission for the

next academic semester. Acceptance will be subject to the approval of the UNCOSA Wellness Center, the relevant Art School Dean, and the High School Academic Program.

## **F. Non-Resident Status Graduation**

In rare circumstances, twelfth-grade students who must withdraw from UNCOSA during the academic year may receive permission, upon request, to complete their UNCOSA high school diploma requirements through an approved correspondence or on-line program and qualify to receive the UNCOSA high school diploma. Typically, only seniors who have experienced a catastrophic event (medical or financial) or who have been hired by a professional performing arts company during the course of their senior year may be given permission to graduate non-residentially. These students must receive permission from their Arts School Dean and from the High School Academic Program, which maintains the UNCOSA high school graduation list and monitors a student's progress while on non-resident status. This permission is valid for one twelve-month period from the date of permission, after which the High School Academic Program will permanently remove a non-resident student from the graduation list. High school seniors who have been suspended long-semester from UNCOSA for disciplinary reasons are not eligible to graduate from UNCOSA on a non-resident status basis and must adhere to the requirements of their suspension for re-applying to and graduating from UNCOSA.

## **IV. High School Diploma Requirements**

Students must meet the course and credit requirements of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts for the high school diploma. These academic requirements are similar to the diploma requirements at traditional public and private high schools. Additionally, the High School Academic Program requires that all 12th-graders be enrolled in at least two academic courses, that all 11th-graders be enrolled in at least three academic courses, and that all 10th-graders and all 9th-graders be enrolled in at least four academic courses throughout the school year. Electives beyond the basic academic requirements for graduation may be chosen from available high school courses for qualified students, college courses, schedule permitting. UNCOSA high school students may not take academic courses in the High School Academic Program unless they are enrolled full-time in a UNCOSA arts program, with the exception of students approved by both the High School Academic Program and a student's art school for Non-Resident Status Graduation. Furthermore, no UNCOSA high school student may be simultaneously enrolled in another academic credit-granting school, including correspondence and on-line programs, without the permission of the High School Academic Program.

### **The Citizen Artist Graduation Requirement**

The Citizen Artist graduation requirement is part of the 20 units required for a student to earn a diploma from UNCOSA's High School Academic Program. The core of the requirement is the successful completion of a Citizen Artist-designated course, each of which will house a robust, year-long citizen artist project.

Seniors will have a menu of courses (designated in the "High School Courses" section) from which they can choose that will fulfill the Citizen Artist requirement. No matter the subject area, a number of core skills will be consistent across all of these courses and projects; students will receive some training in, and feedback and assessment on, the following skills:

- Research
- Oral Presentation
- Visual Presentation
- Civic Action

Further, in terms of these core skills, there will be some common assessments to ensure consistency of expectations. There will also be a final exhibition of student work, with smaller formative assessments spaced thoughtfully throughout the year to help support the students by breaking up their projects into more manageable stages and providing formal feedback opportunities for students on their progress.

**Total Credits Required for High School Graduation\***

English	4 units
Mathematics ( <i>Including Algebra I</i> )	3 units
Science ( <i>1 Physical Science, 1 Biology, 1 Additional Science</i> )	3 units
Social Studies ( <i>1 U.S. History, 1 Civics/Economics, 1 World History</i> )	3 units
Wellness/Health and Physical Education	1 unit
Electives ( <i>Including Arts</i> )	6 units
Total	20 units

*\*Total to be accumulated in grades 9-12*