

About Academics

Principia College offers academic programs leading to a Bachelor of Arts (<http://catalog.principiacollege.edu/summary-degree-requirements-ba/>) or a Bachelor of Science (<http://catalog.principiacollege.edu/summary-degree-requirements-bs/>) degree. Each of these degrees has its own requirements, described in the academic programs section of this catalog.

Principia's faculty members consider teaching their primary purpose. Their research, writing, and professional activities complement and deepen their teaching. Small classes allow students to enjoy a lively interaction with faculty. These stimulating exchanges extend beyond the classroom, laboratory, or studio to informal visits in faculty offices, homes, or by telephone.

Principia operates on the semester system, with two sixteen-week terms per year: fall and spring semesters. Each semester consists of fourteen weeks of classes, one week of in-term break, and an exam week at the end of the semester.

Course credit is measured in semester hours. A semester hour represents three hours of student work per credit per week for fourteen weeks. Depending on the method of instruction, the ratio between contact time and student work outside of class varies. No academic credit is given to PE. One PE course is comprised of a minimum of 42 hours of activity (three hours per week for fourteen weeks).

To be considered a full-time student, a student must carry a minimum of twelve semester hours per semester. **A normal academic load is fifteen semester hours per semester, which allows a student to complete the required 120 semester hours in four years.** Students are expected to complete their degrees within eight semesters. In order to remain enrolled beyond eight semesters, a student must petition for extended study.

Each incoming student starts with an "undeclared" major and works closely with a new-student advisor. These advisors help students select courses, explore possible majors, start to connect skills and interests to potential career ideas, and develop an educational plan which may include extracurricular activities. Students may declare a major at any time after their first term begins. Typically students will declare a major within the first year or two of college, and the sooner they decide on a major and take this important step, the easier it will be to plan their major coursework. Once a major has been declared, the student will be advised by a faculty member in that academic program.

The Advising and Academic Success Center (AASC) administers the advising program and offers services designed to support all students in their academic endeavors. Support could relate to skills such as:

- self-assessment
- understanding course/assignment expectations
- improving time management and organization
- improving study skills
- improving communication with professors

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The academic accessibility process is administered by AASC alongside students who request assistance in identifying and addressing disabilities that impact learning and other individual learning needs.

The Writing Center offers programming to equip all students to engage with and succeed in research and writing assignments across the curriculum, including the writing proficiency graduation requirement. Writing Center faculty teach for-credit courses in writing that may also include academic literacy/reading strategies, for all students. In addition, Writing Center faculty support students by offering one-on-one sessions and group workshops throughout the term. The Writing Center also trains and hires writing/research tutors to guide their peers through the paper-writing process.

Majors, minors, and courses available at Principia College are described in Academic Programs (<http://catalog.principiacollege.edu/majors-minors/>). Students desiring to go beyond regular curricular offerings should consult Independent Study (<http://catalog.principiacollege.edu/credit-rules/#independent-study>) and Individualized Majors and Minors (<http://catalog.principiacollege.edu/majors-minors/individualized-majors/>).

Principia also offers three types of off-campus programs: Principia Study Abroads, domestic field programs, and academic internships. See Off-Campus Programs (<http://catalog.principiacollege.edu/off-campus-programs/>).