

ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Mission Statement

Newark Academy will contribute to society thoughtful and compassionate citizens who embrace their responsibilities as ethical, intellectual and civic stewards in the global environment.

Philosophy

The motto of Newark Academy, *ad lumen*, implies the mission of the school: toward enlightenment. Since 1774 this motto has illustrated our belief that education is a shared process of inquiry, a process in which students strive to expand the horizons of their minds through dialogue with teachers, peers, and community. A Newark Academy graduate has a significant grounding in content knowledge and an understanding of the value of dialogue.

Newark Academy recognizes that a responsible education is best offered in an inclusive community with a variety of backgrounds; our differences both expand and refine our inquiries. Bound together through the Newark Academy Honor Code, and guided by the Faculty, all members of our community share the common pursuit of respect, scholarship, and integrity. Service to Newark Academy is our timely mission, but service to the greater community is our ultimate goal.

Our intent is to contribute to the world thinking and informed citizens, who are grounded in the core disciplines, and trained in the process of inquiry itself. Newark Academy graduates move with confidence and humility into the world knowing that their years of study equip them to deal with the challenges they will face in the future. As responsible citizens, Newark Academy graduates recognize that they are charged with a vital mission.

Honor Code

In an environment where educational enlightenment and growth are the goals, the integrity of each member of the community is crucial. The Honor Code, the details of which are delineated in the *Student and Family Handbook*, serves to reinforce the understanding that members of the Newark Academy community uphold principles of honor and integrity in dealing with people, personal property, and academic work. A breach of the Honor Code is a breach not only of the individual's integrity, but also of the integrity of the community as a whole.

Intellectual Engagement

The goal of many schools is *academic engagement*. This means learning how to be a responsible student—e.g. doing homework, participating in class, preparing for assessments—and, therefore, doing well in school. At Newark Academy, we assume a commitment to academic engagement at the time of admission and its achievement by Upper School. Our larger goal is *intellectual engagement*. This means thinking critically, open-mindedly and genuinely about material presented. As it is intrinsic and voluntary, it means using class time and assignments to probe and question for the sake of understanding. When substantively engaged, students adopt a personal, psychological stake in the problem at hand. As a result, there is a concern for the quality, not just completion, of schoolwork. Ultimately, there is a concern for the broader implications and applications of their pursuits.

Global Citizenship

It is our aim to educate our students for life in a more globalized future. As global citizens, Newark Academy students strive to: appreciate different perspectives and opinions; engage with other cultures daily; understand the causes and implications of global issues; be resilient in a rapidly changing world; and translate their education into ethical action.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program

Newark Academy was the first school in New Jersey authorized to offer the IB Diploma Program (1991) and has been unusually successful in its diploma acquisition rate (92%). It is a rigorous two-year academic curriculum whose breadth and depth of inquiry challenge very able students. While it is highly respected among university officials, NA students are

encouraged to pursue it primarily for its intellectual rewards and international perspective. Some students pursue it for admissions to universities overseas. Strong performance on the culminating exams leads to college credit and/or advanced standing at most colleges and universities. While nearly all NA students take individual IB courses (akin to taking individual AP courses), approximately 25-30% percent of each graduating class chooses to pursue the full IB Diploma Program. It has four required components, summarized below. A more detailed description of the IB Program can be found in Appendix A.

1. Subjects and Exams - Diploma seekers must take subjects in each of six academic groups. Three or four of these subjects must be taken at the higher level (HL), the rest at the standard level (SL).
2. Theory of Knowledge (TOK) - This seminar lies at the heart of the IB program, providing a forum for students to reflect upon what they are learning in their other coursework by examining the nature of Knowledge. (See the Humanities section for a fuller description.)
3. Extended Essay - All diploma candidates do an independent research project on a topic of their own choosing while working with a faculty mentor. They do their research and much of their writing in the summer following their junior year. The work culminates in a scholarly paper of no more than 4,000 words, due at the beginning of senior year.
4. Creativity, Action, Service - Over the course of the two years, IB diploma candidates must commit to the spirit of CAS by engaging in and reflecting upon their non-academic passions. This includes pursuits such as community service, participation in athletics, arts, civic organizations, religious activities, clubs, outdoor activities, etc. Completing this expectation is rarely a hurdle for Newark Academy students.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Advanced Placement courses designed by the College Board provide college level work for high school study. Strong performance on the culminating exams often leads to college credit and/or advanced standing at most colleges and universities. Newark Academy offers preparation for AP exams in ten subjects across academic disciplines. In addition, individual students may register to take any AP exam of interest to them and for which they feel prepared. For AP testing information contact, please the Dean of Faculty or visit <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

IB and AP Exams

IB and AP coursework are hallmarks of Newark Academy's academic program. These rigorous college level courses culminate in standardized exams each May. Students in an AP or IB course are required to take the associated exam, the fees for which are paid by the student. Newark Academy registers students for these tests, and administers them at the school. Students' scores on these exams can result in advanced placement and/or course credit upon their matriculation in college. As each college has its own policy regarding AP and IB exam results, individual colleges and their relevant departments should be consulted in order to learn the ramifications of various exam results. Any student who does not make a good faith effort on the standardized exam in May will remain enrolled in the course until the end of the school year and will take a faculty-made assessment at that time.

Curriculum Committee

Proposals for new courses and curricular changes are considered by Newark Academy's Curriculum Committee, which is composed of a faculty member from each department, academic administrators and four student representatives. While the initial idea for a curriculum change may come from any member of the school community, the proposal must be supported by and brought to the Committee by the relevant department or division for consideration.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Immersion Experiences

Beginning with the Class of 2013, all Upper School students are required to complete successfully an approved immersion experience. These experiences seek to engage students in an intensive cultural or environmental exploration, developing in them an appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures, peoples and perspectives in the world.

This requirement is flexibly fulfilled as it can be done at any time during the four year of high school, it can focus on any of four major themes, and it can be structured in a variety of ways. (A more detailed description of the Immersion Experiences Program can be found in Appendix B.)

Off-Campus Study

Newark Academy encourages Upper School students to expand their educational horizons through off-campus experiential learning opportunities. To this end, we promote seven semester programs for juniors and sophomores, each of which has a unique academic and experiential learning focus and most of which fulfill the Immersion Requirement (above). They are:

- *The Mountain School* (Vershire, VT)
- *Maine Coast Semester* (Wiscasset, ME)
- *Rocky Mountain Semester* (Leadville, CO)
- *The Island School* (Eleuthera, BAH)
- *The Oxbow School* (Napa, CA)
- *The Outdoor Academy* (Pisgah Forest, NC)
- *The School for Ethics and Global Leadership* (Washington, DC)

We also promote the year-long cultural and linguistic home-stay immersion experiences for juniors offered by *School Year Abroad*. Their programs are located in China, France, Italy, Spain and Vietnam. Internal applications for all off-campus study programs are due in January of the preceding year. For more information, contact the Upper School Principal.

Senior Projects

During the course of their senior year, students research and design an 80-hour project to be completed at the end of the year. Senior projects are “mini-internships” and include such varied choices as working with a fashion designer, shadowing a doctor or lawyer, working with an auto mechanic, designing toys, canoeing a major waterway, teaching or coaching children, learning about the stock market with an investor, creating web pages, building houses, creating a photodocumentary about China, repairing musical instruments, or gaining EMT or first-aid certification. Students receive detailed information including proposal instructions during their senior year. For more information, contact the Dean of Students.

The Global Speaker Series

Newark Academy's popular Global Speaker Series brings in five or six speakers each year to further our mission of helping our students become global and ethical stewards. Global speakers share their diverse experiences with our community through school-wide assemblies followed by open forums, workshops, and class visits. Recent speakers include Arn Chorn-Pond, musician, human rights promoter, and survivor of the Khmer Rouge genocide; Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Sonia Nazario who has written on Latin American children who attempt to immigrate alone and atop trains in search of their parents; and scholar-refugee Tompson Makahamadze, an activist against the brutalities of the government of Zimbabwe.

GRADUATION

Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate from Newark Academy, students in the Classes of 2010-2012 must earn a minimum of 80 credits.* Beginning with the Class of 2013, students must earn a minimum of 84 credits. (Four credits are awarded for the successful completion of a full-time, year-long course; two credits for a semester course.) Other graduation requirements include:

- 4 years of English;
- 3 years of Mathematics;
- 3 Laboratory Science courses, two of which must be Biology, Chemistry or Physics;
- 3 years of Humanities through European history;
- Foreign Language through level 3;
- 1 year of Art;
- 4 years of Health and Physical Education;
- a successfully completed Immersion Experience (beginning with the Class of 2013);
- a successfully completed Senior Project; and
- a successfully completed Community Service requirement (minimum: 10 hours per year).

*[*Note: The 2010-11 school year marked a shift in the school's grade reporting calendar from trimesters to semesters, as well as a shift in the credit value for a full-time year-long course from three to four. At that time, many requirements and policies shifted to adapt to the new system. Care is being taken to ensure continuity of policy for those classes affected by the transition.]*

Waiver from a Graduation Requirement

The school must be confident that each of its students can complete the curriculum required for graduation. In exceptional circumstances, a student may request in writing a waiver from a Newark Academy graduation requirement. For all students requesting a waiver, appropriate documentation from a qualified professional is required. A committee is formed to consider each request. The committee will be composed of the Upper School Principal, the School Counselor, the Learning Consultant and the relevant Department Chair. The committee will make a recommendation to the Head of School after analysis of the documentation (e.g. a medical or individualized learning evaluation, standardized testing results, reports from current and previous teachers, etc.). The Head of School will make the final decision on the waiver, and a written copy of this decision will be sent to the student's home.

Academic Requirements for Seniors

A senior must pass a minimum of five courses each semester, earning at least 20 credits for the year. A senior who fails a course in the fall semester will be expected to take a sixth course in the spring semester.

A student may not take more than six and a half courses in any semester. A senior must pass five courses in the spring semester. Credits earned in previous semesters or terms may not be applied to this requirement. A failed course must be made up before a diploma may be granted.

A senior who fails a course in the spring semester will be given the opportunity to take a final examination or other evaluation in June. Such an examination or evaluation will be averaged with the spring semester grades within departmental policy and may enable the student to pass the course.

Permission to leave on a senior project prior to senior check out day must be requested prior to April 1 and approved by the Dean of Students and the senior project advisors.

Participation in Commencement

A senior will be permitted to participate in the Commencement ceremony if all graduation requirements can reasonably be expected to be completed by September 1.

SCHEDULING

Passion and the Liberal Arts

Newark Academy offers a college preparatory program in the liberal arts. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves in *all* academic disciplines for as long as possible. They are also encouraged to find and pursue their passions. For some, this means taking multiple courses in a favorite department. For others, it means continuing their academic interests in extracurricular contexts (e.g. school newspaper, Robotics and Engineering Club, Model UN). Ultimately, our goal is to develop in our students a life-long passion for learning itself.

Course Scheduling Philosophy

During the process of scheduling courses, Newark Academy places students in courses that will take them from one level of learning to a higher level. Requirements exist to assure that students will have the academic credits for graduation and college admission. A student's academic load for a given year should challenge them and allow them to be successful, but not be so challenging or time-consuming as to be unmanageable. Students should seek to situate their academic load between the extremes of boredom and anxiety.

Class Placement Philosophy

As our admissions policy is selective, the range in academic abilities within classrooms is correspondingly narrow. English classes in grades 6-10, Humanities classes in grades 6-9, and Science classes in grades 6-9 are heterogeneously scheduled. The ranges of skill level and background knowledge, however, make ability grouping in courses at other grade levels advantageous. A student's placement in a discipline is evaluated every year. In determining the appropriate course level, each academic department considers prerequisite courses, achievement, and, in some cases, placement tests. The student and his or her advisor carefully preview the student's overall course load in the previous spring.

Course Loads

Middle School students take six courses including Arts, as well as Physical Education or Health. They are also required to participate on a sports team each season. Upper School students must take a minimum of five full-time academic courses from no fewer than four academic departments, as well as Physical Education or Health. An Upper School student may take a sixth course as an elective, including art. Students may only take six full-time academic courses with the permission of their advisor and the Upper School Principal.

Changing Courses during the School Year

Students are allowed to drop or add courses only during the first two cycles of each semester. Courses dropped after these deadlines will be recorded on the transcript as 'W' (withdrawal). The time limit for dropping an extra academic course, however, may be extended with the permission of the Upper School Principal. No student may withdraw from a course in the last two cycles of a semester. Students may move "up" in course *level* (e.g. from "regular" to Honors) only in the first semester. Students may move "down" in course *level* (e.g. from Honors to "regular") during either semester. Students may not change courses in the last two cycles of either semester. Changes of course level will appear on the transcript only if they occur after a semester has been completed.

Independent Study

Courses taught in the form of Independent Study are offered in two situations: when a student has exhausted the available courses in a department; or when a scheduling conflict prevents a student from taking a necessary course. Independent Studies, which must be approved by the relevant Principal, are only available in extant Newark Academy courses.

Newark Academy Summer Session

Students who successfully complete an NA Summer Session course for *advanced credit* will be enrolled automatically in the next sequential course for the subsequent the school year. In advanced credit courses, the Summer Session grade will appear on the student’s transcript, although it will not be included in the calculation of internal GPA. Students may also take courses through Newark Academy’s Summer Session for the purpose of *previewing* the following year’s curriculum.

Outside Coursework

Some students take courses at other institutions (usually in the summer). Those who wish to use the outside course to advance in our curriculum are usually required to take an NA exam in order to demonstrate mastery (typically, with a minimal passing grade of 80). Such students are also strongly advised to vet the outside curriculum with the help of the relevant Department Chair prior to enrolling in the course to ensure they will be on track. Courses taken at outside institutions are not included on NA’s transcript.

GRADING

Philosophy and Standards

Newark Academy prepares young men and women for challenging university programs in the nation's leading institutions. The grades of ‘A’ through ‘F’ are evaluations to indicate a student's level of knowledge and skill mastery. An ‘A’ earned in ninth grade English indicates a knowledge and skill mastery appropriate for a grade nine student in a college preparatory program; while an ‘A’ in eleventh grade indicates a much greater sophistication of knowledge and skills.

Newark Academy does not set arbitrary quotas or systems for grade distribution. The standards of expectation in each course should remain fairly constant and students are graded against those standards.

Newark Academy has a reputation among universities for its solid academic program and its honest evaluation of student academic work. When a student applies to college, Newark Academy sends an accompanying grade distribution chart that enables the college to interpret better the meaning of an individual grade in individual courses.

Grading System

The system of academic grading is as follows:

93–100	A	Excellent
90–92	A-	
87–89	B+	
83–86	B	Very Good
80–82	B-	
77–79	C+	
73–76	C	Proficient
70–72	C-	
65–69	D	Minimum Pass
Below 65	F	No Credit
	P	Pass
	INC	Incomplete
	W	Withdrawal

Final Year Grades

Final grades in full-year courses are determined from the two semester grades. The grade for the spring semester—due its greater length and recency—will serve as a tie-breaker.

GPA and Ranking

To minimize internal competition and to advantage all of our students in the college search process, Newark Academy does not publish GPA information and does not rank its students. GPAs are shared privately with students and their families at the

outset of the college search process in order to provide a benchmark for comparison with previous NA applicants at given colleges. The GPA is based on a traditional 4.0 system with a weight of 0.4 added to Honors, AP and IB courses.

Grade Reporting

Mid-term reports with comments and grades are mailed home for each of the school year's two semesters in order to provide prescriptive help to students. Grade reports with optional comments are sent home at the end of the semesters. For year-long courses, only final year grades are recorded. For semester courses, grades are recorded on the official transcript. Parents of all new students and of those experiencing academic difficulty receive email progress reports one month into the school year. In addition, progress reports are emailed periodically to update parents on academic progress. Specific dates for these reports are given on the school calendar.

Academic Probation

A student who in any semester receives two or more grades below 'C-' including an official "Withdrawal" from a course, or who earns one grade of 'F' will be placed on Academic Probation until the student makes substantial improvement in a subsequent semester. Whenever a student is placed on Academic Probation, the faculty and administration will consider the appropriateness of greater structure in the student's schedule and additional academic support. Newark Academy will not re-enroll a student who accumulates three or more semester grades below 'C-' during the academic year, unless the faculty, in reviewing the student's total performance, determines that the student has the academic potential, maturity and attitude that indicate a reasonable likelihood of future academic success at the school. A student who accumulates three or more semester grades below a 'C-' by the end of the fall semester may be asked to withdraw from the school mid-year.

Required Summer Coursework

Students who do not master the work of a sequential course must either make up the work in summer school or repeat the course the next school year. A sequential course is one in which there is content mastery and skill development needed for success in the next course level. Sequential courses are as follows:

- English: 6, 7, 8, *World Literature*, *American Literature*, *British Literature*
- Humanities: courses through *Western Heritage*
- Language: levels A, B, C, 1, 2, 3
- Mathematics: courses through *Algebra 2/Trig*
- Science: courses through *Biology*

The general guidelines for *required* summer school are as follows:

- A single semester grade of 'D' or 'F' requires one semester to be made-up: three weeks of summer school.
- Two semester grades of 'D' or 'F' require the full course to be made-up: six weeks of summer school.

Note that students who are required to make up English or Humanities credits may be asked to enroll in a course that will strengthen skills rather than repeat course content. This may be in addition to, or in lieu of, reviewing course content.

Retests

If a teacher believes that a student's educational progress will be furthered by re-examination, the teacher may grant a retest. However, the teacher will not give a student the opportunity to re-do poor quality work if he or she believes that a "second chance" will encourage bad study habits or misleading assumptions about work performance. If a retest is given, the cumulative grade cannot be higher than 'C.'

Late Work and Submission of Work

Papers, projects, lab reports, make-up quizzes, and tests are penalized one grade per class meeting. Late work is accepted for credit no more than one cycle beyond its due date. Homework may not be submitted for credit after it has been reviewed and/or collected in class. In the event of an unexcused absence, work may be made up only at the discretion of the teacher in conjunction with the Dean of Students. If a teacher has agreed to accept work at a time other than the class period during which it is due, the student must submit the work to the teacher in person or via email (if acceptable to the teacher), but not by leaving it for them someplace.

Extension of Semester Deadlines

In exceptional circumstances a teacher, with administrative approval, may grant a student's request for an extension of course deadlines beyond the end of the semester. In this situation, an 'Inc' will be indicated on the grade report. The work must be completed within one cycle of the subsequent semester. If it is not, the semester grade will be calculated with the missing work counted as a "zero."

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Teacher Conferences

Students are encouraged to meet with their teachers on an individual basis. Conferences may be scheduled, at the student's or teacher's initiative, for a variety of purposes: to discuss topics of interest, to ask questions, to obtain extra help, or to discuss homework. If they do not have common free periods during the day, students can meet with their teachers during the after school Activity Period from 2:30-3:15.

Assessment Overload

If a student has more than two major assessments—tests, projects, papers, reports—due on the same day, the student may request to reschedule those assignments beyond the two maximum. (Two quizzes equal one test.) Students in this situation should see the Middle or Upper School Principal at least two school days in advance to secure written permission for postponing any additional assessments.

Study Hall

Middle School students are assigned to supervised study halls when they are not scheduled for classes. Freshmen who earn any grade lower than 'B-' at the midterm juncture of the fall semester are automatically placed in two study halls per cycle for the balance of the semester. Similar evaluations are made at the end of the fall semester and at spring midterm. Older students may be assigned to study halls at the recommendation of their teachers. To maximize student concentration and efficiency, study halls are silent. Group work is not allowed and students may not go to the library. The study hall proctor may excuse a student to work with a teacher only if he or she provides the proctor with a note from the teacher at the beginning of the period. An unexcused absence from study hall is treated as a class cut.

Tutors and Tutoring

The role of a tutor (defined as anyone—a paid tutor, a relative, a peer, etc—who provides academic assistance to a student) is to help students improve their skills and learning rather than to do their work or ensure their grades. Assignment-specific tutoring falls outside the appropriate role of the tutor. Thus, a tutor might properly focus on improving close-reading skills or choosing paper topics or arguing a thesis or interpreting literature, but cannot assist with the actual writing or revision of an assignment that will be handed in as the student's work except in the general "no pen in hand" manner. Because they are not a student's own work, assignments deemed to have violated the letter or spirit of the tutoring policy are against the Honor Code and subject to Honor Council action. Families are strongly encouraged to inform the current teacher of any formal tutoring arrangement so that the educators may work together.

Testing Center

Any student who is absent on the day of a quiz, test or other in-class assessment will be required to make up that assessment on the day of her or his return. The student should speak to the teacher at or immediately after Morning Meeting on the first day she or he returns to arrange for the make-up. The teacher may ask the student to take the test during class or in the Testing center. The Testing Center is available to students Monday through Friday from 2:30-3:30. A faculty member will be present to proctor students taking assessments.

Study Skills

Students who are having difficulty in their course work are encouraged to speak to their advisor or teachers to determine the reasons for their difficulties and to discuss support options. Students who need additional support and assistance in learning skills are scheduled for routine meetings with the school's Learning Specialist.

Students with Special Needs

Newark Academy does not have a program developed specifically for students with disabilities. However, as it is our goal to help each student to achieve in our academic program, we provide a variety of academic and emotional support strategies as well as some specific accommodations.

Newark Academy offers specific accommodations for students with verified disabilities. Students with a verified disability must be able to succeed in the regular academic program using only those accommodations and auxiliary aids that do not require a fundamental change in Newark Academy's mission, policies, programs or staffing. For more information about learning issues and accommodations, please consult the *Student and Family Handbook* or the Learning Specialist.