

Repeating a Class

Deciding whether to retake a class is a bit of a complicated question so it might be good to make an appointment with your advisor so that you could talk about it in greater depth.

In general, repeating a class can be an opportunity to improve your GPA, but you need to know your options.

You might want to repeat a course when...

- there's a class that you need to have a certain grade in for a major/minor you're considering
- there's a class that you failed and you need to have credit for that class in particular for a major/minor you're considering
- you need to prove to graduate school that you can master that content area (i.e. passing Chemistry because you want to go to Med School)
- you feel like you need to have a better understanding of the content in a class before you can move on to the next level
- you're on academic probation or are in danger of reaching academic suspension and need to boost your GPA- see <http://www.jmu.edu/acstudserv/standing.shtml#standing> for GPA cutoffs

You have 2 ways of retaking something: **Repeat Forgive** or **Repeat Credit**. Both are described here in the catalog: <http://www.jmu.edu/catalog/15/academic-policy.shtml#RepeatingCourses>.

Repeat Credit

"Repeat credit" means that you're re-taking a class that you did poorly in, and your 1st grade and 2nd grade are averaged together (along with all of your other classes) into your total GPA. This can boost your GPA a little, but not as much as if you do a "repeat forgive" (see below for more info on that).

Since "repeat credit" just averages your 2 grades together, in most cases you're better off just taking other classes in which you think you'll do well to boost your GPA- instead of retaking the one that you did poorly in. The presumption here is that since you did poorly the first time, you might struggle again the second time around, but taking a class in a subject area that you prefer might be even better for your GPA. But if you want to retake a course for one of the reasons listed above and you don't want to use your "repeat forgive" (as described below), "repeat credit" is the way to go.

Repeat Forgive

"Repeat forgive" means that you're re-taking a class that you did poorly in, and want your 2nd grade to replace the 1st grade you had in the course. Because your 1st grade will no longer be calculated in your GPA this can really help your overall grade point average. However, if you do worse in the class or even have the same grade the 2nd time compared to the 1st time you took the class, there's no going back- you've still used your "repeat forgive".

You only get to use "repeat forgive" twice while you're a student at JMU, so you want to be careful about when you use it.

Think about whether you might need to use a "repeat forgive" option early in your time at JMU because you're trying to get into a major requires you to have a certain GPA in a certain class... or whether you

might need to save "repeat forgive" options for later in your time at JMU because of potentially challenging classes that your major requires.

There is no statute of limitations on when you must use your "repeat forgive", so if you're not sure what to do and you don't need to have a certain GPA for your major and you're still in good academic standing overall (a 2.0 or above) you could always save your "repeat forgive" options until senior year and use them to fix some of your earlier lower grades. (The only disadvantage with this approach is that by that point you would probably have forgotten most of the content from the first time you took the course so it would be like starting over.) **If your GPA is low, however (below a 2.0), you want to consider using your "repeat forgive" soon in order to avoid suspension.** Have questions about this? Schedule an appointment with your advisor to talk more.

You also have the option to change a class you registered for as "repeat forgive" into "repeat credit" if it's mid-semester and you're realizing that you're not doing as well as you hoped in the class you're retaking and you don't want to waste your "repeat forgive". See http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/students/print_dates.shtml and click on the semester, and then scroll down to the date for "Change a course credit option (including repeats)" to know when your last day would be to change the status of a class.

Once you've decided, you need to change your grading options for the class

Once you've made the decision of how you want to retake a course, you can make that selection in MyMadison when you register for a course. After you pick the time and section for the class you want to retake, there will be a screen asking about "grading options" and you'll choose "repeat forgive" or "repeat credit" from the pulldown menu. See screenshot to the right.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Classes' page in MyMadison. The title is '1. Select classes to add - Enrollment Preferences'. Below this, it says 'Spring 2011 | Undergraduate | James Madison University'. The selected course is 'PSYC 220 - PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE'. Under 'Class Preferences', the course 'PSYC 220-0001' is listed as a 'Lecture' and is 'Open'. The 'Grading' option is set to 'Graded' with 'Units' of '3.00'. There is a 'Repeat Code' dropdown menu. A callout box with a blue border and a speech bubble icon says: 'If you want to take this class Repeat Forgiveness or as Repeat Credit, select a Repeat Code.' At the bottom right, there are 'CANCEL' and 'NEXT' buttons. A mouse cursor is pointing at the 'NEXT' button.

IMPORTANT: If you've already registered for a course and want to make it "repeat forgive" or "repeat credit", go to the Registrar's Office on the 5th floor of the Student Success Center, and ask them to manually change the grading option of the course for you to either "repeat forgive" or "repeat credit". **(Do NOT try to drop the class and then add it back to your schedule via MyMadison to change the grading option- you're likely to lose your seat.)**

You have to make up your mind about making a class "repeat forgive" or "repeat credit" before the Course Adjustment Deadline. See http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/students/print_dates.shtml and click on the semester, and then scroll down to the date for "Change a course credit option (including repeats)" to know when your last day would be to change the status of a class.

Have questions?

Talking about this with your advisor can help. If you have questions about repeating a class, schedule an appointment to talk with your advisor about the decision.