

Registrar: Andrea DeMayo, M.Ed.  
(413) 662-5216. registrar@mcla.edu

# ACADEMIC INFORMATION AND POLICIES

In keeping with its mission, the College has approved policies aimed at strengthening the academic environment.

## COURSE

**Load** - Fifteen (15) credit hours is the normal academic course load at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Students may enroll for up to eighteen (18) credit hours without special permission. Students wishing to enroll for more than eighteen (18) credit hours must secure the permission of their advisors. The Dean of Academic Studies must approve any request above 20 credits. The Course Overload Permission Form may be obtained at the Registrar's Office.

## Add-Drop Procedures

**Addition of Courses** - Students may add courses during the first seven days of each semester. Forms for this purpose are available in the Registrar's Office.

**Dropping or Withdrawing From Courses** - Students have one week (five class days) to drop from a full semester course with no academic penalty and no notation that they were enrolled in the course on their records. Courses running less than an entire semester will have varying withdrawal dates based on the length of the course. Forms for this purpose are available in the Registrar's Office. Students who withdraw between the second and the eighth week of a regular semester will incur no penalty as far as the quality point average is concerned but will have a notation of "W" on their permanent records. No student may withdraw from a course during a regular semester after the eighth week. *Note: A course is not officially added or dropped until the appropriate form has been completed by the student and advisor and has been validated by the Registrar's Office.*

*Any student not attending a course and not officially withdrawing will be issued a grade of "F" on his/her record. The "F" grade will be used in computing the student's grade point average.*

**Repeat Policy** - A course may be repeated. If the course is required and the student received an F, the course *must* be repeated. The grade earned in a repeated course replaces the original grade in the student's quality point average **even if the repeated grade is lower**. (The grade earned each time the student took the course remains on the student's transcript, but the course is marked "RX", and the originally attempted credit is not calculated into the quality point average.)

Students must complete a Repeat Course Form for each course they repeat. Repeat course work taken off campus must be approved **prior** to the course being taken. Forms to be completed include: off-campus approval and repeat course. Both forms are available in the Registrar's Office.

**Audit Policy** - A student may audit a course with the approval of the chairperson of the department and the consent of the instructor. Auditors are subject to any conditions established by the department or the instructor. No credit is awarded for audited courses. Such courses are officially reported on the student's transcript with the notation "AU" (Audit-No Credit) when all course conditions are met. Auditor status cannot be changed.

Students register for audit during the first week after the Add Period. A student who wishes to attend class before audit registration may do so with the consent of the instructor. Students are responsible for all course fees when auditing a course. Students who have registered for a grade have enrollment preference over auditing students.

## GRADING

**Grading System** - The College grading system is based on the 4.000 quality point method.

Grade	Quality Points	Grade	Quality Points
A	4.000	C	2.000
A-	3.700	C-	1.700
B+	3.300	D+	1.300
B	3.000	D	1.000
B-	2.700	D-	0.700
C+	2.300	F	0.000

Listed below are other grade notations that may appear on student records. These grades are not used in computing the quality point average.

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- AU Audit-No Credit. Indicates that the student has audited a course.
- I Incomplete. A temporary grade that may be reported only when a portion of the assigned work, as clearly indicated in the course syllabus, has not been completed because of the necessary absence of the student or for other reasons equally satisfactory to the instructor, and then only when the instructor judges the work already done by the student to be of passing quality. The course work must be completed by a date specified by the instructor. This date cannot exceed six (6) weeks after the beginning of the following semester. The "I" is then changed to a permanent letter grade. The obligation rests with the student to ask the instructor what work must be completed and what conditions, if any, must be met. The instructor and the student sign a standardized contract specifying the nature of the course work to be completed. Signed incomplete contracts must be submitted with grade rosters. If the course work is not completed before the deadline specified in the contract, the "I" will be changed to an "F". An "I" grade disqualifies a student for Dean's List recognition.
- P Pass. Indicates successful completion of a Pass/Fail course. Credit is awarded with no quality points.
- PC Pass Continue. This notation is used solely for courses offered by Learning Services. It indicates that a student has demonstrated both effort and progress in a course but requires additional time and work to complete the curriculum. A student who earns a PC grade must reenroll for the course in only the next semester of enrollment and must complete assigned work during this time. A student is entitled to only one "PC" grade per (SKIL) course. Once a student has been reenrolled for such a course, no further grades of "PC" can be awarded, nor can a student withdraw from the course. Only regular letter grades (A-F, and I) may then be assigned. Students receiving a "PC" grade on their transcript **are not eligible for the Dean's List** for that term.
- T Transfer. Indicates credit for course work that has been accepted by the College from another institution. No (grades) quality points are received for transfer work. Grades from other institutions do not appear on the MCLA transcript, and are not calculated into the MCLA GPA.
- W Withdrawal. Indicates withdrawal from a course in the third through the eighth week of the semester. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of all deadlines for withdrawal. No withdrawals for individual courses may be made past the withdrawal deadline.
- WX Withdrawal from College. The student has officially withdrawn from the College. A student may withdraw from the College prior to the first day of final exams. All courses will be given the notation "WX".

**Grade Point Average** - The grade point average is a numerical indication of the student's academic achievement. It is the quotient of the total quality points earned divided by the total credits attempted for all courses in which grades A through F were received. No quality points are assigned to notations AU, I, P, PC, T, W or WX.

The grade point average may be computed as follows:

- Multiply the quality points of the letter grade earned in each course by the number of credit hours assigned to the course.
- Total the quality points earned in all courses.
- Divide the sum by the total number of quality hours.

An Example of Grade Point Averaging:

Course	Grade	Quality Points	x	Credit Hours (Quality Hours)	=	Total Quality Points
ENGL 150	B+	3.300		3		9.900
MATH 101	C-	1.700		3		5.100
HIST 105	A-	3.700		3		11.100
BIOL 150	D	1.000		4		4.000
PHED 101	B	3.000		1		3.000
				14		33.100

$$\text{QPA} = \frac{\text{Total Quality Points}}{\text{Total Credits (Quality Hours)}} = \frac{33.100}{14} = 2.364$$

**Midterm Warnings** - Faculty members submit "D" and "F" reports on freshmen and sophomores to the Registrar two weeks before the end of the course/withdrawal period. Copies of these reports are sent to the students and their advisors.

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**Semester Grades** - are mailed to students at their permanent home addresses after the conclusion of each semester.

**Transcripts** - A student is entitled to one official transcript free of charge. Additional copies are available for \$5.00 a copy. No transcript will be issued without the student's written request. An official transcript bears the College seal. Official transcripts are sent directly to another college or university, school department, or other agency by the Registrar of the College. Only unofficial copies of a student's record will be furnished for the personal use of the student. **The College does not fax confidential information and will not accept faxed transcripts as official copies.**

**Dean's List** - Undergraduate matriculated students who achieve a minimum grade point average of 3.250 with no incomplete grades are placed on the semester's Dean's List. For more information contact the Registrar's Office. Students receiving "I" or "PC" grades **are not eligible for the Dean's List** for that term.

The final date for students to qualify for the Dean's List is the last day for reporting grades each semester. These days are determined by the Registrar and the Dean of Academic Studies.

**Registration and Advising for Matriculated Students** - Each semester an advisement and registration period is held for students to select their next semester's courses. Students are required to meet with their advisors to discuss their academic standing and their remaining course requirements. During this period students register for courses in the order of class status according to number of credits earned. A late registration period is held just before the beginning of each semester for unregistered students.

## **GRADUATION POLICIES**

### **Graduation Requirements**

1. The core curriculum requirements must be completed.
2. The requirements for the student's major must be completed (Student must be matriculated).
3. A minimum grade point average of 2.000 overall and 2.000 in the major program requirements must be earned.
4. A minimum of 45 credits must be completed at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; a minimum of one half of the courses in a student's major must be taken through Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.
5. At least 120 credits including the major program credits must be earned. No more than five credits can be fulfilled by personal fitness/skills courses in physical education.
6. A student's final 15 credits of coursework must be completed at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.
7. At least 39 of the 120 credits must be in upper-division work (300-500 level).
8. A graduation requirement of 2 credits of Physical Education.
9. Application for graduation must be filed with the Registrar's Office according to the following schedule:

Graduation in May:	February 15
Graduation in August:	June 1
Graduation in January:	November 1

**Requirement Waivers** - A student may seek a waiver of any core curriculum or major program requirement. The request is initiated in consultation with the student's advisor. The advisor makes a recommendation that is submitted to the department chairperson for further consideration and recommendation. In both instances, sufficient justification for the waiver must be given. Waivers must have the additional approval of the Dean of Academic Studies. College Waiver Forms are obtained from the Registrar's Office. Students may have waivers for required categories but not for actual credit.

**Graduation With Distinction** - Students of superior academic achievement graduate with distinction according to their quality point average earned at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts only.

Summa cum Laude	3.750 - 4.000
Magna cum Laude	3.500 - 3.749
Cum Laude	3.250 - 3.499

**Graduation Attendance Policy** - Students may attend the graduation ceremony following completion of ALL graduation requirements. Students must complete an application for graduation by the deadlines listed in the section graduation requirements. The form must be submitted to the Registrar's Office.

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## STANDARDS

**Appeals** - The Academic Appeals Committee hears academic grievances from and about students. The membership of the Committee consists of three students in good academic standing (For Grade and Honesty Appeals only), three faculty members, one administrator, the Dean for Academic Studies, and the Registrar, who chairs the committee, as a non-voting member, except in the event of a tie.

In the event a student wishes to appeal an instructor's grade, the route the appeal should take is as follows: a) the student initiates the appeal by obtaining an Academic Appeal Form from the Registrar's Office; b) the student then presents the appeal to the instructor(s) concerned. If a solution satisfactory to the student is not met; c) the student takes the written appeal along with the statement of the instructor to the chair of the department, who must respond in writing. If a solution satisfactory to the student has still not been reached; d) all materials are brought by the student to the Dean of Academic Studies, who after reviewing all the information will meet with all parties; e) If a solution has still not been reached that satisfies the student, all information will be forwarded to the Registrar. A meeting of the Appeals Committee will then be called by the Registrar.

In cases affecting grade changes, a student is allowed 30 days into the following semester to initiate an appeal against grades earned in regular fall or spring semester. In all other cases, the student has 30 days after receipt of the grade to initiate an appeal for a grade change through the aforementioned channels. At each of these points, the appeal must be approved or disapproved in writing and the appropriate signatures affixed to the appeal form within one week after each step of the appeal.

In cases involving suspension appeals, students wishing to be readmitted must appeal in writing by the date specified in the student's suspension notice. Students suspended more than twice are no longer eligible for readmission. There is no appeal of this condition.

**Honesty** - A college is a community of students and faculty interested in the search for knowledge and understanding. Essential to that search is a commitment to honesty and integrity. Honesty on the part of every college student has and always shall be an integral part of the plan of higher education at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Acts of dishonesty conflict with the work and purpose of the entire College and are not merely a private matter between student and instructor.

Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to:

- plagiarism (as defined below)
- submitting the work of others as one's own
- communication during an examination
- using crib notes in an exam, except as allowed by the instructor
- obtaining prior knowledge of examination questions
- substitution of another student in an examination
- altering College academic records
- knowingly using false statements for academic benefit
- collaborating on material after being directed not to collaborate
- forging a signature of a College official or faculty member
- soliciting an official signature under false pretense

**Plagiarism** - The academic departments of the College have varying requirements for reporting the use of sources, but certain fundamental principles for the acknowledgment of sources apply to all fields and levels of work. The use of source materials of any kind and the preparation of essays or laboratory reports must be fully and properly acknowledged. In papers or laboratory reports, students are expected to acknowledge any expression or idea that is not their own. Students submitting papers are implying that the form and content of the essays or reports, in whole and in part, represent their own work, except where clear and specific reference is made to other sources. Even if there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment may constitute plagiarism.

Any quotation - even of a phrase - must be placed in quotation marks and the precise source stated in a note or in the text; any material that is paraphrased or summarized and any ideas that are borrowed must be specifically acknowledged. A thorough reordering or rearrangement of an author's text does not release the student from these responsibilities. All sources that have been consulted in the preparation of the essay or report should be listed in the bibliography.

Upon an occurrence of alleged academic dishonesty instructors may exercise **their discretion in imposing a sanction**. Instructors may **further** file charges with the Academic Appeals Committee against students if they believe that additional sanctions would be appropriate.

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Instructors shall notify the Registrar in writing of any occurrence of academic dishonesty whenever they have imposed sanctions. Such notification shall include the student's name, course title, date of occurrence, type of dishonesty, sanction(s) being imposed, **and any further action requested.**

This notification shall be effected within fourteen days after discovery of the incident. A copy of said notice shall be sent to the student involved, including the charges made against the student and the grounds, if proven, that would justify failure or other academic sanction.

If the student involved wishes to appeal the sanction imposed by the instructor, the student must initiate an appeal within two weeks after receipt of this notification.

The Academic Appeals Committee shall consider as a basis for a hearing that: a) the student claims not to have been academically dishonest; b) the student claims the instructor imposed an inappropriate sanction; c) the nature of the offense merits further action.

In academic dishonesty cases the Committee may receive requests for hearings from students, from individual faculty and staff members, and from the Registrar. The Academic Appeals Committee reserves the right not to hear any appeal in any case where data is not sufficient, the necessary steps have not been followed, and when the committee jurisdiction is not clear.

Further information regarding instructor and student rights and responsibilities and appropriate procedures to be followed in applying this policy may be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies or the Registrar.

**Attendance Policy** - Class attendance is taken very seriously, and students may be penalized for unexcused absences within the grading process. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, since this is a necessary means of learning and of attaining the educational objectives of the College. Since course design and objectives vary, attendance policies are set forth in each instructor's course syllabus.

**Probation/Suspension** - New students (freshman and transfer) who have achieved a 0.0 grade point average after their first semester at the College will be automatically suspended without a probationary semester. Students whose cumulative grade point average falls within the suspension range (and above a 0.0) who have never been on academic probation will have a one semester probationary period in which to raise their average above the suspension range. Failure to do so will result in suspension. Students placed on probation are required to meet with the Coordinator of Advising Services and are strongly encouraged to use the support services offered by Counseling Services, Career Services, Learning Services, and their faculty advisor. Suspended students could be eligible for readmission to the College following a successful appeal, unless suspended more than twice, which would result in permanent suspension.

**Probation** - Students whose academic performance falls below a specific GPA will be placed on probation by the Registrar. The probation range is based on the cumulative grade point average and increases with each succeeding year. Students placed on probation are encouraged to avail themselves of the advising, tutoring, and counseling services provided by the College. Students placed on probation following a successful appeal of suspension must complete a contract with Advising Services as a condition of readmission to Massachusetts College.

Attempted Credits*	Probation Year	Range
1-15	Freshman	1.00-1.499
16-30	Freshman	1.500-1.749
31-45	Sophomore	1.500-1.749
46-60	Sophomore	1.750-1.999
61-75	Junior	1.750-1.999
76-90	Junior	No Probation
91-105	Senior	No Probation
106-120	Senior	No Probation

\* Attempted Hours minus P, PC, W, I, WX, T. After 1st semester, T credits are factored into attempted hours calculation.

Advising Services provides help to students on academic probation. One option is for students to attend small personalized informational meetings at the beginning of the semester. These meetings are specifically designed to help probationary students succeed. These groups are staffed by professionals from Advising Services, Counseling Services, and Learning Services.

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**Suspension** - Students whose performance would make it exceedingly difficult to meet graduation requirements will be suspended from the College. The suspension range is based on the cumulative quality-point average and increases with each succeeding year.

Attempted Credits*	Suspension Year	Range
0-15**	Entering Fresh or Transfer	0.00
0-15	Freshman	Under 1.000
16-30	Freshman	Under 1.500
31-45	Sophomore	Under 1.500
46-60	Sophomore	Under 1.750
61-75	Junior	Under 1.750
76-90	Junior	Under 2.000
91-105	Senior	Under 2.000
106-120	Senior	Under 2.000

\* Attempted Hours minus P, PC, W, I, WX, T. After 1st semester, T credits are factored into earned hours.

\*\* The 1st semester of attendance (new freshman and new transfers) does not qualify for probation status if a 0.00 GPA is earned.

Students suspended under this policy may appeal their suspension, except students suspended more than twice. The Registrar notifies students of their suspension and of their right of recourse to the appeal process. See "Academic Appeals" for details.

Suspended students may not enroll at the College for one semester. They may then apply to the Admissions Office for readmission. The College requires that they complete a minimum of 6 credits with a minimum GPA of 2.0 at another institution before reapplication. Students must complete an off-campus readmission form available from the Registrar. Approval of the Vice President of Enrollment Management is required prior to enrollment in courses. Students re-applying after sitting out one semester on suspension will be evaluated on an individual basis based on the entire Massachusetts College academic experience and coursework completed at another college. The Vice President of Enrollment Management may impose further requirements. Students suspended at the end of the spring term may not take courses at MCLA in the summer or fall, and must re-apply through admissions.

## **STATUS**

**Student Status** - The College describes student status as follows:

**Full-Time Student.** A student registered for 12 or more credit hours that semester.

**Part-Time Student.** A student registered for fewer than 12 credit hours that semester.

**Matriculated Student.** A student who has been accepted in a major program or is undeclared or in a certificate program, and who is subject to all the normal academic regulations and policies of the College.

**Nonmatriculated Student.** A student not enrolled in a major program. Such students are not assigned class status and are designated as Special Students (SPU).

**Change of Major** - Students wishing to change their major must secure a Change of Major form from Advising Services. This form requires the approval of the chairperson of the new department and must be filed with the Registrar's Office before the change of major takes effect.

**Class Status.** Matriculated students are assigned class status according to the total number of their earned credits at the conclusion of any given semester.

Credits	Class
0-29	Freshman
30-59	Sophomore
60-89	Junior
90 or more	Senior

**Declaring a Minor** - Students who are completing the requirements of a minor program must complete a Declaration of Minor form. This form is available at the Registrar's Office.

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**Prior Learning** - The College recognizes that significant learning occurs outside formal educational settings: at work, at home, in community activities, in military service, and in individual reading and study. Students may receive credit for such experiences following review by appropriate faculty and the Dean of Academic Studies. Students should consult with the Coordinator of Advising Services for assistance in preparing an application to receive academic credit for life experiences. Several options are available for receiving prior learning credit. The Coordinator of Advising Services will advise on the appropriate option. Contact information: (413) 662-5400 or advising@mcla.edu.

**Individual Course Credit for Life Experience** - Academic credit for an individual course will be awarded when documentation indicating that goals of the course, as defined by the appropriate academic department, have been met. Credit can be awarded for a variety of life experiences, including those recommended by the *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* (American Council on Education). Advising Services will assist students with the preparation of the application.

**Standardized Tests** - Academic credit will be awarded following completion of the following standardized tests:

**Advanced Placement Program** sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). A test score of 3 or higher is required to receive credit. All scores must be forwarded to the College from CEEB.

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP)** sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board. Completion at 480 or better on the general examinations in English composition, mathematics, natural science, humanities, and social science-history, and the 50th percentile or better for the subject examination are required for credit.

**Basic Evaluation (1-12 credits)** - The student consults with his/her academic advisor about the experience as it may be credited and applied to the student's degree program. The student completes an Application for Prior Learning Credit at the Office of Advising Services. The application will include a description of the experience, supervisor's statements or evaluations, and any documents which indicate that the applicant has an awareness of the value gained from the experience (s) and the new knowledge or skills were acquired. The Coordinator of Advising Services will notify the student of the credit recommendation. A Prior Learning Credit Assessment Fee of \$100 per assessment and a fee of \$50 per credit awarded will be implemented for this service.

**Portfolio Evaluation of Prior Learning (13-30 credits)** - This is a comprehensive evaluation offered to students who enter college with an unusual range of learning experiences. In such a case the student applies for prior learning evaluation at the Office of Advising Services. If after an extensive interview the student's experience and educational goals are considered to be adequate, he or she receives permission to enroll in a three-credit course, offered through the Department of English/Communication, in which learning experiences are explored and described in detail, matched with college requirements, and assessed up to a level of 30 credits. A faculty evaluation committee and all appropriate department chairpersons review and approve the credit recommendation and refer it to the Coordinator of Advising Services, who conducts an independent review and makes the final determination of credit to be awarded. A Prior Learning Credit Assessment Fee of \$100 per assessment and a fee of \$50 per credit awarded will be implemented for this service.

**Leave of Absence** - A student whose personal, family, or medical circumstances require a temporary interruption of college study may apply for a leave of absence for up to two semesters. Students who attend primarily in the evening and need to attend on a less than regular basis may also use this process. To apply for a leave of absence a student must complete an application to be filed at Advising Services. Recommendations regarding requests will be made by the Coordinator of Advising Services to the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Dean will make the final decision on the request.

A leave of absence may only be granted to students who are matriculated and in good academic and financial standing. All students returning from a leave of absence must contact the Registrar's Office by December 1 for reactivation in the spring semester and by August 1 for reactivation for the fall semester. Students who are granted a leave of absence before the end of the drop/add period will have no notation on their record for that semester. Students granted a leave during the withdrawal period will have a grade of "WX" on their record for that semester. Students with financial aid who take a leave of absence will be treated as a withdrawn student and will lose their aid as of the date of their leave. Loan repayment will begin 6 months after the date of withdrawal from the College. If the student returns in the second semester of the academic year, eligibility for aid will be reinstated and the student will be considered for any aid which is available at that time. When a student returns from a leave of absence, they should process loan deferment forms through their lender.

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**Outstanding Obligation** - Official transcripts will not be issued for students or former students who have an outstanding obligation to the College. Such obligations may include but are not necessarily limited to: unreturned books or fines due in the library; unpaid tuition or fees; uncompleted health forms; unreturned athletic equipment, unpaid parking fines; failure of Perkins/NDSL recipients to complete their exit interview; and delinquency in repayment of a Perkins or National Direct Student Loan or a refund owed to the College for financial assistance of any kind.

**Transfer Credit Policy** -New matriculated students to MCLA who have attended one or more accredited institutions should be aware of the following policies related to transfer credit:

- S Students must disclose to the Admissions Office all colleges previously attended.
- S Official transcripts from each college must be submitted prior to admission or awarding of credit. (See Admissions section for requirements).
- S Grade point average of coursework taken at previous institutions will be used for admission determination only.
- S If more than one college was attended, an average transfer grade point average is calculated for admission determination only.
- S A new cumulative grade point average begins at MCLA for ALL transfer students. Honors distinction for transfer students considers the MCLA grade point average only. Courses and credits from other institutions will be noted on the transcript; however, grades, quality points, and gpa will not be listed or used for purposes of gpa at MCLA.
- S Transfer students must complete all major, degree, and graduation requirements, including at least 45 credits at MCLA.
- S Courses with grades of "C-" or above will transfer (unless Transfer Compact fulfilled). See transfer gpa requirements in admission section.
- S Remedial and skills coursework do not transfer to MCLA.

**Off-Campus Study for Currently Enrolled Students:** Matriculated students who wish to enroll in coursework at another accredited institution while still enrolled at MCLA must receive approval from MCLA prior to enrolling in such courses. Approval is granted through the Registrar's Office in consultation with the department chair. Coursework in which the student received a grade of C- or above is transferable, provided that the student's overall grade point average is a 2.0 or higher (based on a 4.0 scale) at the other institution.

**Withdrawal from College** - Students leaving the College must complete a Withdrawal from College form obtained from Advising Services. Students officially withdrawing before the first day of final examinations will receive a notation of WX **in all courses**. After this time students will receive a final grade in all courses.

*Note: A student is not officially withdrawn from the College until the appropriate form has been completed and has been validated by the Registrar's Office.*