

**University Policy 2.01.02****Maximum Time to Degree Completion****Revised Policy Approval Date: March 27, 2007****Revised Policy Effective Date: July 1, 2007****Revised Procedure Approval Date: October 11, 2018****Revised Procedure Effective Date: November 1, 2018****POLICY STATEMENT**

Capella University requires students to complete all degree or certificate program requirements within specific time limits in order to be eligible to graduate. Students who do not complete their degree or certificate program within required time limits, which are based on their degree or certificate level, will be administratively withdrawn from the university. These time limits are the outside dates for completion and do not supersede the obligation to maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout the student's program of study. Time limits for degree and certificate programs are outlined in this policy.

Time limits for Capella University degree and certificate programs are as follows:

<b>Degrees and Certificates</b>	<b>Maximum Time to Completion</b>
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	8 years
<b>Master's Degree*</b>	4 years
<b>Education Specialist Degree</b>	4 years
<b>Doctoral Degree**</b>	7 years
<b>Certificate***</b>	3 years

- \* Students enrolled in the Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy, Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Master of Science in School Counseling, Master of Science in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Clinical Counseling, or Master of Science in Nursing have a maximum of six years to complete their degree program.
- \* Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work have a maximum of six years to complete their degree program. Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work—Advanced Standing have a maximum of four years to complete their degree program.
- \* Students enrolled in the Master of Public Health have a maximum of five years to complete their degree program.
- \*\* Students enrolled in the PsyD degree programs have a maximum of nine years to complete their degree program.

\*\*\* Students enrolled in the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Post-Master's Certificate or the Family Nurse Practitioner Post-Master's Certificate have a maximum of four years to complete their certificate.

## **RATIONALE**

By limiting the length of time students may take to complete their degree or certificate program, Capella University supports student success, helping students make reasonable and timely progress in their programs and ensuring that their completed degrees and certificates are representative of current coursework.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### Certificate

A certificate is a non-degree credential at a specific level that is awarded upon successful completion of coursework and learning experiences in an academic or professional field.

### Dean's Designee

A dean's designee is an individual designated by the dean to act on their behalf. The designee must be in a leadership position equivalent to or above an academic director (e.g., associate or assistant dean).

### Degree

A degree is the name of a specific academic degree that may include a broad academic subject.

### Degree Extension Form (DEF)

A Degree Extension Form is a written communication between the student and the school describing the conditions under which an extension may be granted.

### Degree Program

A degree program is a specific set of coursework and learning experiences in a field of study that, upon successful completion, results in the conferral of a degree or credential.

### Maximum Time to Completion

Maximum time to completion is the time allotted for students to complete their degree or certificate program. Maximum time to completion begins on the student's program's initial census date and continues regardless of course activity, registration status, or change of specialization, minor, concentration, catalog, or delivery model until a degree is conferred.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **I. Federal Financial Aid Impact**

This is a university policy separate from financial aid policies. Therefore, the listed time limits may not align with financial aid eligibility requirements. For further information, contact a financing coach or see the financial aid policies located on Campus.

- II. Change of Degree or Certificate Program and Maximum Time to Completion
  - A. Students who change their degree or certificate program are assigned a new maximum time to completion.
  - B. Students who are changing their specialization, minor, concentration, catalog, or delivery model are not assigned a new maximum time to completion.
- III. Failure to Meet Maximum Time to Completion
  - A. Students will be notified via email one quarter prior to the last date of eligibility for maximum time to completion that they will be administratively withdrawn from the university unless they have a signed Degree Extension Form (DEF), granting them an exception that extends their maximum time to completion deadline.
  - B. Students will be notified via email that they have been administratively withdrawn from the university effective as of the last date of their maximum time to completion.
- IV. Maximum Time to Completion Extensions
  - A. Extension Criteria

Extensions requested due to change of specialization or extenuating circumstances may be approved by the program director and validated by the Admissions & Records Operations department. Extensions are generally limited to between two and four quarters, unless the student's circumstance warrants a longer period, as approved by the dean or dean's designee.
  - B. Extension Application Process

Bachelor's, master's, specialist, and certificate students may apply for an extension by contacting Academic Advising to discuss their status.

    1. Students consult with Academic Advising to identify their remaining degree or certificate program requirements, propose a new time frame for completion if necessary, and discuss any potential financial aid impact.
    2. Students complete the Degree Extension Form (DEF) located on Campus that reflects the new completion date based on the proposed extension.
    3. Students and their academic coaches sign the DEF and submit it to the dean's designee for review, along with appropriate academic rationale.
  - C. Extension Approvals
    1. The dean's designee reviews the proposed DEF and rationale and determines if they meet the criteria for approval.
    2. If the extension request is approved, the decision and rationale are filed in the student's official academic record.
    3. If the extension request is not approved, the student is notified that they will be administratively withdrawn from the university when the maximum time to completion deadline has expired.
    4. The decision of the dean's designee is final.
  - D. Failure to Meet DEF Terms

Students who cannot complete their degree or certificate program within the time frame of their DEF will be administratively withdrawn from the university, with no option to appeal.
  - E. Doctoral Extensions

Doctoral students are reviewed for eligibility for extensions by the university.

1. The president's designee reviews the student's history and progress and makes a decision. Students are notified in writing of the academic review and decision of a degree extension.
2. Students who are not awarded an extension or who cannot complete their doctoral degree program within the time frame of their extension will be administratively withdrawn from the university. Doctoral students may appeal their administrative withdrawal.

V. Readmission and Maximum Time to Completion

A. Readmission Eligibility

1. Students who have discontinued from the university or who have been administratively withdrawn after four consecutive quarters of inactivity may apply for readmission at any time.
2. Administrative Withdrawal
  - a. Bachelor's- and master's-level students who have been administratively withdrawn from the university as a result of not completing their degree or certificate program before the maximum time to completion deadline may reapply for admission to Capella University.
  - b. Doctoral-level students who have been administratively withdrawn from the university as a result of not completing their degree program before the maximum time to completion deadline are not eligible for readmission to that program or for admission to any doctoral program at Capella University.

B. Readmission and Maximum Time to Completion

Students who are readmitted are assigned a new maximum time to completion and catalog.

VI. Administrative Withdrawal Appeals Process for Doctoral Students

- A. Students must appeal an administrative withdrawal decision within seven calendar days of being sent notification of the decision.
- B. Students must notify the university of their intent to appeal.
- C. Students must indicate their plan for future academic progress and success.
- D. Students must include an explanation of the circumstances surrounding their administrative withdrawal and the impact of those circumstances on the student's academic progress. The case decision is based on the student's progress, their plan for completion, and documentation/evidence supplied by the student.
- E. Students are not permitted to register for any Capella course (including non-credit courses, residencies, etc.) while the outcome of their appeal is pending.
- F. A president's designee reviews the appeal, makes a determination, and emails the student to notify him or her of the decision.
- G. The decision of the president's designee is final. Matters that have been reviewed and have received a final decision under this policy are not eligible for further review under another policy.

VII. All procedures in this policy apply to students in programs in GuidedPath and FlexPath formats.

**POLICY OWNERS**

Academic Owner: Registrar

Operations Owner: Admissions & Records Operations

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

University policy 2.01.01 Admission

University policy 2.02.03 Concurrent Program Enrollments

University policy 2.02.07 Changing Academic Program

University policy 2.02.08 Leave of Absence

University policy 2.02.12 Military Leave

University policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing

University policy 3.01.05 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

University policy 4.01.02 Retention of Student Records and Work Products

University policy 4.03.02 Tuition and Fee Refunds

Financial Aid policies—See Campus

**REVISION HISTORY**

Original Policy Approval Date: July 1, 2005

Revision Dates: 6-12-07; 3-10-09; 6-21-12; 12-17-13; 5-13-14, 8-11-16; 1-10-18; 10-11-18; 8-8-23

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