

University Policy 2.02.07

Changing Academic Program

Revised Policy Approval Date: December 19, 2006

Revised Policy Effective Date: April 1, 2007

Revised Procedure Approval Date: February 24, 2025

Revised Procedure Effective Date: April 1, 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

Capella University students may apply to change their academic program at any point in their studies pursuant to the procedures established to support this policy. If accepted, the change becomes effective at the start of the next academic quarter—except for a change of catalog, which becomes effective immediately. A change of academic program results in changing the student's current program requirements to those in the *University Catalog* or addendum that is in effect at the time of the change (the catalog of record). Students are responsible for fulfilling the program requirements specified in their new catalog of record. Doctoral students may not enroll in more than one Capella degree program or specialization concurrently.

RATIONALE

This policy is intended to support a standard approach to processing student requests for changing their degree or certificate program or specialization. The policy statement provides guidelines for when, how often, and under what circumstances a change may occur.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Program

An academic program is any credentialed academic offering and its components, including but not limited to a degree, specialization, concentration, certificate, or delivery model in which a student is enrolled.

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.

Certificate Program

A certificate program is a course of study that leads to the award of a certificate; that 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.

Degree

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

Degree Level

A degree level is a classification of postsecondary academic achievement by a prescribed depth of understanding relative to coursework and learning experiences. Capella's degree levels are bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral.

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.

Specialization

A specialization is a course of study associated with a specific degree program that leads to the award of a degree.

PROCEDURES

I. Change to Academic Program for All Students

A. Process for All Students

1. Prior to initiating an academic program change, students are encouraged to consult with Academic Advising to discuss options and considerations for the change.
2. The submitted academic program change request, in addition to any previous academic work at Capella, is reviewed in accordance with change of program requirements.
3. All students are expected to work with Academic Advising to ensure their academic plan and course registrations are updated accordingly.
4. If accepted, students begin the new academic program at the start of the next academic quarter.

B. Current Course Registration

Students remain registered in their current course(s) through the end of the term unless they initiate a course drop or withdrawal. The course withdrawal process is governed by university policy *2.02.02 Course Registration*.

C. Change of Academic Program Process

1. For all academic program changes, students must request a change to the new academic program (and new school, if necessary) using the [Change Program, Specialization, or Concentration Form](#) on Campus.
2. Students who are approved for a change from an accelerated master's pathway (AMP) option to the associated non-AMP option, or between the GuidedPath and FlexPath formats of a degree program, may remain under the academic program requirements of their original *University Catalog*. Students who are approved for any other change of academic program must meet the academic program requirements listed in the *University Catalog* in effect at the time they are admitted to the new academic program.
3. Students are expected to take the first course affiliated with their new academic program.
4. A change of academic program requires a new transfer credit evaluation. Students are responsible for understanding their new degree plan.

II. Change of Catalog for All Students

A. Student Catalog of Record

1. Students are assigned their initial catalog of record upon their admission to Capella University.
 - a. Students who begin their academic programs in winter or spring quarter are assigned to the January catalog and the April addendum respectively.
 - b. Students who begin their academic programs in summer or fall quarter are assigned to the July catalog and the October addendum respectively.
 - c. Subsequent changes or additions to a student's academic program may result in new catalog requirements. See university policy *2.02.03 Concurrent Program Enrollments* for details.

B. Change of Catalog Process

1. Prior to initiating a change of catalog, students are encouraged to consult with Academic Advising to discuss options and related considerations.
2. Students may request a change to the current catalog in order to complete a different set of program requirements, provided that the academic program is available in the current catalog. If the student's request is approved, the student must fulfill all program requirements specified in their new catalog of record.
3. A change of catalog requires a new transfer credit evaluation. Students are responsible for understanding their new degree plan.

III. Bachelor's/Master's Integrated Pathways for Students in Eligible Programs in the GuidedPath or FlexPath Format

A. Change of Bachelor's/Master's Integrated Pathways

1. Students may change into other bachelor's/master's integrated pathways using the same form and procedures as an academic program change.

B. Additional Considerations for Eligible Bachelor's/Master's Integrated Pathways

1. After successfully completing the requirements for the bachelor's degree program, bachelor's/master's integrated pathway students apply for the master's degree program that corresponds to their bachelor's degree program.
2. Students who start a corresponding master's degree program within one year of completing their bachelor's degree program may apply all predetermined master's-level coursework taken as a part of the bachelor's degree program toward that corresponding master's degree.
3. Change requests from students whose intended bachelor's/master's integrated pathway master's degree program has been retired prior to their entering the master's degree program will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate program requirements.
4. Students admitted to a master's degree program not corresponding with their bachelor's degree program are held to the program requirements of the catalog in effect the quarter they are admitted into the master's degree program.
5. Students admitted into any master's degree program more than one year after completing their bachelor's degree program are held to the program requirements of the catalog in effect the quarter they are admitted into the master's degree program.
6. Upon successful completion of the remaining master's degree program requirements, students will be awarded a master's degree.

IV. Additional Considerations for FlexPath Students

- A. Students who are requesting a change within or from the FlexPath delivery model, including those who are graduating and moving into a new degree program, will have changes effective on the first day of the next Capella University term, regardless of the timing within the student's session. The day prior to that effective date, all current and future course registrations are dropped. Students should consult with an academic coach to discuss options and the timing of the term start. Students should plan to finish any active courses before the change is made.
- B. Students who are not in good academic standing in accordance with university policy *3.01.04 Academic Standing* are not eligible for an academic program change within the FlexPath delivery model but may request a change into the GuidedPath delivery model.
- C. Students who have been administratively withdrawn from or have voluntarily changed from the FlexPath delivery model may not return to the FlexPath delivery model at the same degree level.
- D. Students may be financially impacted by the drop of current course registrations. Students are responsible for fully understanding the financial implications of a course drop. Students should refer to university policy *4.03.02 Tuition and Fee Refunds* to determine the financial implications of a course drop.
- E. Students who receive financial aid should discuss the potential implications of program changes within or from the FlexPath delivery model, including the return of financial aid funds, with a financing coach.

POLICY OWNERS

Academic Owner: Provost

Operations Owner: Admissions & Records Operations

RELATED DOCUMENTS

University policy 2.01.01 Admission

University policy 2.02.02 Course Registration

University policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing

REVISION HISTORY

Original Policy Approval Date: April 23, 2004

Revision Dates: 7-1-04; 10-1-06; 9-1-10; 6-21-12; 6-6-13; 10-31-14; 5-4-15; 10-28-15; 5-1-16; 8-11-16; 7-25-17; 12-7-18; 6-6-22; 12-11-23; 4-1-25

Administrative edits as result of ongoing review: 10-1-08; 1-16-09; 8-28-09; 11-20-09; 2-19-10; 10-26-10; 5-17-11; 1-23-12; 10-23-13; 2-10-14; 11-1-16; 12-14-16; 4-1-18; 5-23-19; 4-1-20; 3-26-21; 7-1-23; 4-24-24; 7-1-24; 8-14-24; 4-1-25