

University Policy 3.01.09

Degree and Certificate Conferral

Revised Policy Approval Date: September 8, 2023

Revised Policy Effective Date: October 1, 2023

Revised Procedure Approval Date: February 24, 2025

Revised Procedure Effective Date: April 1, 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

Capella University students are eligible for degree or certificate conferral upon successful completion of all degree or certificate program requirements as described in Capella's *University Catalog* and pursuant to this policy. Successful completion is determined by a degree audit conducted by the Admissions & Records Operations department.

RATIONALE

Capella University requires all Capella graduates to have completed the requirements for their conferred degree or certificate. This policy ensures the integrity of degrees and certificates conferred by Capella University.

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.

Commencement

Commencement is a voluntary ceremony that recognizes the conferral of a student's degree.

Conferral

Conferral is the issuance of a degree or certificate by Capella University.

Conferral Date

Conferral date is the date upon which a student's degree or certificate is formally issued by the university and made effective. The conferral date is noted on the student's official transcript and diploma.

Credit Residence Requirement

The credit residence requirement is the minimum number of quarter credits earned at Capella University that are applied toward the conferral of a unique Capella degree.

Graduation

Graduation is the successful completion of a student's degree or certificate program with the conferral of a degree from Capella University.

University Catalog

Capella's *University Catalog* is the official record of requirements for the university's academic offerings. Students are assigned their initial catalog of record upon their admission to Capella University. Students who begin their academic programs in the winter or spring quarters are assigned to the January catalog and the April addendum, and students who begin their academic programs in summer or fall quarters are assigned to the July catalog and the October addendum.

PROCEDURES

- I. Degree and Certificate Conferral Requirements for All Students
 - A. Students must complete all degree or certificate program requirements, including coursework, residencies, practica, internships, and any other components such as cumulative grade point average (GPA) and credit totals as described in their *University Catalog* of record.
 1. A single course may satisfy multiple requirements within a degree program, but the credits from that course may only be applied once toward the total credits needed for the degree.
 - a. Undergraduate general education requirements may fulfill either core or specialization requirements when the course is applicable to both categories.
 - b. A single course may not fulfill both a core and a specialization requirement in any program.
 2. Students should refer to university policies *2.02.07 Changing Academic Program* and *4.01.04 University Catalog* for information about catalog and catalog changes.
 3. Students are encouraged to contact Academic Advising should they have questions about their current catalog requirements.
 - B. Students must also meet the minimum university credit residence requirements for their degree or certificate level. Any credits above the university minimum may be fulfilled by transfer and/or credit for prior learning (CPL).

Minimum University Credit Residence Requirements by Degree Level

Degree Level	Credit Minimum Earned at Capella University*	Additional Requirements
Bachelor's	45 quarter credits of total required credits.	Minimum quarter credits includes courses that cannot be fulfilled by transfer as stated in the course descriptions in Capella's <i>University Catalog</i> . Students enrolled in any bachelor's degree program in the FlexPath format must complete a minimum of 22.5 program points at Capella University.
Undergraduate Certificate	12 quarter credits or at least 50% of	Only full courses will be accepted toward the 50% minimum.

	total required credits, whichever is greater.	
Master's	33 quarter credits of total required credits.	<p>Minimum quarter credits includes courses that cannot be fulfilled by transfer as stated in the course descriptions in Capella's <i>University Catalog</i>.</p> <p>Students enrolled in master's degree programs in the FlexPath format must complete a minimum of 16.5 program points at Capella University.</p> <p>Students enrolled in the Master of Education in Teaching and Learning degree program must complete a minimum of 26 quarter credits at Capella University.</p> <p>Students enrolled in the Master of Education in Teaching and Learning FlexPath option must complete a minimum of 13 program points at Capella University.</p>
Education Specialist	36 quarter credits of total required credits.	Minimum quarter credits includes courses that cannot be fulfilled by transfer as stated in the course descriptions in Capella's <i>University Catalog</i> .
Professional Doctorate	52 quarter credits of total required credits.	<p>Minimum quarter credits includes courses that cannot be fulfilled by transfer as stated in the course descriptions in Capella's <i>University Catalog</i>.</p> <p>Students enrolled in professional doctorate degree programs in the FlexPath format must complete a minimum of 26 program points at Capella University.</p>
PhD	60 quarter credits of total required credits.	Minimum quarter credits includes courses that cannot be fulfilled by transfer as stated in the course descriptions in Capella's <i>University Catalog</i> .
Graduate Certificate	4 quarter credits or at least 25% of total required credits, whichever is greater.	<p>Only full courses will be accepted toward the 25% minimum.</p> <p>Minimum quarter credits includes courses that cannot be fulfilled by transfer as stated in the course descriptions in Capella's <i>University Catalog</i>.</p>

* Individual academic programs may have additional/greater credit [residence requirements](#).

- C. To qualify for conferral in their degree or certificate program, students must complete the following requirements.
 - 1. Apply to each degree or certificate program and be admitted to that program.
 - 2. Register for and complete a minimum of one Capella University course that will be applied to their academic program requirements after admission, change of academic program, change of catalog, or change of delivery method, GuidedPath or FlexPath.
 - 3. Complete all credit for prior learning and transfer or ACE-recommended coursework prior to the start of their final course, which must be taken at Capella.

- II. Degree and Certificate Conferral Process for All Students
 - A. Upon completion of the last program requirement, the Admissions & Records Operations department will conduct a degree audit of the student's record.
 - B. Upon confirmation that all degree or certificate program requirements have been met, the student will be conferred their degree or certificate and will be notified of the conferral.
 - C. Degrees and certificates are conferred on the last day of the month in which it is confirmed that the degree or certificate program requirements were met.
 - D. Changes, including grade point average (GPA), quarter credit totals, or specializations, cannot be made to conferred degrees.

- III. Commencement for All Students
 - A. All students must receive official confirmation that their degree or certificate was awarded and must be invited before they may attend a commencement ceremony.
 - B. Students who meet requirements after the RSVP deadline will be invited to attend a subsequent commencement ceremony.
 - C. Students should not purchase travel, hotel accommodations, or regalia until they have been invited to participate in commencement and have sent in their RSVP confirming their intent to attend.
 - D. Diplomas are not issued at commencement events.
 - E. Additional commencement information is located on Campus.

- IV. Capella University Diplomas
 - A. Capella University diplomas will identify a student by the individual's official student name of record, unless the student requests otherwise and the request is approved. To request that an alternate name appear on a Capella University diploma, a student must contact Admissions & Records Operations. Such requests will be reviewed and approved or denied on a case-by-case basis.
 - B. Students are granted one official diploma. Duplicate diplomas are available for a fee.

- V. Capella University Transcripts
 - A. The Capella University transcript is the student's official academic record at Capella University.
 - B. Capella University will not modify a student's certificate- or degree-conferred transcript after a degree or certificate has been conferred. The student's record is

considered to be sealed from retroactive change upon conferral, except to correct clerical errors.

- VI. 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 2.01.02 Maximum Time to Degree Completion

University policy 2.02.07 Changing Academic Program

University policy 3.01.03 Academic Recognition

University policy 3.01.08 Academic Degree and Certificate Requirements

University policy 3.04.04 Application of Capella Credits

University policy 3.04.05 Attendance at Residencies

University policy 3.04.11 Transfer Credit and Credit for Prior Learning

University policy 4.01.04 University Catalog

University policy 4.01.06 Official Student Name of Record

University policy 4.03.01 Tuition and Fees

University Catalog

[Dissertation Manual](#)

Campus commencement pages

REVISION HISTORY

Original Policy Approval Date: May 22, 2009

Revision Dates: 11-11-09; 7-1-11; 7-1-12; 10-8-12; 11-21-12; 8-21-13; 12-21-13; 5-8-15; 4-28-16; 8-11-16; 11-1-16; 12-20-16; 6-6-17; 11-16-17; 3-14-19; 3-31-20; 11-2-21; 6-26-23; 9-8-23; 4-1-25

Administrative edits as result of ongoing review: 2-16-10; 8-9-11; 10-18-12; 1-18-13; 1-29-13; 6-24-13; 2-10-14; 7-20-14; 1-29-15; 11-1-15; 4-26-17; 10-25-17; 5-1-18; 2-27-19; 4-1-19; 5-23-19; 3-26-21; 1-6-22; 2-14-22; 6-12-23; 7-26-23; 7-1-24; 8-19-24; 4-1-25