

Degree Regulations

In this section

- Undergraduate Degree Requirements (p. 1)
- Credit Residence Requirements (p. 1)
- Work Done Out of Residence (p. 1)
- Credit Validation (p. 1)

Undergraduate Degree Requirements

All undergraduate degree programs include the General Education Foundations (GEF), require a minimum grade point average of 2.0 or higher, and require a minimum of 120 credit hours. In addition, the various colleges and schools may determine their own specific graduation requirements which may include additional course or credit requirements, minimum course grades, and grade point averages higher than a 2.0.

Every undergraduate degree program at WVU requires that students satisfactorily complete the General Education Foundations. For General Education Foundations definitions, please see the list of approved GEF courses (<http://registrar.wvu.edu/gef>). All undergraduate students at WVU are also required to fulfill a Writing and Communication Skills and a Capstone course. It is determined by the degree-granting college and/or academic unit which course fulfills the Writing and Communications Skills requirement. Please note that transfer courses do not fulfill the Writing and Communication Skills or Capstone requirements. In exceptional cases, students can petition their college to have a transfer course approved as fulfilling the Writing and Communication Skills requirement. Students will need to provide evidence of process writing. Because of their unique concept, Capstone courses can never be transferred from another institution, including courses taken while studying abroad.

Students entering WVU as an undergraduate student with fewer than twenty-nine hours must also earn a passing grade in First Year Seminar in their first semester at WVU. Those who do not pass the course must re-enroll for subsequent semesters until they earn a passing grade.

Credit Residence Requirements

Candidates for an undergraduate degree from West Virginia University should plan to complete at least 30 their final 36 credit hours in residence. Students who do not complete 30 of the final 36 credit hours in residence must complete a minimum of 90 total credit hours in residence in order to earn a WVU degree. Individual colleges, schools, or departments might have additional residence requirements as part of their degree or major requirements. Students should consult their respective academic unit with questions regarding specific degree or major residence requirements. Transfer coursework (excluding Potomac State College and WVU Institute of Technology courses); WVU administered credit by examination, placement credit, and experiential learning credit; Advanced Placement (AP) credit; International Baccalaureate (IB) credit; College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit; high school dual enrollment credit; and military training credit are examples of the types of coursework excluded from WVU residence credit. While WVU administered credit by examination, placement credit, and experiential learning credit will be excluded from WVU residence credit, it does not interrupt the final 30 credit hours in residence if earned during this period.

Note: Resident credit hours are not synonymous with West Virginia State residency definitions for tuition purposes.

Work Done Out of Residence

Coursework completed at another institution (including Potomac State College and WVU Institute of Technology) is considered non-WVU resident credit hours. Students transferring to WVU from another institution will receive a preliminary evaluation of transfer credits upon admission to the University. Transfer credits from two-year community colleges and junior colleges are limited to a maximum of seventy-two hours of lower-division credit. Coursework accepted from two-year colleges is limited to lower-division credit; in some cases, upper-division courses may not apply toward a student's degree at WVU. WVU students who wish to take courses at another accredited institution and receive transfer credit should review the transient approval process and consult the Office of Admissions's website (http://admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/university-requirements/transfer_equivalency) for the Transient Application Form.

Credit Validation

Students returning to WVU to complete a degree after a significant break in enrollment may be asked to retake certain courses to validate their subject knowledge (or otherwise demonstrate mastery). This significant break is normally defined by the department offering the course. Typically, a course must be revalidated if taken seven or more years previously. However, certain programs may have shorter time limitations that require re-enrollment or validation sooner. This requirement to re-enroll or demonstrate subject mastery in a course is at the discretion of the department chair and dean.

Coursework deemed to be insufficient to meet current course standards will still be factored into a student's GPA and may be treated as elective credit (as allowed by the student's academic major).

In this section:

- Awarding Degrees (p. 2)
- Official Program Designations (p. 2)
- Double Majors (p. 2)
- Dual Degrees (p. 2)
- Second Degrees (p. 3)
- Reverse Transfer (p. 3)
- Diploma Retention Policy (p. 3)

Awarding Degrees

All degrees are conferred by the WVU Board of Governors as recommended by the faculties of the various colleges and schools. A degree is granted at the end of the semester or summer term in which a student completes all the requirements for that degree, provided the student has submitted an application for graduation at his or her major department's academic dean's office and the dean has certified completion of all degree requirements.

A student becomes eligible to graduate when he or she completes the requirements of the University, college or school, and major degree program according to the Undergraduate Catalog in effect at the time the student first entered WVU. With the consent of the student's advisor and dean, a student may choose to meet the conditions published in a later catalog. If a student entered WVU more than seven years previously, the student must complete the requirements in a catalog that is no more than seven years old.

Students must observe any program changes that are enacted by the West Virginia University Faculty Senate, West Virginia University Board of Governors, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, or by local, state, or federal law.

WVU policy dictates that, in view of their professional responsibilities to the general public, the faculty of a professional school may recommend to the president of the University, in writing, that a student be removed from its rolls. The recommendation of the faculty must indicate that the student is not fit to meet the qualifications and responsibilities of the profession.

WVU will not issue a diploma or a transcript to any student until payment of all tuition, fees, and other indebtedness to any unit of the University is made.

Official Program Designations

Degree program: A degree program is an area of study approved as such by the institution and the Board of Governors (BOG) and listed on the official inventory of degree programs (<https://www.wvhepc.org/resources/degree%20inventory%20update/progoffpubpriv.html#IDX1>). The degree, which is an award signifying a rank or level of educational attainment and which is conferred on students who have successfully completed a degree program, is represented by the official degree designation (e.g., B.A.—bachelor of arts, B.S.—bachelor of science, etc.)

Major: A major is a field of study within an approved degree program, having its own curriculum. A degree program may have more than one major.

Area of Emphasis: An area of emphasis is a specific subject area within an approved degree program and major. Normally, a minimum of 12 credit hours and no more than 18 credit hours are expected for an area of emphasis within a baccalaureate degree program. Normally, a minimum of 6 and no more than 12 credit hours would be expected for an area of emphasis within a graduate degree program.

Minor: A minor is an area of study outside of the major that encourages students to pursue a secondary field. Students may not earn a minor in the same field as their major. Requirements for a minor are set by the academic unit offering the minor and must include at least 15 hours of coursework, with a minimum of 9 hours at the upper division level (course numbers 300 or above). Minors are only available to students earning a baccalaureate degree.

Certificate program: A certificate program is a coherent, specialized curriculum designed for students in search of a specific body of knowledge for personal/career development or professional continuing education. Normally, a minimum of 12 and no more than 21 credit hours constitute a certificate program at the baccalaureate or graduate level.

Double Majors

The double major is the awarding of one degree with two majors offered by one college/school. For instance, a student who completes majors in English and history earns one B.A. degree. A student who completes multiple majors with the same degree designation offered by different colleges/schools will be awarded dual degrees. The completion of double or multiple majors must lead to the same degree and can only be achieved simultaneously. Students must be accepted into each major and fulfill all requirements of each major in addition to satisfying all University requirements. Students who complete multiple majors within one degree will be awarded one degree, and the transcript will list the degree and each major.

Dual Degrees

The dual degree is the concurrent awarding of two distinct baccalaureate degrees (i.e. B.A., B.S., B.S.E., B.S.J., B.S.B.A.). Dual degrees will not be awarded when a student has completed a double major with the same degree designation. Students pursuing two majors in different degree programs are expected to have the full range of skills, competencies, and experiences as students graduating from each of the programs independently.

Therefore, students must be admitted into each degree program and fulfill all requirements for each degree. Students should pay particular attention to GEF requirements for each degree. Simultaneous completion of dual baccalaureate degrees requires students to complete a minimum of thirty unique credit hours that are not used to satisfy their primary degree requirements. For example, if the student's primary degree program requires a minimum of 120 credit hours, the student must complete a minimum of 150 credit hours to earn both degrees.

Second Degrees

Some students decide to continue their undergraduate studies after receiving their first bachelor's degree. Students who attempt to earn dual baccalaureate degrees from WVU but do not fully complete requirements for both degrees simultaneously will become second degree candidates. Students who have previously earned a bachelor's degree, whether from WVU or another institution, must complete a minimum of thirty hours beyond the first degree. Second degree candidates must meet all requirements for their degree program, major, college, or school and the University, including residence requirements. General Education Foundations (GEF) requirements, however, are generally considered satisfied by completion of the first undergraduate degree. In the event that courses taken for the first bachelor's degree are required courses for the second degree program, the college or school granting the second degree may approve course substitutions. In no circumstance may the coursework in the second degree program be fewer than thirty credit hours after the conferral of the first degree. Students who have already earned a WVU bachelor's degree cannot earn a second bachelor's degree with the same degree designation and within the same college as the first degree.

Reverse Transfer

Students who are admitted to a professional program in their last year of bachelor's degree coursework may request reverse transfer of professional coursework to fulfill the requirements of the bachelor's degree at WVU, Potomac State College or WVU Institute of Technology. Students are required to complete at least 90 hours of the three-year curriculum at WVU with no more than 30 credits transferring in from a regionally accredited professional program. Examples of professional programs may include but are not limited to: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Dental Science, etc.

Diploma Retention Policy

Diplomas retained by or returned to the Office of the University Registrar will be held for two years. This includes diplomas that are retained in the office for financial holds, have been returned to sender, or shipped to the office for pick up. After two years of the conferral date, any request for a diploma by the student will incur fees and fall under all policies associated with ordering a replacement diploma.

In this section:

- Graduation (p. 3)
- Graduation with Honors (p. 3)

Graduation

In order to graduate, a student is required to complete an application for graduation the semester or summer term in which he or she expects to graduate. If a student is uncertain about graduation requirements, the student should meet with his or her academic advisor for guidance.

Graduation with Honors

WVU recognizes distinguished academic achievement by awarding degrees cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude. This distinction can be awarded on initial or second baccalaureates and specified entry-level professional degrees. All candidates for a baccalaureate with a GPA of 3.8 or higher graduate summa cum laude. Those with a grade point average of less than 3.8, but equal to or above 3.6, graduate magna cum laude. Those with a GPA of less than 3.6, but equal to or above 3.4, graduate cum laude.

The grade point average for honors consideration for a baccalaureate is based on baccalaureate-level college work attempted through the final semester. This calculation includes baccalaureate-level college work attempted at institutions accredited by regional accreditors in the United States. Credit hours earned with a grade of P or S are not considered in the determination. Grades of F, however, are computed as hours attempted. The grade point average through the penultimate semester will be used for notations in the commencement programs. Students who received academic forgiveness are not eligible to graduate with honors.

Students must meet residency requirements at WVU to be considered for graduation with honors.

The GPA for honors consideration for entry-level professional degrees is based on baccalaureate-level and professional-level work attempted through the last semester. This calculation includes baccalaureate-level and professional-level college work attempted at all regionally accredited higher education institutions attended. Credit hours earned with a grade of P or S are not considered in the determination.

Students entering and completing a second baccalaureate program following completion of the initial degree are eligible to receive the honors designation. Grade point averages for graduation with honors on second baccalaureates shall be computed on all baccalaureate-level work, excluding credit earned with a P or S. This includes work completed for the first degree as well.