



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Academic Distinction

Policy Number 1-14

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, April 9, 2026

Issued by President Jeffery Osgood, April 23, 2026

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Previous Policy Number: IAP 16

1. Purpose

To recognize undergraduate degree seeking students who achieve high academic performance as evidenced in the grade point average.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all undergraduate degree seeking students.

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Definitions

- 3.1.1 **Dean's List Distinction:** Academic recognition of the scholarly achievement demonstrated by students in their academic studies based on a semester GPA of 3.5-3.99.
- 3.1.2 **President's List Distinction:** Academic recognition of the scholarly achievement demonstrated by students in their academic studies based on a semester GPA of 4.0.
- 3.1.3 **Ceremonial Distinction:** Level of distinction recognized at the commencement ceremony based on the prior semester's cumulative GPA as recognized on the graduation program and with the receipt of gold honor cords.
- 3.1.4 **Latin Distinction:** Level of distinction for bachelor's degree students recognized on the transcript and diploma upon degree conferral. Three levels of honor: cum laude ("with praise"), magna cum laude ("with great praise"), summa cum laude ("with highest praise").

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities



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- 3.2.1 **Office of the Registrar** – The Office of the Registrar will calculate Dean’s List and President’s List at the conclusion of each semester as part of the end-of-semester processing, will assign ceremonial distinction at the time of graduation application, and will assign Latin distinction at the time of degree conferral.

4. Policy

4.1 Dean’s List

- 4.1.1 The Dean’s List will be issued at the end of each fall and spring semester for undergraduate degree seeking students who earn at least 12 credits that count toward the GPA and have a term GPA of 3.5-3.99.

4.2 President’s List

- 4.2.1 The President’s List will be issued at the end of each fall and spring semester for undergraduate degree seeking students who earn at least 12 credits that count toward the GPA and have a term GPA of 4.0.

4.3 Latin Distinction

- 4.3.1 Bachelor’s degree seeking students with a minimum of 30 earned credits from Commonwealth University that count toward the GPA calculation will receive Latin distinction based on the cumulative GPA:
- Summa Cum Laude – GPA 3.95-4.00
 - Magna Cum Laude – GPA 3.75-3.94
 - Cum Laude – GPA 3.5-3.74
- 4.3.2 A student’s academic distinction level is determined based on the final cumulative grade point average (GPA) in the semester in which the student’s degree is conferred and will be designated on the transcript and the diploma.
- 4.3.3 An associate’s degree student with a minimum of 30 earned credits from Commonwealth University that counts toward the GPA calculation with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher will receive an associate’s degree with honors designation.
- 4.3.4 Students who have previously been awarded a baccalaureate degree and who are being awarded a second baccalaureate degree will not be eligible for Latin distinction unless they have completed the 30 credit hours as part of their second degree.

4.4 Ceremonial Distinction

- 4.4.1 Undergraduate degree seeking students with 30 earned credit hours from Commonwealth University that count toward the GPA calculation will be recognized



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with ceremonial distinction at the commencement ceremony. Students may have the 30 credit hours in progress at the time of the ceremony.

- 4.4.2 A student's ceremonial distinction is based on the cumulative GPA as of the semester prior to degree conferral.

Summa Cum Laude – GPA 3.95-4.00

Magna Cum Laude – GPA 3.75-3.94

Cum Laude – GPA 3.5-3.74

- 4.4.3 An associate's degree student with a minimum of 30 earned credits from Commonwealth University that counts toward the GPA calculation with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher will receive "associate's degree with honors" designation. Students may have the 30 credit hours in progress at the time of the ceremony.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

- 5.1 Every University policy will undergo a regular review on a five-year cycle, with approximately 20% of the total policies inventory being reviewed each year.
- 5.2 All policy reviews will be conducted by the responsible Senate Committee to assure that the policy remains relevant and aligns with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, PASSHE Board of Governors policies, and other University policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.

6. Additional Information

6.1 Supporting Documents

6.2 History

- 6.2.1. Replaces Interim Academic Policy (IAP) 16 Commencement Honors
- 6.2.2. Effective Date – April 23, 2026
- 6.2.3. Revised – April 23, 2026
- 6.2.4. Next Review Date – Spring, 2031

6.3 Related Policies

- 6.3.1. IAP 16 Commencement Honors

6.4 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting

Office of the Provost

Commonwealth University

viceprovost@commonwealthu.edu

570-389-3803