

Graduate Admissions, Withdrawal, Course Repeat, Transfers, and Graduation Requirements Policy

Policy No. 01-

Policy on Graduate Admissions, Withdrawal, Course Repeat, Transfers, and Graduation Requirements

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, [Date of Approval]

Revised [Date of Revision]

Responsible Office: Office of Graduate Education

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for graduate admissions, withdrawal, course repeat, transfers, and graduation requirements.

2. Scope

The policy governs processes surrounding graduate student admissions, transfer, and academic progress and may impact students, faculty, the Office of Graduate Admissions, the Office of the Registrar, the Financial Aid Office, and the Office of Graduate Education.

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 Provisional Status: A temporary admission standing granted to applicants who do not meet standard GPA or prerequisite criteria, requiring them to meet specific academic conditions (e.g., maintaining a minimum GPA) within a set timeframe to gain full admission.

3.1.2 Act 48 Requirements: Pennsylvania state-mandated continuing education hours/credits required for active educators to maintain their professional teaching certification.

3.1.3 Non-Degree Status: Enrollment classification for students who are permitted to take graduate-level coursework for personal or professional development without being formally admitted into a degree-granting program.

3.1.4 Early Admissions: A dual-enrollment pathways program allowing qualified undergraduate students to enroll in graduate courses and apply up to 40% of their graduate level coursework toward both undergraduate and graduate requirements.

3.1.5 Transfer Credits (External vs. Internal):

External: Graduate coursework completed at another accredited institution applied toward a degree at Commonwealth University.

Internal: Graduate coursework previously earned at Commonwealth University applied toward a concurrent or subsequent graduate degree.

3.1.6 Credit for Prior Learning (CPL): Academic credit awarded for demonstrated college-level knowledge or skills gained outside a traditional classroom (e.g., work experience, military training, or professional certifications).

3.1.7 Residency Requirement: The minimum proportion of degree credits that a student must complete directly through Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania.

3.1.8 Extenuating Circumstances: Exceptional, unforeseen personal or medical events (such as severe illness, bereavement, or sudden hardship) that justify exceptions to academic deadlines or policies.

3.1.9 University: shall mean Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1 Graduate academic procedures are maintained by the Office of Graduate Education in consultation with the Graduate Council, Registrar, Admissions, and Academic Affairs leadership.

4. Policy

4.1 Admission to the Graduate School at Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania is determined by the applicant's academic and program specific qualifications and decisions are reached without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, or disabilities.

4.2 General Admission: Applicants must hold or be on track to earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution or international equivalent, with a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Final admission is contingent upon receipt of official transcripts showing degree completion. Applicants not meeting minimum GPA criteria may be considered for provisional status upon Program Coordinator and Graduate Dean approval.

4.2.1 Specific entrance requirements for graduate studies at Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania vary according to program.

4.2.2 Some programs may require specific exams or certifications at entry. Any exam or certification fees must be paid by the student.

4.3 International Applicants: Applicants must submit official language exam scores (TOEFL/IELTS) taken within two years, unless exempt by completing at least one full-time semester at a U.S. institution. Applications must be complete four months prior to term start

4.4 Non-Degree Status: Allows students to take graduate coursework, audit classes, or fulfill Act 48 requirements. Up to 12 non-degree credits may be applied toward a degree program. Additional non-degree credits may be completed with Program Coordinator and Graduate Dean approval.

4.5 Early Admissions – Qualified undergraduate students with a 3.0 GPA may take graduate courses with permission and should consult with their undergraduate advisor and the graduate director for the program they are interested in for more information. Up to 40% of required graduate degree credits may count toward their undergraduate requirements.

4.6 Readmission - Students inactive for two consecutive years must reapply

4.7 Transfer of Credits Transfer credits must be graduate-level, earned with a grade of B or higher (no Pass/Fail), and completed within six years of graduation (unless granted an exception by the department and Dean of Graduate Education). Undergraduate coursework cannot apply toward a graduate degree. All post-admission external coursework requires pre-approval. Some programs may require certain courses to have included specific content in order to be eligible for transfer, so please consult with the program director.

4.7.1 External Transfer of Credits Students may transfer up to one-third of total degree credits from another college or university, with the approval of their graduate program director and Dean of Graduate Education.

4.7.2 Internal Credit Transfer and Second Graduate Degrees Graduate credits earned at Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania may be applied toward a subsequent or concurrent graduate degree program with approval from the program coordinator of the accepting program and the Dean of Graduate Education. A second degree must include a minimum of an additional 15 credits and complete the degree requirements for each additional degree, while a concurrent degree requires a minimum of 12 additional credits for each additional degree.

4.8 Graduate Course and University Withdrawal - Course withdrawals ("W") must be executed by the posted academic calendar deadline. A maximum of two (2) course withdrawals are permitted per degree program. Late withdrawals require Dean approval for documented extenuating circumstances. Re-registration for withdrawn courses requires the approval of the program coordinator. Additional withdrawals may be granted with the approval of the graduate program director and Dean of Graduate Education under special circumstances.

4.9 Course Repeats: Students may repeat up to two (2) unique courses, with no course repeated more than once. The most recent grade earned calculates into the GPA, though all attempts remain on the transcript. Additional withdrawals may be granted with the approval of the graduate program director and Dean of Graduate Education under special circumstances.

Courses with grades below 'C' earned at Commonwealth University must be repeated internally.

4.10 In addition to the program specific graduation requirements, the following Graduate School graduation requirements must be met:

4.10.1 Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 for all graduate work taken.

4.10.2 Consistent with the University residency requirement, the combined total of transfer credit and Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) may not exceed one-third (1/3) of the total program credits. Individual programs determine whether that program will consider any CPL and may impose additional limits on the amount of CPL or combined CPL and transfer credits. Please see the Policy on Graduate Credit for Prior Learning for more information on these credits.

4.10.3 Graduate students are generally expected to complete their degree requirements within six years of beginning their program. Extensions to this timeline and permission to use courses that are older than 6 years may be granted with permission from the program director and Dean of Graduate Education.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

5.1 Exceptions to this policy may be proposed to the Dean of Graduate Education.

6. Additional Information

6.1 Supporting Documents

6.2 Related Policies – Replaces Bloomsburg University PRP 3565 Graduate Academic Progress, Probation, and Dismissal

6.3 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting

Office of the Graduate Education, Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, Dr. Heather S. Feldhaus, hfeldhaus@commonwealthu.edu 570-389-4214