

# Graduation Policy for Undergraduates

## I. **PURPOSE**

This policy is enacted to document the process of awarding degrees upon completion of all requirements.

## II. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Villanova University undergraduate students.

## III. **DEFINITIONS**

A **Degree Program** is defined as an approved academic program of study, outlined in the Villanova University Undergraduate Catalog, that contains a degree and, in the case of an undergraduate, at least one major, and leads to an official diploma and notation of such on the university's official transcript.

A **2nd Degree** is an officially declared program of undergraduate study in addition to the primary degree program. The second degree will be awarded only if a student has completed 43 or more additional credits beyond the greater of the two program requirements and all other degree requirements as specified by the college.

A **major** is an area of specialized study that dictates the structure and requirements of the degree. Students may pursue 2 or more majors, but the degree is awarded upon successful completion of the primary major.

A **Certificate** is an academic award that can be obtained at the undergraduate level. Certificates are focused, structured, and interrelated sets of courses that enhance a student's experience in an academic area, address a professional development need, or provide preparation for specific degree programs. Certificates can be earned independently or in conjunction with a degree program.

The college offering the degree or certificate program bears the responsibility for authenticating completed program requirements. Changes or exceptions in course requirements for individual students must be documented in the academic record of the student.

## IV. **POLICY STATEMENT**

Students are required to graduate at the end of the term in which all degree requirements are completed (e.g., the completion of their primary/first major). The academic calendar for each year shall indicate the official graduation dates for the University (these dates shall not be confused with the dates for the annual commencement exercises). Undergraduate students must meet the graduation requirements which are stated in the University Undergraduate Catalog.

The deans shall send to the Registrar a list of all students in their college or school who have satisfactorily completed all their degree requirements by the official date of graduation. The Registrar shall issue diplomas only to those students whose names appear on the list. The current graduation dates are May 31st, September 1st, and December 31st. The graduation date appears on a student's diploma and transcript.

Incomplete minor, concentration, or secondary major requirements do not prevent degree awarding. If a student wishes to continue to pursue an additional major, minor, or concentration post-graduation, a statement of intent must be submitted to the student's college prior to the official census date in the semester in which the student [will meet all requirements](#) to graduate. The college should notify the Registrar's Office of students that are continuing post-graduation to complete secondary major/minor/concentration requirements. A major, minor, or concentration completed after the degree is awarded will be added to the transcript with a notation indicating

when it was completed. The GPA will not be recalculated for honors purposes. These additional programs must be completed within one academic year after degree completion.

Majors/minors/concentrations not declared prior to the official census date in the semester in which the student will meet all requirements to graduate will not be added retroactively to the student's record after graduation unless documented university error is discovered after the degree is posted.

## V. **PROCEDURE**

The Registrar's Office requires students to complete a Prospective Graduate Form; however, because students are required to graduate at the end of the term in which all degree requirements are complete, the university reserves the right to graduate a student without a graduation application on file.

Exceptions or waivers for specific courses required for degree completion may occur as determined by the college. These exceptions must be documented in the student's file. Students have advisors available who assist in planning and implementing their plan of studies; however, it is ultimately each student's responsibility to know and fulfill the requirements for graduation specified in the approved University Catalog for their academic program.

Students who intend to pursue a second undergraduate degree must inform their advisor and meet with the appropriate assistant or associate dean of their college. If approved, a degree plan must be provided by the college to the Office of the Registrar. This plan will be used to verify that at least 43 additional credits were taken by the student to complete the second undergraduate degree.

Colleges verify degrees/certificates and must submit a list of those graduating to the Office of the Registrar by the deadline set by the Office of the Registrar each semester.

The Office of the Registrar posts the degrees/certificates of students who appear on the graduation list within two weeks of receipt of the list.

Students are notified by email when degrees are posted.

The Office of the Registrar orders diplomas for these students after the graduation list is submitted. Diplomas are only issued for awarded degrees. Certificates are issued by the college in which the program is offered.

Diplomas are mailed 4-6 weeks after the awarding process. Students are notified by email when diplomas have been shipped. Certified Electronic Diplomas (CeDiplomas) become available as soon as diplomas have shipped. CeDiplomas are only available for conferral dates beginning May 2020.

### Guidance for Academic Advisors

Advisors may consider different options for students as described below.

- Advise students at the beginning of their final semester that if they wish to complete a second major or a minor or concentration after they graduate, then they must declare that major or minor or concentration prior to the census date of their final semester. Their graduation semester will still be the term in which they completed their primary degree requirements. The college should notify the Registrar's Office of students that are continuing post-graduation to complete a secondary major or a minor or a concentration. A major or minor or concentration completed after the degree is awarded will be added to the transcript with a notation indicating when it was completed. The GPA will not be recalculated for honors purposes. These additional programs must be completed within one academic year after degree completion. If students are undecided at the census date in their final semester – for whatever reasons – they should still plan to return. Please direct students to the Bursar's tuition and

fees webpage for the undergraduate rates if the student will be enrolled in less than nine credits. If they decide towards the end of their final semester to not return for an additional semester to complete the additional major or minor or concentration, then the college will need to notify the Registrar that the student is no longer pursuing the additional major or minor or concentration, so to have an accurate student record on file.

- Advise students to graduate on-time, and rather than complete additional majors or minors or concentrations, apply to a graduate program. If accepted, they enroll in that graduate program. If they decide to not complete the graduate program, they may have enough courses to receive a graduate certificate or may need to take only one or two courses to complete such a certificate. This may be a credential more meaningful than another undergraduate major or minor or concentration. Graduate students are considered full time for loan deferment purposes if taking six credits in a full term. Students receiving veteran's benefits must check with the School Certifying Office for rules regarding enrollment status and benefits.
- Advise students to graduate on-time, and if they do not qualify for admission to a graduate program, or do not want to enroll in graduate programs, they may pursue a second undergraduate degree, including the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies offered by the College of Professional Studies. Another option is to enroll in one of the College of Professional Studies' credit-bearing Certificates. These certificates range from twelve to thirty credits. Finally, students may enroll in Post-Baccalaureate Individual Courses in the College of Professional Studies. Tuition is set at the College of Professional Studies rate listed on the Bursar's website.
- Advise students who do not want to graduate early, to develop an "academic plan" with their advisor that has them complete degree requirements after four years or eight semesters of study. The academic plan will allow the student to complete degree requirements in the final semester when they also are completing their secondary major or minor or concentration. There are many reasons that students can graduate in less than four years including AP credits, summer school enrollment, and overloads.

**VI. RELATED INFORMATION/FORMS**

[Prospective Graduation Form](#)  
[Change of Major Form](#)

**VII. HISTORY**

Academic Policy Committee Reviewed May 1, 2022  
Council of Deans Approved August 24, 2023  
Provost Approved August 24, 2023  
President Approved November 8, 2023  
Effective Date January 2, 2024

**VIII. RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/ DEPARTMENT**

Office of the Provost  
Enrollment Management

**IX. RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT**

The Office of the Registrar