

AP.4 DEGREE APPLICATION, CONFERRAL AND GRADUATION

AP.4 Degree Application, Conferral and Graduation

- **AP.4.1 Application for Degree**
- **AP.4.2 Degree Conferral**
 - AP.4.2.1 Definitions of Degree Components
 - AP.4.2.2 Catalog Requirements for Degrees
- **AP.4.3 Graduation**
- **AP.4.4 Conferral of Posthumous Degree**

AP.4.1 Application for Degree

In the semester prior to the expected completion of degree requirements, students must confirm their intent to graduate through Patriot Web (<https://patriotweb.gmu.edu>). The deadline to apply to graduate is generally three to four months prior to the conferral date. Specific deadlines and complete instructions regarding graduation are published on the Office of the University Registrar's website (<http://registrar.gmu.edu>). Separate applications for each graduate degree or certificate are required.

For a degree to be conferred, all coursework must be completed, even if the coursework is not being applied to the degree. All students must complete the following degree requirements prior to the conferral (graduation) date: credit-by-exam, oral exams, theses, scholarly papers, and comprehensive exams. Students in doctoral programs must also complete internship/practicum requirements prior to the conferral date. Master's theses and doctoral dissertations are due in the library well before the conferral date. For more information visit the University Dissertation & Thesis Services web (<http://library.gmu.edu/udts/>)page (<http://thesis.gmu.edu>).

Students must have active registration status in the semester or summer term of graduation. Students not registered for coursework in the term of graduation must obtain a special registration. (For more information, see AP.1 Registration and Attendance (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/registration-attendance/>.) Degree applications will not be automatically extended if graduation is postponed; students must reapply for each conferral date.

AP.4.2 Degree Conferral

Mason awards degrees and certificates in programs and at levels authorized by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). The university confers degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. An academic program may include a degree program and additional majors, minors, or certificates. The university offers no certificate program below the bachelor level; some post baccalaureate certificates, however, may be awarded concurrently with the bachelor's degree. For more information, see listings in Find Your Program (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/programs/>).

AP.4.2.1 Definitions of Degree Components

- **Degree program, major, or field:** A program of study that normally requires at least 30 credits of coursework in the specified field. The primary program name (degree and major or field) appears on the diploma for bachelor's and master's degrees. Only the degree name appears for doctoral degrees. An undergraduate who desires to graduate with a BA or BS degree in two or more subjects must meet departmental requirements for the major in each field. For each major,

- at least 18 credits used to fulfill its requirements must be applied only to that major, i.e., cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of a concentration, minor, undergraduate certificate, or another major.
- **Concentration:** A second-order component of a degree program. A concentration consists of at least 12 hours that are not applied to any other concentration. Undergraduate concentrations are approved by the Undergraduate Council at the undergraduate level or by the Graduate Council at the graduate level.
- **Certificate:** A non-degree program complementary to a degree that requires at least 15 unique undergraduate or 12 graduate credits. For each undergraduate certificate, at least 15 credits used to fulfill its requirements cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of a major, concentration, minor, or another undergraduate certificate. The name of a completed certificate program appears on the transcript after the conferral of an undergraduate degree. Certificates are approved by Undergraduate or Graduate Council as appropriate. Credits from a maximum of one graduate certificate may also apply to a master's or doctoral degree program.
- **Minor:** A complement to a bachelor's degree program or major normally requiring at least 15 credits in a field other than the student's major. Of the courses presented for a minor, at least 8 credits must be applied only to that minor and may not be used to fulfill requirements of the student's major, concentration, an undergraduate certificate, or another minor. When coursework for a minor is used to fulfill a component of a major, only those credits in excess of the 30 required for a major may be applied to the requirement for unique credits.
- **Option:** The choice of a thesis or nonthesis path in graduate programs.

AP.4.2.2 Catalog Requirements for Degrees

Catalog year refers to the setting of course and non-course requirements within academic programs as stated in the school and college section of a specific catalog. Catalog year does not set academic policies other than program requirements in place, however. For more information, see the Knowledge of University Policies section of the Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/student-rights-responsibilities/>) page. Not all programs and degree components are available in all catalogs. For any one degree, all requirements must be met as stated in a single catalog. The only exception is that Bachelor's degree students may select a minor from another catalog year for which they are eligible, as noted below.

Bachelor's degree candidates may choose to graduate under the terms of any catalog in effect during their enrollment in degree status. Students who have been inactive for two or more years or who have attended another institution without prior approval from their academic dean or director must graduate under a catalog in effect at or after their re-admission and during their enrollment in degree status.

Master's and doctoral degree candidates who have been continuously enrolled may choose to graduate under the terms of any catalog in effect during their enrollment in degree status. Students who have been inactive more than one year, however, may be required by their program to graduate under a catalog in effect after they have been granted permission to re-enroll. In no case may a student choose the requirements of a future catalog year that take effect after the student's degree is anticipated.

AP.4.3 Graduation

Graduation ceremonies provide opportunities for students and their families to share in the conferral of academic degrees. Students who wish to participate should check GMU Events (<http://events.gmu.edu>) for current information about all graduation details including tickets, regalia, and schedules. Note: there is one formal commencement ceremony per year, in May, that includes all schools and colleges; students are recognized in groups, by their degrees. Each college holds a separate convocation where individual student names are called. Bachelor's and master's degree candidates who declare their intent to graduate in August but who have not yet completed all degree requirements may participate in the graduation ceremonies in anticipation of degree completion. Their names are marked with an asterisk identifying them as candidates pending completion of all requirements. Doctoral students may participate only if they have successfully completed all degree requirements, including defending and submitting a signed, final copy of their dissertation by the deadline. A Winter Graduation ceremony is held for August and December graduates where each student is individually recognized.

AP.4.4 Conferral of Posthumous Degree

A posthumous degree is an official Mason degree that is awarded to a deceased student in recognition of the student's academic achievement. The criteria for the award are established in order to uphold academic and institutional integrity. If a student does not qualify for a posthumous degree, an "In Memoriam" degree may be awarded to a student in good academic standing. Either degree award is subject to final review by the Provost.

Criteria

A posthumous degree may be awarded if, at the time of the student's death, he or she was enrolled in George Mason University, was in good academic standing, and was nearing completion of the requirements in the major degree program.

- **Undergraduate:** The student must have completed 90 credit hours, with at least 30 credit hours completed at Mason.
- **Graduate – Masters:** The student must have been admitted into degree status; completed at least 80% of the credit hours required for the degree, with at least 18 hours completed at Mason; and have a minimum GPA of 3.00 which does not include more than 6 credits of C.

If the degree requirements include a thesis, the student must have completed sufficient research or scholarship such that a thesis or one or more articles can be prepared. The student's thesis committee must approve the thesis or article(s) and recommend granting the degree.

- **Graduate – Doctoral:** The student must have advanced to candidacy; completed all coursework required for the degree with a minimum GPA of 3.00 which does not include more than 6 credits of C; and must have completed a full draft of the dissertation. The student's dissertation committee must determine that the dissertation could have been defended and recommend granting the degree.