

Policy Title: **Degree/Certificate Standards**

Policy Number: *0-01-0614*

Applies to: Degree or Certificate seeking candidates

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy provides the criteria that benchmark the baccalaureate, masters, professional and doctoral degrees as well as graduate certificates awarded by the University. These expectations include identifying credit hour requirements, achieving competence or learning outcomes, and requiring academic activities by award level to reflect appropriate progression in learning. The Degree/Certificate Standards policy also provides faculty with reference points for the development of programs, courses, assignments and learning assessments. Degrees and certificates are awarded by the University, not the school or program in which the candidate is enrolled. Unless otherwise stated, limited transfer credit earned at a regionally accredited postsecondary institution may be counted as credit in residence toward the degree or certificate, based on school policies

- (i) **Bachelor of Science (BS).** To receive a Bachelor of Science degree, a student must complete a minimum of 180 credit hours, 45 of the last 60 credits completed by each candidate for the bachelor's degree must be earned in residence at OHSU (courses completed at an OCNE community college partner institution or another Oregon University System institution can be counted as credit in residence toward the nursing degree only if the credits were taken after admission to OHSU). Students are expected to complete all general education and pre-major requirements at a regionally accredited postsecondary institution which are transferrable to meet the goals of the Bachelor of Science program.
- (ii) **Master of Science (MS).** To receive a Master of Science degree, a student must complete a minimum of 45 to 55 credit hours of study in residence at OHSU. Competence must be demonstrated by completing **at least one** of the following: master's thesis; comprehensive written and/or oral examination with a passing score; a culminating experience as a final project, paper or capstone. All Master of Science level work must be completed within 6 years of matriculation.
- (iii) **Master's Degree in a Designated Professional Field.** To receive a Master's degree in a designated professional field, a student must meet the learning standards and competencies designated by specialized accreditation agencies for that field. A student must complete a minimum 45 to 55 credit hours of study earned in residence at OHSU. Program faculty will determine how students demonstrate competency in the application of knowledge and research to the understanding of practical problems within the field. Demonstration of competency could include but is not limited to a comprehensive written examination; oral presentation; and/or a culminating experience in the form of a final project, paper or capstone. All master's level work must be completed within 6 years of matriculation. Master's degrees in a designated professional field that do not have external specialized accreditation requirements must receive approval from the Provost to exceed 55 credit hours.
- (iv) **Professional Practice Doctorate (DMD, MD, PharmD, DNP).** To receive a doctorate in professional practice, a student must complete sufficient credit hours of study in

residence to achieve program goals and learning competencies identified by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and school.

- (v) **Research Doctorate (Ph.D.).** To receive a research doctorate or PhD, a student must complete a program of study and research as planned by the graduate program faculty totaling a minimum of 135 hours of study earned in residence at OHSU; register for a minimum of 27 credits of dissertation over a period of at least 3 quarters; and complete all doctoral work within 7 years of the date of matriculation unless an extension is granted.
- (vi) **Research Doctorate (Ph.D.) School of Nursing.** To receive a research doctorate or PhD in the School of Nursing, a student must complete a program of study and research as planned by the graduate program faculty totaling a minimum of 91 hours of study beyond a master's degree earned in residence at OHSU; or a minimum of 103 hours of study beyond a bachelor's degree earned in residence at OHSU; register for a minimum of 27 credits of dissertation over a period of at least 3 quarters; and complete all doctoral work within 7 years of the date of matriculation.
- (vii) **Graduate Certificate** (Post-baccalaureate or post-master's). A certificate constitutes a coherent body of study more limited in scope than a degree, generally between 18 and 28 credits of graduate courses earned in residence at OHSU, or as required to achieve program goals and learning competencies identified by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and school. Under the discretion of the Registrar, and/or for programs in which the certificate is a pathway to a master's degree, required units can be a subset of courses required for a graduate degree. Individual programs set specific limits on the number of eligible shared credits, but shared credits cannot exceed 50% of the total credit requirement for a master's degree. Additionally, eligible courses for shared credit must meet time limits outlined in Transfer of Credit Policy, 2-03-1012. The certificate program usually does not culminate in a capstone or equivalent unifying experience.
- (viii) **Graduate Certificate: Advanced Practice Specialty** An advanced practice specialty certificate is a credential designed to qualify candidates for professional licensure and/or further certify professional practice. To receive a graduate certificate in an advanced practice specialty, the candidate must complete sufficient credit hours of study in residence at OHSU to achieve program goals and learning competencies identified by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and school.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 A Credit Hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. The credit hour is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction, and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week of an academic term, or approximately eleven to twelve weeks, for one hour of credit; or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

2.2 Credit In residence refers to OHSU-offered courses taken at any OHSU site.

2.3 A Degree is an academic title conferred by a university to a student who has successfully completed a specified instructional program of study. OHSU awards associate degrees, bachelor degrees, master's degrees and doctoral degrees.

2.4 A Certificate is an academic award, distinct from a degree, certifying the satisfactory completion of an academic instructional program or course of study. OHSU awards post-baccalaureate certificates, post-master's certificates and post-doctoral certificates.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for monitoring minimum degree requirements for each degree granting program the university offers through Degree Works.

The Faculty Senate Education Policy Committee is responsible for ensuring that new program proposals comply with minimum credit requirements.

4.0 PROCEDURES

N/A

5.0 RELATED POLICIES

5.1 [Course Credit Hour Policy, 0-02-0214](#)

5.2 [Transfer of Credit, 2-03-1012](#)

6.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

Graduation requirements, minimum degree qualifications
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7.0 REVISION HISTORY

11/1/2013	1.0	New Policy Statement
6/20/2014	1.1	Policy Implemented

Responsible Officer: Provost

Policy Contact: *Office of the Registrar, 503-494-7800*

Supersedes: N/A