



OHSU POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number: 02-70-035

Policy Title: Degree/Certificate Standards

Effective Date: June 21, 2021

Page 1 of 5

1. Policy Statement

This policy provides the criteria that benchmark the baccalaureate, masters, professional and doctoral degrees as well as graduate certificates awarded by OHSU. These expectations include but are not limited to identifying credit hour requirements, cumulative OHSU Grade Point Average (GPA) requirements for graduation, achieving competence or learning outcomes, and requiring academic activities by degree 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 OHSU, 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 toward the degree or certificate based on school policies.

- A) **Bachelor of Science (BS).** To receive a Bachelor of Science degree, a student must complete a minimum of 180 degree specific 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 public university 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. All Bachelor of Science degree requirements must be completed within the time frame established by the program unless an extension is granted. The time frame established by the program shall not exceed 5 years from the date of matriculation at OHSU. In order to be awarded a Bachelor of Science degree, a student must complete the program with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- B) **Master of Science (MS).** To receive a Master of Science degree, a student must complete a minimum of 45 and no more than 55 program specific credit hours of study. Competence must be demonstrated by completing **at least one** of the following: master's thesis; comprehensive and/or oral examination with a passing score; a culminating experience as a final project, paper or capstone. All Master of Science degree requirements must be completed within 6 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded a Master of Science degree, a student must complete the program with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

- C) **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 competence designated by specialized accreditation agencies for that field. A student must complete a minimum 45 program specific credit hours of study. Program faculty will determine how students demonstrate competence in the application of knowledge and research to the understanding of practical problems within the field. Demonstration of competence could include but is not limited to a comprehensive examination; oral presentation; and/or a culminating experience in the form of a final project, paper or capstone. All Master's degree requirements must be completed within 6 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. 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. In order to be awarded a Master's degree in a designated professional field, a student must complete the program with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- D) **Professional Practice Doctorate (MD, PharmD, DMD, DNP).** To receive a doctorate in professional practice, a student must complete sufficient credit hours of study to achieve program goals and learning competencies identified by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and school.
- (1) All MD degree requirements must be completed within 6 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded an MD, a student must complete the program as documented by receiving a Passing grade in all required courses and be endorsed for the MD by the Faculty of the School of Medicine.
 - (2) All PharmD degree requirements must be completed within 5 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded a PharmD, a student must complete the program with a minimum cumulative OSU GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
 - (3) All DNP with an advanced practice specialty major (e.g. DNP in FNP, etc.) degree requirements must be completed within 5 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded a DNP with an advanced practice major, a student must complete a minimum of 106 credit hours with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. DNP with a major in Nursing degree requirements must be completed within 4 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded a DNP with a major in Nursing, a student must complete 46 credit hours with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
 - (4) All DMD degree requirements must be completed within 5 years of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded a DMD, a student must complete the program as documented by receiving a Passing grade in all required courses and be endorsed for the DMD by the Faculty of the School of Dentistry.

- E) **Research Doctorate (Ph.D.).** To receive a research doctorate or PhD, a student must complete an instructional program of study and research as planned by the graduate program faculty to achieve program goals and student learning outcomes identified by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and/or school. In order to be awarded a Ph.D. a student must complete the minimum number of credits established under this policy, of which no more than 25% of credits may be taken at the 500 level; register for a minimum of 27 credits of research over a period of at least 3 terms; and complete all doctoral degree requirements within 7 years of the date of matriculation unless an extension is granted. In order to be awarded a Ph.D., a student must complete the program with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- (1) **School of Medicine.** To receive a Research Doctorate or Ph.D. in the School of Medicine, a student must complete a minimum of 135 credit hours of study.
 - (2) **School of Public Health.** To receive a Research Doctorate or Ph.D. in the School of Public Health, a student must complete a minimum of 103 credit hours of study.
 - (3) **School of Nursing.** To receive a Research Doctorate or Ph.D. in the School of Nursing, a student must complete a minimum of 91 credit hours of study beyond a Master's degree; or a minimum of 103 credit hours of study beyond a Bachelor's degree.
- G) **Graduate Certificate (non-clinical programs).** A certificate constitutes a coherent body of study more limited in scope than a degree. To receive a graduate certificate, a student must generally complete 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 school. The certificate program usually does not culminate in a capstone or equivalent unifying experience. All Graduate Certificate requirements must be completed within the time frame established by the program unless an extension is granted. The time frame established by the program shall not exceed 4 years from the date of matriculation at OHSU. In order to be awarded a Graduate Certificate, a student must complete the program with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- H) **Graduate Certificate: Advanced Practice Specialty (clinical programs).** 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 a minimum of 15 credit hours to achieve program goals and learning competencies identified by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and school as required by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency. All advanced practice specialty certificate requirements must be completed within the time frame established by the program unless an extension is granted. The time frame established by the program shall not exceed 4 years from the date of matriculation at OHSU. In order to be awarded an Advanced Practice Specialty Certificate, a student must complete their program with a minimum cumulative OHSU GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

2. Definitions

- A) **Credit Hour** is defined per Section 2.B of the Assignment of Course Credit Hours Policy, 02-50-015.
- B) **Credit in Residence** refers to OHSU-offered courses or through a joint degree program as part of an instructional program of study.
- C) **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.
- D) **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. Under the discretion of the Registrar, 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 degree. Eligible courses for shared credit must meet time limits outlined in Policy 02-70- 055, Transfer of Course Credit.
- E) **Grade Point Average (GPA)** is the average grade based on a pre-defined scale (for example 0.0 to 4.0 points, where A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0. F=0.0). Transfer credits are not included in the OHSU GPA calculation.

3. Responsibilities

The Office of the Provost is responsible for monitoring minimum degree requirements for each instructional program of study.

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

Related Policies and Procedures: [02-50-015, Assignment of Course Credit Hour](#); [02-50-060, Course Identification](#); [02-70-005, Transfer of Course Credits](#); [02-70-020, University Grading](#).

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Responsible Office: Office of the Registrar, 503-494-7800; academicpolicy@ohsu.edu

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