

Graduation Requirements and Commencement

1. Degree Candidacy

- a. Policy: Students working toward a degree must file an online Application for the Degree with the Registrar's Office at the beginning of their senior year. Applications require the approval of the Academic Council and the Community of Educators before students are formally admitted to degree candidacy.
- b. Procedure:
 - (1) At the beginning of the fall semester, students who have completed 85 credits or more are invited to complete the online Application for Degree which is returned to the Academic Records Specialist in the Registrar's Office.
 - (2) Students and advisors are encouraged to review the students degree audit in preparation for graduation. By doing so, the student had the opportunity to adjust his/her schedule if necessary in order to complete outstanding requirements.
 - (3) The Academic Records Specialist and the student's academic department reviews each graduate's academic record for completion of all graduation requirements.
 - (4) The Registrar's Office prepares a list of certified degree candidates and the Registrar presents it to the Academic Council and Community of Educators for their approval.
- c. Rationale: These procedures are needed to identify the graduating seniors and keep the Registrar's Office in contact with them throughout the senior year in preparation for graduation.

2. Verification of Academic Progress

- a. Policy: While each student is responsible for seeing that all general education and major requirements are met, the Registrar's Office monitors each student's progress toward the chosen degree in order to assist in this responsibility. This progress includes completion of general education and major requirements, satisfactory academic progress, and sufficient hours completed in order to graduate.
- b. Procedure: During the student's last semester, a degree audit is sent to the student's advisor. The student's advisor and the major department chairperson are asked to certify that all requirements for the major(s) have been met. The Academic Records Specialist also checks each student's record. Students and advisors are notified if any questions or problems arise.
- c. Rationale: To monitor the academic progress of potential graduates.

3. Requirements for All Degrees

- a. A minimum of 123 hours of credit. Students matriculating prior to Fall 2005 must complete a minimum of 126 hours of credit.
- b. A minimum cumulative (GPA) of 2.0 for all work taken at Messiah College.
- c. A minimum cumulative (GPA) of 2.0 for all work listed as specific requirements for the major.
- d. Compliance with the residency rule which states that the last thirty (30) credits preceding the conferring of the degree must be earned at Messiah College with a minimum of twelve (12) credits in the major.
- e. Completion of a major with requirements as specified under the department of instruction in which that major falls, or as offered at the Philadelphia Campus in conjunction with Temple University.
- f. Completion of all general education requirements

4. Attendance at Commencement

Graduating seniors are expected to participate in the commencement exercises. The Registrar's Office must be notified in writing if the student will not be attending commencement at least two weeks prior to commencement.

5. Release of Diplomas

In order for diplomas to be released, the following guidelines must be met:

- a. All course work, including Approved Off-Campus Study Programs and transfer credit, must be completed and recorded on the student's Messiah College transcript.
- b. All student accounts in the Business Office must be cleared.

6. Graduation Honors

The College awards three levels of honors according to a graduating senior's cumulative grade point average (GPA): summa cum laude (GPA 3.90 or above), magna cum laude (GPA 3.60–3.89), cum laude (GPA 3.30–3.59). The following guidelines are used in determining the eligibility and level of honors granted:

- a. Only credit for courses taken at Messiah College and approved off-campus study programs are calculated in the grade point average.
- b. A minimum of sixty (60) graded credits hours must be taken at Messiah College.
- c. Honors published in the graduation commencement bulletin will be based on the student's cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of the preceding fall semester.
- d. Final honors as noted on the student's diploma and transcript will be based on all credits earned at Messiah College.

7. Late Completion of Requirements

a. Policy

Students who are within 6 credits of completing academic requirements for their degree, but do not have all the work completed by commencement day of the year they wish to graduate, may be permitted to go through the ceremony with their class and then complete requirements in the summer following commencement. Such students must contract with the College to complete all work by September 1 following the commencement date. If they fail to complete all work by this date, a three (3) hour penalty course will be added to their graduation requirements.

b. Procedures

- (1) Students wishing to graduate but not having all work complete will receive a "Contract for Late Completion of Degree Requirements" from the Registrar's Office.
- (2) The Registrar's Office rules on these contracts prior to commencement.
- (3) Approved students may march with their class at commencement.
- (4) After completion of all requirements and payment of all bills to the College, the student requests the diploma from the Registrar's Office.