

# GRADUATION POLICIES



Information on policies related to degree requirements and graduation at the University of Louisville can be found on this page or by clicking on the following links to topic-specific pages:

- Catalog Year (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/university-wide-unit-specific-policies/catalog-year>)
- General Education: Cardinal Core Requirements (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/university-academic-policies/graduation/gen-ed-cardinal-core>)
- Graduation and Degree Requirements (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/university-wide-unit-specific-policies/graduation-degree-requirements>)
- Graduation with Academic Honors (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/university-wide-unit-specific-policies/graduation-academic-honors>)
- Residency Requirements (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/university-wide-unit-specific-policies/residency-status>)

**These policies are effective for Academic Year 2019-2020 (Summer 2019 semester).** Students enrolled in a term before this effective semester should consult with an advisor in their enrollment unit (<http://louisville.edu/advising/centers>) if they feel that they are disadvantaged by any change from previous policies.

Previous catalogs are available via the archive page of this catalog (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/archive>).

---

## Catalog Year

The university issues a catalog annually in conjunction with the start of the summer term, and the degree requirements stated in the annual issue apply to all students who matriculate during that year. These requirements constitute the “catalog year” for those students and set their degree requirements as long as they are enrolled without a break of more than two calendar years. In other cases, a student may elect to follow the requirements of a later catalog year. The student’s advisor will assist in identifying the need and benefit of such an election. The advisor must record this election in the student’s permanent record.

Students may petition for a variance from the stated degree requirements of their catalog year. Any variance must be approved by the dean or unit advising director (for unit and major degree requirements) or the provost (for General Education or Cardinal Core requirements).

Students readmitted after an absence of two or more calendar years must reapply for admission. If readmitted, they are subject to the catalog year requirements in force at the time of their readmission.

**Note:** The degree requirements for students enrolled before summer 2018 have been migrated to the university’s updated General Education program, Cardinal Core, with provision for differences between the old general education program and the Cardinal Core.

---

## General Education: Cardinal Core Requirements

Beginning in summer 2018, all students are required to meet the requirements of the Cardinal Core general education program. Students who matriculated to the university before summer 2018 should consult with their advisors about transitioning from the previous general education program to Cardinal Core.

The Cardinal Core program at the University of Louisville prepares students to do the advanced work needed for their baccalaureate degrees and prepares them to contribute to society throughout their lives through their professional work and civic engagement. The program emphasizes the development of key intellectual skills relevant to any career path: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, and the understanding of historical, social, and cultural diversity. Students will develop skills and acquire knowledge in the content areas of arts and humanities, historical perspectives, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, written communication, and the competency area of diversity in the United States and globally. Upon completion of the program, students will be prepared to analyze complex problems and evaluate possible courses of action in an environment characterized by diversity and the need for sustainable solutions.

For detailed information, please refer to the General Education: Cardinal Core (<http://catalog.louisville.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements>) page in this catalog.

---

## Graduation and Degree Requirements

The conferring of degrees by the University of Louisville is conditional upon completion of all requirements in the opinion of the unit faculty and dean, regardless of the students’ participation in commencement.

Students are strongly urged to run preliminary degree audits on a regular basis so that possible deficiencies in degree requirements can be identified early.

The baccalaureate degree (Bachelor’s of Arts, Fine Arts, Music, or Science) is the undergraduate degree offered by UofL. It is awarded to students who have completed both university-wide requirements and the requirements of the selected degree program. The following university-wide requirements apply to all baccalaureate degrees; the student must:

- Complete an online degree application by the specified date at the beginning of the semester of graduation.
- Complete an application for and be accepted for admission into a major program.
- Satisfy all Cardinal Core requirements.
- Complete all required courses and program requirements listed in the degree program section of this catalog.
- Have a cumulative university GPA of at least 2.00, or higher if specified by the program.

- Have a cumulative program GPA of at least 2.00, or higher if specified by the program.
- Complete a minimum of 120 hours applicable to the program, or more if required by the program.
- Complete at least 60 hours at an accredited four-year institution.
- Complete at least 25-percent of the total credit hours required for the degree in residence at the University of Louisville.
- Complete 30 of the last 36 hours in residence at the University of Louisville.
- Have neither missing nor outstanding I or X grades.
- Satisfy any additional requirements specified by the major program and unit.
- Be discharged of all financial obligations to the University.
- Be formally recommended for the baccalaureate degree by the unit faculty and dean and approved by the Board of Trustees.

To be awarded a second bachelor's degree, students must earn a minimum of thirty additional semester hours in the program. For students pursuing two degrees simultaneously, these thirty hours will be added to the minimum total of semester hours needed for the degree requiring the least number of hours.

Students who want to take a minor must apply for admission to the minor program after acceptance into a major program. The coursework requirements for a minor are prescribed by a department or unit and consist of at least 18 semester hours. Satisfactory completion of coursework required for a minor will be certified as completion of the minor, and will be shown on the student's transcript only if the student's application has been accepted by the department or program offering the minor. Most minor programs are open to students from all units.

---

## Graduation with Academic Honors

Baccalaureate degree students who have earned a minimum of 60 hours of degree credit in residence at the University of Louisville will be eligible for consideration to graduate with honors. Students who have re-entered the university under the fresh-start policy must have earned at least 60 credit hours since their return to be considered for academic honors.

Commencement programs will list eligible students as a Candidate for Honors based on their having earned both undergraduate and program grade point averages of 3.5 or higher prior to the semester preceding graduation. Final determination of a student's eligibility to graduate with academic honors will be based on the student's standing upon completion of the degree. The name of the honor is decided by the unit.

Minimum criteria for honors are as follows:

- Cum Laude or Honors: 3.50 undergraduate and program grade point averages
- Magna Cum Laude or High Honors: 3.75 undergraduate and program grade point averages
- Summa Cum Laude or Highest Honors: 3.90 undergraduate and program grade point averages

In addition to these minimum criteria, units may specify additional requirements for grade point averages and additional work such as honors projects or honors theses. Students should consult their advisor concerning eligibility and requirements for graduation with academic honors. The dean's office will make any final decisions concerning eligibility.

Students who were admitted to the University Honors program may be eligible to graduate as an Honors Scholar. Students who complete the necessary coursework with the required GPA will earn the designation of University Honors Scholar on both their transcript and diploma. Students who earn this distinction are awarded a medal and recognized at an awards ceremony prior to university commencement.

---

## Residency Requirements

Students earning baccalaureate degrees are required to complete at least 25 percent of the total credit hours required for the degree (including Cardinal Core credit hours) at the University of Louisville. Students earning baccalaureate degrees are also required to complete 30 of their last 36 semester hours at the University of Louisville. Students earning associate degrees are required to complete a minimum of 15 of their last 18 semester hours at the University of Louisville. Additionally, transfer students must take a minimum of 12 credit hours in their major at the University.