

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

## Four-year Graduation Plan

Western Colorado University has adopted a four-year graduation plan. If a student signs the four-year graduation plan agreement, fulfills all of the conditions, and is still unable to graduate in four years, the University will absorb the cost of the additional course work required for the degree. The four-year graduation plan is available on the Academic Affairs web page.

## 3 + 2 Programs

Western Colorado University offers 3+2 programs in a number of disciplines allowing eligible students to complete both undergraduate and master's degrees in five years. Available 3 + 2 programs will be listed within the department site offering the program.

## Operative University Catalog

All first-time entering students are allowed six years from their entering date as degree-seeking students to complete undergraduate requirements in force at the time of their entrance to Western. During the six-year period, students may elect to satisfy requirements specified in a Catalog more recent than the one under which they entered. Students must, however, indicate to the Registrar which Catalog they want used for the evaluation of their credits when they request a "Graduation Audit." Students who do not complete their degree within six years are updated to the current catalog year. Students who leave and return (readmit) six years or more after their initial catalog year are updated to the current catalog. Catalog extensions can be requested and must be approved by the major department.

Beginning with the fall 2023 semester, the operative Catalog year will begin at the start of the fall session and end with the conclusion of the following summer semester.

Readmitted or currently enrolled students who choose, or are required to use, a Catalog more recent than the one in effect when they entered must satisfy all requirements in the new Catalog with the following exception: They are allowed to use courses already posted to the permanent record in satisfying the General Education requirements.

## General University Requirements

A minimum of 120 semester credits is required for graduation. Of the 120 total credits required, students must earn 40 credits in upper-division courses (those courses numbered 300 and above). Fifteen of these 40 upper-division credits must be earned in courses that are part of the standard or comprehensive major programs.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs), offered through Extended Studies, appear on your transcript; however, they are not University credits and do not fulfill degree requirements.

At the time of graduation, students are required to have a minimum overall cumulative grade-point average of 2.000 or better, as well as a 2.000 or better grade-point average in their major and minor.

All requirements specified in this section are minimums; some programs require levels beyond these minimums.

## Resident Credit Requirements

Every candidate for a degree must earn a minimum of 30 credits from Western Colorado University. This 30-credit minimum must include: a) at

least 15 credits in the major, and b) at least eight credits in the minor. No more than 9 semester hours of a student's final credits will be accepted in transfer. These final credits must be selected in consultation with his or her faculty advisor. Credit earned for student teaching, independent study, internships, and other courses that may require off-campus experiences are treated as "resident" credit if the student has registered for that credit through Western directly. If a student registers for courses at another institution, regardless of the auspices under which such registration occurs, then such courses cannot be counted as "resident" credit at this University.

Certificate candidates must complete a minimum of 25% of their credits used to satisfy certificate requirements in residence at Western, or at program discretion.

## Major and Minor Requirements

Each student is obligated to meet either: (a) the requirements of a standard major program and a minor in another discipline, requiring a minimum of 30 credits earned in the major and a minimum of 18 credits earned in the minor; or (b) the requirements of a comprehensive major program, requiring a minimum of 48 credits with no minor required. The requirements of some majors and minors exceed these minimums. Students must complete a capstone requirement (minimum of 2 credits) as part of the standard or comprehensive major. Capstone courses are incorporated in the degree requirements listed in the Academic Programs section of this Catalog.

A student may earn a second or additional major by completing the requirements of each major.

A student may earn a second or additional emphasis within a major by completing the requirements of each emphasis, which must include a minimum of 18 unduplicated credits. To graduate with both a B.F.A. and either a B.A. or B.S., a student must complete the requirements of both degrees and complete a minimum of 150 credits. Students earning both a B.A. and a B.S. must complete the requirements of both degrees. All degrees, majors, emphases, and minors desired must be declared on the application for the Bachelor Degree.

Western allows well-prepared advanced students who have been provisionally admitted to a 3+2 program to substitute graduate courses for required or elective courses in an undergraduate degree program and then subsequently count those same courses as fulfilling graduate requirements in a related graduate program.

## General Education Requirements

All students must complete the Western Colorado University General Education Program including the Essential Skills and the Liberal Arts requirements. Specific requirements are described in the General Education section of this Catalog.

## Graduation with Honors

In order to graduate with honors, a student must have a cumulative grade- point average at Western Colorado University as follows:

Honor	GPA
Cum Laude	3.500 - 3.749
Magna Cum Laude	3.750 - 3.899
Summa Cum Laude	3.900 – 4.000

In order to be recognized for honors at a commencement ceremony, a student must have achieved the required cumulative grade-point average in all work completed at Western the semester prior to commencement. A student must also have a minimum of 40 GPA credits in residence at Western. Up to eighteen of these credits may be in progress during the final semester. Any honors status which is posted to a student's permanent record upon graduation will reflect the grade-point average that student earned on all work completed at Western.

## **Application for and Awarding of the Degree**

In consultation with their advisor(s), students are required to file an Application for Graduation on their MyWestern account during the first two weeks of the semester prior to the one in which they expect to complete all degree requirements. Academic progress will be monitored by the Office of the Registrar upon receipt of the Application for Graduation and an official audit will be saved in DegreeWorks. The Registrar reviews the audit and communicates with the student and the student's academic advisor on requirements not yet completed.

Degrees are awarded at the end of the semester in which all degree requirements are completed provided all requirements are completed and grades recorded within 25 working days after the last day of that semester. If requirements are not completed and recorded within that period, students must notify the Office of the Registrar when all requirements are completed and file a new Application for Graduation.

## **Commencement**

All students who complete requirements for graduation and are entitled to receive degrees are encouraged to participate in commencement exercises. In order to participate in commencement a student must have nine or fewer credits left to complete graduation requirements and be registered for those credits the following summer and/or fall term. Students must be in good standing and must submit a request to be included in the commencement ceremony to the Registrar during the first two weeks of the semester in which the commencement is held.

## **Academic Regalia**

All degree candidates participating in commencement activities shall wear approved commencement attire. In addition to the cap and gown, candidates will be allowed to wear cords, medals and/or stoles if such items have been previously approved by the Commencement Committee and the President's Cabinet. Gold cords are restricted to the university-recognized designations of cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude. No more than two accoutrements shall be worn by an individual. Any student who fails to comply with this policy may be asked not to participate.