Graduation Policies

Applying to Graduate

Students who intend to graduate in the next academic year must complete an Application for Graduation as directed by their respective academic advising office. The university confers degrees three times per year and there is one annual commencement ceremony in May.

Graduating in May

Most students who enter the university directly from high school graduate in May after eight semesters of full-time enrollment. Full-time enrollment is a minimum of 12 credits. Part-time enrollment is not permitted within a student’s first eight semesters. Because of the requirement that students have full-time status in the semester immediately prior to graduation, students must register for at least 12 credits in the final semester even if all course and credit requirements could be met with fewer than 12 credits.

Graduating in August

A small number of students complete their degree during the summer. Students who have completed eight full-time semesters may graduate in the summer if all degree requirements have been satisfied by the degree conferral date (last Friday in August preceding the start of fall semester classes). Students who have not completed eight full-time semesters should see the Graduating Early (p. 1) policies.

Graduating in December

A small number of students complete their degree at the end of the fall semester, not including intersession. Students may graduate in December if all degree requirements have been satisfied by the degree conferral date (December 30th or the preceding Friday if the 30th falls on a weekend). Students are required to maintain full-time status (at least 12 credits) in their final semester unless they are in their ninth semester or later.

Note for students who entered as transfer students

Transfer students are not subject to the eighth semester restrictions listed above. They must complete at least four full-time semesters at JHU before they are eligible to graduate.

Completing Graduation Requirements

Students are responsible for completing the requirements for a bachelor’s degree (http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/academic-policies/requirements-for-a-bachelors-degree). All grades and credits for courses that are required for graduation must be submitted in time to clear students for graduation.

Each student expecting to graduate will receive a final bill from the university. It is university policy that all outstanding accounts must be paid in full before a student’s diploma may be released.

Students who have not completed degree requirements after eight full-time semesters (or four full-time semesters for transfer students) in college may register for less than 12 credits and pay for courses on a per credit basis. With approval of the director of the student’s academic advising office and the major department (in the case of courses required for the major), these students may take courses elsewhere to meet the remaining graduation requirements, but must observe the 12 credit limit on transfer credit. These students also may have part-time status in the semester when they graduate.

Graduating students who are taking courses through the Baltimore Student Exchange Program or in other divisions of the university must make arrangements with their instructors on the first day of class to have final grades submitted to the host registrar and then to the Homewood Registrar by the deadline for submitting grades for graduating students. If such an arrangement cannot be made, students should not register for the course.

Students who graduate in December may remain in university housing and/or continue to participate in student organizations only if they enroll for a minimum of 6 credits during the following spring semester.

A student will not be graduated with unresolved outstanding charges of misconduct or academic ethics violations.

The university does not guarantee the award of a degree. The award of degrees is conditional upon a) satisfaction of all degree and instructional requirements in effect at the time of matriculation as a degree-seeking student (as published in the relevant annual catalog), b) compliance with the current university and divisional regulations, and c) performance meeting the bona fide expectations of the faculty.

No member of the faculty is obliged to provide students or graduates with an evaluation or letter of recommendation which does not accurately reflect the faculty member's true opinion and evaluation of the student’s academic performance and conduct.

Graduating Early (less than 8 semesters)

Students are eligible to graduate early at the end of the fall or spring semester if they have completed all requirements for graduation, including the residency requirement (http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/academic-policies/requirements-for-a-bachelors-degree/#residencytext). Students graduating early may not use intersession as a final term to complete remaining graduation requirements. Students may not graduate early during the summer except in the circumstances described below:

- Student has at most two incomplete grades in spring semester required courses, or
- Student has one incomplete grade in a spring semester required course and needs one required course in the summer, or
- Student needs one required course in the summer.

These students must meet with their respective advising office to file an August conferral plan prior to the May commencement ceremony. This plan requires proof of summer course registration, if applicable.

Incomplete Grades and Graduation Status

Students with incomplete grades or missing grades in required courses at the date of conferral will not graduate.

Students who have completed at least 8 full-time semesters and have met the residency requirement and who receive one or more incompletes in their last semester in attendance, may complete those incomplete grades and are not required to register for additional coursework unless required for their degree.

Students who have completed less than 8 full-time semesters:
• who receive one or two incomplete grades in required courses during their intended last spring semester should review the Graduating Early (p. 1) policies.

• who receive three or more incomplete grades during their intended last spring semester are required to register for another full-time fall semester (at least 12 credits) in order to complete all degree requirements (including the residency requirement).

• who receive incomplete grades in required course(s) during their intended last fall semester must resolve these incomplete grades no later than the December degree conferral date or register for another full-time spring semester (at least 12 credits) in order to complete all degree requirements (including the residency requirement).

Last Semester Option
In their last semester before graduation, students may request that they be excused from taking the final examination in one or more courses. This option is solely at the discretion of the course instructor. This option is not available to students who are graduating early.

S/U Option in the Last Semester
Students in their final semester, who will have completed at least eight full-time semesters in college when they graduate and who are taking more credits than are needed to complete graduation requirements, may take one or more of the extra courses for S/U credit. Engineering students must have the faculty advisor’s permission, indicated by his/her signature on an add/drop form, to request this option. The faculty advisor’s signature indicates that the student will have completed all degree requirements without this course. In addition, a signature from the Engineering advising office is needed to confirm that the senior has applied for graduation in the spring semester. Arts & Sciences students must seek approval from the Academic Advising Office.

The extra courses may also include up to 6 credits of independent academic work, either graded or S/U. In addition, the usual limit of no more than 6 credits per year of independent academic work will be waived if the additional credits are for extra credit work done in the final semester.

Graduation Closes the Undergraduate Record
Upon graduation, the undergraduate record is closed. The only permitted changes are the resolution of incomplete grades, missing grades, and grade errors. These changes must be resolved by the first Monday after 30 days have lapsed since the degree conferral date. Students wishing to take additional courses at JHU after graduation should refer to Alumni Enrollment (http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/academic-policies/student-status/#alumnienrollmenttext) policies.

General and Departmental Honors at Graduation
Students may receive general honors, departmental honors, or both at graduation. General honors are awarded to students with cumulative grade point averages of 3.50 or better. The final determination is made after all grades have been reported. Departments set their own standards for the award of departmental honors. Students should consult with Director of Undergraduate Studies for their major about the requirements for honors.

General and departmental honors are noted on a student’s academic record following the student’s last undergraduate semester before graduation. In addition, honors are noted in the Commencement program. However, because the program is printed several weeks before the date of Commencement, not all honors are announced in time for inclusion in the program.

Completing an Honors Thesis
Students who are completing an honors thesis for departmental honors must complete the thesis before graduating. Students may not stay on after graduation to complete an honors thesis. Similarly, students graduating at midyear may not register part-time in the spring semester to finish an honors thesis.

The university commencement ceremony is held once each year in May. The student’s academic advising office determines whether a student has completed all requirements and clears the student for graduation and participation in Commencement. Students who graduate in August, December, and May are invited to participate in the commencement ceremony in May following their degree completion. Students who graduate in August may receive permission to walk in the May ceremony preceding degree completion if they file an August conferral plan with their respective advising office. The diploma and degree will not be awarded until all courses are completed successfully and recorded.