

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: Loren J. Blanchard, President
Subject: Undergraduate Graduation and Commencement

UH-Downtown/PS 03.A.06
Issue No. 9
Effective Date: 06/14/2021
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1. PURPOSE

This policy describes requirements and procedures for graduation and commencement.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Cumulative UHD Grade Point Average (GPA): The grade point average of UHD coursework as defined in PS 03.A.04 Grading System Policy (section 2.3 and 3.2).
- 2.2 Enrollment: Registration for and completion of at least one course.

3. POLICY

3.1 General Requirements for Graduation

- 3.1.1 Students must meet all requirements of their degree programs as certified by their academic dean.
- 3.1.2 Grade Point Average: All students receiving a degree from the University of Houston - Downtown (UHD) must attain at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average, calculated on grades earned in college level courses at UHD. For this calculation, repeated courses are handled under the provisions of the Grading System Policy PS 03.A.04, section 3.2. Colleges may impose more stringent requirements in one or more of their degree programs; however, the requirements may not contradict the stated grading policy of the university and must be approved by the Provost. Grades of I are calculated as F in the determination of a student's cumulative GPA for graduation.
- 3.1.3 UHD Residency: Twenty-five percent (25%), or 30 semester credit hours, of the course work toward the degree must be taken at UHD. At least 18 credit hours must be in the upper division. UHD department-approved study abroad credit, although processed as transfer credit, will count toward University residency requirements. Only the appropriate academic dean may waive any portion of these requirements. Students seeking a waiver of the residency requirements must follow the procedures established by their academic college

3.2 Graduation under a Specific Catalog

3.2.1 General Requirements

- 3.2.1.1 A student graduates under the degree provisions of the catalog in effect at the time of their first completed term of enrollment, or a subsequent catalog at the request of the student.

3.2.2 Exceptions

- 3.2.2.1 No catalog more than ten years old may be used.
- 3.2.2.2 The program of students whose enrollment is interrupted for more than fourteen consecutive months for reasons other than military service shall be governed by the catalog in effect at the time of the students' reenrollment in the university. Students have the option of graduating under the provisions of this catalog or any subsequent catalog.
- 3.2.2.3 A student whose enrollment is interrupted by military service must reenroll within one year from date of separation from the service and no more than five years from the beginning of military service in order to remain under the provisions of the catalog in effect at the time of original enrollment at the university.
- 3.2.2.4 Students forced to withdraw for adequate cause before the completion of the degree may, upon readmission, petition the appropriate academic dean to graduate under the catalog in effect at the time of original enrollment.
- 3.2.2.5 The program of students who change their major shall be governed by the catalog in effect at the time of the change of major.

3.3 Graduation with Honors

3.3.1 Eligibility for Honors

- 3.3.1.1 Students who have completed 42 credit hours or more at UHD, of which 24 credit hours must be upper level course work, may qualify for official university honors designation on their diploma and transcript. Preliminary designation of university honors for commencement is based upon a minimum of 30 credit hours completed at UHD.

3.3.2 Computation of Grade Point Averages (GPA) to determine official Honors

- 3.3.2.1 Criteria for Latin honors designation: Students who have earned a UHD grade point average of 3.80-4.00 will graduate summa cum laude; a UHD grade point average of 3.60-3.79, magna cum laude; and a UHD grade point average of 3.40-3.59, cum laude.
- 3.3.2.2 Only credit hours earned at UHD are considered; transfer credits are not used in the GPA calculation for university honors. For this calculation, repeated courses are handled under the provisions of the Grading System Policy [PS 03.A.04](#), section 3.2.
- 3.3.2.3 The higher of these two UHD GPAs will be considered for university honors: the UHD GPA calculated from the student's last 42 credit hours completed at UHD and the UHD GPA calculated from all courses completed at UHD.
- 3.3.2.4 Students not eligible for university honors may be eligible for College Honors. Each college will set its own GPA requirements for College Honors. College honors will be reflected only on the student's final transcript.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Application for Graduation

- 4.1.1 Any student planning to graduate must file an electronic application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar. Deadlines for filing the application and paying necessary fees are printed in the UHD Catalog and in the Class Schedule.

4.2 Commencement Exercises

- 4.2.1 Eligibility: Only students who have completed or are currently enrolled in courses necessary to complete degree requirements and have filed an application for graduation may participate in the commencement exercises.
- 4.2.2 Honors Designation at Commencement
 - 4.2.2.1 Designation of university honors in the commencement program for graduates reflects only grades earned prior to the final semester, and is therefore preliminary. A minimum of 30 credit hours completed at UHD is necessary for preliminary designation. Official designation of University honors, noted on the transcript, is calculated after final semester grades post and is based upon the requirements in section 3.3 of this policy. It is thus possible for a student to receive preliminary designation of honors at

commencement, but not have honors officially transcribed.

4.2.2.2 Students graduating with university honors will be so designated in the commencement program and will wear special insignia with their academic regalia.

4.2.3 Academic Regalia: Academic regalia (cap and gown) must be worn at the commencement ceremony.

4.2.4 University Commencement Speakers: UHD seeks speakers who are relevant to UHD graduates, respected in their field, and if possible, of national or international stature.

4.2.4.1 Selection Process

4.2.4.1.1 A Commencement Speaker Committee, appointed by the Provost, is comprised of two members selected by Faculty Senate, a Student Affairs representative, an Advancement and University Relations representative, an elected member of the Student Government Association and two students at-large selected by SGA, one undergraduate and one graduate.

4.2.4.1.2 Members serve one year terms and may be re-appointed.

4.2.4.1.3 The committee will produce annually a slate of potential speakers to recommend for the following academic year December and May Commencement ceremonies. The committee determines criteria for speakers and forms the slate in consultation with all UHD constituents.

4.2.4.1.4 Speakers for college or program specific ceremonies are selected through a representative process by the faculty of the college or program.

4.2.4.2 Timeline

4.2.4.2.1 Provost appointments for the following academic year must be made by the first Monday of May and appointment letters must be sent by the first Monday of June.

4.2.4.2.2 The SGA at-large student representatives must be selected by the first Monday in September.

4.2.4.2.3 By October 1 the committee will be convened and select a chair.

- 4.2.4.2.4 The slate of recommended speakers for the following academic year is submitted to the Provost by April 1 for final determination and selection by the President.
- 4.2.4.2.5 The President's selection must be finalized and publicized no later than 6 weeks prior to each Commencement ceremony.
- 4.2.4.2.6 Any exceptions to the timeline must be made in consultation with the Commencement Speaker Committee.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost

Review: Every five years, or as necessary.

Signed original on file in the Office of Human Resources.

6. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #4: 04/25/1994

Issue #5: 05/28/2013

Issue #6: 06/22/2015

Issue #7: 02/08/2016

Issue #8: 06/08/2016

7. REFERENCES

[PS 03.A.04 Grading System policy.](#)