

Requirements to Participate in a Commencement Ceremony

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Academic / Commencement

Policy Owner: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Effective date: immediate

Approval date: March 6, 2025

Schedule for Review: Fall 2028

Policy Summary:

Students with an approved Application for Graduation submitted by the deadline may participate in one commencement ceremony aligned with their degree completion. Participation is optional and does not equate to degree conferral, which occurs after final grades are verified.

Policy Statement:

Commencement ceremonies are held twice per year: one at the end of the Fall semester (in December) and one at the end of the Spring semester (In late April or early May.)

The date that the student's degree is officially conferred, or the student is "graduated," is the date that the final grades have posted for the semester and degree requirements finalized. This date may differ from the ceremony date.

A student with an approved Application for Graduation that was submitted by the deadline for spring or summer semester may participate in the commencement ceremony at the end of the Spring semester (in late April or early May).

A student with an approved Application for Graduation that was submitted by the deadline for fall semester may participate in the ceremony at the end of the Fall semester (in December).

Applications for Graduation must be submitted by the deadline to participate in a commencement ceremony. A late application does not prevent the conferring of the degree but may limit the student's ability to participate in the ceremony.

A student may only participate in one commencement ceremony and is expected to participate in the ceremony that corresponds with their approved Application for Graduation.

Students may request approval to participate in an earlier or later commencement ceremony. If a student completes their degree by the Fall semester, they may seek approval to participate in the upcoming Spring commencement ceremony instead. If a student plans to complete their degree by the Spring semester, they may seek approval to participate in the prior Fall commencement ceremony instead.

A student who submits an Application for Graduation after the deadline may not participate in the next commencement ceremony.

Participation in a commencement ceremony does not mean that the student has graduated or had their degree conferred. The conferral process begins following the commencement ceremony whereby courses and grades are reviewed to verify all degree requirements have been met and the degree can be officially awarded.

Students are not required to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Responsibilities:

For oversight of the policy: Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

For procedures for implementing policy: The College Registrar provides the final list of students approved to participate in a commencement ceremony.

For enforcement of the policy: College Registrar or designee

Definitions:

Commencement Ceremony: The official ceremony or event that celebrates the awarding of degrees to students who have earned a certificate, baccalaureate or master's degree. At Fort Lewis College this celebratory event includes the opportunity for students to invite family and friends to attend.

Degree Conferral: The degree has been officially awarded upon verification that all academic requirements have been met.

Application for Graduation: Students must initiate the request for their degree to be conferred and for approval to participate in a commencement ceremony. The Registrar's Office oversees the Application for Graduation process and maintains all necessary information and deadlines on the Skyhawk Station website.

Procedures: The full Application for Program Completion process is posted on the Skyhawk Station website.

Cross-Referenced Policies: Degree Conferral Policy

Consequences of Non-Compliance: Students who do not apply for graduation for a specific term by the specified deadlines or are not approved to graduate, may not participate in the commencement ceremony for that term.

Review and Revision History:

Policy was reviewed in Fall 2023, no substantive changes were made.