

GRADUATION

POLICY

Upon successful completion of program requirements, a student will be eligible to receive an Associate in Arts degree, an Associate in Science degree, an Associate in Applied Science degree, a diploma, or a certificate as listed for each major. Total credit requirements will vary by program and have been determined based upon curriculum requirements, advisory committee recommendations and Program Development Staff at the Office of the Chancellor. Ridgewater College adheres to the definitions included in [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.36](#) and [Minnesota State System Procedure 3.36.1](#) – Academic Programs.

History:

01.27.03 Adopted

05.12.06 Revised

03.25.10 Revised

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PROCEDURES**Requirements**

To be considered eligible for graduation with an Associate Degree, Diploma or Certificate (9 credit minimum, as defined by Minnesota State) each student must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete all courses and achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or better on a 4.00 grading scale. In addition, diplomas and degrees may require minimum passing grades for specific courses.
2. Fulfill all financial obligations to the college.
3. A student seeking candidacy for an associate degree, diploma or certificate must submit an "Application for Graduation" form to the Registration Office when the student pre-registers for his/her last semester in residence. (A student must be within 10 credits or 12 credits internship of completing his/her degree or diploma to participate in graduation ceremony.) A separate application is required for each degree, diploma and/or certificate. Students must check their Interactive Degree Audit (DARS) in their e-services before applying. The audit must be for the major indicated on the application and it must read "ALL REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED – IN PROGRESS COURSES USED" or "ALL REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED BELOW HAVE BEEN MET."
4. Residence: To be eligible for graduation, a student must have earned at least 1/3 of the total program credits at Ridgewater College and must be enrolled at the college during the semester in which the degree requirements are completed. An exception may be made when a student who has completed at least 20 credits at Ridgewater College lacks 10 or fewer credits for graduation. Petitions/transcripts will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for recency or to insure compliance with current graduation standards.

Except for extenuating circumstances – such as entry into the military service – this transfer of acceptable credits must occur within a reasonable amount of time after the student transferred from Ridgewater College. The petition form, which is available from the counselors, must be submitted in the year in which the degree is to be awarded.

5. Participation: All students seeking the Associate Degree or Diploma are expected to participate in the graduation ceremonies.
6. Time Limit: Students graduating in fewer than four years must meet the graduation and degree requirements in the current college catalog or those degree requirements in effect during their first term at Ridgewater College. Students graduating more than four years after the date of first enrollment must meet the requirements stated in the catalog in effect for the year in which graduation occurs.

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Attire

All faculty, administration, and students wearing caps and gowns will wear only official graduation attire. This would include official graduation caps, tassels and gowns, as well as honors cords, medallions and veteran's cords issued by Ridgewater College. No other items are allowed on the gown or to be worn to the ceremony.

Ceremony

Once each academic year, a formal commencement ceremony is held at the end of finals week during spring semester (typically mid-May). A ceremony will be held on each campus for its graduates. Eligible applicants will receive commencement information regarding specific dates, times, location, gown ordering and pick-up, etc. via mail. Participation in the ceremony does not signify completion of all degree requirements.

Honors

For those who qualify, the graduation program will note, with a †, individuals who are members in good standing of the national honor society of two-year colleges (PTK). In addition these individuals will wear PTK cords and their tassel will be gold. Individuals who have achieved a cumulative GPA of at least 3.50 will be noted with one * and their diploma will be embossed with the honor student seal. Two ** will indicate a cumulative GPA of at least 3.75. In addition to the honors seal on the diploma, these students will receive gold cords to be worn at the ceremony. Three *** will indicate a 4.00 GPA. In addition to the honors seal and gold cords, these students will also be given a medallion to be worn at the ceremony.

To be eligible for honors, at least two-thirds (2/3) of all credits earned at Ridgewater College must have a grade point value letter grade assigned (i.e., A – F).

Process

Awards are not handed out at the ceremony. Each student attending the ceremony receives a degree jacket when they walk across the stage. Final approval is not determined until final grades are submitted and posted to the student's record. Awards will be mailed four (4) to six (6) weeks after all requirements have been verified.

In order for awards to be mailed, there must be no holds on the student's account, such as Business Office, laptop, overdue library books, etc. If a hold exists, awards will not be mailed until the Registrar's Office has been notified that the obligation has been satisfied.

It is the student's responsibility to keep the Registrar's Office informed of address changes so that awards are mailed to the correct permanent address on file in the student information system.

The name printed on the certificate/diploma/degree will be the full first and last name on file in the Student Information System at the time of application for graduation. Any name changes require proof of

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authenticity. This includes a picture ID and at least one other form of documentation. This documentation may include any one or more of the following: Marriage decree, Divorce decree, Court order, Certificate of U.S. Citizenship, Social Security card, or other official documentation recognized by the college. Name changes must be made before degrees are ordered from the printer. After that time, there will be an additional \$25 charge for a corrected certificate/diploma/degree.

Transcripts and certificates/diplomas/degrees will reflect the semester term and year in which all graduation requirements have been met, including receiving official transcripts with final grades from transfer institutions, applications and fees, as well as clearing any holds.

History:

05.12.06 Adopted

01.28.08 Revised – For Implementation 07.01.08

03.25.10 Revised

11.15.11 Revised

07.06.12 Revised

02.06.14 Revised – Honors section.

02.13.17 Proposed

03.13.17 Adopted

02.14.19 Proposed

04.01.19 Revised