

GRADUATION POLICY			
Effective Date	January 15, 2019	Policy Type	Academic
Responsibility	Director of Student Experience	Cross-Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Council Authority and Bylaws 2. Access to confidential student records & information 3. Records Management 4. Recognition of Prior Learning 5. Advanced Standing: Recognition of Other Learning Experiences 6. Grading 7. Recognition of Academic Achievement
Approver	Academic Council	Appendices	Appendix 1 Graduation Process Appendix 2 Parchment Replacement Appendix 3 Grades and Grade Point Averages Appendix 4 Eligibility to Participate in Convocation Appendix 5 Posthumously Awarding Credentials Appendix 6 Awarding Honorary Credentials
Review Schedule	This policy is to be reviewed every 2 years from the date the policy is approved.		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Grande Prairie Regional College (“GPRC” or the “College”) values the integrity of each Credential it grants. GPRC recognizes learners for successful completion of program requirements through the issuance of Credentials in the form of both transcript and Parchment.

2. Background

- 2.1. This policy provides a framework to ensure that practices related to learners meeting the requirements and the criteria for graduation are consistently applied.

3. Policy Objective

- 3.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide information related to successful completion of program requirements and granting of a Credential.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to all students enrolled in credit programs offered by the College.

5. Definitions

- 5.1. “Academic Calendar” is the official publication, which articulates graduation requirements for students admitted to GPRC programs under a particular calendar year.
- 5.2. “Academic Council” is the cross-divisional council for the purpose of making recommendations or reports to the Board of Governors or designate on academic matters.
- 5.3. “Academic Plan” is a prearranged plan, pertaining to a specific Academic Year of Admission, which itemizes the necessary courses for successful completion of program requirements to obtain a Credential.
- 5.4. “Academic Progression” is the continuation of a student into the next Academic Term, Academic Year or level of study based on the successful completion of all program requirements.
- 5.5. “Academic Term” identifies the portions of the Academic year in which the College schedules courses.
- 5.6. “Academic Year” identifies the start and end of the College’s Academic Year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.
- 5.7. “Approved Equivalent GPRC Course” is the recognition of equivalent coursework completed at GPRC that replaces a required course for a program.
- 5.8. “Approved Program Curriculum” is the formally approved curriculum as approved by Academic Council and reflected in the appropriate Academic Calendar for the year of Admission.
- 5.9. “Certificate of Achievement/Certificate of Grade 12 Equivalency” is the recognition of the completion of program requirements in specific programs such as Academic Upgrading or Inclusive Post-Secondary and is noted on a student’s official transcript for successful program completion.
- 5.10. “Certificate Program” is a designated program that is normally completed within one Academic Year. Some Certificate Programs may be more or less than one-year in length.
- 5.11. “Continuing Student” is a current student who is returning to the college after an absence of less than one Academic Year.
- 5.12. “Convocation” is the ceremony to celebrate with the students who successfully completed, or are in progress to complete, their programs and satisfied the College’s graduation requirements.

- 5.13. “Credential” is an Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education approved degree, diploma or certificate awarded and noted on a student’s official transcript for successful program completion.
- 5.14. “Degree Audit” is the activity or output whereby a student’s academic record is reviewed in comparison to the program/Credential requirements.
- 5.15. “Diploma Program” is a designated program that is normally completed within two Academic Years. Some Diploma Programs award a certificate after the completion of the first year’s program requirements.
- 5.16. “Exemption” refers to a course that has been used within another Credential (i.e. Certificate) and is required in the current Credential (i.e. Diploma) for which a student is exempted from repeating the course but is still required to complete credits to replace that course.
- 5.17. “First Admission” is the oldest admission to a program of continuous studies used to determine the appropriate Academic Plan used for program requirements. Returning Students must follow the current admitted Academic Year program requirements. Students can only be admitted to one program at a time.
- 5.18. “Grade Point Average” (GPA) is the weighted average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total credits attempted.
 - 5.18.1. “Program (or Graduation) GPA” is the grade point average calculated from the grades of the courses completed toward a specific program.
 - 5.18.2. “Term GPA” is a GPA calculated only from the courses taken in a single term by dividing the sum of grade points earned in a term by the total credits attempted in that term. A Term GPA shows on the transcript.
 - 5.18.3. “Year GPA” is a GPA calculated only from courses take in one Academic Year by dividing the sum of grade points earned in an Academic Year by the total credits attempted in that year. A Year GPA shows on the transcript.
- 5.19. “Graduate” is a student who has successfully completed the program requirements for a Certificate, Diploma or degree as specified by the governing GPRC Academic Calendar or the Approved Program Curriculum for year of First Admission.
- 5.20. “Graduation Date” is the date noted on the student’s transcript and Parchment denoting the date the Credential was awarded. Graduation dates will vary and normally the date used will be the last date of the term of the last class required for the Credential or the date of completion of the last required class.
 - 5.20.1. For programs that normally complete in April of the winter term, the date of Convocation will be used, provided all coursework has been completed.

5.20.2. For programs that are completed following late advanced standing or Transfer Credit, the noted date of the awarding of the credit will be used as the Graduation date.

5.21. "Letter of Permission" is a formal written letter from GPRC indicating that a particular course to be taken at another institution will be permitted for Transfer Credit from that institution to a specified GPRC course or elective in order to satisfy program requirements.

5.22. "Parchment" is the document issued for successful completion of a Credential or a Certificate of Achievement.

5.23. "Residency" is the minimum percentage of total credits required for a GPRC Credential which must be completed through enrolment in GPRC courses to fulfill a program's requirement or meet graduation requirements. This requirement is normally 50%. Residency cannot be fulfilled with Prior Learning or Transfer Credit.

5.23.1. Some programs may have approved exceptions or Residency requirements that differ from this requirement.

5.24. "Returning Student" is a student who is returning to the college after an absence of a minimum of one Academic Year.

5.25. "Stale-Dated Course" is any individual credit course completed more than ten years prior or as indicated in the program requirements of a specific curriculum in the Academic Calendar or under Statute of Limitations.

5.26. "Statute of Limitations" is the maximum allowed parameters governing Stale-Dated Courses and other specific program requirements as noted in the Academic Calendar.

5.27. "Transfer Credit" refers to credits awarded at GPRC for credit courses completed at other post-secondary institutions or schools.

6. Guiding Principles

6.1. GPRC has defined graduation requirements for each program as published in the GPRC Academic Calendar. A student must satisfy requirements related to grades, credits, courses, Academic Progression and GPA for their program of study. The College maintains these requirements in accordance with recognized expectations of academic performance and achievement.

6.2. Graduation Eligibility

6.2.1. To qualify for graduation from a program, a student must:

6.2.1.1. be admitted to the program and meet the graduation requirements as stated in the Approved Program Curriculum noted in the Academic Calendar governing the Academic Year of their First Admission to the program.

- 6.2.1.2. meet the Residency requirements of the program
- 6.2.1.3. not have any outstanding monies owing to the College
- 6.2.1.4. not be currently suspended from studies due to academic, financial or other non-academic reasons
- 6.2.2. Returning students will be governed by the Academic Calendar pertaining to their year of re-admission. A Returning Student may not be eligible to graduate from a program that is no longer offered by GPRC.
- 6.2.3. Continuous Students will be governed by the Academic Calendar of First Admission but may have a time limit applied to complete program requirements (see 6.15).
- 6.3. A Stale-Dated Course or anything outside a program's Statute of Limitations will not be considered in the graduation eligibility assessment or may require additional coursework to complete requirements. Exceptions may be made for factors such as the student's continued involvement in the field.
- 6.4. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all applicable paperwork, including appropriate transcripts and Letters of Permission, is completed with respect to Transfer Credit, and that their transcript has been updated accordingly prior to applying for graduation purposes. While the College may accept for Transfer Credit a course with a minimum passing grade as determined by the sending institution, individual program progression or course prerequisite criteria may exclude the student from continuing to the next level of study. Statute of Limitations may also apply.
 - 6.4.1. Programs may require that specified courses be completed at the College. These specifications are approved as program or graduation requirements.
- 6.5. Once a Credential is awarded, there is no option for reassessment at a future date. The only exception, upon review of a student's academic record, would be to remedy an oversight or error.
- 6.6. GPRC reserves the right to rescind earned Credentials, including Certificates, Diplomas or degrees that were acquired through the commission of a serious breach of one or more academic offences. This penalty is only imposed by the Vice President, Academic on the recommendation of the Registrar, who reviewed and made a determination about the incident.
- 6.7. Credentials may be issued posthumously following guidelines in Appendix 5.
- 6.8. Honorary Credentials may be issued following guidelines in Appendix 6.
- 6.9. When a Student has repeated a course, the higher mark shall count in the student's Program GPA. While the lower mark will not count in the Program GPA, the record of this registration and mark will remain on the student's transcript and will be calculated in the Year and Term GPA when the course was completed.

- 6.10. Grades for courses that are repeated after a Credential has been granted will not affect the Program GPA or the courses used in the Credential that has already been granted.
- 6.11. Students enrolled in programs with more than one major may be eligible for double majors.
- 6.12. Students may use course work from a previously completed recognized GPRC Credential to satisfy up to 50% of the second Credential. Approved Equivalent GPRC Courses are done on a course-by-course basis as stipulated in the second program's requirements.
 - 6.12.1. If identical courses are required in two or more Credentials which the student is pursuing, the courses can only be used in one Credential. The second Credential will acknowledge the courses as complete, but an equivalent number of additional approved credits will need to be taken to replace the missing credits required for the second Credential.
- 6.13. GPRC shall not be required to reissue a Credential with the new program/course title to former graduates. The Registrar may issue, upon request, a statement describing the circumstances surrounding the title change and the equivalence of programs/courses.
- 6.14. GPRC retains the right to cancel programs. Upon cancelation, students have the right to complete the program in which they have commenced studies as specified in the Academic Calendar at the time of First Admission.
 - 6.14.1. If a program is cancelled, students registered in the program have one year after the expected Graduation Date for the last enrolled cohort to complete the requirements of the Credential.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Academic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve and formally support this policy.
Vice-President, Academics and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and formally support this policy. • Hear formal appeals • Award posthumous Credentials based on recommendation of the Director, Student Experience • Rescind Credentials • Award honorary Credentials
Director, Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues/hears concerns • Hear informal appeals • Make recommendations to the VPAR regarding posthumous Credentials
Associate Registrar, Records and Associate Registrar, Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policy

8. Exceptions to the Policy

- 8.1. GPRC reserves the right to change program/course titles; changes may reflect shifts in program/course emphasis or the adoption of descriptors more consistent with general practice. Such changes shall have appropriate approvals by GPRC.
 - 8.1.1. Courses and programs may change during the time a student is completing a program. Academic Chairs and Student Services will develop a plan to manage the change. This may include PLAR, Transfer Credit, Approved Equivalent GPRC Course, challenge exam, adjusting graduation requirements, and creating bridging programs between old and alternative programs.
 - 8.1.2. If a program has recently undergone changes, students may request to change their Academic Calendar (year) to graduate under the new program graduation requirements and program name as specified in the Academic Calendar (year) they have selected.
- 8.2. Occasionally, students, chairs or advisors will request that exceptions be made to the student's Credential requirements for the program in which the student is enrolled. Requests for exceptions are received at the time of initial evaluation, anytime during the student's progress towards the Credential, or at the time of Degree Audit.
- 8.3. Any requests for Residency exceptions must be made in writing to the Chair of the Department.
- 8.4. The Vice President Academics and Research (VPA) or designate approves all exception requests unless the request falls under specific categories whereby approval is granted and implemented by Student Services. Specific exceptions not requiring VPA approval:
 - 8.4.1. When blanket approval has been previously given by the VPA or designate (e.g. when GPRC requires the same change for every student in the program)
- 8.5. Exceptions will be formally tracked by Student Services

9. Inquiries

- 9.1. All inquiries regarding this policy should be forwarded to the Director, Student Experience.

10. Amendments (Revision History)

- 10.1. Includes the history of dates of previous policy revisions and the date of the most recent revision to the policy.

Appendix 1 – Graduation Process

1. To fulfill program graduation requirements and earn a Credential, the following must occur:
 - 1.1. All students submit a graduation application form to Student Services.
 - 1.2. Students must successfully complete all program and course requirements for an approved program of study. Students must fulfill all program specific and institutional regulations indicated in the applicable Academic Calendar and in compliance with the Academic Policies.
2. Eligibility to graduate is verified and Parchments are issued by the Registrar or designate.
3. Eligible students are invited to participate in Convocation as defined in Appendix 4 - Eligibility to Participate in Convocation.
4. The name on the Parchment will match the legal current name of the student as recorded in the student's official academic record. Changes to the name recorded in the academic record can be requested in writing and submitted to the Registrar or designate for approval. The format of the legal name will take one of two forms:
 - 4.1. Firstname Middleinitials. Lastname (e.g. John G. A. Doe)
 - 4.2. FirstInitial. Middlename (additional MiddleInitial(s) where multiple middle names) Lastname (e.g. J. George A. Doe)
5. Parchments will be withheld from Graduates placed on restrictive holds at GPRC, e.g. outstanding fees or equipment.
6. If a student applies for a Credential, and it is determined that the program requirements have not been met, the application will be denied and the student is invited to reapply once the deficiency(ies) have been remedied.
7. GPRC approves and awards Credentials regularly. All requirements for the Credential (final grades; including grades for courses on Letters of Permission) must be received and processed by Student Services before evaluation will occur. Exceptions are as follows
 - 7.1. For Convocation at Grande Prairie campus in May: Parchment Applications must be submitted by the published deadlines, and all requirements met, or in process to be met, by the Monday preceding Convocation.

Appendix 2 – Parchment Replacement

1. GPRC will re-issue Parchments to replace those that are lost, stolen, or damaged.
2. The official Parchment is a legal document and, as such, will not be reproduced except on the written request of the student. Students must complete an application for parchment reprint form and pay the appropriate fee in order to receive a replacement.
3. The name on the Parchment will match the legal current name of the student as recorded in the official academic record. Changes to the name recorded in the academic record can be requested in writing.
4. If the original Parchment contains an error or is damaged, it must be returned to Student Services before the reprinted Parchment can be released.
5. If the request is due to an official change of name, supporting documentation, including a Change of Student Information form obtained from Student Services, must be presented before the reprinted parchment will be released.
6. Details of the Replacement Parchment:
 - 6.1. Parchments shall be re-issued in the format and style of those Parchments being used at the time of replacement, not necessarily in the format and style of the original Parchment.
 - 6.2. The replacement Parchment will bear the signatures of the College officials in place at the time of reprinting and will bear the current Department name that the curriculum falls under.
 - 6.3. The replacement Parchment shall bear the following words in small print on the face of the Parchment: “Issued as replacement (or duplicate) of original Parchment.”
 - 6.4. The Registrar’s Office will forward the Parchment to the student as requested.

Appendix 3 – Grades and Grade Point Averages

1. The GPA requirement and/or minimum program grade requirement to graduate may vary by program curriculum as noted in the College's Academic Calendar.
2. Students achieving a Program GPA of at least 3.3 out of a possible 4.0 may have the appropriate honours award designation affixed to their Parchment and transcript record as per the Recognition of Academic Achievement policy.
3. Although a pass in a course is D (1.0), in some courses or programs students are required to achieve more than a minimal level of achievement in order to proceed in their program, or to transfer a course to another program or institution, as will be noted in the Academic Calendar program requirements for a specific program.
4. In order to remain in good standing, a student must maintain a Year GPA of 1.0 or higher as per the College's Grading policy.

Appendix 4 – Eligibility to Participate in Convocation

1. Students must be, at a minimum, registered within the current Academic Year in all remaining required courses for their program and eligible to receive the Credential in order to be able to attend Convocation. If GPRC becomes aware of a failing grade, the College will encourage the student to register in the required course or face not being able to attend.
 - 1.1. Students wanting to take courses elsewhere, expecting Transfer Credit to complete a Credential, must have a Letter of Permission on file with GPRC before a particular course will be considered as part of the program requirements.

Appendix 5 – Posthumously Awarding Credentials

1. Students in credit and non-credit programs can be awarded Credentials posthumously. Programs include:
 - 1.1. Certificate Programs
 - 1.2. Diploma Programs
 - 1.3. Apprenticeship programs
2. The next of kin, or a person or group other than the next of kin may request the posthumous awarding of a Credential; however, the request will only be considered if the consent of the next of kin has been obtained. Requests must be submitted in writing and may be submitted via email, fax, or regular mail to the Director, Student Experience.
3. If a deceased student has completed all of the published requirements of their Credential, their name will go forward for graduation purposes.
4. If the deceased student has completed three-quarters or more of their program, the Director, Student Experience can recommend to the VPA the posthumous awarding of the Credential. If the student has completed less than three-quarters of their program, cases will be considered individually at the discretion of the Director, Student Experience. The VPA, in consultation with the Director, Student Experience, will make all final decisions in the best interest of GPRC and the deceased student and advise Student Services of the decision. The Director, Student Experience will then notify the person who has requested the posthumous awarding of the Credential.
5. If the posthumous Credential is awarded, the student's name will be published in the Convocation program for the first Convocation following the student's death and the next of kin may attend Convocation to receive the Credential on behalf of the deceased student.

Appendix 6 – Awarding Honorary Credentials

1. A GPRC honorary Credential is intended to recognize and honor outstanding individuals whose significant achievements and contributions are worthy of the college's highest honor. The awarding of an honorary Credential is intended to encourage a standard of excellence which is exemplary to students and to society. Honorary Credential recipients embody the college's vision to inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery and citizenship in a creative community. GPRC awards the honorary Credential to laud distinguished achievement in scholarship, the creative arts or public service, on the provincial, national or international stage.
 - 1.1. The VPA, in consultation with the Director, Student Experience, will make all final decisions in the best interest of GPRC and will advise Student Services of the decision.