

## University Policy 2.02.07

## Changing Academic Program

**Policy Revision Approval Date: December 19, 2006**

**Policy Revision Effective Date: April 1, 2007**

**Procedure Approval Date: December 7, 2018**

**Procedure Effective Date: January 1, 2019**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Capella University learners may apply to change their academic program at any point in their studies pursuant to the procedures established to support this policy. If accepted, the change becomes effective at the start of the next academic quarter—except for a change of catalog, which becomes effective immediately. A change of academic program results in changing the learner's current program requirements to those in the *University Catalog* or addendum that is in effect at the time of the change (the catalog of record). Learners are responsible for fulfilling the program requirements specified in their new catalog of record. Doctoral learners may not enroll in more than one Capella degree program or specialization concurrently.

### **RATIONALE**

This policy is intended to support a standard approach to processing learner requests for changing their degree or certificate program or specialization. The policy statement provides guidelines for when, how often, and under what circumstances a change may occur.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### Academic Program

An academic program is any credentialed academic offering and its components, including but not limited to a degree, specialization, minor, concentration, certificate, or delivery model in which a learner is enrolled.

#### Certificate

A certificate is a non-degree credential at a specific level that is awarded upon successful completion of coursework and learning experiences in an academic or professional field.

#### Certificate Program

A certificate program is a course of study that leads to the award of a certificate; that is, a non-degree credential at a specific level that is awarded upon successful completion of coursework and learning experiences in an academic or professional field.

#### Combined Option

Combined options are designated bachelor's and master's specializations with a set of shared master's-level courses that are applied to the requirements for both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. The bachelor's degree is earned using the designated master's-level courses to

complete specific requirements; the master's degree is awarded upon completion of the remaining master's degree program requirements.

### Degree

A degree is the name of a specific academic degree that may include a broad academic subject.

### Degree Level

A degree level is a classification of postsecondary academic achievement by a prescribed depth of understanding relative to coursework and learning experiences. Capella's academic degree levels are bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral.

### Degree Program

A degree program is a specific set of coursework and learning experiences in a field of study that, upon successful completion, results in the conferral of a degree or credential.

### Specialization

A specialization is a course of study associated with a specific degree program that leads to the award of a degree.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **I. Change to Academic Program for All Learners**

#### **A. Process for All Learners**

1. Prior to initiating an academic program change, learners are encouraged to consult with Academic Advising to discuss options and considerations for the change.
2. The submitted academic program change request, in addition to any previous academic work at Capella, is reviewed in accordance with change of program requirements.
3. All learners are expected to work with Academic Advising to ensure their academic plan and course registrations are updated accordingly.
4. If accepted, learners begin the new academic program at the start of the next academic quarter.

#### **B. Learners can only change from a GuidedPath program to a FlexPath program effective starting summer, fall, and winter quarters.**

#### **C. Current Course Registration**

Learners remain registered in their current course(s) through the end of the term unless they initiate a course drop or withdrawal. The course withdrawal process is governed by university policy *2.02.02 Course Registration*.

#### **D. Change of Academic Program Process**

1. For all academic program changes, learners must request a change to the new academic program (and new school, if necessary) using the [Change Program, Specialization, or Concentration Form](#) on Campus.
2. Application fees are waived for academic program changes.
3. Learners who are approved for a change of academic program must meet the academic program requirements listed in the *University Catalog* in effect at the time they are admitted to the new academic program.

4. Learners are expected to take the first course affiliated with their new academic program.
5. A change of academic program requires a new transfer credit evaluation. Learners are responsible for understanding their new degree plan.

## II. Change of Catalog for All Learners

### A. Learner Catalog of Record

1. Learners are assigned their initial catalog of record upon their admission to Capella University.
  - a. Learners who begin their academic programs in winter or spring quarter are assigned to the January catalog and the April addendum respectively.
  - b. Learners who begin their academic programs in summer or fall quarter are assigned to the July catalog and the October addendum respectively.
  - c. Subsequent changes or additions to a learner's academic program may result in new catalog requirements. See university policy *2.02.03 Concurrent Program Enrollments* for details.

### B. Change of Catalog Process

1. Prior to initiating a change of catalog, learners are encouraged to consult with Academic Advising to discuss options and related considerations.
2. Learners may request a change to the current catalog in order to complete a different set of program requirements, provided that the academic program is available in the current catalog. If the learner's request is approved, the learner must fulfill all program requirements specified in their new catalog of record.
3. A change of catalog requires a new transfer credit evaluation. Learners are responsible for understanding their new degree plan.

## III. Bachelor's/Master's Integrated Pathways for Learners in Eligible GuidedPath or FlexPath Programs

### A. Change to Combined Options

1. Learners currently enrolled in select Capella bachelor's degree programs may request to be enrolled in a combined option. A combined option enrollment or change includes the same procedures as an academic program change.
2. For all combined option changes, learners must request a change to the new combined option using the [Combined Option Request Form](#) on Campus.

### B. Change of Bachelor's/Master's Integrated Pathways

1. Learners may change into other bachelor's/master's integrated pathways using the same form and procedures as an academic program change.

### C. Additional Considerations for Eligible Bachelor's/Master's Integrated Pathways

1. After successfully completing the requirements for the bachelor's degree program, bachelor's/master's integrated pathway learners apply for the master's degree program that corresponds to their bachelor's degree program.
2. Learners who start a corresponding master's degree program within one year of completing their bachelor's degree program may apply all predetermined master's-level coursework taken as a part of the bachelor's degree program toward that corresponding master's degree.

3. Change requests from learners whose intended bachelor's/master's integrated pathway master's degree program has been retired prior to their entering the master's degree program will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate program requirements.
4. Learners admitted to a master's degree program not corresponding with their bachelor's degree program are held to the program requirements of the catalog in effect the quarter they are admitted into the master's degree program.
5. Learners admitted into any master's degree program more than one year after completing their bachelor's degree program are held to the program requirements of the catalog in effect the quarter they are admitted into the master's degree program.
6. Upon successful completion of the remaining master's degree program requirements, learners will be awarded a master's degree.

#### IV. Additional Considerations for FlexPath Learners

- A. Learners who are requesting a change within or from the FlexPath delivery model will have changes effective on the first day of the next Capella University term, regardless of the timing within the learner's session. The day prior to that effective date, all current and future course registrations are dropped. Learners should consult with an academic coach to discuss options and the timing of the term start. Learners should plan to finish any active courses before the change is made.
- B. Learners may be financially impacted by the drop of current course registrations. Learners are responsible for fully understanding the financial implications of a course drop. Learners should refer to university policy *4.03.02 Tuition and Fee Refunds* to determine the financial implications of a course drop.
- C. Learners who receive financial aid should discuss the potential implications of FlexPath program changes, including the return of financial aid funds, with a financing coach.
- D. Learners who have been administratively withdrawn from or have voluntarily changed from the FlexPath delivery model may not return to the FlexPath delivery model at the same degree level.

#### **POLICY OWNERS**

Academic Owner: Provost

Operations Owner: Admissions & Records Operations

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

University policy 2.01.01 Admission

University policy 2.02.02 Course Registration

#### **REVISION HISTORY**

Original Policy Approval Date: April 23, 2004

Revision Dates: 7-1-04; 10-1-06; 9-1-10; 6-21-12; 6-6-13; 10-31-14; 5-4-15; 10-28-15; 5-1-16; 8-11-16; 7-25-17; 12-7-18

Administrative edits as result of ongoing review: 10-1-08; 1-16-09; 8-28-09; 11-20-09; 2-19-10; 10-26-10; 5-17-11; 1-23-12; 10-23-13; 2-10-14; 11-1-16; 12-14-16; 4-1-18; 5-23-19; 4-1-20; 3-26-21