SENIOR GUIDE TO GRADUATION

Note: This document is based on University policies regarding the graduation process. Updates will be provided as policies are updated or revised. Students should adhere to all policies and requirements in the undergraduate handbook for their major department. Policies are also explained in the Undergraduate Bulletin at undergraduatestudies.howard.edu.

Graduation at Howard University is a four-step process.

Application + Academic Clearance + Financial Clearance + Ceremony

### Step 1: Application

Prospective graduates must complete two separate applications.

1. CEA Graduation Application
   Applications for graduation are emailed by the CEA Office of Student Services. Completed, typed applications must be returned to the Office of Student Services no later than the following dates.
   - June 31st for August graduates
   - January 15th for May graduates
   - October 15th for December graduates

   All students who complete the application for graduation by the deadline and have the possibility of completing degree requirements in the indicated semester will be included on the prospective graduate list.

2. BisonWeb Graduation Application
   Once designated as a prospective graduate, students will be able to apply for graduation in BisonWeb. Students must complete the BisonWeb application by the indicated date on the University calendar.

Information provided on the BisonWeb application is submitted to the Secretary of the University for the diploma order. Student names will appear on the diploma exactly as they are printed on the application for graduation. It is extremely important that students provide accurate mailing addresses and phone numbers (both local and permanent), as well as e-mail addresses, to both the Office of Enrollment Management (through BisonWeb) and the CEA Office of Student Services so that you may be contacted expeditiously for the mailing of your degree or if other issues arise.

NOTE: Students who do not graduate by the date indicated on their application should reapply. Students who must complete additional requirements during the summer session will become a part of the class of the following academic year.
Step 2: Academic Clearance

The graduation clearance process begins with the review of academic records for all students who have been labeled prospective graduates. These are students who have the possibility of completing degree requirements in the current academic year (August, May, or December). It is the student’s responsibility to complete all academic requirements for graduation, as indicated by their respective department. If a student is unclear about any academic requirements, he/she should seek clarification from his/her academic advisor.

Deadlines for completing academic requirements are included in the University academic calendar. Look for “DEADLINE FOR INSTRUCTORS TO SUBMIT FINAL GRADES FOR PROSPECTIVE GRADUATES.” All grades must be received by these dates.

**NOTE:** Students enrolling in Consortium classes during their last semester run the risk of not completing their academic requirements on time and not being cleared to graduate since the schools involved may have different schedules.

To obtain academic clearance for graduation…

FIRST, make an appointment with your faculty advisor to review your academic scheme. In consultation with the faculty advisor or Department Chair, complete and sign a check sheet to ensure that all academic requirements for graduation have been met. In addition to course requirements, students must also meet the following.

- **Cumulative GPA:** Prospective graduates are required to earn a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. This will be the cumulative GPA displayed in the BisonWeb academic record/transcript.

- **Major GPA:** Prospective graduates must also earn a GPA of 2.0 in their major. The major GPA is computed using grades earned in all required courses other than general education courses.

- **“D” Credits:** No student can be cleared for graduation if he/she has earned a “D” in more than 1/6th of the total semester hours required for the degree.

SECOND, check sheets are presented by the major department to the faculty. All prospective graduates are recommended to receive their degree based on a vote by the faculty.

**Academic Scheme:** the official record of program requirements for graduation. Students should begin following the appropriate academic scheme as soon as they declare a major. Graduation clearance can be a smooth process if students follow their academic scheme and related requirements.

**Major:** a series of courses prescribed by a department that include major course requirements and general education course requirements. Students must complete the prescribed courses for their major and earn the total number of credit hours required to earn a degree.

**Credit Hours:** CEACS majors require 120 to 171 total semester credit hours to earn the Bachelor’s degree.
**Step 3: Financial Clearance**

The Office of Student Financial Services provides each school/college with a listing of prospective graduates who have satisfied their financial obligations to the University. Students must satisfy all outstanding account balances, including the **graduation fee**, in order to be financially cleared for graduation. Financial obligations include:

**Library**
All library books must be returned and charges paid by the established deadline in order to obtain a library clearance. Students who borrow library materials after being cleared are responsible for additional charges or fines on their accounts.

**Residence Life**
Housing fees and late charges must be paid before students can receive financial clearance.

**Exit Survey**
Students who have received federal student loans or emergency loans are required to complete an exit interview administered by the Office of Student Financial Services. Visit the Campus Based Loan Office in the Administration Building to arrange an appointment to complete the exit interview prior to graduation. Students who fail to do so will not be permitted to graduate.

**Step 4: Ceremony**

Please sure to read the following information and comply with all requirements to ensure that you have a memorable and rewarding commencement experience.

*Only students who have received academic and financial clearance for graduation by the deadline will participate in the commencement ceremonies.*

**University Commencement**
The Commencement Convocation for Howard University is traditionally held on the main campus on the second Saturday in May each year. Information about the University ceremony, including times by which graduates must report, is available on the University website.

**CEA Degree Recognition Ceremony**
The College of Engineering and Architecture hosts a degree recognition ceremony on the Friday prior to the University Commencement each year, beginning at 6:00pm in Cramton Auditorium.

**Diplomas**
Actual diplomas are mailed to students by the Office of Enrollment Management, usually within thirty days of commencement.
**Procurement of Academic Costumes**
The Howard University Bookstore hosts a graduation ordering fair to allow prospective graduates to order caps, gowns, announcements, and other memorabilia. In May, the ordered items will be distributed at a designated location, usually the University Bookstore. Check the Howard University Bookstore website for locations, dates, and times. Pick up is by school/college so be sure to note the time that is specific to CEA students. Student ID is required to receive and pay for ordered items. Academic and financial clearance may be required.

**Graduation Tickets**
Each prospective graduate will receive four graduation tickets for guests. Only students who have been academically and financially cleared will be able to collect tickets. Tickets are usually picked up from the University Bookstore, along with academic costumes.

**Assembly of Degree Candidates**
Information on assembly for the commencement Ceremony will be included in the graduation information made available on the University website.

**Conferring of Degrees**
Degrees will be conferred only during the commencement ceremony. Degrees will not be conferred prior to that time.

**Commencement Program**
Every attempt will be made to include all candidates for the Bachelor of Architecture and Bachelor of Science degrees in the commencement program. However, names will be eliminated for students who do not meet requirements by published deadlines. Inclusion of names in the program does not guarantee graduation. Students should check with the CEA Office of Student Services if they have any questions.

**Honor Cords & Medallions**
Students who are graduating with honors may pick up an honors medallion from the CEA Office of Student Services before 1pm on the Thursday before the CEA degree recognition ceremony. For more information about graduating with honors, see the Special Recognition section of this document.

**Senior Class Picture**
All graduating seniors will be photographed as a group on the Friday of the CEA degree recognition ceremony. Students should report to Downing Hall, Room 2019 by 11:30am in full academic costume in order to be included in the class (group) picture.

**Special Accommodations**
Any graduate or guest in need of special accommodations due to a disability must contact the Office of Special Student Services (202-238-2420) as soon as possible with their request. Accommodations that are requested on the day of the ceremony cannot be honored.
## Special Recognition

### Honors Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative GPA</th>
<th>Honors Designation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.20 to 3.49</td>
<td>Honors <em>(cum laude)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50 to 3.79</td>
<td>High Honors <em>(magna cum laude)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.80 to 4.00</td>
<td>Highest Honors <em>(summa cum laude)</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These honors will appear on student transcripts, diplomas, and in the commencement program.

### Honors Eligibility

Grades in non-credit courses are not considered in determining eligibility for honors. In addition, students are NOT eligible to receive honors distinctions if:

- the last half (60 hours) of coursework required for the degree was not completed in residence at Howard University
- courses were repeated to raise the GPA
- they have not been enrolled in at least 12 credit hours for each semester enrolled, with the exception of the last semester in residence.

### Honor Societies

Graduates who have been inducted into a CEA honor society may be identified in the graduation program.
SENIOR GUIDE TO GRADUATION: FAQ

When are graduation applications due?

*BisonWeb Application:* Check the University calendar.

**CEA Office of Student Services Application:** The application will be emailed to prospective graduates. The completed, TYPED application must be submitted to the CEA Office of Student Services (Downing 1114) by **October 15th** for December graduation, **January 15th** for May graduation, and **May 15th** for August graduation.

What if I need a class to graduate and it is not being offered?

Students must inform their Department Chair of any required course that is not listed in BisonWeb.

How do prospective graduates check on outstanding balances for tuition, library fines, housing charges, etc?

Students are able to view their balance by logging into *BisonWeb > Student Accounts > View/Pay My Bill.*

Are hospital bills included in the balances that must be paid in full in order to be financially cleared for graduation?

No, hospital bills are not included in a student’s school balance and do no prohibit financial clearance for graduation.

Where do I go to obtain a library clearance?

Students must go to Founder’s Library by the established deadline (see University calendar) in order to pay any library fines and obtain a library clearance.

Can I graduate with a balance?

No. All students must have a ZERO balance to obtain financial clearance for graduation.

Is there a limit to the number of “W”s (course withdrawals) I can have and still graduate?

There is no CEA policy that limits the number of “W”s a student can have to meet degree requirements. Note, however, that Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and financial aid eligibility may be affected by course withdrawals.
What is the deadline for advanced standing (transfer credits) to be submitted?

All grades must be received by the deadline indicated for receipt of prospective graduates’ grades. Advanced standing (transfer credit) for approved courses taken outside of Howard University should also be processed by this date. Students should initiate requests for advanced standing as early as possible, but no later than forty five days prior to the prospective graduates’ grade submission deadline.

If I am enrolled in a consortium class that does not count toward degree requirements, will my academic clearance for graduation be delayed if the grade is not received by Howard by the deadline for receipt of grades?

A consortium class could delay academic clearance for graduation, even if the class does not count toward degree requirements. Because consortium grades are factored into grade point averages, academic clearance for graduation cannot be completed if the consortium grade has the possibility of placing the student in breach of minimum grade point average and maximum “D” credit policies.

Must all prospective graduates complete an exit interview in the Office of Financial Aid?

Exit interviews must be completed if you are in one of the following categories.

- Any student who borrowed a Direct Loan (must complete exit counseling at www.studentloans.gov)
- Any student who borrowed an institutional loan (must schedule an appointment in the Administration Building, Room 218 to complete exit counseling)
- Any student who borrowed a Perkins loan (must schedule an appointment in the Administration Building, Room 218 to complete exit counseling)

Note, some students may have to complete multiple exit interviews based on their financial aid history. Graduation holds for exit interviews are usually applied in March.

Must the last half of coursework required for the degree be completed in residence at Howard University in order to graduate with honors?

The CEA honors eligibility criteria are:

- Meet the cumulative GPA requirement
- Courses may not have been repeated to raise the GPA for honors eligibility

However, note that only sixty credits may be transferred toward CEA degree requirements, with the exception of special courses approved by the major Department Chair.
If I get a “D” in a course, but retake it and earn a higher grade, will the original “D” count toward the “D” credit maximum?

If a “D” grade was replaced in accordance with the University grade replacement policy, the original “D” does not count toward the total “D” credits.
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