Westfield State University

Procedure Number: ADM008 **Title:** Degree Audit and Graduation Requirements
Effective Date: 2023-09-15

1.0 Purpose and Overview

This document outlines the official procedures for degree audits and the fulfillment of graduation requirements at Westfield State University. The purpose is to ensure that all students have a clear and consistent understanding of the academic requirements necessary to earn a degree. This procedure establishes the framework for utilizing the university's Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS), tracking academic progress, applying for graduation, participating in commencement ceremonies, and receiving a diploma. A systematic approach to degree auditing helps students and academic advisors monitor progress, identify outstanding requirements, and plan for timely degree completion.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to all undergraduate and graduate students pursuing a degree at Westfield State University. It also applies to all faculty, academic advisors, and administrative staff involved in the degree certification and graduation process, including the Office of the University Registrar, college-level advising offices, and departmental academic advisors.

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS)

The Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) is the official tool for tracking students' progress toward the completion of their degree requirements. The DARS report, also

known as the degree audit, provides a detailed analysis of how a student's coursework applies to their declared major, minor, and concentration requirements.

3.1.1 Accessing the Degree Audit:

Students can access their degree audit at any time through the university's student portal, MyWestfield. After logging in, navigate to the "Academic Records" section and select "Degree Audit."

3.1.2 Reading the Degree Audit:

The audit is organized into blocks of requirements, such as University Core Curriculum, major requirements, and minor requirements. Each block lists the specific courses or credit hours needed. The audit uses color-coded symbols to indicate the status of each requirement:

- **Green Checkmark:** Requirement is complete.
- **Blue Tilde:** Requirement is in progress (student is currently enrolled in the necessary course).
- **Red 'X':** Requirement is not yet met.

3.1.3 "What-If" Audits:

Students considering a change of major or the addition of a minor can generate a "What-If" audit. This feature allows students to see how their completed and in-progress coursework would apply to a different academic program. This tool is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an official change of major.

3.2 Tracking Academic Progress

Students are responsible for regularly reviewing their degree audit to ensure they are on track for graduation. It is mandatory for students to meet with their academic advisor at least once per semester to review their progress and plan for upcoming semesters.

3.2.1 Advisor Meetings:

During these meetings, students and advisors will:

- Review the degree audit for accuracy.

- Discuss any discrepancies or potential issues.

- Plan course selections for the following semester.

- Address any petitions or substitution requests for required courses.

3.2.2 Final Year Review:

Students must schedule a mandatory Final Year Review with their primary academic advisor upon completion of 90 credit hours (for undergraduate students). This review is intended to confirm the student's graduation timeline and identify any remaining requirements.

3.3 Application for Graduation

Students must formally apply for graduation to have their degree conferred. The application is submitted online via MyWestfield.

3.3.1 Deadlines:

The application for graduation must be submitted by the following deadlines:

- **Fall Graduation:** October 1st

- **Spring Graduation:** February 1st

- **Summer Graduation:** June 1st

A non-refundable graduation fee is required at the time of application. Failure to apply by the deadline may result in a delay in degree conferral.

3.3.2 Final Audit and Certification:

Once a student applies for graduation, the Office of the University Registrar will conduct a final, official degree audit at the end of the student's final semester. The Registrar's Office will certify that all requirements have been met. If any discrepancies are found, the student will be notified immediately.

3.4 Commencement Participation

Commencement is the formal ceremony celebrating the completion of an academic degree. Participation is voluntary but highly encouraged.

3.4.1 Eligibility:

Only students who have successfully completed all degree requirements and have been certified by the Registrar's Office are eligible to participate in the commencement ceremony. Students with a small number of outstanding credits may petition to participate in the ceremony; however, their degree will not be conferred until all requirements are met.

3.4.2 Regalia and Logistics:

Information regarding the purchase of academic regalia (cap and gown), ceremony dates, times, and guest tickets will be sent to eligible students via their university email address.

3.5 Diploma Issuance

Diplomas are issued by the Office of the University Registrar after all degree requirements have been certified and the degree has been officially conferred.

3.5.1 Diploma Name:

The name printed on the diploma will be the student's legal name as it appears in the university's official records. Students may request to have a preferred name included by submitting a formal petition to the Registrar's Office at least one month prior to the end of their final semester.

3.5.2 Delivery:

Diplomas will be mailed to the student's permanent address on file approximately 8-10 weeks after the end of the graduation term. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their address is current in the university system.

4.0 Deadlines and Timelines

Action	Deadline
Apply for Fall Graduation	October 1st
Apply for Spring Graduation	February 1st
Apply for Summer Graduation	June 1st
Final Year Review (Undergraduate)	Upon completion of 90 credit hours
Diploma Mailing	8-10 weeks after end of term

5.0 Required Forms and Systems

- **MyWestfield Student Portal:** For accessing Degree Audit, applying for graduation, and updating personal information.

- **Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS):** The official system for tracking degree progress.

- **Graduation Application Form:** Submitted online via MyWestfield.

- **Course Substitution/Petition Form:** Available from college advising offices for requesting exceptions to degree requirements.

6.0 Contact Information

For questions regarding degree audits, graduation requirements, or diploma services, please contact:

Office of the University Registrar Westfield State University 123 University Drive Westfield, USA 12345

- **Email:** registrar@westfield.edu

- **Phone:** (123) 456-7890

- **Website:** www.westfield.edu/registrar

7.0 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1: What should I do if I believe there is an error on my degree audit?

A1: Contact your academic advisor immediately. They can review your audit and, if necessary, submit a correction request to the Registrar's Office.

Q2: Can I walk in the commencement ceremony if I have one class left to take over the summer?

A2: In some cases, students with a minimal number of outstanding credits may petition to participate in the spring commencement ceremony. Approval is not guaranteed and is handled on a case-by-case basis. The degree will not be conferred until the final course is completed.

Q3: I missed the deadline to apply for graduation. What happens now?

A3: You will need to apply for graduation for the following term. This will delay the conferral of your degree. Contact the Registrar's Office to discuss your options.

Q4: How do I change my major?

A4: To officially change your major, you must complete the "Change of Major" form, available from your college's advising office. Once processed, your degree audit will be updated to reflect the new requirements.

8.0 Revision History

Effective Date	Summary of Changes
2023-09-15	Initial version of the document.
2022-08-01	Updated graduation application deadlines.
2021-01-15	Added information on "What-If" audits.