

FAQ on the College Policy on Full-Time Attendance

Undergraduate students must spend at least eight semesters in full-time attendance, unless the period is reduced by advanced standing credit from another institution as reviewed and approved by the Associate Provost for Academic Policy and Mission Support. The College reserves the right, for extraordinary reasons, to allow graduation at the completion of seven semesters following the successful petition by students to the Committee on Academic Status. Students may also petition the Committee on Academic Status to be allowed to accelerate their degree program, through Summer and/or Winter Session work (usually through summer/winter coursework at Providence College); such petitions must be received by the Associate Provost for Academic Policy and Mission Support by the end of their sophomore year. Appeals of the decisions of the Committee on Academic Status should be presented to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, whose decisions will be final.

1. Is it possible for a student to earn his/her degree in fewer than eight semesters?

College policy requires incoming freshmen to “spend at least eight semesters in full-time attendance.” However, students may petition the Committee on Academic Status to approve exceptions to this policy. Transfer students who are accepted as second-semester freshmen or sophomores or juniors will attend the day school for fewer than eight semesters, according to the status given them by the Office of Admissions in their acceptance letter.

2. What is the Committee on Academic Status?

The Committee on Academic Status is the Committee Providence College charges to consider various appeals and petitions regarding their academic programs: appeals of academic dismissals, petitions for reinstatement to Providence College on probation, petitions to allow extensions of deadlines to complete coursework, and for exceptions to the College requirement to be in full-time attendance for eight semesters. The Associate Provost for Academic Policy and Mission Support chairs this committee which meets twice a year, at the end of the Fall and Spring semester (early January and early June) each year.

3. On what grounds would the Committee on Academic Status make an exception to the “8-semester policy” to waive the final semester?

The Committee will consider waiving the final semester of full-time attendance of a student for *extraordinary reasons*: for example, if a student has matriculated with a semester of AP courses and has been accepted early into a graduate program, or if a student is attempting to “catch up” through summer work following a medical leave of absence.

4. Can a student make a case to the Committee on Academic Status that his/her degree program be accelerated in order to allow an early graduation?

Yes. If a student is hoping to graduate in fewer than eight semesters in the day school, the student may petition the Committee on Academic Status with a plan accomplish this. The plan invariably would include permission to take Summer and Winter courses.

5. What would the Committee on Academic Status be looking for in a proposal to accelerate a student’s degree program?

Proposals for accelerating a degree program should include the following: **(a)** The reasons for the petition to accelerate the program of study; **(b)** A *detailed plan* for the completion of all degree requirements—major, core and credit—including *specific* Summer and Winter coursework; **(c)** A letter of support from the student’s academic advisor (and endorsed by the student’s school advising dean), regarding the level of the advisor’s confidence in the plan (as well as its practicality) to complete the degree by the proposed new deadline. When the Committee considers the petition, it will be looking for careful planning to preserve the Providence College character of the degree in the program, incorporating Providence College coursework as needed.

6. When should a student submit a petition to the Committee on Academic Status to accelerate their degree program?

Since plans for the intentional and accelerated completion of all degree requirements involve careful planning of Fall and Spring semester courses as well as Summer and/or Winter coursework, the sooner the plan is submitted, the better. The deadline for submission of a “petition to accelerate” is the last official day of the student’s second semester of the sophomore year.

7. If a petition to accelerate my program is approved before the start of a student’s junior year, will the student automatically become a senior and register for courses with the seniors?

No. A student’s status for registration will be based on the student’s earned credits.

8. If a student petitions to accelerate his/her degree program is approved, but then has a change of heart for any reason, is the student bound to the new early graduation date?

No. If a student decides, for example, that s/he wants to graduate with her original class, or if s/he is unable to register for the Summer or Winter or extra courses s/he needs to complete the program, or if s/he decides to declare a second major which pushes the completion date back, s/he would then return to the original graduation date.

9. If the Committee on Academic Status approves a student’s plan to graduate early, is the College required to ensure that the courses needed are available to the student when s/he needs them?

No. The College is not required to provide the particular Summer or Winter or special courses a student may need to enable him to graduate early. If the Committee on Academic Status approves a plan to accelerate a program, this does not guarantee that the student will graduate early. The Committee on Academic Status’ decision simply allows a student the opportunity to complete a student’s degree requirements without being bound by the College’s eight-semester rule. Required courses may be unavailable in the abbreviated timeframe; substitutions may not be appropriate or possible; other contingencies may arise which would prevent a student from moving the plan to completion. If it is not possible for a student to complete the plan to accelerate the program, the expectation is that the eight-semester rule would once again apply.

10. If a petition to accelerate a program based on AP credits and/or approved Summer and Winter coursework is accepted, and a student completes the degree requirements according to plan, can the student still graduate with his/her incoming class?

No. Students whose petition to accelerate their program *must* graduate in the semester their degree requirements are completed, participating in the graduation ceremony for that date. For example, students who complete their accelerated program of studies in May according to plan will participate in the May commencement ceremonies that year. The graduation photo will be in the yearbook of the new graduation year, and the class reunions will be with the new class.