

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING GRADUATION PROCESSING TRANSCRIPT REQUEST, COMMENCEMENT and DIPLOMA MAILINGS

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Please share the following information with your staff and students. This information is included in all correspondence students receive from the CRO. This information is also located on the website by entering “graduation” in the search window and clicking the information links.

1. When are the Spring 2017, Summer 2017 and Fall 2016 graduation application deadlines?

- The **fall** graduation application deadline is **always October 1st**. The **spring** graduation application deadline is **always March 1st**. The **summer** graduation application deadline is **always June 1st**. The application is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the MyNOVA portal. The only issue that will prevent students from applying for graduation is if they have not been program placed in the desired plan; a financial hold does not prevent a student from applying! If students experience problems, they need to screen shot or copy the error message and contact the Help Desk immediately. Applications submitted after the deadlines are automatically date stamped by the Student Information System (SIS) as the next semester.

2. How do I apply for graduation?

- As of fall 2008, potential graduates must submit an online application for graduation for the semester they will complete their program requirements. Applications are only valid for one semester. They must reapply if all requirements are not completed. As of March 2, 2011 the application for graduation is only accessible via MyNOVA; go to Self-Service/Academic Records/Apply for Graduation.

3. What happens if the student did not apply by the deadline?

- At midnight, the application date automatically changes to the next semester. The application will be processed for the semester that is listed in SIS. The degree award will also reflect the semester the application was submitted.
- Please remind students to read the information listed on the website, in the catalog, and in the schedule bulletin.

4. What do I do if I need to withdraw/rescind my application for graduation?

As of fall 2016, student no longer have the option of withdrawing a graduation application. If all requirements are satisfied, the degree/certificate will be awarded. If the student failed the final requirement, the student will need to re-apply.

5. What about students who are enrolled in ELI courses? What award date will be posted to their record?

- Two important issues are considered; the semester the student applied for graduation and the semester the student enrolled in the final program requirement. If a student submitted a fall 2016 graduation application and enrolled in a fall 2016 ELI course that will complete requirements, the degree or certificate award will reflect the fall 2016 semester.

6. What is the policy regarding deceased graduates?

Posthumous Degree Award Proposal

A recent change was made to section 5.1.7 of the *VCCS Policy Manual* that authorizes colleges to award posthumous degrees, with the criteria determined by individual institutions. The following guidelines were proposed for NOVA:

1.

- Posthumous degrees may be awarded to students who are in their last semester of study and/or within 15 credits of degree completion at the time of death.
- The degree award must be approved by the Executive Vice President.
- If possible, the student's name will appear in the commencement program with an appropriate notation.
- The student's family will receive an invitation to the commencement ceremony from the President's office; if they choose to attend, they will be provided with an escort.
- At the appropriate point in the ceremony, the degree will be announced and the family will be asked to stand and be recognized.
- Unless alternative arrangements are made by the student's campus, the diploma will be mailed to the family with a letter of condolence from the President. The diploma will bear the notation. "Awarded Posthumously."

A certificate of completion could be awarded to students who had fewer than 15 credits.

Administrative Council members approved the policy and suggested that "UUU on request" be added to the guidelines.

7. When will students receive a status letter from the CRO?

- Students receive an immediate confirmation message listing the **information that is extracted directly from the student's permanent record**. If the student discovers an error, they need to contact one of the Student Services Centers promptly for assistance to make corrections to their record. The following status letters are emailed to students' VCCS email accounts:
 - 1.) All requirements completed
 - 2.) Requirements completed pending successful completion of current enrollment
 - 3.) Ineligible:
 - Missing requirements
 - Low GPA
 - Did not satisfy residency requirements

All communication includes the following information: time and location of commencement (To be determined) The Annandale campus holds a Graduation Fair each spring in the month of March, where regalia, class rings and invitations can be purchased. The **Graduation Information Brochure** (*available online after April 15th*), provides the dates and location where the commencement ceremony will be held, the name of the commencement speaker and line-up information for graduates.

8. When will degree/certificates be awarded?

- Final grades must be posted before degree/certificates are awarded. Degree/certificate awarding will always begin the last of day class. Please note the award process is a line by line review of every potential graduate's degree audit in SIS plus is a manual process and may take up to 3 months to complete.
- Remember, the NOVA closes for the Winter Break in late December; the CRO is closed as well. Fall 2016 degree /certificate awarding should be **completed by the end of February 2017**. Degree/certificates cannot be awarded prior to the last day of the semester.

9. How will students know when their degree/certificate has been awarded?

- Students should check their degree audit periodically for the degree award just as they do to check the posting of their final grades.

10. When can students expect to receive their spring diploma/certificates?

- Diplomas and certificates are ordered after the award has been posted to the student's records.

- Diplomas should arrive within 3-4 months after the degree has been awarded. Please note, diplomas and certificate are not produced by NOVA, they are ordered and produced by an out of state vendor. The normal processing time frame per order is 3-4 months.
- Diplomas will be mailed to the student's address that is listed in the **Student Information System (SIS)**.
- Requests for lost/destroyed diploma requests should be sent to AsktheCRO@nvcc.edu, per the policy listed in the College catalog, *names will only be changed in cases of gender reassignment not change of name due to marriage, divorce or other reasons*.
- **International students'** diplomas will be mailed to their international addresses if one is provided.
- **Returned/undeliverable diplomas** are eventually returned to the CRO via mail. A copy of the mailing envelop can be found in ImageNow linked to students' ID#.

11. What about students who did not apply by the deadline and are planning to transfer to a 4 year institution or need verification for employment?

- Students in this situation need to contact the transfer school to determine their course of action. The transfer school's policy is normally listed on their website.
- Submit the College Records Office Request for Degree Verification form 125-340. Graduation verification status letters will only be mailed **directly to the school or the employer**. The potential graduates must provide the name of the supervisor/department and a complete mailing address of the company; copies will not be provided to students/parents.

12. Who can participate in the Spring 2017 Commencement? Is my name on the list?

- Summer 2016 graduates, fall 2016 graduates, and **students who submit a spring 2017** application for graduation by the March 1, 2017 deadline are eligible to participate; their names will be listed in the spring commencement book. Please note spring graduation honors will not appear in the commencement book since the book is produced prior to the end of the semester when degree awarding and posting of Latin honors occurs.

13. What if a student's name is not listed in the Commencement Program?

- Mistakes do happen, but students whose names are not listed in the commencement book still have the opportunity to participate in the ceremony.
- ALL students in regalia are handed a white card on which to print their names.
- The cards are handed to the announcer who calls the names of all participants.
- The participants walk across the stage and receive a diploma cover with an insert. The insert informs students when they can expect to receive their diploma/certificate.
- Missing name inquiries can be emailed to AsktheCRO@nvcc.edu ; once the information is verified, a supplemental insert will be prepared and copies mailed to the student.

14. Why wasn't a student's name listed in the commencement book?

The CRO will made every effort to include all of the summer 2016/fall 2016 graduates and spring 2017 applicants. The CRO truly regrets any omissions.

15. Why weren't the names of Spring 2017 applicants listed as Latin Honors graduates?

The Latin honors list is populated every time a degree is awarded. Spring 2017 degree awarding begins May (*last day of the semester*) 2017, well after the commencement book has been sent to the vendor for printing thus; the list **only includes** summer 2017 and fall 2017 graduates' honors. Latin honors cords are available at the bookstores for eligible students. Students need to download an unofficial transcript to present as proof of eligibility. Phi Theta Kappa and other honors sponsors are responsible for providing 3.

their lists of names to the Commencement Events manager to be included in the commencement book. The CRO does not handle any matters regarding any graduation honors other than Latin honors.

16. Some students will complete their program requirements during the summer 2017 term; are they eligible to participate in the spring commencement?

No, again, students who completed program requirements summer 2016, fall 2016, or submitted a spring 2017 graduation application are eligible to participate in the Spring 2017 Commencement.

17. When and where will Commencement be held?

Commencement will be held in the month of **May 2017 location to be announced**. The doors close once the ceremony begins, no graduates will be admitted after that time. Students and their guests are asked to conduct themselves as is appropriate for this most important occasion and to remain in their seats until the conclusion of the ceremony. Please note, **tickets are required** for all attendees.

18. When will students receive their diploma covers?

Diploma covers are issued to all students who participate in commencement. Students who do not attend commencement may pick up a diploma cover at any the Student Services Center.

19. Where and when do students purchase regalia?

The Annandale campus bookstore holds a “**Graduation Fair**” during the month of **March 2017 from during the hours of 10:00-2:00**. However, regalia may be purchased at any of the NOVA campus bookstores.

20. When will Commencement information be available?

The Graduation Information brochure is the same from year to year; the date of commencement and name of the speaker are the only changes. The Commencement Information Brochure will be available on the NOVA website (*after April 15th*) **students are instructed to bring** the brochure to commencement.

21. What about commencement day traffic?

Historically, traffic poses many challenges. Students should allow a minimum of two hours to travel to the location, park, and walk to the designated meeting locations outlined in the Commencement brochure. The venue generally opens 1 hour before commencement begins.

22. How do I order an official transcript?

Information is available on the NOVA website. Students who completed courses from fall 2001 to the present **must** go online and order a transcript via the web. Students who completed courses prior to fall 2001 **must** complete **form 125-089** (*available on the NOVA website*) and fax to (703) 813-6022 or mail to: **College Records Office – Northern Virginia Community College-Annandale, VA 22003**. **All transcript requests that are addressed to students will be stamped “Issued To Student”.**

- **Emergency/Urgent requests**, it is the student’s responsibility to contact one of the Student Services Centers **by phone** to make arrangements **24 hours in advance** to **pick up one emergency transcript**. The student needs to **fax the request** to the Student Services Center, the **Student Services Center will process the signed, faxed transcript request, not the CRO.**

Overnight/priority or express mail service: It is the student’s responsibility to go the UPS or USPS* websites and follow the pre-pay instructions for using **UPS or USPS*** services. Students should have the pre-paid label emailed to **AsktheCRO@nvcc.edu**. Once received the label is 4.

forwarded to the CRO transcript coordinator for processing; labels are scanned to ImageNow for verification. ***Please note, requests submitted using USPS (United States Postal Service) need to be submitted NLT 10:00am to be processed and mailed the same day; mail is picked up at noon. Requests received after 10:00am will be processed and mailed the following work day.**

- **Urgent Express Mail Service (UEMS) for expedited overnight service to foreign countries**
Students must contact the Office of International Student Services (OISS) to obtain information, the mailing label and coordinate payment. An official transcript request form must be submitted to the CRO with an indication that arrangements have been made with OISS to use the UEMS service. The CRO will process the transcript (s) and deliver to OISS for UEMS pickup.

23. How should an *All Services Hold* on a transcript be handled?

First determine who and why the hold was placed, in rare cases the matter must to be handled by the AVP for Student Services and Enrollment Management. Usually the hold is placed by the comptroller for monies owed to the college.

24. Why haven't I been awarded Latin Honors or higher Latin honors?

Per the College catalog: "**Graduation Honors** – Students attending NOVA for a minimum of 30 credit hours in degree programs are eligible for graduation honors. Those attending NOVA for a minimum of 50 per cent of the credit hours in their certificate program are eligible for graduation honors. Student must apply online for graduation to be eligible for graduation honors. **Graduation honors are determined by the student's cumulative grade point average at the completion of the semester for which he/she is certified for graduation.**"

25. How do I obtain a Degree Verification Letter, an Apostille or an International Authentication?

The request forms are available on the NOVA website for students to download complete and sign. Students requesting a **Degree Verification** letter must have submitted a current application for graduation. The letter is mailed directly to the third party, never to the student/parent nor are copies of the provided to students/parents. **Apostille** forms are available online for students to download. Completed and signed forms must be submitted with their original diploma and official transcript to the OISS along with course descriptions for every course the student enrolled. Once notarized, the forms will be returned to the Office of International Student Services (OISS) for pick up by the student. The student is responsible for mailing the Apostille to the Commonwealth's Attorney with the required fee. **International Authentication** requests consist of course descriptions for all courses completed by the student, the College Certification/Accreditation as well as the student's program of study. It is the student's responsibility to:

1. Prepare the College course descriptions (*found at <http://www.nvcc.edu/courses>*) and submit with the request
2. Prepare the College Certification and Accreditation information sheet (*found at <http://www.nbv.edu/accreditation>*) and submit with request.
3. Prepare the College Program of studies information information (*found in the College catalog and at <http://www.nvcc.edu/programsofstudy>* listed by catalog year) and submit with request.

MATTERS NOT HANDLED BY THE CRO

1. **Repeat codes** (*report run at the end of the semester by IT; can be corrected by campus registrars*).
2. **Grade postings/changes** (*handled by campus registrars*).
3. **Schedule changes** (*handled at the campus level*) **Admissions/Enrollment** (*handled at the campus level*)
4. **Phi Theta Kappa honors** (*handled by designated sponsors on select campuses responsible for providing names to the editor for the commencement book*)
- 5.

5. **Presidential Scholars nor any Scholars or Honor Societies** (*These designations are done automatically by CIS. It's only run once per semester per VCCS policy. If a student is left off, it's probably because a grade wasn't posted until after it was run. Your campus registrar can run academic standing for an individual student,*)
6. **Calculation of Grade Point Averages (GPAs – handled by campus registrars)**
7. **Domicile issues** (*handled at the campus level*)
8. **Honors Course Designations** (*handled in the Division by the instructor*)
9. **Holds** (*handled at the campus level*)
10. **Unofficial transcripts** (*can be download by the student*)
11. **CEU (Continuing Education Units) transcripts** (*must contact the campus where the course was completed*)
12. **Commencement Ceremony arrangements. Graduation Information Brochure** (*arranged by the Commencement Events Manager*)
13. **Historic/Statistical Graduation Data** (contact the Office of Institutional Research)

Guaranteed Admissions Agreement (GAA)-Transfer Concerns:

1. **How do I send a transcript to George Mason University (GMU)?**
 - The website has specific instructions on how to submit a transcript to GMU. NVCC and
 - GMU and NOVA have an electronic transcript relationship that was established January 2007. The CRO transmits transcripts to GMU at 7:30am Monday –Friday. The transcripts are available for download after 2:30pm the same day. GMU downloads the transcripts at will. Students need to allow GMU 30 days for processing.
2. **How long does it take for NOVA to send a transcript?**
 - Transcripts requests submitted online Sunday –Thursday are processed (and mailed) within 24 hours. Faxed or mailed requests submitted Sunday –Thursday are processed (and mailed) within 5 days. *Confirmation messages are sent to the student's email account.*
 - Students who completed at least one course at NOVA from Fall 2001 to the present **must** use the online method of requesting a transcript if they remember their student ID number. Exceptions, see item #22.
 - It is not uncommon for students to be told that their transcript has not arrived at their senior institution even though the CRO has mailed the transcript within 24 hours of the request. Schools routinely take up to 30 days to process and post transfer credits.
3. **Will you write a letter indicating my degree status?** Students receive status letters via their VCCS email accounts which can be shown as proof of pending graduation completion.
 - GMU and other senior institutions want a transcript bearing the degree award, not a letter. Students need to check their school's transfer website for information.
4. **I was awarded a General Education Certificate (6950); I did not apply for this. Why was I awarded this certificate?**

The GEC program is mandated from VCCS (*Virginia Community College System*); all schools within the VCCS were required to comply with this mandate. This program provides a solid foundation in the VCCS and NOVA general education core competency areas. Essentially the first year of an Associate of Science degree, this certificate is awarded to students placed in A.A. and A.S. degree programs¹ who complete the 33 credit requirements listed on the website.

5. **Will this GEC award reflect negatively on my cumulative GPA or ability to transfer to a 4 year institution?** No, the GEC award has no bearing on students' GPA and does not reflect negatively on a student's ability to transfer to a 4 year institution. However a combination of the GEC plus an AAS is required for admission to some 4 year institutions.
6. **I am pursuing a Career Studies Certificate in Massage Therapy, how do I convert my Red Cross CPR card to HLT 105 credit need for my degree?** Download the *Request for Evaluation of Transfer Credit* form available online, complete the form. Make front and back copies of your current CPR card, take both to the Student Services Center for scanning and linking and evaluating.

COLLEGE RECORDS OPERATION IN A NUTSHELL

The CRO staff is cross trained to process transcripts, post substitution requests and audit student records.

Daily Work Schedule:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 5:00am – 10:30 am | Process and transmit electronic transcripts to George Mason University
Process and prepare web transcript and hard copy transcript requests. |
| 10:30am -12:30am | Post substitution requests, respond to Degree Verify requests from the National Clearinghouse. |
| Note: | Evaluations of traditional (from colleges and universities located in the US), non-traditional credits (<i>including WES, AP, CLEP, SDV, DANES</i>) have been migrated from the campuses to the CRO. Please note transfer credit evaluations are being completed during this same time frame. |

However, the **evaluation of military credits** are handled by the Military Services Registrar in the Office of Military Services.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 12:30- 1:30pm | Lunch break |
| 1:30- 5:00 | Audit graduation applications, diploma ordering, email correspondence |
| Simultaneous Operations | |
| 8:30 – 5:00 | Transfer Credit Evaluation |
| 8:30 - 5:00 | Communication is emailed, diplomas are ordered and responds to email messages submitted via AsktheCRO@nvcc.edu , problems are resolved. |

NEW QUESTIONS

I did not participate in my Commencement can I participate in future ceremonies?

Currently, the *Commencement Day Marshalls* do not have a list eligible of graduates so no one is checking. Anyone in regalia is allowed in the line, handed a card on which to print their name and hand to the announcer when they walk on the stage. However, names of the students who did not submit an application for graduation will not be included the Commencement Book program nor will a supplement insert be produced.

Where can I find the names of my past instructors?

Student can find this information on their unofficial transcript. Unofficial transcripts can be downloaded by the student. The CRO does not process or produce unofficial transcripts.

Where can I find the actual dates for past semesters?

Students can go to the NOVA website and search for the Academic Calendar or official Catalog for the desired year.

Do you ever fax official transcripts?

No

Finally, **The CRO is a *virtual* operation**, student inquiries regarding any of the subjects previously addressed or any CRO matters should be submitted to AsktheCRO@nvcc.edu. This is the only method of contacting the CRO; there are persons assigned to respond to inquiries within 48 hours.