

EPC PROPOSAL FORM

Submit a **pdf version with all appropriate signatures** (or attached email signatures with endorsement or reservations) **and a Word version** (without signatures) to facgov@plu.edu.

Deadlines: **Type 3** - November 1. **Type 2** - December 1. **Type 1** - October 1 for J-Term and Spring requests; March 1 for Summer/Fall requests. *Early submission is strongly recommended.*

Originating Academic Unit(s):

PAC

Name of Dept. Chair/Program Chair/Assoc. Dean

Bridget Yaden

Date Proposal Submitted:

2/27/26

REQUIRED SIGNATURES FOR APPROVAL

(Note: Type 1 only does not require Dean or Provost signature.)



2/27/26

Dept. Chair/Program Chair/Assoc. Dean (printed name and signature) Date

X With Endorsement

With Reservations

Dean

Date

With Endorsement

With Reservations

Provost

Date

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

One-sentence summary of the proposal.

Adjust graduation total hour requirement from 128 to 120 credits.

Has this proposal been formally approved by at least 2/3 of the full-time teaching faculty in your academic unit?

- Yes**
 No (indicate why not)

N/A

Does this proposal impact any other academic units?

- Yes** (provide email statement of support from chair of impacted units indicating at least 2/3 of the full-time teaching faculty in those units support that impact or, if not, why not)
 No

Does this proposal involve Core Curriculum elements in any way?

- Yes**
 No

TYPE 1

Check all that apply.

- Add Core Curriculum element to a Special Topics course**
 Add, change and/or remove Core Curriculum element to an existing course**
 Change a course's credit hours
 Change course description (if change alters learning objectives or a student could retake the altered course
for credit then submit as new course)
 Change grading type (e.g. P/F, letter grade)
 Catalog editorial change
 Change course number
 Change course title
 Prerequisite change within the academic unit only
 Reactivation of formerly offered course(s)

TYPE 2: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Check all that apply.

- Add a permanent Core Curriculum course**
 Add a permanent non-Core Curriculum course
 Add or remove cross-listing to pre-existing course
 Change a concentration requirement**
 Change a major requirement**
 Change a minor requirement**
 Change a prerequisite involving another unit's course
 Create new department code

- Create new subject prefix
- Delete course
- Eliminate concentration
- Eliminate degree
- Eliminate major
- Eliminate minor
- Merge multiple department codes into single or new department code (indicated preferred code below)

Other:

Change the graduation requirement regarding total required hours, lowering the minimum from 128 to 120.

**TYPE 3: NEW PROGRAMS - REQUIRES FACULTY
ASSEMBLY AND BOARD OF REGENTS
APPROVAL**

Check all that apply.

- Add certificate (non-Continuing Education)^
 - New concentration^^
 - New degree^^
 - New major^^
 - New minor^^
 - Other:
-

++ Review [How to Request a Core Element](#) and then complete the [Worksheet for Requesting a Core Element](#).

****** Complete the [EPC Curriculum Change Template](#) and a revised two-year course cycle.

^^ Complete the [EPC Curriculum Change Template](#), a revised two-year course cycle, and an [Institutional Impact Evaluation Form](#).

STATEMENT OF RATIONALE (1000-word limit)

Provide a statement of rationale for your requested changes. Include information on impact on student learning and outcomes.

PLU is committed to offering students an academic experience that is flexible enough to fit their lives and goals, and can be realistically completed in four years. In considering this change, our research shows that in Washington and nationally, most universities have been moving to 120 credit hours to improve timely graduation rates. In fact, the Washington Student Achievement Council, the body that authorizes degrees in Washington state, set 120 semester credits as standard for 4-year universities in the state. We want to support students who need room in their schedules to add a minor, hold an internship, join service projects, or better balance their studies and their jobs. Some academic programs take longer to complete. This tactic does not change that reality – just as our current 128-credit graduation requirement still allows for programs of study that require more than 128 credits. Our current requirement of 128 credits isn't serving students who discern their majors early in their time at PLU, or who have shorter majors, and experience tremendous frustration in continuing to take full loads of courses – with commensurate tuition and fees – that wouldn't be expected of them if they were elsewhere. Please see the attachment with frequently asked questions. These questions came up during meetings with academic unit heads.

Proposed Catalog Language changes for all areas requiring change (blue Bold for additions and ~~blue Strikethrough~~ for deletions).

<https://www.plu.edu/catalog-2025-2026/ilos-values-principles-gened-writing/academic-program/>

Academic Program

Pacific Lutheran University uses a 4-1-4 calendar, which consists of two 15-week semesters bridged by a four-week January Term. The January Term's intensive, four-week format is designed to offer students a unique pedagogical opportunity. It supports study away, in-depth focus on a single theme or topic, and the use of student-centered and active-learning pedagogies. The January Term's intensive format also supports other pedagogical activities that contribute to building an intentional culture of learning inside and outside the classroom. It offers an opportunity for an intensive First-Year Experience Program (FYEP) that combines rigorous academic study with co-curricular activities that serve the goals of the First-Year program—thinking, literacy and community. Further, the January Term offers the opportunity to orient students to PLU's mission, support them in understanding how they position themselves within the PLU community and the world, and support them as they embrace their role as active citizens.

Course credit is computed by semester hours. The majority of courses are offered for four semester hours. Each undergraduate degree candidate must complete a minimum of 1208 semester hours with an overall 2.00 grade point average.

Departments or schools may set higher grade point requirements.

Degree requirements are specifically stated in this catalog. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with these requirements and meeting them.

<https://www.plu.edu/catalog-2025-2026/undergraduate-admission/evaluation-of-credits/>

Transfer of Credits from Other Universities

Courses must be listed in the official college catalog, be a part of the regular college curriculum of a regionally accredited college or university, and be posted on an official college or university transcript.

- Courses completed with a grade of C- or higher at other regionally-accredited colleges or universities normally will be accepted for graduation credit with passing grades and will not be calculated into the PLU grade point average. Courses from all institutions are subject to course-by-course evaluation.
- A student may transfer a maximum of 906 semester or 13544 quarter hours. Of these, the maximum transferable from a two-year school is 604 semester or 906 quarter hours.

<https://www.plu.edu/catalog-2025-2026/undergraduate-program/>

Course Load (last sentence)

To achieve the minimum 1208 semester hours required for graduation within a four-year time frame, students must complete at least 302 semester hours within any given academic year.

Second Bachelor's Degree Earned – Returning Students

Students cannot return to have additional majors or minors posted to their records once they graduate unless they complete an entirely new degree. Students who return to PLU to earn a second bachelor's degree after earning a first bachelor's degree or those who earned their first degree at another institution must meet the following requirements:

- **Current Catalog:**
Apply for admission through the Office of Admission and acceptance under the current catalog.
- **302 Semester Hours:**
Earn a minimum of 302 new semester hours that apply to the degree.
- **GenEd Requirement:**
If the previous degree was earned at PLU, no additional general education requirements will be added.
- **906 Semester Hours Maximum:**
Students who complete a bachelor's degree, excluding the Bachelor of Applied Science, from an accredited college or university before matriculation at PLU will be admitted with senior standing of 906 semester hours. Students may transfer in a maximum of 906 semester hours or ~~13544~~ quarter hours; of these the maximum transferable from a two-year school is 604 semester or 906 quarter hours. These students will have satisfied all General Education Program elements except for four hours in The Academic Study of Religion (RL); four hours in Global Engagement (GE); and the Culminating Experience (SR).

Transfer of Credit from Other Colleges/Universities

- **906 Semester Hour Maximum:**
A student may transfer a maximum of 906 semester hours. Of these, the maximum transferable from a two-year school is 604 semester hours. Credits from quarter-hour colleges or universities transfer on a two-thirds equivalency basis. (Example: a five-quarter-hour course transfers as 3.33 semester hours).
- **302-Hour Residency Rule:**
At least 302 semester hours must be completed in residence at PLU.

<https://www.plu.edu/catalog-2025-2026/undergraduate-program/limitations-baccalaureate-degrees/>

Limitations: All Baccalaureate Degrees

(All credit hours referred to in listings of requirements are semester hours.)

Total Required Hours and Cumulative GPA

A minimum of 1208 semester hours must be completed with a grade point average (GPA) of 2.00. A 2.50 is required in the Schools of Business and Education and Kinesiology, plus the Departments of Economics, History, Languages and Literatures (Hispanic Studies), Sociology & Criminal Justice, and Social Work.

Upper-Division Courses: 40-Hour Rule

A minimum of 40 semester hours must be completed from courses numbered 300 or above. Courses from two-year institutions are not considered upper division regardless of subject matter parallels (and regardless of major/minor exceptions). At least 20 of the 40 semester hours of upper-division work must be taken at PLU.

302-Hour Residency Rule

At least 302 semester hours must be completed in residence at PLU.

Academic Major: 8-Hour Rule

A major must be completed as detailed by each school or department. At least eight semester hours must be taken in residence. Departments, divisions, or schools may set higher residency requirements.

Minimum Grades: Courses in the Major and Minor

All courses counted toward a major or minor must be completed with grades of C- or higher and with a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or higher in those courses. Departments, divisions, or schools may set higher grade requirements.

Music Ensembles: 8-Hour Rule

Non-music majors may not count more than eight semester hours in music ensembles toward graduation requirements.

Correspondence/Extension Courses: Limitations

A maximum of 24 semester hours in accredited correspondence or extension studies may be credited toward degree requirements, contingent on approval by the Office of the Registrar.

604-Hour and 906-Hour Rule

A student may transfer a maximum of 906 semester hours. Of these, the maximum transferable from a two-year school is 604 semester hours.

Fitness and Wellness Courses: 8-Hour Rule

Two different one-semester hour courses (FTWL 100–259), which must include FTWL 100, are required for graduation. No more than eight of the one-semester hour FT activity courses may be counted toward graduation. Students are encouraged to select a variety of activities at appropriate skill levels. All fitness and wellness activity courses are graded on the basis of A, Pass, or Fail and are taught on a coeducational basis.

<https://www.plu.edu/catalog-2025-2026/undergraduate-program/program-curriculum-information/business/>

Bachelor of Business Administration Degree Overall Requirements

- A minimum of 1208 semester hours

Certificates

The certificate program and courses are open to all students of PLU. Credits may be applied towards graduation (e.g. the 1208 credit requirement for PLU). A student may enroll for more than one certificate course.

<https://www.plu.edu/catalog-2025-2026/undergraduate-program/program-curriculum-information/mathematics/>

Major in Mathematics Education

36 semester hours of mathematics, plus 8 to 9 semester hours of supporting courses

- 36 semester hours of mathematics: MATH 152, 242, 253, 317 or 318, 319, 331, 433, 499A, 499B, and MATH/EDUC 446
- 4 semester hours of education: EDUC 205
- One course (4-5 semester hours) from: PHYS 125/135 Lab, PHYS 153/163 Lab, or CHEM 115
- Strongly recommended (but not required): MATH 455

A minimum of 1208 semester hours must be completed with a GPA of 2.50 or higher. MATH/EDUC 446 must be completed with a B- or higher. MATH 433, 499A, and 499B must be completed with grades of C- or higher. All other mathematics courses counted toward a mathematics education major must be completed with grades of C or higher.

If there are new courses in your proposal, please complete the following for each new course.

Course Code (e.g. ANTH 102) and number of credits (e.g. 4 or 1-4):

Is this a course that can be repeated?

Yes (must be clear in course description)

Number of times repeatable **–or–**

Number of credits repeatable

No

Grade Type

Check if Pass/Fail rather than Standard Letter Grade

Does this proposal require the commitment of new or substantially different support services (e.g., Library acquisitions, Information and Technology Services, Wang Center, Internships)?

Yes (explain what services and provide email statement of support from those areas)

No

Explain how the proposed change(s) will be staffed.

n/a

If this proposal impacts regular offerings of Core Curriculum, FYEP and/or IHON courses, explain how.

n/a

Are special budgetary arrangements and funding required? If “no”, explain how the proposed changes will be integrated with current financial resources. (Budgetary considerations will be reviewed/approved by Dean and Provost.)

Yes (Explain what types of support will be used to meet the budgetary requirements of the proposed change(s). Include the source(s) of funding, percentage of costs covered, and time frame covered.)

No

Why are we proposing this?

PLU is committed to offering students an academic experience that is flexible enough to fit their lives and goals, and can be realistically completed in four years. In considering this change, our research shows that in Washington and nationally, most universities have been moving to 120 credit hours to improve timely graduation rates. We also want to support students who need room in their schedules to add a minor, hold an internship, join service projects, or better balance their studies and their jobs.

What are the requirements at other universities in Washington and when did the other colleges make the change?

If the change has been recent, we indicate the year of the change in parenthesis. For the other institutions, these requirements have not changed in decades.

SCHOOL NAME	Hours Required to graduate
Univ Washington system per year) (2003)	180 quarter = 120 semester hours (3 courses per quarter x 3 quarters)
SPU	180 quarter = 120 semester hours
Seattle U	180 quarter = 120 semester hours
WWU (2003)	180 quarter = 120 semester hours
St. Martin's (2019)	120 semester hours
WSU	120 semester hours
Gonzaga (2025)	120 semester hours
Heritage	120 semester hours
Whitman (1996)	124 semester hours
Whitworth (2024)	126 semester hours
UPS	32 units = 128 semester hours
PLU	128 semester hours

When would this take effect?

Fall 2026

Who will be eligible to graduate under the new 120 credit requirement for undergraduates?

All students who are on the new General Education curriculum will be updated to the new 120 credit minimum requirement. This includes students who matriculated in Fall 2023 and after, students who started in Fall 2022/Spring 2023 who chose to convert to the new GenEd, and new incoming students. The change will be reflected on their CAPP Report.

Students who are on the previous General Education curriculum (matriculated before Fall 2023 and did not elect to convert GenEd) will continue to need a minimum of 128 credits to graduate. However, they will be eligible to petition to reduce the number of required credits, by a maximum of 8 credits, should they meet all graduation requirements with less than 128 credits. The petition will be filed with the Registrar's Office when they apply for graduation.

If 120 credits is the minimum number needed to complete a bachelor's degree, will some degree programs require more than 120 hours?

Yes, some undergraduate programs by their nature require more major-specific hours and support courses (for example, nursing or music).

How can a degree be completed within 120 credits if the number of credits required for the major, minor, and core curriculum have not changed?

In most cases, students will be able to graduate with 120 credit hours by reducing the number of general electives (in PLU-Speak "Graduation Hours") they take. However, the student should be sure that all degree requirements (residency hours, general education and major/minor courses) are met.

Will reducing the total required credits for graduation impact a student's ability to double major or pursue minors?

No. In fact, the reduction in required credits should add some flexibility to students' schedules. Keep in mind that 120 credit hours is a minimum; students who want to expand their learning to include another major or multiple minors can do so. That may mean they may go beyond the 120 credit minimum. If they do, they will simply need to plan strategically to anticipate any impact on their timely academic progress and financial aid.

Will this reduction in total required credits change when a student moves up into their next class classification?

No, students will continue to be classified as sophomores at 30 credits, juniors at 60 credits, and seniors at 90 credits.

Does this reduction water down what a PLU degree means?

No, this change still requires students to complete all of PLU's General Education curriculum plus University and major/minor requirements.

Have any other undergraduate graduation requirements changed as a result of this policy change?

No.

Will this change PLU's requirement of 40 upper-division credits?

No.

How will the new 120 credit requirement be applied to students who have taken a break and are returning to PLU?

Returning students who matriculated to PLU before Fall 2019 will be updated to the most current curriculum at the time of their re-entry. This will include updating to the new 120 credit requirement.

Returning students who matriculated to PLU from Fall 2019 through Spring 2023 will remain on their original curriculum, determined by the catalog for their matriculation term. This means they will remain with the 128 credit requirement but they will be eligible to petition to reduce the number of required credits, by a maximum of 8 credits, should they meet all graduation requirements with less than 128 credits. The petition will be filed with the Registrar's Office when they apply for graduation.

Returning students who have matriculated to PLU since Fall 2023 and those students who matriculated in Fall 2022/Spring 2023 and chose to convert the new General Education requirements will automatically be updated to the new 120 credit requirement.

Will this change to minimum required credits impact students' financial aid eligibility?

No.

What is considered full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes?

Undergraduate students must take a minimum of 12 credits in a semester to be considered full-time.

Will students still be eligible for their current financial aid if they take only 12 credits per semester?

Yes.

Can students take more than 12 credits per semester?

Yes! The normal credit load for undergraduate students during Fall and Spring Semesters is 13 to 17 credit hours per semester, including fitness and wellness.

Will this cause students to receive fewer credits for the same tuition cost?

No. The credit range that block pricing allows (12-17 credits) means that students regularly pay the same tuition for a varying number of credits.

What happens if students want to take a lighter credit load and extend their graduation timeline?

A student who wishes to take a lighter credit load and extend their graduation timeline should meet with Student Financial Services. The impact will be different for each student depending on their credit load per term and the types of aid they receive.

Will graduating earlier affect federal student loans?

Students enter repayment on their loans starting six months after they drop below half-time status. Students who graduate earlier can expect to begin loan repayment sooner than students who graduate later.

If students take fewer credits per semester, how will it impact their loan eligibility?

A student must be at least half-time (6 credits UG/4 credits GR) in order to receive federal student loans. Effective July 1, 2026, federal student loans will be prorated for students enrolled less than full-time.

Will institutional or merit scholarships be affected by the lower total credits required for graduation?

No. However, students must be enrolled full-time to receive PLU gift aid in any given semester.

Will this change impact Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements?

Yes. Satisfactory academic progress measures three things at the end of each term - cumulative GPA, cumulative pace of completion, and maximum timeframe. The change to 120 credits will not impact the GPA or pace of completion measurements. However, the maximum timeframe will change. Maximum timeframe is defined as 150% of the published length of the program. At 128 credits, maximum timeframe is 192 attempted credits. At 120, maximum timeframe is 180 attempted credits. Once it becomes

mathematically impossible for a student to graduate within the maximum timeframe, all financial aid is suspended immediately.

How will the new credit requirement impact SAP pace calculations?

See above.

Does this change impact students' ability to receive Federal Work-Study?

No.

How does this impact military benefits (e.g., GI Bill, VA benefits)?

This change will not impact military benefits.

