

Western Michigan University  
Faculty Senate  
Memorandum of Action

MOA – 18/06

Honors Upon Graduation

Name of Council(s)/Committee(s):  
Transfer of Credit Committee

Approval Date:  
11 October 2018

Implementation Date:  
Upon Administrative Approval

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Reduce the number of credit hours of WMU coursework required to be considered for graduation with honors from 50 to 30.



12/6/18

David Reinhold, Chair, Transfer of Credit Committee

Date

Approve  
Comments:   Disapprove  Other Action

1/10/19

Bruce Ferrin, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council

Date

Approve  
Comments:   Disapprove  Other Action

Approved by the Faculty Senate on 7 February 2019



2/7/2019

Richard A. Gershon, WMU Faculty Senate President

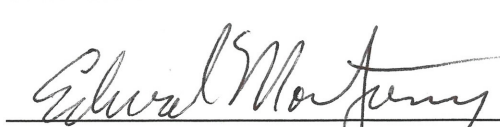
Date

Approve  
Comments:   Disapprove  Other Action

8.8.19

Jennifer P. Bott, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date

Approve  
Comments:   Disapprove  Other Action

8/9/19

Edward B. Montgomery, WMU President

Date

**Western Michigan University  
Faculty Senate  
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**Honors Upon Graduation**

**RATIONALE**

The Transfer Credit Committee believes it is not equitable to have a situation in which a student is eligible for a degree from Western Michigan University, but there is no opportunity for them to earn the honors designation while obtaining that degree. This situation currently exists for a handful of students since a WMU degree can be earned by taking 30 credit hours of WMU coursework, but 50 credit hours of WMU coursework is required to be considered for the honors designation. This is currently a problem in 3 + 1 programs where a student completes the first three years at another institution, finishes the final year at WMU, and earns a WMU degree. These types of agreements are becoming more popular, especially with international institutions, and the Transfer of Credit Committee would like to solve this situation before more such agreements are made.

The question of how much this would affect the number of students graduating with honors has been raised. The Transfer of Credit Committee has received data from the Registrar's Office from the academic year beginning in summer I of 2017 and ending in the spring 2018 semester (most current data). During that period, 3,685 students graduated and 1,272 earned honors (34.5%). If the policy would have allowed students with 30 – 49 credits here at WMU to be considered for honors, 52 more students would have been eligible with 27 more earning honors. This increase of 27 students would have meant that 35.3% of the graduating students would have been awarded the honors designation, an increase of 0.8 percentage points.

It should be mentioned that this increase is probably larger than would occur in most years. Fourteen of the 27 additional students who would have been awarded the honors designation if the policy had been different were students from Miller College. When Miller College recently closed, WMU agreed to help students complete degrees. This source of students has largely completed their degrees and will no longer add to the students who graduate with 30 – 49 credits from WMU. Thus, the more realistic number of additional students awarded honors each year if this proposed policy change is accepted is probably closer to 10 -15 students per year. This amounts to a less than 0.5 percentage point increase in the number of students awarded honors each year.

Finally, the Transfer of Credit Committee consulted the Lee Honors College about its thoughts on this policy. The dean responded, "We see no problem with the proposed change".

In summary, this policy will allow **all** students seeking a WMU degree to be eligible for the honors designation and will have a minimal effect on the overall percentage of graduates who are given the honors designation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Reduce the number of credit hours of WMU coursework required to be considered for graduation with honors from 50 to 30.

**CURRENT POLICY** (additions in bold and deletions with strikethrough)

**Honors Upon Graduation:** Honors are conferred upon graduating students who have displayed a high level of performance during their University career.

Recipients of honors receive their degrees:

**Cum laude:** when their grade point average is 3.50 to 3.69, inclusive

**Magna cum laude:** when their grade point average is 3.70 to 3.89, inclusive

**Summa cum laude:** when their grade point average is 3.90 to 4.00, inclusive

In computing the grade point average for honors, the following rules will apply:

1. All credits and honor points earned at Western Michigan University will be counted.
2. All students must have earned at least ~~forty~~ **thirty** semester hours of course work at Western Michigan University which was graded by a letter grade and computed into the final cumulative grade point average.

**The commencement program will list as candidates for honors, all students who have earned a grade point average of 3.50 and have registered for 30 hours of graded WMU credit by the end of the first week of their final semester. Final determination of honors and level of awards will be based upon all work and will appear on the final transcript and diploma.**

~~The graduation program will list as *candidates for honors* all students who have earned a point-hour average of 3.50 through the next to last semester of residence (based on a minimum of forty-five semester hours of credit earned at Western of which thirty-five hours must be in courses with grades.) Final determination of honors and level of awards will be based upon all work and will appear on the final transcript.~~