 VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY	Title: Exceptions Policy for Undergraduate Degrees	
	University Division/Department: Office of the Provost	
Policy Number:	Effective Date: June 1, 2024	Page: 1 of 3

I. POLICY STATEMENT


Degree (along with minor, concentration, dual major, certificate, and other credentials) requirements are stated in the undergraduate catalog. Students follow the requirements of the catalog of the year they first enrolled at Villanova. Each student is identified by catalog year in their degree audit. While a student is tied to the requirements stated in the catalog that was in place for their first year, a student may wish to pursue a new academic program of study or credential that launches at a later point during their time at Villanova. The Office of the Registrar will work with the colleges to ensure the student’s degree audit will accommodate the accurate requirements for students who may choose a program of study that was not initially an option in their catalog year.

The degree audit tool, Degree Works, is scribed to match student’s coursework with degree requirements and displays how the courses apply toward the student’s degree. It is the student’s responsibility for understanding and knowing the requirements for their programs of study. Exceptions to requirements are considered only when compelling circumstances exist, and the exception upholds the integrity of degree standards. The exceptions feature in Degree Works gives the colleges the ability to initiate exceptions to student degree audits, which are sent to the Office of the Registrar. The Degree Works team in the Registrar’s Office will review the request for an exception to determine how it should be applied to the degree audit and will collaborate with the college if additional clarification is needed for processing.

Exceptions to university policy or school/college requirements must first be approved by the Dean’s designee in each college. Any exceptions applied to a student audit will remain on record unless the student changes programs and the exception is no longer applicable. Exceptions will apply to an individual student degree audit only. While there is no method in Degree Works to process “batch” exceptions, there could be instances where exceptions are needed for a group of students in a similar situation. In these cases, the college would still submit a request for each individual student but can use the same rationale.

If documentation justifying an exception is required, the Dean’s designee has the responsibility to enter the request for an exception in Degree Works and to scan, name, and store the justification document at the appropriate location. At minimum, the rationale for the exception must be submitted by the college when requesting the exception to the Office of the Registrar. Each college should create, publish, and maintain its own process for submitting exception requests.

In the absence of extenuating or mitigating circumstances (see below), no course may be used to fulfill a requirement unless it has been officially designated to meet the requirement.

 VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY	Title: Exceptions Policy for Undergraduate Degrees	
	University Division/Department: Office of the Provost	
Policy Number:	Effective Date: June 1, 2024	Page: 2 of 3

Below are examples of acceptable reasons for seeking an exception; these do not represent guarantees of approvals for exceptions.

- Unavailability of required courses that could make it difficult for a student to graduate in a timely manner and meet all core, major and elective requirements.
- When transferring colleges internally at Villanova, course substitutions with similar learning outcomes may be requested at the discretion of the Dean’s designee.

It is the responsibility of the student to explore and understand the requirements and expectations of their program(s) of study as defined in the catalog. Noted below are unacceptable reasons for seeking an exception:

- Failure of a student to complete requirements indicated as outstanding.
- Failure to implement an academic advisor’s suggestions.
- Poor course performance.

The authorization to make exceptions to a student’s degree completion requirements comes with significant responsibility. In submitting exception requests, advisors/program directors/department chairs and Dean’s designees must check and carefully document that the modified degree requirements preserve the academic integrity of the corresponding degree. They also must uphold the standards for degree requirements imposed by accrediting agencies. The colleges must be transparent in the approval and utilization of exceptions to avoid causing inequities in student degree progression. Exceptions cannot be used for broader curricular changes. The Office of the Registrar will create reports to monitor exceptions to share trends and outcomes with the colleges on the use and commonalities of exceptions throughout an academic year.

II. HISTORY

Approved by BAAD April 11, 2024

Approved by Provost and Council of Deans May 22, 2024

III. RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/ DEPARTMENT

Provost (or Designee)

Office of the Provost


800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085

619-519-4520

IV. RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT

Registrar

Office of Registrar

 VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY	Title: Exceptions Policy for Undergraduate Degrees	
	University Division/Department: Office of the Provost	
Policy Number:	Effective Date: June 1, 2024	Page: 3 of 3

Office of the Provost
800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085
610-519-4033