

Graduation and Certificates

Students completing their four years in the Mason LIFE program will graduate with a Certificate of Completion with a catalog concentration and a work specialty area.

There are three components or areas of importance. First, the Certificate of Completion is only awarded to those students who have made satisfactory academic progress (SAP). To maintain satisfactory academic progress, 67% of all non-credit LIFE classes cumulatively attempted, must be completed with a passing grade. Passing grades are SA, SB, SC, or S, where the "S" is defined as "Satisfactorily equivalent to" as recorded by the University Registrar's Office.

Participants must also meet certain timeframe requirements to earn their Certificate of Completion. The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy requires that the student must complete the program within 150% of the normal time frame of completion. The program completion time is 4 years or 300 clock hours so the program must be completed within 450 clock hours. Participants who do not meet the 67% qualitative equivalent requirement or the 150% quantitative (timeframe) requirement are no longer eligible for financial aid or for continuation in the full time program.

There is required coursework in Mason LIFE. All students must complete at least one semester of the following: Human Sexuality and Relationship Fundamentals, Developing Self-Regulation, Employment, Independent Living, Literature, Writing, Mathematics, and Banking. The last requirement is the Senior Seminar class that is mandatory during the Spring of their final year. Students must make sufficient academic progress as denoted by their equivalent grade point average to stay as an enrolled member of the university.

The second area of importance is the catalog concentration. Students participate in university classes (called Special Topics classes) on a non-credit basis. Some students will participate in one course per semester while others will be enrolled in two or more classes. This course-load is based on the student and his/her goals. With successful completion of each university class, as noted by test scores, work products, and other academic performance assessments, the grade will be entered into their academic transcript. The selected Special Topics classes are selected in Advising meetings held once per semester with the goal of helping the student plan what they would like to study during their time at George Mason University.

These courses fall under the Exploration area of the Academic Component. A support staff attends class with the Mason LIFE student and there are also two hours of support class where coursework may be completed. This is the process that forms students' catalog concentrations. Catalog concentrations may be three, four, or five class concentrations. A five-course concentration is termed a Comprehensive Concentration on their Certificate of Completion. Completing three courses in a discipline area is noted on the Certificate as a Minor Concentration. Students may have more than one concentration.

The third and final area of importance is the Work Specialty area. During the first year, students are enrolled in a classroom-based employment class to refine resumes, work behaviors, and discuss options for internship. After successful completion, students begin to have work experiences. Students are placed both on- and off-campus with a support staff. Placements are based on several factors such as schedule, interests, available options, and rank in program. Additionally, a student's "soft skills" and needs related to workplace readiness will be considered. Based on these work experiences, the student begins to cluster skills that form the work specialty area. Some specialty areas that are currently being pursued are Recreation Services, Government and Public Administration, Early Childhood Education Services, and Office Clerical Skills.