Request for Letter of Certification

# When to use this form:

Prior to degree conferral, you need an official letter that verifies your status with respect to meeting degree requirements and your expected graduation date. Potential employers, licensure boards, embassies and other agencies may require this type of verification, including petitions for H-1B visas.

**Please allow two weeks to process all letters.**

## Alternate form:

The Graduate School offers all of its forms in an accessible Microsoft Word document format. This accessible version of the Request for Letter of Certification was created to be used with screen reader technology. **If you do not require the use of screen reader technology, it is recommended you use the original PDF version of this form available at** <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/forms>.

## Important notes:

The Graduate School is the only qualified official institutional entity authorized to provide verification and certification prior to degree conferral that degree requirements have been met by graduate students; subsequent to degree conferral, the University Registrar is the appropriate, authorized entity. Letters signed by a representative of the Registrar’s Office, faculty members, or college deans attesting that degree requirements have been met for graduate students are not official or appropriate for verification purposes.

### Completion of all degree requirements (degree completion letter):

(Master and Doctoral Students)

Candidates for graduation during a particular semester who have completed all degree requirements may request an official letter that verifies their status and their expected graduation date.

Degree Requirements Completion Letters provide official verification from The Pennsylvania State University that all degree requirements have been met and specify the date that the student’s degree is expected to be conferred. A Degree Requirements Completion Letter includes the student's name, degree, major, the date requirements were completed, the projected degree conferral date, the University's official seal, and the signature of the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Because a Degree Requirements Completion Letter can only be issued if ALL degree requirements have been officially met, if a required course is in progress The Graduate School will not issue letter to certify that all degree requirements have been met until final grades have been officially reported and noted on the student’s transcript.

Note that Degree Requirements Completion Letters will be dated with the date of completion of the final requirement. For example, if a thesis or dissertation is a requirement of the degree program and is the final requirement completed by the student, the Degree Requirements Completion Letter will note that all degree requirements were met on the date that the thesis/dissertation was approved and reported by the Thesis Office, and not the date of the final oral examination nor the date the committee members approved and signed the final document.

A degree completion letter **cannot be provided** if:

1. the degree requirements include a thesis or dissertation and the final, signed thesis or dissertation has not been submitted to and approved by the Graduate School Thesis Office;
2. completion of the culminating experience (for degree programs that do not require a thesis or dissertation) has not yet been reported to the Graduate School by the graduate program;
3. there are missing or deferred grades;
4. a hold has been placed on the student record.
5. the student is currently enrolled in a course (other than 601) and the grade has not yet been posted to LionPATH. Grade rosters do not become available until the day following the official end of classes.
	1. NOTE: The deadline to request a letter of certification is the last day classes. Therefore, students currently enrolled in classes other than 601 with an official end date of the last day of the semester are ineligible for a letter of certification;
6. the student has not activated their intent to graduate (i.e., the student is not on the graduation list) for the semester in which the letter is requested
	1. NOTE: Students cannot activate their intent until the activation period opens (the beginning of every semester). Students who have satisfied all requirements but who are not graduating until the following semester are unable to receive a letter of certification until the all steps (including activation of Intent to Graduate) have been completed in the semester in which the degree will be conferred.
7. the student has not been approved in LionPATH Graduation Tracking by either the graduate program head (or Director of Graduate Studies).
8. the student has not been approved in LionPATH Graduation Tracking by Graduate Enrollment Services.

At a student’s request, a Degree Requirements Completion Letter may be provided to potential employers, licensure boards, embassies and other agencies.

A Degree Requirements Completion Letter is the appropriate letter to request when petitioning the USCIS for an H-1B visa. For H-1B visa purposes, all required credit and course requirements need to be officially met (i.e., noted on the student’s transcript) no later than the end of the fall semester preceding any request for a letter of certification that all degree requirements have been met in the subsequent spring semester.

Requests for Degree Requirements Completion Letter from the Graduate School will be fulfilled in approximately 1-2 weeks.

For doctoral students, diplomas are distributed at the commencement ceremony therefore, the deadline to request a letter is the last day of classes.

After degrees have been conferred, completion letters are no longer issued by the Graduate School because an official transcript can be requested from the University Registrar that provides evidence of degree completion.

### Final oral examination passed verification letter:

(Doctoral Students Only)

Final oral examination letters are official verification from The Pennsylvania State University that a doctoral student has successfully passed the final oral examination in the degree program in which the student is currently enrolled. At a student’s request, a final oral examination letter may be provided to potential employers, immigration, or other agencies. Final oral examination letters are certified statements that include the student’s name, degree, major, date of examination and the signature of the Graduate School director of Graduate Enrollment Services.

### Comprehensive examination passed verification letter:

(Doctoral Students Only)

Comprehensive examination letters are official verification from The Pennsylvania State University that a doctoral student has successfully passed the comprehensive examination in the degree program which the student is currently enrolled. At a student’s request, a comprehensive examination letter may be provided to potential employers, immigration or other agencies. Comprehensive examination letters are certified statements that include the student’s name, degree, major, date of examination and the signature of the Graduate School director of Graduate Enrollment Services.

## Letter of certification specifics:

Which of the three certification letters are you requesting?

Select one:

[ ]  Degree Completion Letter

[ ]  Final oral exam passed verification letter

[ ]  Comprehensive exam passed verification letter

What is the semester for which you have activated your intent to graduate?

Are you an international student? Please indicate ‘yes’ or ‘no’

Have you applied for Optional Practical Training (OPT)? Please indicate ‘yes’ or ‘no’

## H1-B visa applicants:

Are you an applicant for an H1-B visa? Please indicate ‘yes’ or ‘no’:

Students applying for H1-B visas are typically asked to provide proof of having earned a degree. For this reason, it is desirable for students to complete their degrees and graduate by the end of December. However, some students may be in the position of applying for H1-B in April and graduating in May. Students who will have completed all degree requirements no later than March 1st of each year may request a letter certifying that all requirements have been met.

## Personal information:

Please indicate your name formatted as last, first, middle:

Please indicate your 9-digit Penn State ID number:

Please indicate your phone number, starting with area code:

Please indicate your Penn State email address:

## Academic information:

What is your present graduate degree?

What is your present graduate major?

If receiving a master’s degree, are you submitting a thesis, a paper, capstone course, or capstone project?

[ ]  Submitting a thesis

[ ]  Submitting a paper

[ ]  Submitting a capstone course

[ ]  Submitting a capstone project

## Addressing and mailing instructions:

Please select ONE of the three options below, and complete the addressing information:

1. The letter should be addressed to a particular person and mailed as follows:

Name of recipient:

Company name, if applicable:

Street address 1:

Street address 2:

City, State, Zip:

Country:

1. The letter should be addressed TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN and mailed as follows:

Name of recipient: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Company name, if applicable:

Street address 1:

Street address 2:

City, State, Zip:

Country:

1. I do not want the letter to be mailed. Please address the letter as follows, and contact me when it is ready to be picked up:

Name of recipient:

Company name, if applicable:

Street address 1:

Street address 2:

City, State, Zip:

Country:

## Signatures and dates:

The following individuals should sign, print, and date here:

Student’s Signature:

Student’s Printed Name:

Student’s Date Signed:

Graduate Program Head or Director of Graduate Student Services Signature:
(This signature indicates completion of all departmental requirements, including completion of the paper, if required.)

Graduate Program Head or Director of Graduate Student Services Printed Name:

Graduate Program Head or Director of Graduate Student Services Date Signed:

Graduate Faculty Dual-Title Representative Signature (if applicable):
(This signature indicates completion of all departmental requirements, including completion of the paper, if required.)

Graduate Faculty Dual-Title Representative Printed Name (if applicable):

Graduate Faculty Dual-Title Representative Date Signed (if applicable):

## Where to return this form:

Office of Graduate Enrollment Services
The Pennsylvania State University
114 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802-3396.

Phone – 814-865-1795; Fax – 814-863-4627

You may also email this form to gswww@psu.edu.

## For Graduate Enrollment Services Office use only:

[ ]  Checksheet

[ ]  3.0 GPA

[ ]  No holds or prov

[ ]  No DF’s or NG’s

[ ]  Graduation tracking

[ ]  Emailed DISSA date of completion

[ ]  Thesis or Dissertation approved or paper report received

[ ]  Comprehensive/final report form

[ ]  Copy to graduate program head