

## **POLICY REGARDING ANNUAL REVIEWS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

The Faculty Senate has charged the Graduate Studies Council to investigate the development of yearly reviews of graduate students. To this end, two focus groups have been held to explore current activities and to recommend guidelines for the implementation of an annual review policy.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to academic review and evaluation of graduate students. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to supersede or modify any other policies applicable to students regarding discipline and dismissal from a program and/or the University due to unacceptable grade point average, violation of the student code, or other violation or application of University policies or law.

### **Procedures for the Annual Review of Graduate Students**

An annual review of each graduate student's progress shall be conducted by all departments. The purpose of this review is to assist students in the timely completion of their programs of study, and to advise them of their progress. The timing of the review will be determined by the department. Satisfactory progress should be taken into account in providing internal awards and recommending graduate assistantships or doctoral associateships.

Upon acceptance into a graduate program, the student will be advised to read the student code, the requirements and expectations for graduate study, the research misconduct policy, the intellectual property policy, and sections of the Graduate Catalog dealing with procedures, requirements, and student rights and responsibilities.

The department's criteria, timetable, and procedures for the annual review must be in writing or electronic form and provided or made available to the student prior to implementation. The annual review shall take into account the seven-year or six-year time requirement for completion of degree; at the end of that time period, each department must require its students to either leave the program or request an extension under the criteria stated in the Graduate Catalog.

Upon the student's initial enrollment, the department shall provide a document to the graduate student outlining the annual review criteria and procedures. The document shall also explain that unsatisfactory progress resulting in program dismissal at the graduate level means that the student is not eligible to continue as a student at the University unless he or she applies and is accepted into another program. Where deficiencies are identified, the department communicates its concerns to the student and files its report in the student's file. Except for those students dismissed due to violations of the student code, lack of improvement in grade point average, or other violation of University policies or law, the student must have one cycle (one year) to ameliorate any deficiencies. At the next annual review the student must show progress in ameliorating documented deficiencies or face dismissal from the program.

The process for doctoral and specialist degree students includes an intensive review that examines academic performance, professional development, research progress, and, where applicable, the professional/ethical behavior of the student within the discipline. The process requires the student to file an annual student activity report and the faculty to provide a written response which is communicated to the student and kept in his or her file. In addition, discussion of progress with the student occurs following the review. For the master's student a more efficient level of review may be performed. At a minimum it includes a review of the student's academic progress towards completion of courses listed on the permanent program of study.

The department shall document that the student has been advised of the appeals process established by the department in regard to the review and the committee's recommendations. In cases of disagreement between the faculty and the student, the appeals process provides an opportunity within a specified time period for the student to request that an appeals committee, established by the department, review the student's progress again. If the student fails to request a review by the departmental appeals committee within the specified time period for appeal, the annual review decision shall be final.

Any student disagreeing with the review must file a timely appeal as specified by his or her department, or will be deemed to have waived his or her rights of appeal. The decision rendered by the departmental appeals committee other than for program dismissal will be final. However, in cases where the progress review results in a decision for program dismissal, the student shall have those rights to appeal that dismissal decision as provided for in the Graduate Catalog. If a program dismissal decision is affirmed (after the established appeals have been exhausted), the department shall forward the decision for program dismissal to the registrar with the signed approval of the department chair and the appropriate academic dean. Unless and until such time that a dismissed student applies for and is accepted into another program at the University, the dismissed student shall no longer be considered an enrolled student at the University as of the date all appeal proceedings are concluded and/or waived by failure to timely appeal to the next level as provided for in the Graduate Catalog.

The student's right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

### **Procedures for Review of Doctoral and Specialist Students**

Each department shall develop its own doctoral or specialist degree progress review criteria, timetable, and procedures for each of its academic programs, and these shall be consistent with general policies and procedures applicable to doctoral and specialist students and the general process outlined above. Such criteria, timetable, and procedures must be developed with input from departmental chairs and faculty.

Each doctoral or specialist degree review shall reflect the common dimensions of academic performance, professional development, research progress, and, where applicable, the professional/ethical behavior of the student within the discipline. The review should identify both strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of verifying progression through the program and determining areas that need strengthening. The doctoral or specialist student shall meet with his or her faculty mentor or advisor to discuss the annual review within 30 days of the date of the annual review.

Once a permanent program of study has been formulated, each subsequent review will also be judged against progress made in the completion of that program of study. Prior to each annual review the student will complete a student activity report on a form provided by the department.

The annual review shall be conducted by an appropriate faculty body. This body may differ by discipline but is likely to be one of the following:

- Faculty mentor and committee

- Dissertation committee

- Faculty committee

- Training committee

- Program committee

- Committee of the whole

The annual review provides the student with ratings and comments about the specifics of his or her accomplishments and deficiencies and indicates the student's current status within the department. The annual review includes the short term and long term goals and requirements that need to be addressed and accomplished by the student for satisfactory progress.

Each annual review shall clearly indicate a decision for one of the following:

- Continuation
- Continuation with reservations
- Dismissal

A copy of the annual review from the program director or designee shall be sent to each student each year. The annual review will be kept on file and referenced in the next review period, along with the student's new activity report, which addresses the committee's recommendations.

### **Procedures for Review of Master's Students**

Each department shall develop its own master's degree progress review criteria, timetable, and procedures for each of its academic programs, and these shall be consistent with general policies and procedures applicable to master's students and the general process outlined above. Such criteria, timetable, and procedures must be developed with input from departmental chairs and faculty. Departments are encouraged to implement review criteria and procedures for their master's students that are consistent with the goals of their master's programs.

At a minimum, the review criteria should encompass considerations of academic progress, and timeliness to completion of degree. Programs with primarily academic components may employ an approach that relies upon an internal audit of courses. Where the department deems it necessary, professional development, research progress, and professional/ethical behavior may also be considered. While review of students may be conducted by one or more designated faculty members, when deficiencies are found, they must be reviewed by an appropriate faculty body. In such cases a report must be communicated to the student, and placed in the student's file. Any resulting dismissal from a program can only be made by the designated faculty body.

### **Implementation of Graduate Reviews**

A copy of the Annual Review policy and the Appeals Process policy shall be approved by the appropriate academic dean and sent to The Graduate College.

### **Interpretation of Policy**

The Dean of The Graduate College shall decide any questions regarding the interpretation of any of the provisions of this policy after consultation with the Chairs of the Professional Concerns Committee and Graduate Studies Council and Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel.