BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES REGARDING ANNUAL REVIEWS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

These guidelines align with Graduate College Policy which says departments shall conduct annual review of each graduate student, with the criteria, timetable, and procedures determined by the department. Graduate student annual review is required for several reasons:

- Assist students in the timely completion of their programs of study and to advise them of their satisfactory/unsatisfactory progress toward the degree.
- Provide departments with a monitoring system to document students with academic deficiencies that may require future action (e.g., program dismissal)
- Enhance communication between departments and graduate college

Guidelines

1. Upon acceptance, students will be directed to the Graduate catalog sections that outline the student code, the requirements and expectations of graduate study, the research misconduct policy, the intellectual property policy, and the conduct for appeals. The students will also be directed to the sections of the Graduate catalog dealing with procedures, requirements, and students rights and responsibilities.

2. Upon the student’s initial enrollment, the graduate director or designee will provide the student—in written and/or electronic form—with the department’s criteria, timetable, procedures, and form(s). The student shall receive this information prior to implementation.

3. On annual basis, using timetables and procedures best suited to department needs, graduate directors or designees shall assess each student’s academic performance and progress toward degree. For a sample model of review for a standalone master’s program see Communication’s website at www.wmich.edu/communication and for a sample model of master’s and doctoral program see Biological Sciences’ website at www.wmich.edu/biology

4. Along with department-specific criteria, the annual assessment shall evaluate the student’s academic progress according to the following categories: Continuation, Continuation with Reservation, and Dismissal. See www.wmich.edu/grad/forms/ for sample annual review forms.

5. Students and their faculty advisors should be given access to completed review documents. As desired, students should initiate follow-up communication with their faculty advisors and/or the graduate director or designee. Faculty advisors and/or the graduate director or designee shall make themselves available to students and allow opportunities to ask/answer questions.

6. Students experiencing academic performance difficulties will meet with the graduate director or designee to review the progress report and to discuss the student’s options and possible strategies to address the concern. These meetings may include the student’s faculty advisor.
   a) 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.
b) At the next annual review the student must show progress in ameliorating deficiencies or face dismissal from the program.

7. At his/her discretion, the graduate director or designee may seek the advice and counsel of her/his department’s graduate faculty (i.e. graduate committee) to address/resolve individual students’ performance concerns.

8. The department shall provide students with an appeals process for annual review and academic performance assessment. The graduate director or designee shall document that students have been advised of this process and students shall follow the department process and timetable. However, in cases where the progress review results in a decision for program dismissal, the student shall have those rights to appeal the dismissal decision as provided for in the Graduate Catalog.

9. Copies of the completed annual review form will be given to the student and faculty advisor (as applicable) and the graduate director or designee. These reviews will become a part of the student’s permanent file.

10. By the end of summer session I, each department shall respond to the Graduate College’s request for annual review data pertaining to the prior academic year (Summer II, Fall and Spring):
   a) # Graduate students enrolled in at least a class (unduplicated count)
   b) # Graduate students for whom annual reviews completed
   c) # Reviewed students ranked “continue with reservations”
   d) If students were identified "continue with reservations" what were the reasons
   e) # reviewed students ranked “dismissal”
   f) If students were identified "dismissed" what were the reasons
   g) # Master’s students passing comp exams (if applicable)
   h) # Master’s students defending thesis proposals
   i) # of masters students graduated
   j) # Doctoral students passing comp exams
   k) # Doctoral students defending dissertation proposals
   l) # Doctoral students graduated
   m) Average time to degree (months) for students who graduated in the past 12 months