Graduate Director’s Handbook
Fall 2016
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Role of the Graduate Director

The graduate director oversees all aspects of graduate education within a department or program. While the specific responsibilities of the graduate director may differ from program to program, generally it is the graduate director who is responsible for the recruitment, admission, advising and monitoring of progress of students within that program. In addition, graduate directors

- Request approval and provide justification for any exceptions to policy from the Graduate Dean.
- Review and approve the composition of all student advisory committees and programs of study
- Review and approve the acceptance of transfer credits
- Resolve conflicts between faculty mentors and students
- Advise faculty regarding student progression, problems, academic integrity issues, etc.

Admission

University minimum admission requirements:

- Baccalaureate (or equivalent) from a regionally accredited institution as evidenced by official transcripts.
- Cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 for admissions to master’s programs; 3.0 in both undergraduate and graduate coursework for admission to doctoral programs.
- Students who have taken graduate-level courses at UNR in Graduate Special status must also have a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0.
- Standardized test scores: If a program requires applicants to submit standardized test scores (GRE, GMAT, or MCAT etc.), then all applicants must submit test scores. This requirement cannot be waived for individuals regardless of their qualifications or circumstances. This is a fundamental “equality in admissions” issue and violations of this policy open the institution up to charges of unfair, discriminatory admissions practices.

DISCUSSION: Sometimes students en route to admission to a graduate degree program achieve poor grades as a graduate special due to declining interest in the course and either submitting poor quality work or simply ceasing to attend class. If the student’s UNR GPA in courses taken as a graduate special is below 3.0, we will not admit the student “on probation.” The problem is that the student could complete an entire course of study without ever achieving a graduate GPA of 3.0 and would therefore be ineligible to receive an advanced degree. If a student is offered fall admission and takes summer courses, they must earn a cumulative 3.0 GPA or fall admission could be revoked.

If a domestic prospective master’s student does not meet university minimum GPA requirement, the applicant may be admitted on a Prescribed Program (form available on Graduate School website). This is a specified curriculum of courses consisting of either 9 credits in the first semester of admission or 12 credits over two consecutive semesters. The courses may be graduate level or undergraduate level (provided the minimum enrollment requirement of 3 graduate credits is met) and all courses must be completed with a “B” or better. Students on prescribed programs are ineligible to hold assistantships. International students are ineligible for prescribed programs.
**International Students**
In addition to the academic criteria required by all students for admission to an advanced degree program, international applicants must have **one** of the following to be admitted into an advanced degree program:

1. A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of at least 550 (paper version), 213 (computer version), or 79 (Internet version)
   a. Students who have achieved a TOEFL score of at least 600 (paper version), 250 (computer version), or 100 (internet based version) are exempt from Intensive English Language Center evaluation.
   b. Students with a TOEFL score of 550 but less than 600 (paper version), 213 but less than 250 (computer version), or 79 but less than 100 (internet based version) must report to the Intensive English Language Center for evaluation and appropriate placement in English language courses.

2. The International Language Testing System (IELTS) (must be academic version) with an equivalency score of a 6.5 (equivalent to 550 TOFEL).

3. International students who have received a baccalaureate or advanced degree from a regionally accredited United States university or college, or, from an accredited college or university from a country in which English is the native language (United Kingdom, Canada, Australia) are EXEMPT from the TOEFL score requirement.

All international applicants must satisfy the medical examination and the required financial responsibilities prior to admission.

**Student Handbooks**
All graduate programs must have a graduate student handbook that is posted online, either as a link to a pdf document or as a component of the graduate program’s web site. Ideally, the Graduate School would like programs to have both online and pdf versions of their handbook.

**Leave of Absence**
Students in good standing may request a leave of absence (form available on Graduate School website) during which time they are not required to maintain continuous registration. Usually, a leave of absence is approved for one or two semesters. Leave may be extended by the student filing an additional leave of absence form. Students applying for a leave of absence should not have any “incomplete” grades which could be changed to “F” and have a detrimental impact on their cumulative grade point average. Requests for leave of absences must be received by the Graduate School no later than the last day of enrollment for the semester the leave is to begin.

**Reinstatement**
When a student has been absent for one semester or more without an approved leave of absence, he or she may request reinstatement via the Reinstatement Form available on the Graduate School website. This form allows the program the option to recommend the student be re-admitted to their graduate program based on their previous admission OR require the student to re-apply for admission which would require students to submit a new application for admission and pay the application fee. The Notice of Reinstatement to Graduate Standing must be received by the Graduate School no later than the last day of enrollment for the semester the reinstatement is to begin.
Continuous Enrollment
To maintain “good standing” all graduate students are required to enroll in a minimum of three (3) graduate credits each fall and spring semester until they graduate. International students may be required to enroll in nine (9) graduate credits each fall and spring semester depending on the requirements of their visa. All students holding assistantships (whether teaching or research assistantships) are required to enroll in a minimum of six (6) graduate credits each semester they hold the assistantship.

Enrollment Limitations

- **Fall and spring semesters:** Graduate students may not enroll in more than 16 graduate credits. Wintermester: cannot be enrolled in more than three (3) graduate credits.
- **Summer Sessions:** Graduate students may not enroll in more than six (6) graduate credits in any single summer session. Mini term cannot be enrolled in more than three (3) graduate credits.
- **Graduate Assistants:** Must enroll in at least six (6) graduate credits; may not enroll in more than 12 graduate credits.

Academic Status
All graduate students must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0. If their GPA drops below 3.0 they are either put on probation or dismissed.

- **Probation:** Students whose cumulative graduate GPA is between 2.99 and 2.31 are on probation. Students are placed on academic probation for one semester. If they fail to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 by the end of one semester, they are dismissed from their graduate program. **DISCUSSION:** Thesis, dissertation, undergraduate courses, S/U graded courses, and transfer credits have no impact on a student’s GPA. Students sometimes enroll in these types of credits without realizing they will not raise their GPA.

- **Dismissal:** Students whose cumulative graduate GPA is 2.30 or lower are dismissed from graduate standing. Dismissed students are no longer in a graduate program and may take graduate-level courses as a Graduate Special. Students wishing to complete their degree must obtain approval to take graduate-level courses, raise their graduate GPA to at least 3.0 and then re-apply to their graduate program. Any courses taken to raise their GPA will be included in the graduate special/transfer credit limitation (9 credits for master’s degrees). Dismissal recommendations other than GPA (i.e. failure to progress) can be forwarded from the program to the Graduate School and if approved by the Graduate Dean, the student will be notified. The Office of Admissions and Records will also be notified that the student is dismissed from graduate standing. Students can appeal their dismissal from graduate standing by submitting a formal letter to the Dean of the Graduate School and to the Graduate Program Director. The letter must be submitted within 10 working days following notification of the dismissal.
Programs of Study:

- Lists only those graduate-level courses that apply to fulfilling degree requirements
- No need to list every registration of thesis/dissertation credits; simply list the total number of credits to be applied (6 credits for thesis; minimum of 24 credits for doctoral programs. EXCEPTION – 12 credits dissertation for Ed.D. degrees only.
- For master’s degree students, programs of study forms are due no later than the end of the student’s third semester.
- For doctoral students, programs of study are due no later than the end of the student’s fourth semester.
- Programs of study must be approved by the Graduate Dean prior to the student applying for graduation.
- Each graduate course must be completed with a grade of “C” or better for the credit to be acceptable toward an advanced degree. A grade of C- or below is not acceptable for degree completion.

Declaration of Advisor/Major Advisor/Committee Chair:

- The declaration form is used to declare a student’s advisor/major advisor/Committee Chair and should be submitted to the Graduate School before the program of study.
- For master’s degree students, declaration forms are due no later than the end of the student’s second semester.
- For MFA and doctoral degree students, declaration forms are due no later than the end of the third semester.

Minimum credit requirements:

Master’s degrees

Thesis programs: a total of 30 graduate credits with at least 18 700-level credits (includes 6 credits of thesis, XXX-797)

Non-thesis programs: a total of 32 graduate credits with at least 15 700-level credits. Since the introduction of credit for comprehensive examinations, XXX-795 (spring 2000), some graduate programs have elected to increase their total credit requirement to accommodate 1 to 3 credits of comp exam: some programs have elected to include comp exam credits in the existing total credit requirement. Additionally, some programs have elected to consider the comp exam credits as part of the 700-level credit requirement and some have decided to regard them as exclusive of the 700-level requirement.

Advisory Committees (Master’s Programs)

All masters programs (with the exception of the Master’s of Business Administration and the Master’s of Accountancy programs) require at least three advisory committee members. All must be graduate faculty members. At least one (the graduate school representative or “outside” member) must be from a department or program different from the department or program from which the student is graduating.

When administrative faculty is involved, they have to be from a different discipline than that of the student.
example, a geologist serving in an administrative position could not be the graduate school representative for a geology master’s student. Even though the geologist may not be assigned at the time to the Geology Department, he/she is too closely associated with the discipline to serve the purpose of an “outside” or “independent” viewpoint.

When desiring to add a non-UNR faculty member to a student’s advisory committee, the Graduate Director should forward a request accompanied by faculty member’s vita to the Graduate Dean. Generally, the faculty member should meet the same requirements for graduate faculty status (terminal degree in the discipline, research expertise, etc.) but the graduate director’s memo should state a convincing rationale for including the individual as part of the student’s committee. If approved, the non-UNR member would serve as an “inside” committee member, not the graduate school representative.

**Doctoral Degrees**
Minimum of 72 graduate credits beyond the baccalaureate. As many as 24 credits may be used from a completed master’s degree. Credits from a completed master’s degree are exempt from the eight year time limit on doctoral course work. Thirty (30) 700-level credits required; as many as 18 may be used from a completed master’s degree. Limit of 9 credits of satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading.

Doctoral degrees in the College of Education have different credit requirements. See catalog for details.

**Advisory Committees (Doctoral Programs)**
Consist of a minimum of five graduate faculty members; the chair, at least two faculty members from the student’s major department/program, at least one faculty member from a department in a field related to the student’s major, and at least one Graduate School representative.

Formal approval of all student advisory committees is made by the Graduate Dean.
**Time Limitations**

**Master’s degrees:** All course work must be completed within six years preceding the awarding of the degree.

**Doctoral degrees:** All course work must be completed within eight years preceding the awarding of the degree. Credits from a completed master’s degree are exempt from this eight year limit.

**Graduation Time Limitations**

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<th>Graduating Date</th>
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<th>Doctoral Degrees Courses No Earlier Than</th>
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The “clock” starts with the date of the earliest course work to be applied toward the degree whether it was taken prior to admission as a graduate special or transferred from another institution.
Extensions
Requests for extension of the course time limits must be made to the Graduate Dean by the director of the graduate program and the appropriate rational and documentation should be provided. Second extensions will only be granted under rare circumstances. Extensions should not be considered routine.

Transfer Credits
These are credits transferred from another institution. Credits completed at UNR in another program or as a graduate special do not need to be transferred.

Transfer credit is requested on the Transfer Credit Evaluation Request form available on Graduate School website and must be signed by student, major advisor, and graduate director.

Transfer credits applied to a master’s program must comply with the time limitation on master’s work (6 years). Thus, if a student took a course five years prior to admission, he would have to complete the degree within one year for the course to apply to the degree.

Completing Two Degrees Simultaneously
Students may choose to complete two master’s degrees at the same time, or complete a master’s degree while working on a doctoral program in a different discipline. Students may NOT complete two doctoral programs simultaneously.

When completing two master’s degrees at the same time, the student must: apply and be accepted to each graduate program; must submit a separate program of study for each degree; must form two separate advisory committees with no more than one member in common; and have no more than 9 credits in common with each program of study.

Graduate Faculty

The University of Nevada, Reno Bylaws establish the Graduate Council as the governing body for graduate education at the university. To nominate a faculty member for Graduate Faculty status, please use the following formstack submission: https://nevada.formstack.com/forms/grad_faculty_nomination. The Graduate Faculty Bylaws define the work of the graduate faculty. They include the following text on the composition of the graduate faculty:

I. Authorization for Graduate Faculty Status

The Graduate Council Bylaws (revised 1/01) define graduate faculty as:

The Graduate Faculty shall consist of those members of the faculty (as faculty are defined in Section 15 of the UNR Bylaws) or adjunct faculty and clinical faculty (as defined in Section 22 of the UNR Bylaws) appointed to it by an instructional department or program. Each instructional department or program shall develop criteria for appointment to the Graduate Faculty and shall place the criteria on file with the program and with the Graduate School. Any subsequent changes in those criteria also should be placed on file with the program and with the Graduate School before they are put into use. Notices of appointment shall be forwarded to the Graduate School. Appointments to the Graduate Faculty shall be based on a capability to contribute to graduate education demonstrated through: (a) receipt of a terminal degree considered appropriate by the department or program, (b) research competence, and (c) ability to teach graduate students. Research competence may be demonstrated by scientific, creative, or other scholarly activities consistent with the
department or program. These should include, but are not limited to, refereed national or regional publications, presentations, or other refereed creative accomplishments. Ability to teach graduate students individually or in groups may be demonstrated by peer and/or student evaluation of classroom, laboratory, or clinical instruction, or supervision of research or creative activity.

Members of the faculty who have not been appointed to the Graduate Faculty may, upon approval of the Graduate Dean, be permitted to teach specified graduate courses and serve on graduate advisory-examining committees. However, such persons shall not be permitted to chair graduate advisory-examining committees.

Regular faculty members at UNLV and DRI can be appointed to Graduate Faculty status in the same manner as UNR faculty. UNLV faculty who are accorded Graduate Faculty status are subject to the same rules and have the same rights and privileges as UNR Graduate Faculty except that they have no voting privileges on university-wide matters, though they may have such privileges on specific graduate program matters as outlined in program bylaws, shall not chair student advisory committees, and are not eligible to serve as Graduate School Representative member of advisory committees.

Should departments or programs not establish separate criteria for appointment to the graduate faculty and file those criteria with the Graduate School, the following criteria will be in effect:

II. Graduate Faculty

Graduate Faculty members include:

1. Tenured and tenure-track faculty, with the appropriate terminal degree.
2. DRI faculty who have been nominated by a UNR department/program for graduate faculty status,
3. Clinical and research faculty,
4. Administrative faculty who have been nominated by a UNR department/program for graduate faculty status, and
5. Non-UNR individuals who have been approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. To be approved, such individuals need to demonstrate the ability to contribute to the graduate education as defined in section I of this document. To nominate such an individual for approval, the Director of Graduate Studies for the student's department/program must forward a memorandum and the nominee's current CV to the Dean of the Graduate School.

III. Graduate Faculty who are eligible to (a) chair advisory/examining committees and (b) to serve as the second and third "inside" members of advisory-examining committees.

Individuals eligible to chair and serve on advisory/examining committees, in addition to meeting the criteria for graduate faculty could be:

1. Emeriti faculty for a one year grace period; emeriti faculty will have a one-year grace period during which they will still be officially recognized as the chair of the student's advisory/examining committee and continue to act in that capacity. If the student does not complete the degree during that one-year grace period, a co-chair from the UNR graduate faculty must be added to committee consistent with the guidelines for chairing advisory/examining committees noted above.
2. Non-continuing UNR/DRI faculty for a one-year grace period; faculty who leave UNR or DRI faculty will have a one -ear grace period during which they will still be officially recognized as the chair of the student's advisory/examining committee and continue to act in that capacity. If the student does not
complete the degree during that one-year grace period, a co-chair from the UNR graduate faculty must be added to committee consistent with the guidelines for chairing advisory/examining committees noted above. Non-UNR/DRI faculty may co-chair a committee with appropriate approval from the Graduate School. To obtain approval, the Director of Graduate Studies for the student's department/program would submit a memorandum of request with documentation, including a current CV, of the individual's ability to contribute to the student's graduate education as defined in section I of this document.

Graduate faculty who are ineligible to chair advisory-examining committees are:

1. UNLV faculty.
2. Emeriti faculty past the one year grace period.
3. Faculty who have left UNR/DRI beyond the one-year grace period.
4. Non UNR-DRI faculty.

On master's level committees, the second member of the committee must hold graduate faculty status in the student's department or graduate program.

For doctoral committees, two faculty members in addition to the chair must hold graduate faculty status in the student's department/program or in an area that is representative of the student's area of specialization.

**IV. Graduate Faculty Serving as the "outside" or Graduate School Representative on student advisory-examining committees.**

The Graduate School Representative must be a member of UNR's graduate faculty from outside the home departments or programs of the other committee members, with the exception of interdisciplinary graduate programs. In case of interdisciplinary graduate programs, the Graduate School Representative cannot have a primary appointment in the same department (or other appropriate major unit) as the student's committee chair.

The Graduate School Representative protects the interests of the student, the advisory committee, and the Graduate School. The Graduate School Representative should also act as an "unbiased person" to whom the Dean may turn for judgment and counsel. The primary responsibility of the Graduate School Representative is that of an observer. Consequently, the Representative should be invited to participate in both the preliminary and final oral examinations, **but should never take a dominant role in the exams.**

The Representative should:

1. Sign the form without comment
2. Sign the form and note any specific comments, or
3. Sign the form and note that a letter to the Graduate School Dean will follow (with copies to the Committee)

The Representative may wish to comment on:

1. the appropriateness of the committee
2. the adequacy of the Plan of Study
3. the appropriateness of the examination questions and procedures
4. the quality of the student's performance; and/or
5. reservations about the thesis or dissertation
IV. The Role of Members of Graduate Advisory/Examining Committees

The role of the graduate committee is to provide guidance and mentoring to the graduate student with respect to their graduate education. This includes guidance on the selection of courses, i.e. the program of study, guidance on the knowledge requirements for their discipline, i.e. the comprehensive examination, and guidance with respect to the development of their research expertise, i.e. the professional paper, thesis or dissertation. By providing guidance and mentoring, the graduate committee sets forth appropriate academic standards and rigor.

All committee members should be afforded the opportunity to provide guidance as defined above under the role of the graduate committee (program of study, comprehensive examinations, professional paper, thesis/dissertation). The degree of guidance on these matters from the graduate school representative may vary depending on how closely the graduate school representative is allied to the student's area of specialization. However, the graduate school representative is always charged to represent the Graduate School as a participant in the student's academic endeavors.

VI. Periodic Review

To ensure that members of graduate faculty continue to meet the criteria for graduate faculty status as outlined in section I above, the Graduate School shall direct the respective graduate programs to: (1) update their list of graduate faculty members annually and (2) review the standing of their graduate faculty members regularly and recommend whether each member should continue or not continue as graduate faculty.

VII. Administrative Requirements

To ensure that correct and up-to-date information is available for all Graduate Faculty members, the following administrative requirements must be followed.

1. Graduate Program Director or Department Chair will submit a memorandum to Dr. David Zeh, Dean (either thru campus mail or email zehd@unr.edu) requesting the faculty member be listed as a graduate faculty member for that department or program.
2. The following information must be included on the memo or in the email.
   1. Name
   2. Program
   3. Email address
   4. Mail stop
   5. Phone #

Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations

- To pass the oral/written comprehensive examination the committee must have no more than one negative vote. If two negative votes are cast – regardless of the total number of committee members – the student fails the exam.
- The examination may be retaken once, if additional study is approved by the committee.
Doctoral Dissertation Defense
A successful dissertation defense is reflected by no more than one negative committee vote. If two negative votes are cast – regardless of the total number of committee members – the defense is unsuccessful. At the discretion of the committee, the candidate may be permitted one additional attempt to conduct a successful defense.

Commencement
Commencement exercises are held each December and May. Starting May 2015, commencement will be a combined graduate/undergraduate ceremony.

Doctoral students are “hooded” by their academic advisors. Students and advisors process in and are seated together.