



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, Directors, Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students

FROM: Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School, Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor

SUBJECT: **Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures**

DATE: August 29, 2014

**\*\*IMPORTANT POLICY REMINDERS AND UPDATES\*\***

**BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF FACULTY, STAFF, AND GRADUATE STUDENTS**

This memorandum highlights key policies and procedures that are relevant to graduate education at FSU. Generally, the issues are summarized with pointers and links to websites and the pdf version of the Graduate Bulletin containing the complete information. Please give careful attention to this memorandum, but please note that it is not exhaustive and faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with all policies affecting graduate education at FSU.

The policies and procedures affecting graduate education are posted on the following websites.

- "**GradSpace**" Blackboard® site: located under campus organizations
- "**Graduate School - Faculty/Staff**" Blackboard® site - located under campus organizations
- **Faculty Handbook** - <http://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu/>
- **Florida State University Graduate Bulletin 2014-2015**  
<http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/apdefault.htm>

**NEW POLICY – The paragraphs below represent new policies approved by the Graduate Policy Committee and Faculty Senate in 2013-2014 and these are appearing for the first time in the 2014-2015 Graduate Bulletin**

- Conflicts of Interest

The following policy concerning conflicts of interest applies to graduate students who are being supervised or evaluated by faculty. The applicability of this policy to graduate students who are serving as teaching assistants is subject to the terminology of the UFF GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Sexual relationships between faculty members and students where a direct supervisory or evaluative relationship exists are fraught with the potential for exploitation. The respect and trust accorded a faculty member by a student, as well as the power exercised by the faculty member in a direct supervisory or evaluative role, make voluntary consent by the student suspect. In their relationships with students, faculty members are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and to avoid conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias.

- When any direct supervisory or evaluative role exists, a consensual sexual relationship between a student and a faculty member is a conflict of interest.
- Any situation of direct supervision or evaluation will be ended immediately when a consensual sexual relationship between a student and a faculty member exists.
- Any such relationship must be disclosed to the faculty member's supervisor immediately.

Direct supervision includes any type of evaluative role. Examples of direct supervision of the student include teaching the student's class, serving as a thesis or dissertation director, instructor of record, member of the student's thesis or dissertation committee, member of the student's comprehensive or doctoral exam committee, member of other committees where the focus is evaluation or supervision of the student's academic competence or the student's assistantship.

- Admissions

The University now accepts the Pearson's PTE Academic examination as an additional option for the admission of international students. The minimum score for admission is 55. In addition, departments/colleges may waive the test requirement as noted by the underlined text below.

- International applicants whose native language is not English are required to have a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based or 80 on the Internet-based TOEFL examination, 6.5 on the IELTS examination, 55 on the PTE Academic examination, or 77 on the MELAB examination. Some departments may require a higher score or may waive the test requirement if the student has received a bachelor's degree or master's degree from a U.S. institution or other institution where English is the required language of instruction . International students expecting to receive appointments as teaching assistants are required to pass the SPEAK test which evaluates the English-speaking ability of non-native speakers of English and is

administered at Florida State University. Students who receive a score of 26 or higher on the speaking section of the Internet-based TOEFL examination meet the University requirement to serve as a teaching assistant; however, some departments may still require that the student take the SPEAK test.

- Dual degrees

The University has clarified requirements related to the pursuit of two degrees simultaneously as noted by the underlined text below.

#### Distinction between Dual and Joint Degrees

Joint degree programs provide students the opportunity to earn graduate degrees from two academic programs concurrently. Students completing joint degrees receive two diplomas, one for each degree.

In addition to academic program requirements, joint degree programs provide for some cross-credit of a specified number of hours from each of the two degree programs. This enables students who are admitted and enrolled in two programs concurrently to, in effect, “save” on the number of total hours required versus those required when completing the two degrees separately. The development and initial approval of all joint degree programs resides with the program faculty in the specific schools and colleges involved.

Applicants must complete an application to the Office of Graduate Admissions and must be admitted to each academic program separately, meeting all of the admission requirements for that program, such as applicable entrance exams (e.g., GRE, GMAT, LSAT). Interested students should contact the respective degree programs for specific admissions requirements and programs of study.

Dual Degrees are two degrees earned simultaneously when a student is accepted by both department/programs and is approved by the appropriate academic deans and the Dean of The Graduate School. A student must be admitted to one academic program initially, and after the first semester, may apply and be accepted to the second degree program. There is no formal relationship between the two degree program requirements in a dual degree situation.

To ensure that students entering a second graduate degree program receive timely and effective advisement on a program of study approved by the second department, admission to the second graduate degree program must be approved before the student completes more than twelve credit-hours of coursework that are counted in that department toward the second graduate degree. In special circumstances, students may petition their academic deans for an exception. This limit of 12 credits earned only applies to students admitted to their first graduate degree program in the Fall 2014 semester and onwards.

## **NEW CLARIFYING LANGUAGE – Sections of the Graduate Bulletin and Faculty Handbook have been clarified to reflect some changes in existing procedures.**

The following items do not represent substantive policy changes, but editing was done to improve the clarity of the message.

- 1) Graduate degree requirements (Portions of the text were revised to improve the clarity of processes and procedures, particularly those relating to the manuscript clearance process).
- 2) The section on University-Wide Teaching Standards was clarified to make explicit the fact that these standards apply specifically to graduate students appointed as Teaching Assistants. A companion policy has been developed by the UPC which applies to undergraduates who assist with instructional activities.
- 3) Membership in the Graduate Faculty - Due to the establishment of the specialized faculty classification system, the Faculty Handbook, Section 5: Faculty Development was revised.

## **REMINDERS REGARDING SOME POLICIES**

### **1. IRB and ACUC approval**

Students are reminded to seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval prior to commencing any research involving human or animal subjects. The student's name must appear on the IRB approval and/or application form as a PI or co-PI for the period of time when the student's research and data analysis were conducted. Students must be listed on an ACUC protocol in order to conduct any animal research. IRB requires that students have their own approval.

Failing to get the appropriate approvals is a serious breach of research integrity and standards. The Graduate School will be amending various defense-related forms to include a requirement that students, major professors, and committee members acknowledge that proper approvals were obtained prior to the commencement of research. The Graduate School is also developing a reporting procedure that will send reminders to students who are registered for thesis, treatise, or dissertation hours as well as to their major professors.

### **2. Membership in the Graduate Faculty**

A person must hold an appropriate general faculty appointment in order to be considered for status as a member of the Graduate Faculty. **Graduate Faculty Status (GFS)** is limited (except for special circumstances) to faculty who hold tenure or tenure-earning appointments. This status is necessary to teach graduate courses. Limitations, if any, as to who is eligible to serve on and supervise thesis and dissertation/treatise committees rests with the programs and must adhere to criteria previously approved by the GPC. Only tenured faculty with GFS can serve as the University Representative on doctoral committees. Persons holding specialized, non-tenure track or visiting in lieu of adjunct faculty appointments must be approved for **Graduate Teaching Status (GTS)** to teach graduate courses. In addition, specialized, non-tenure track and courtesy faculty maybe nominated for and granted Co-

**Masters Directive Status or Co-Doctoral Directive Status (Co-MDS and Co-DDS)** to serve on student committees. As such they may also co-chair a student committee.

The policy on Graduate Faculty Status and Graduate Teaching Status is incorporated into the Faculty Handbook, Section 5: Faculty Development; Graduate Faculty Membership (<http://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu>). The forms and procedures for nominating faculty for GFS, GTS, co-MDS, and co-DDS are available on the "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site under the "Forms" and "Graduate Faculty Status" tabs in the left-hand menu. The forms are also available on the Graduate School Website (<http://gradschool.fsu.edu/Forms>).

Departments and colleges must request graduate status for all new eligible tenure track faculty by submitting a completed *Graduate Faculty Status Appointment Recommendation for Tenure-Track Faculty Form* ([Form# GFS-01](#)) with a curriculum vitae. Such nominated faculty require at least a 2/3 majority affirmative vote of all faculty holding GFS in the program. The completed form and CV should then be sent to the academic college dean and subsequently the Dean of the Graduate School for approval.

The graduate faculty categories for specialized, non-tenure track, visiting in lieu of adjunct faculty and courtesy faculty include Graduate Teaching Status (GTS), Co-MDS, or Co-DDS. The forms ([Form# DS01](#) and [Form#GTS01](#)) for these requests are available on the Graduate School Blackboard® site and website. Once completed these forms should be sent to the academic college dean and subsequently the Dean of the Graduate School for approval. Such approval must be obtained prior to engaging in these activities.

Fully retired faculty (includes Emerita/Emeritus status) may continue to serve as major professors for those students who have already begun their thesis/dissertation/treatise at the time of the professor's retirement. Fully retired faculty, however, may not accept additional students in this capacity. Fully retired faculty may serve as an additional member beyond the minimum number required on Master's and Doctoral committees of new students if they choose. Appointment to courtesy is not necessary, but department chairs must send a memo to The Graduate School indicating the names of the student committees on which the professor serves and the approval of this continued service.

For faculty who depart the University for any reason other than retirement, the department or program that wishes to continue the faculty member in some or all of these roles must provide a courtesy appointment and nominate the faculty member for master's or doctoral co-directive status, as needed, so the faculty member may continue as co-chair or an additional member for those students who have already begun their thesis/dissertation/treatise at the time of the faculty member's departure. If the faculty member is serving as committee chair, the department will then designate a current or new member of the committee with appropriate directive status as co-chair of the committee. Faculty members who depart the University may not accept additional students in this capacity, nor may they serve as the University Representative on committees.

### **3. Appointment of graduate students on assistantships**

The FSU UFF-GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement and subsequent Memoranda of Agreement set forth the terms and conditions that affect the employment of students who are supported on graduate assistantships. These documents can be found on the FSU Human Resources website ([http://hr.fsu.edu/index.cfm?page=EmployeeRelations\\_Homepage](http://hr.fsu.edu/index.cfm?page=EmployeeRelations_Homepage)) by clicking the link for UFF-GAU Bargaining Unit. Faculty and staff should familiarize themselves with these documents. It is important to remember that this agreement outlines minimums for stipend rates and entitles Graduate Assistants to certain employment rights, including an annual employment evaluation, that is distinct from the annual academic evaluation (see item 11 below) which is required of all doctoral students and highly recommended for master's and specialist students. The Graduate School recommends use of the one page Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation form. The form can be found in the "Graduate School - Faculty/Staff" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Forms" and "Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form". Additionally, it is imperative that you appoint Graduate Assistants to the proper job code. A listing of the job codes with descriptions can be found in the "Graduate School - Faculty/Staff" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Waiver/Info Forms" in the "Graduate Student Waiver Management Manual" under page 12.

### **4. Graduate assistant stipends**

This is subject to collective bargaining and there is no new information at this time.

### **5. Health insurance subsidy for graduate students for 2014-2015**

This is subject to collective bargaining and there is no new information at this time.

However, we are moving ahead with plans to provide the health insurance subsidy as a fringe benefit instead of a payroll supplement for qualifying Graduate Assistants. This new payroll deduction method allows for the subsidy to be a pre-tax fringe benefit.

The Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Subsidy Benefit will work the following way for the Fall 2014 semester:

1. Students purchase the university-sponsored insurance plan from University Health Services
2. The entire charge of the health insurance plan will appear on each student's financial account with Student Financial Services
3. Due to different times with Financial Aid disbursement, the Tuition & Fee deadline, and continued open enrollment at University Health Services, the Graduate School will run the eligibility determination during the first week of classes. The students who are deemed eligible for the subsidy benefit during this process will have the entire amount of the student only insurance plan marked as satisfied on the student financial statement.
4. Eligible students from the first eligibility determination process will receive an email to their campus email account on Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> asking them to elect to receive the

benefit. Students must indicate election by September 10<sup>th</sup> by clicking on the link in the email to receive the benefit. This is the only option to receive the benefit.

5. Students that elect to receive the benefit will then receive the subsidy benefit over 5 paychecks beginning October 3<sup>rd</sup>. On each one of the 5 paychecks there will be an Employer-paid benefit (which is the subsidy), and there will be an Employee-paid portion (this is the remaining cost of the policy).

Example: (Note: \$\$\$ values below are only for the purpose of illustrating the calculation)

Price of Fall-only domestic insurance policy	\$696
Fall subsidy benefit for .5FTE Grad Asst	\$433 (Employer-paid portion)
Difference between policy and benefit	\$263 (Employee-paid portion)

Each paycheck of the 5 paychecks the University would pay \$86.60 towards the cost of the policy and the eligible student would pay \$52.60 for totals of \$433 and \$263 as listed above.

## 6. Tuition Waivers

Information concerning tuition waiver policies and procedures can be found in the "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Waiver Info/Forms." Students should access the "[GradSpace](#)" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Funding and Awards". The GS contact is Brian Barton, [bbarton@fsu.edu](mailto:bbarton@fsu.edu), at 644-3501.

The Waiver Receipt Form is now auto-generated in the Student's Service Center and must be printed and signed by each student receiving a waiver and given to the academic unit issuing the waiver for retention by the end of the first week of classes each semester. It is critical that each student signs the form as this is the official certification from the student regarding fee-liability should they withdraw or lose their assistantship. It is equally important that the academic unit has a record of the signed form in the event a student questions their fee liability at a later date.

Waiver entry requests that occur after the deadline for waivers should be made through the CRM ticket center at:

<https://crm.omni.fsu.edu/psp/sprdcn/?cmd=login&service=https://crm.omni.fsu.edu/psp/sprdcn/EMPLOYEE/EMPL/h/?tab=DEFAULT&languageCd=ENG&>

Please note that entry of the late waiver by the Graduate School is not automatic. If the late waiver causes a Financial Aid overaward, the College or Department will be responsible for correcting the overaward with the Office of Financial Aid.

## 7. Thesis, treatise, and dissertation committees

The department or college must enter the composition of the supervisory committee into the

online Graduate Student Tracking system in a timely manner, but no later than the second week of classes in the semester that the student intends to graduate. (Graduate Bulletin, Supervisory Committee, pp. 72 and 73).

All doctoral committees appointed after August 24, 2009, must meet the minimum university standard of four members with GFS. Included among these four members will be the University Representative who must also be a tenured member of the faculty. Specialized, non-tenured tenure track faculty from outside the degree program, department or college and holding GFS are eligible to serve as one of the four members, but they cannot serve as the University Representative. Specialized and non-tenure track faculty holding Co-DDS or Co-MDS are eligible to serve as additional members of the committee (beyond the minimum of four) and those with Co-DDS can serve as a co-advisor, (Graduate Bulletin, Supervisory Committee, p.73).

## **8. Program of Study**

A Program of Study should be prepared for each graduate student. The guidelines and timelines differ slightly for master's and doctoral students. For details, consult the Graduate Bulletin, pp. 72 and 74 respectively.

## **9. Preliminary Examination for doctoral students**

Satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination shall be required for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. No student may register for dissertation or doctoral treatise hours prior to the point in the semester in which the preliminary examination was passed. An admission-to-candidacy form must be completed and filed in the Office of the University Registrar prior to registration for dissertation/treatise hours. After completion of the admission to candidacy process, the student may retroactively add dissertation hours for that semester in which the preliminary examination was completed. Retroactive changes are only permitted if the preliminary examination is passed by the end of the seventh week of the semester. For term specific deadline dates, please refer to the "Academic Calendar" in the *Registration Guide*. (Graduate Bulletin, Preliminary Examination, p. 74).

## **10. Submitting the thesis, treatise or dissertation in electronic format (ETD)**

All information pertaining to the submission requirements for Electronic Thesis, Treatise and Dissertation content can be found exclusively on The Graduate School's Blackboard® websites. All ETD content and information is located in the "Manuscript Clearance" submenu, found on the left-hand side of the screen. Students should access the "[GradSpace](#)" Blackboard® website. Faculty and Staff should access the "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® website. In order for students to submit their manuscript successfully, they must adhere to the formatting rules found in the "Guidelines and Requirements for Electronic Theses, Treatises, and Dissertations," as well as meet the deadlines outlined in the semester they intend to graduate. Manuscripts not formatted in full accordance with the Guidelines

brochure will NOT be reviewed and will NOT count as an initial submission to meet any deadline.

The Graduate School recommends that students submit their manuscript to the Manuscript Clearance Adviser for the initial format check when it is submitted to the supervisory committee in preparation for the defense. In any case students must submit the initial version of their manuscript by the appropriate Last day to submit for initial format review in the semester they intend to graduate. Students must then submit their final version and all forms by the Last day to submit the final version of a successfully defended thesis, dissertation, or treatise and all required forms. However, in all cases students must have their manuscript cleared\* within 60 days of a successful defense or the student must be re-examined. In some cases, the 60-day deadline may occur before semester deadlines; in those cases, the 60-day deadline takes precedence over the semester deadlines.

Semester deadlines are posted in the Manuscript Clearance menu of GradSpace in the Dates and Deadlines submenu. For Fall Semester 2014 the Last day to submit doctoral dissertation or treatise for initial format review is October 20. The Last day to submit master's thesis for initial format review is November 3. The Last day to submit the final version of a successfully defended thesis, dissertation, or treatise, and all required forms is November 17. The Last day for thesis, dissertation, or treatise students to receive an email from Manuscript Clearance confirming final clearance of their manuscript for Fall 2014 graduation is December 5.

For Spring 2015, the Last day to submit doctoral dissertation or treatise for initial format review is March 23. The Last day to submit master's thesis for initial format review is April 6. The Last day to submit the final version of a successfully defended thesis, dissertation or treatise, and all required forms is April 20. The Last day for thesis, dissertation or treatise students to receive an email from Manuscript Clearance confirming final clearance of their manuscript for Spring 2015 graduation is May 1.

\*Cleared = Manuscript formatting approved by the Manuscript Clearance Adviser AND all forms received by the Manuscript Clearance Adviser.

## **11. Annual review of graduate students**

The policy states –“Each year the supervisory committee, the major professor, or the student's advisor, prior to the selection of a major professor, will assess the progress of the student in writing and make available copies of the annual review to the student, the department chair, and the academic dean.” (Graduate Bulletin, Supervisory Committee, p. 69)

The Graduate School recommends that programs use standard templates to facilitate the review process of all students. The Graduate School has posted examples of such forms on "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site in the section for Graduate Program Directors.

Programs must use the online Graduate Student Tracking system to indicate that a student has had his/her annual review. The written review should be uploaded into the system. The Graduate School also recommends that master's students be evaluated annually (e.g., review of timely progress towards completion of coursework and thesis research as appropriate).

## **12. Full-time and Part-time Status of Students**

The required full-time or part-time status of graduate students is affected by their appointment or fellowship status, as well as their progress towards the degree. This status in turn affects eligibility for Financial Aid. Federal guidelines stipulate certain requirements for enrollment. The complete policy is highlighted in the Graduate Bulletin (p.80), under the Academic Regulations and Procedures section, Full-Time Student Course Load.

## **13. University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants at Florida State University**

There are University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants at Florida State University. To date these have been posted on various websites. The standards are now included in the Graduate Bulletin (p. 69). These are meant to be University-wide minimum standards; departments may adopt additional or more stringent standards.