**Change to the 3 Hr Rule for Thesis and Dissertation Graduate Students**

On February 8, 2021, the Graduate Policy Committee voted to delete the following language from the Graduate Bulletin (Graduate Degree Requirements Section):

*Doctoral: After completion of the prelim exam and 24 hrs of dissertation, full-time status requires that a doctoral student must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 hrs per semester (of which at least 2 hrs must be dissertation) until completion of the degree.*

*Thesis: After completion of the required coursework and 6 hrs of thesis (if enrolled in a thesis-track master’s program) full time status requires that the master’s student must enroll in for a minimum of 3 hrs per semester (of which at least 2 hrs must be thesis) until completion of the degree.*

**Additional Comment:**

**This change does not impact** the other existing policies pertaining to full-time enrollment of thesis/dissertation hours or final term registration. The master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation students will still have the eligibility to enroll in as many hours as they need to meet the level of work they are doing with faculty.

The following policies will still be in effect and implemented:

* A doctoral student who has completed the required coursework, passed the Preliminary Examination and submitted an Admission to Candidacy form to the Office of the Registrar, and continues to use campus facilities and/or receives faculty supervision, but has not been cleared by the Manuscript Clearance office,shall include in the required full-time load a minimum of two credit hours of dissertation per semester, including Summer term, until completion of the degree. A student must be enrolled in a minimum of two hours of dissertation in the semester of graduation. Those with underload per­mission must register for at least two credit hours of dissertation per semes­ter (or term). Prior to degree conferral, all doctoral students must have completed a minimum of twenty-four credit hours of dissertation.
* A master’s thesis student must be enrolled in a minimum of two thesis hours in the semester of graduation. The minimum number of thesis hours required for the master’s degree is six.

**Reasoning & Impact of Policy Change:**

* The current policy is not enforced by the Graduate School or Registrar’s Office. Individual departments may be following it. For example, the Center for Global Engagement enforces it for international graduate students.
* Retaining a consistent 2-hour minimum requirement (after 24 hours of dissertation or 6 hours of thesis credit have been completed) is easier to remember than a drop to 3 and then 2 during the final semester.
* Data was analyzed for the Spring 2021 semester. Of a total enrollment of over 11,000 graduate students, the total loss of enrollment would be 51 credit hours at most. *[It is possible that some students would still register for 3 credit hours even if the requirement dropped to 2, so loss of credit hours could be lower than 51.]* While presenting a minute loss of tuition income to the university, savings would be meaningful to students, especially international and out-of-state domestic students who pay approximately $1,000 per credit hour.
* In addition to the GPC, representatives from the Provost’s Office, the Graduate School, the Registrar’s Office, and the Office for Faculty Development and Advancement all support this policy change.