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To:       Deans, Department Chairs/Program Heads, and Graduate Coordinators  
From:   James Beck, Graduate Policy Program Coordinator

Re:       Spring 2022 Graduate School Policy and Procedure Memo

Date:   March 2, 2022

\*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.

A copy of this memo will be posted on the [Graduate School’s Faculty/Staff Website](https://faculty-staff.gradschool.fsu.edu/caslogin) as well as uploaded to the [Graduate Policy Database](https://policy.gradschool.fsu.edu/). Please feel free to forward this memo to any additional faculty or staff in your unit who would like to review it.

**New/Updated Graduate Policies:**

The following items were established as either a new policy or classified as a substantive update to an existing policy:

1. **Graduate Certificate Policy Update:**

(Approved by the GPC on 8/30/21 and Faculty Senate on 9/15/21. This language will be inserted into the 2022-2023 Graduate Bulletin under the ‘Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements’ Section, as well as the Certificate Policy housed under OFDA)

The following sentence has been added to the Graduate Bulletin: “Completion of undergraduate courses will not count toward a graduate certificate.”

The certificate policy (3A-1), as written and housed under the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (OFDA), applies to both undergraduate and graduate certificates. The reason the additional sentence (noted above) was added to the Graduate Bulletin and certificate policy is to clarify that undergraduate-level coursework (1000-4000 level) should not be used and counted as part of the total completion hours of a graduate certificate, especially not systematically or broadly. One example: a 12 hr graduate certificate should not encourage and allow 50% (6 hrs) of undergraduate-level coursework to substitute for graduate credit and count towards the total certificate hours. The added clarification is reflective of the same statement already part of the policy that limits undergraduate certificates to undergraduate-level coursework and does not allow, expect, or require the completion of graduate-level coursework to count toward the undergraduate certificate. Under extenuating circumstances, individual exceptions to the Graduate Certificate Policy may be reviewed by The Graduate School.

1. **Definition for Master’s Degree In-Flight (en route) to Completing the Doctoral Degree:**

(Approved by the GPC on 8/30/21 and Faculty Senate on 9/15/21. This language will be inserted into the 2022-2023 Graduate Bulletin)

The following language was approved to be added as a new section into the Graduate Bulletin. The new language formalizes a policy that has been common practice already on campus and reaffirms that master’s degrees in-flight (en route) to the doctoral degree have a beneficial and intrinsic purpose that can potentially help the students in the professional job market.

“A student who has earned the bachelor’s degree as the highest degree earned may choose to enroll directly into a doctoral program. Graduate students who have enrolled directly into a doctoral program may be interested in obtaining a master’s degree in the program while continuing the progress toward completing the doctoral program. For some programs, this is normal.

A doctoral student might be interested in having the additional “master’s” credential on his/her resume or CV to showcase his/her professional skills for the competitive job market. Moreover, the student’s outlook for completing the doctoral degree may be uncertain, and as such, obtaining the master’s degree in-flight (en route) to the doctoral degree can serve as another option.

Doctoral students interested in having a master’s degree in-flight (en route) awarded need to meet with their primary academic advisor, major professor and/or unit head prior to completing the doctoral degree.

Required Criteria:

Keep in mind, units may impose stricter criteria.

1. The student is an active/current doctoral student who is in good academic standing.
2. The doctoral student has met the curricular criteria and respective degree requirements for the coursework-only, thesis-type, or project master’s degree in-flight (e.g., total hours, requisite GPA, recency requirement, passed the comprehensive exam, completed the capstone project, passed thesis defense/manuscript clearance, etc.).
3. A doctoral student is requesting a master’s degree in-flight (en route) or a unit is offering this degree to a doctoral student from a major/plan that is active and available within the same doctoral major/plan being pursued. The master’s degree in-flight must also be under the same degree program as the doctoral program. If not, a dual degree request form should be submitted to The Graduate School.
4. The doctoral student has not achieved a master’s degree in the same degree program. See “Second Graduate Degrees” Policy Section.”
5. **Change to Grade-Point Weighting for Curved College of Law Grades:**

(Approved by the GPC on 9/13/21 and Faculty Senate on 10/20/21).

The College of Law grade points have been slightly adjusted. Please visit the [Graduate Policy Database](https://policy.gradschool.fsu.edu/) for full details regarding this policy change, as well as a table showing the distribution. Please note that the College of Law, and only that College and only for College of Law majors, uses A+ grades to mark special excellence on their mandatory curve.

1. **Student Course Load Bulletin Updates:**

(Approved by the GPC on 1/31/22 and Faculty Senate on 2/16/22. This language will be inserted into the 2022-2023 Graduate Bulletin)

Several content and structural changes were made to the Student Course Load Graduate Bulletin section that are summarized on the attached document. Full-time load and underload are now clearly defined and labeled in the Graduate Bulletin. For domestic students, no change was made to the number of hours making up various course loads. F-1 and J-1 students now have their own course load policy with clearly states minimum enrollment requirements (see policy below).

Procedurally, all graduate students now need to initiate the process for requesting underload or minimum enrollment course loads, get faculty approval, and may need their Academic Dean’s office approval. A change to the previous process is that Academic Dean’s offices will now each have their own guidelines regarding college-specific processes in this matter.

Additional, minor edits are summarized in the attached document. To view the full list of edits, please visit the [Graduate Policy Database](https://policy.gradschool.fsu.edu/).

F-1 and J-1 International Graduate Students:

The “Standard Full-Time Load and Underload Definition” and the “Doctoral Students” sections do not apply to F-1 and J-1 students, except where specified. F-1 or J-1 international students meet federal enrollment requirements with enrollment in a minimum of nine credit hours in the fall and spring semesters while completing required course work and the university’s required minimum number of thesis (6), project (6), or dissertation (24) credit hours. After completion of required course work and the required minimum number of thesis, project or dissertation credit hours, F-1 or J-1 graduate students may be able to register for the university minimum enrollment requirement of two credit hours per semester until completion of degree after consulting with the academic advisor or the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to thesis, project, or dissertation work. For F-1 and J-1 doctoral students, the minimum enrollment requirement of two hours per semester or term must be fulfilled by registering for a minimum of two dissertation hours per semester or term until graduation. F-1 and J-1 master’s students should follow the “Master’s Students” section above. Minimum enrollment registration requests must be initiated by the student, approved by the student’s faculty advisor, and may require approval by the academic dean or designee. Guidelines for dean’s level approval vary by college and are available at respective Dean’s Offices. The student’s academic advisor, academic dean or designee, assistantship, department, or scholarship may require additional enrollment.

1. **Other Graduate Bulletin Edits:**

Additional sections of the Graduate Bulletin have been slightly amended (some of which required GPC and Faculty Senate approval).

1. **Graduate Admissions**-
2. Test Scores Section-
   1. Updated to reflect the changes noted below regarding the three new English Proficiency Exams.
   2. Language was included to state that “the Faculty Senate and Graduate Policy Committee have waived GRE and GMAT test requirements for all terms through Fall 2026 for Master’s and Specialist applicants.” It is also noted that this waiver excludes degree programs in the College of Business.
3. Graduate Student Admission Policies Section-The acceptance of three new English Language Proficiency Exams have been approved by the GPC and Faculty Senate for graduate admission. The following exams have been approved for use for a provisional period of three years: the Cambridge English Language Assessment, the Michigan Language Assessment and Duolingo. The Graduate Bulletin was updated to note that for a provisional period of three years, starting in the Fall 2022 semester application period, applicants may substitute a score of either 180 on the Cambridge English Language Assessment, 55 on the Michigan Language Assessment, or 120 on the Duolingo for graduate admission purposes.

Language was also included (indicated by underlining) to state that in order to meet the minimum University admission requirements, the applicant must have:

“A bachelor’s degree from a regionally or nationally accredited U.S. institution, or a comparable degree from an international institution, with a minimum 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) grade point average (GPA) in all work attempted while registered as an upper-division undergraduate student working toward a baccalaureate degree, or a graduate degree from a regionally or nationally accredited U.S. institution, or a comparable degree from an international institution…”

1. **Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements-**
2. Defense Decision Definitions Section- This is a new section under both the “Examination in Defense of Thesis” and “Examination in Defense of Dissertation” Sections in the Graduate Bulletin which lays out the defense definitions that the student’s supervisory committee must certify in the Manuscript Clearance Portal (e.g., Pass, Pass with Major Revisions, Re-Examine, or Fail.)

**Reminders:**

1. **Upcoming Graduate School Deadlines:**

The [Graduate School’s Faculty/Staff Website](https://faculty-staff.gradschool.fsu.edu/caslogin) has been updated and now shows all of the different deadlines coming up in Summer 2022 for TA Certification, Faculty Status, the Committee Analysis Report, Dissertation Supervisory Committees Report, Doctoral Student Annual Evaluation Review, etc. All this information can be found under the “Deadlines and Reminders” menu link on the website. A word document is also provided showing such information if you would like to save or print it out.

1. **Combined and Joint Graduate Pathways Tracking in Student Central:**

Each pathway requires admission and is available only to academically talented students. All programs must code their combined and joint pathway students correctly in Student Central for tracking purposes. I have outlined the technical steps below on how this should be done. Please be sure that the following steps are taken to follow the proper tracking protocol.

Combined Pathway Tracking in Student Central:

As soon as it is identified that a student is seeking a combined pathway, the advising track for Combined Degree should be added in Student Central.

* This should be added to the student’s current Undergraduate Program/Plan stack.
* The Academic Dean’s office should add a row to the Student Program tab similar to adding a second major or changing a major. The Program Action should be PLNC.
* On the Student Plan tab, a row should be added and the Academic Plan of COMBINEAV should be selected. You must ensure that the plan sequence for this new advising track is not “10”.
* Then Save.

Joint Graduate Pathway Tracking in Student Central:

Joint graduate pathways should have two program/plan stacks active simultaneously with the appropriate joint pathway academic plan code for each. For example, if a student is in the MSW/JD joint pathway, he/she will have a graduate career program/plan stack and a law program/plan stack. The graduate career will have the Social Work/Law plan and the law career will have the Law/Social Work plan. There are specific joint plan codes for each program. If a student has recently been admitted to a joint graduate pathway and you need the additional program/plan stack created, please email the request to [RegistrarProcessing@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:RegistrarProcessing@admin.fsu.edu).

Please contact James Beck at ([jpbeck@fsu.edu](mailto:jpbeck@fsu.edu)) if you have any questions about the policy and the Registrar’s Office if you require assistance in setting up the program plans in Student Central.

1. **Other Graduate Certificate Policy Reminders:**

It is imperative that units comply with all aspects of the Certificate Policy, especially the requirement that students apply for admission and be accepted as soon as possible (and prior to completing the second course in the program). If a student is accepted into the certificate program, it is the unit’s responsibility thereafter to notify the Registrar’s Office immediately. This is important for tracking and reporting purposes for the university and SACSCOC accreditation. For example, units should not be waiting until a graduate student has reached the final semester and applied for graduation to attempt to admit the student into the certificate program.

Units need to follow the program of studies that was approved in the proposal. Please refer to the matrix that was included in the original proposal paperwork which illustrates the specific required and elective courses that can be counted towards the graduate certificate. Keep in mind, that a graduate certificate shall not require the completion of undergraduate courses. Additionally, students completing an undergraduate degree may not enter a graduate certificate program unless they are admitted as a degree-seeking graduate student or post-baccalaureate non-degree student. Undergraduate students, including combined pathway students, cannot start taking graduate courses for the graduate certificate until the bachelor’s degree is awarded.

The certificate policy can be found on the [Office of Faculty Development and Advancement’s Website](https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/fda/FSU%20Policy%203A-1.pdf).

1. **Dual Degree and Extension of Time (EOT) Request Forms:**

Dual degrees are two degrees earned simultaneously when a graduate student is accepted by both departments/programs and a Dual Enrollment Request Form is approved by the appropriate academic deans and the Dean of the Graduate School. There is no formal relationship between the two-degree program requirements in a dual degree situation.

\*As a reminder, Dual Enrollment and Extension of Time (EOT) Request Forms need to be submitted for review and approval at the proper time. It is not appropriate to wait until the student has reached the final semester and applied for graduation to submit these forms for retroactive approval. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the end of Spring 2022 to submit a dual enrollment or time extension request form for review/approval, if the student actually needed it back in Spring 2021. It is imperative that units carefully monitor their graduate students, run queries to identify those needing such forms and be sure they are submitted at the correct time to ensure proper advisement and avoid any delays in graduation clearance.

1. **Graduation Clearances Reminder**

As a reminder, The Registrar’s Office checks for university-wide requirements for all graduate students and do not check for program-specific requirements.

It is imperative that programs make sure to place their graduate students on the correct track/program plan in Student Central in a timely manner. This is the responsibility of the program. For questions or assistance with this, please contact The Registrar’s Office.

All the best,

James Beck

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