



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 26, 2011

****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 pdf documents 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 2011-2012**
http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/pdf/2011_grad_bulletin.pdf

A. Revised and new policies and procedures – Highlights

1. Thesis

A student who enrolls in thesis hours need not be enrolled continuously thereafter in thesis hours if they meet the minimum university requirement for full-time or part-time enrollment through other coursework. A student must be enrolled in a minimum of two thesis hours in the final semester. The minimum number of thesis hours required for the master's degree is six. Those with underload permission must register for at least two credit hours of thesis per semester. Underloads must be approved by the student's academic dean. Before registering for thesis hours, the student must consult the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to thesis work (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Thesis, p. 84).

2. Thesis, treatise, and dissertation

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, pdf version, Supervisory Committee, p. 85).

3. Doctoral Program of Study

As soon as possible the student, under the supervision of a designated adviser or major professor, should prepare for approval a plan of courses to be taken. This Program of Study must be signed by the faculty adviser or major professor and the chair of the major department. A copy of the student's approved Program of Study is to be kept on file in the department. At the time of the annual review, changes to the plan should be noted and approved. Once designated, the supervisory committee should be included as part of the approval process for any changes to the Program of Study. (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Program of Study, p. 85).

4. Preliminary Examination

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. (Underlined text clarifies a longstanding practice). (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Preliminary Examination, p. 86).

5. Examination in Defense of Dissertation (Underlined text is new language)

The defense of the dissertation will be oral. Responsibility for suggesting the time, designating the place, and presiding at the examination rests with the major professor. It

is recommended that students defend no later than the eighth week of classes in the semester of intent to graduate. Students must defend by no later than the Format Approval Deadline in the semester of intent to graduate. Consult the Graduate School Blackboard site GradSpace for more information.

Academic courtesy requires that the dissertation be submitted to each member of the supervisory committee at least four weeks before the date of the oral examination. The supervisory committee, the chair of the major department, and such other members of the faculty as may be appointed by the academic dean will conduct the examination. All members of the graduate faculty are invited to attend. At least two weeks prior to the date of the examination, the student or major professor will present an announcement of the dissertation title and the date and place of the examination to the Graduate School. Consult the *Registration Guide* for the deadline dates.

All committee members and the student must attend the entire defense in real time, either by being physically present or participating via distance technology. Individual departments may impose stricter requirements on physical attendance, e.g., all members must be physically present. Departments and other degree-granting programs must publicize their policy on defense attendance in their Graduate Student Handbook and in the relevant section of the Graduate Bulletin. If exceptional emergency circumstances, e.g. medical or other emergency situations, prevent the participation of a committee member then it may be necessary to arrange for an additional appropriately qualified colleague to attend the defense. A minimum of four members with Graduate Faculty Status must participate. The oral examining committee will certify in writing to the academic dean of the major department the results of the examination: passed, failed, or to be reexamined. The report of results following a reexamination must indicate the student either passed or failed. To receive a passing grade, the written dissertation must be in final form or require only minor revisions at the time of the defense. A grade of PASS for the defense of treatise or dissertation requires at least a majority approval of the committee. Individual departments may impose stricter requirements for what constitutes a grade of PASS. Departments and other degree-granting programs must publicize their policy on this issue in their Graduate Student Handbook and in the relevant section of the Graduate Bulletin. If the student passes, each member must sign the Manuscript Signature Form to substantiate the results of the defense. It is the responsibility of the major professor to submit this completed form either directly to the Clearance Advisor or to the appropriate college or departmental office for subsequent delivery to the Clearance Advisor in The Graduate School. A written critique of the conduct of the examination in defense of the dissertation should be submitted by the university representative from the graduate faculty to the appropriate academic dean and the Dean of the Graduate School within one week after the date of defense. The degree cannot be awarded until both forms have been received by the Graduate School and the final version of the manuscript has been submitted to and approved by the Clearance Advisor.

The final version of the dissertation that is approved by the supervisory committee must

be submitted electronically to the university manuscript clearance adviser in the Graduate School within sixty days of the defense date or the student must be re-examined. A manuscript processing fee is charged. (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Examination in Defense of Dissertation, p. 86).

B. Important policies, procedures, and general information - Reminders

1. Membership in the Graduate Faculty

- i. A person must hold an appropriate faculty appointment in order to be considered for status as a member of the Graduate Faculty.
- ii. Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) is limited (except for special circumstances) to faculty with tenure or holding 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 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. Graduate Teaching Status (GTS) only applies to non-tenure track and visiting in lieu of adjunct faculty. No changes were made in the criteria for co-directive status categories (co-MDS and co-DDS) required for non-tenure track faculty and courtesy faculty to serve on student committees.
- iii. The policy on Graduate Faculty Status and Graduate Teaching Status has been incorporated into the Faculty Handbook, Section 5: Faculty Development (<http://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu/Section-5-Faculty-Development>).
- iv. 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.
- v. Departments and colleges must request GFS status for all new eligible faculty by submitting a completed *Graduate Faculty Status Appointment Recommendation for Tenure-Track Faculty Form* ([Form# GFS-01](#)) with a curriculum vitae. 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.
- vi. The graduate faculty categories for non-tenure track and courtesy faculty are 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.

2. Annual review of graduate students

- i. 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, pdf version, Supervisory Committee, p. 85).

- ii. 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.
- iii. 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. For more information on how to use the tracking system, contact Chris Simonavice (csimonavice@fsu.edu) in The Graduate School. 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).

3. Doctoral committee composition

- i. All doctoral committees appointed after August 24, 2009, must meet the minimum university standard of four members with GFS (new GFS definition). Included among these four members will be the University Representative who must also be a tenured member of the faculty. 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. 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, pdf version, Supervisory Committee, p.85).
- ii. It is important to note that with the new GFS designation, The Graduate School is no longer aware of which faculty in a program are eligible to serve on master’s and doctoral committees, and can no longer advise students regarding faculty who are eligible to serve. Therefore, programs, departments, and/or colleges must make this information available on their website to students, faculty, and staff. It is essential that the information be updated when a change in status occurs. The Graduate School continues to maintain the [Graduate Faculty Database](#), but the information for tenure track faculty only indicates if the person can serve as the University Representative. The Graduate School continues to maintain the information for non-tenure track faculty and courtesy faculty.

4. Defense of the dissertation, treatise or thesis

See above for new policies governing these defenses

5. Health insurance subsidy for graduate students for 2011-2012

- i. Select graduate assistants will be provided a health insurance subsidy towards the purchase of the university sponsored health insurance plan. The subsidy will be provided based on FTE appointment and will be disbursed by semester (fall; spring/summer).

- ii. The Graduate School and Office of Research will pay for the subsidy for students appointed to E&G and C&G HR funding sources. For students appointed to Local and Auxiliary HR funding sources, the project funding the student, will pay for the subsidy and this charge will show on your budget in November. For details regarding the subsidy and how it is disbursed please click on the [Health Insurance Subsidy Link](#) or contact The Graduate School at 644-3501. For more health insurance information please click on the [University-sponsored Health Insurance Link](#) or contact the Thagard Student Health Center's Health Insurance Office at 644-3608.

6. Tuition Waivers

- i. 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, at 644-3501.
- ii. The Waiver Receipt Form must be 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.
- iii. Waiver entry requests that occur after the deadline for waivers should be made through the online waiver request system: https://netprod.oti.fsu.edu/Waiver_Request. 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. Residence Requirements (not to be confused with In-State Residency requirement, for details see *Florida State University Graduate Bulletin*)

- i. Master's - There is no University-wide residence requirement for the master's degree beyond that implicit in the limitation upon transfer credit, the recency of work requirement, and the full-time student load requirement. Master's candidates are advised that some programs and departments may impose a stricter rule of residency as required by the specific program of study.
- ii. Doctoral - The intent of the residence requirement is to ensure that doctoral students contribute to and benefit from the complete spectrum of educational, professional, and enrichment opportunities provided on the campus of a comprehensive university. After having finished thirty (30) semester hours of graduate work or being awarded the master's degree, the student must be continuously enrolled on Florida State University Tallahassee campus for a minimum of twenty-four (24) graduate semester hours of credit in any period of 12 consecutive months. Students in such programs

should check residence requirements with their departmental chairs or program leaders, (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Residence, p.85).

8. Recency of Work

The work for the master's degree must be completed within seven years from the time the student first registers for graduate credit. Any graduate work transferred from another institution must have commenced not more than seven years prior to completion of the degree for the credits to be applicable to the master's degree, (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Recency of Work, p.84).

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within five calendar years from the time the student passes the preliminary examination, or the student's supervisory committee will require that a new preliminary examination be passed. (Graduate Bulletin, Time Limit for Completion of Degree Requirements, p.86).

9. 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 (pdf version), under the Academic Regulations and Procedures section, Full-Time Student Course Load on p. 93.

10. Thesis Hours

See section above for revised policy for thesis master's students.

11. Dissertation Hours

- i. A student who has completed the required course work, passed the preliminary examination and submitted an Application to Candidacy form to the Office of the Registrar, and continues to use campus facilities and/or receives faculty supervision, but **has not made a final dissertation submission** shall include in the required full-time load of a minimum of two (2) dissertation hours per term. Those with underload permission must register for at least two (2) hours of dissertation credit per term. Underloads must be approved by the academic dean. Before registering for dissertation hours, the student must consult the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to dissertation work. The number of hours listed will show the proportion of time to be devoted to the dissertation. The number of hours should not only reflect the effort of the student, but should take into account the use of campus facilities/resources and faculty interaction/supervision. (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Dissertation, p. 86).
- ii. The minimum number of dissertation hours for completion of a doctoral degree shall be twenty-four (24) semester hours, (Graduate Bulletin, pdf version, Dissertation, p. 86).

12. Graduation

- i. During the **first two weeks of the term** in which a candidate expects to receive a degree, application must be made for graduation by visiting the "Secure Apps" section of the Blackboard® site. For additional information, contact the Office of the Registrar, Graduation Section, (850) 644-5850.
- ii. In accordance with the policy on registration for thesis or dissertation hours noted above, students must be registered for dissertation or thesis hours in the semester they hold the defense and submit the ETD.

C. ETD Requirements

All Electronic Thesis, Treatise and Dissertation content and information can be found exclusively on The Graduate School's Blackboard ® websites. All ETD content and information can be 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 of intent to graduate.

D. University-wide Standards for Teaching Assistants at Florida State University

These are University-wide standards that any student must meet prior to assuming one of the various instructional roles. These are meant to be university-wide minimum standards; departments may adopt additional or more stringent standards. Graduate Programs which do not use graduate students in instructional roles would not be affected by these standards. They are meant to cover the formal use of teaching assistants in course instruction. Extra help sessions and voluntary tutorials in addition to regular class meetings would not normally fall under these requirements.

Please note that early in the fall semester the Faculty Senate is scheduled to vote on a revision of this policy which aims to facilitate the certification of spoken English for International Teaching Assistants.

E. Certification of Teaching Competence

1. Each semester in accordance with guidelines of the Commission on Colleges (SACS) and the standards outlined in the University-wide standards (above), the Academic Dean of each College is required to certify in writing to the Dean of the Faculties and the Dean of The Graduate School that each student who serves as a Teaching Assistant is competent to teach and for International Teaching Assistants that they are also competent to teach in spoken English.
2. It is recommended that each program have a discipline-specific teaching manual for its teaching assistants to supplement the university teaching manual, *Instruction at FSU* which can be viewed on line (<http://learningforlife.fsu.edu/ctl/explore/onlineresources/I@FSU.cfm>).