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

Re:       Summer 2021 Graduate School Policy and Procedure Memo

Date:   May 4, 2021

\*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/).

**New/Updated Graduate Policies:**

The following items were established as a new policy or were updated:

1. **Preliminary Exam Policy Update:**

(Approved by the GPC on 1/11/21 and Faculty Senate on 1/20/21. This language will be inserted into the 2021-2022 Graduate Bulletin under the ‘Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements’ Section, replacing the last paragraph of the current language. The remaining paragraphs stay the same. The updated policy goes into effect in Summer 2021)

“If a student fails the preliminary examination before being admitted to candidacy, a re-examination may be offered by the student’s supervisory committee or other relevant decision making body within each department or unit, per that department or unit’s doctoral student handbook. The Academic Dean’s office should be notified of the outcome of any preliminary exam attempt.

Students can take the preliminary examination for admission to candidacy only two times. A second failure on the preliminary exam makes the student ineligible to continue in the degree program. The second attempt at the preliminary exam shall occur no sooner than six full class weeks after the results of the first attempt are shared with the student. For the purpose of this policy, a “full class week” is defined as a week with five days during which classes are held at FSU. Students must be registered separately for their first and second attempt, if necessary within the same semester, and must receive either a “pass” or a “fail” grade for each attempt.

An exception request regarding the timing of the re-examination can be submitted for consideration to the Academic Dean’s Office by either the student or the supervisory committee. Students who allege that academic regulations and/or procedures were improperly applied for the re-examination of their preliminary exam may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. The full preliminary exam policy as listed here must be added to all doctoral student handbooks.”

1. **Manuscript Clearance Defense Decision Definitions and Guidance:**

(See attached for the full policy. Approved by the GPC on 1/25/21 and Faculty Senate on 2/24/21).

In the past, The Graduate School has shied away from creating definitions for defense decisions for thesis, treatise or dissertation students to allow flexibility in the process. However, the Manuscript Clearance Office regularly received questions about the difference between “Re-Exam” and “Fail”. Based on the experience of the Manuscript Clearance Office, “Re-Exam” and “Fail” were frequently under-utilized and seen as punitive. The “Pass” decision was inappropriately used in many cases where students had major revisions that would more likely resemble a “Re-Exam”, but the committee did not wish for them to defend again. These situations made it seem that a new decision category, as well as accompanying definitions and guidance, would be helpful. The decision to make the defense decisions less complicated (i.e., by reducing the decisions to “Pass” or “Fail”) did not seem to adequately address the nuances of decision-making during a defense and would not address the feelings held by some committee members about the punitive nature of “Fail”.

Keep in mind, these decisions are only present in the Manuscript Clearance Portal where defense forms have been completed by all programs since Summer 2019. Transcripts will still reflect “Pass”, “Fail,” or “Incomplete,” as appropriate.

1. **Update to University-Wide Graduate TA Standards:**

(See attached for the full policy. Approved by the GPC on 3/1/21 and Faculty Senate on 3/24/21).

During the Summer, the Graduate Student Tracking System (GST) will be updated to reflect the changes to the TA standards. Guidance will be provided as we move forward for a Fall 2021 implementation.

Summary of Main Changes to the TA Standards:

1. Changed the TA “levels” classification to “categories” to avoid confusion with levels of courses and prevent ordinal interpretation that no longer applies with the newly created Category 5.
2. Created a new Category 5 classification and suggested an existing but non-active job code specifically for assigning graduate TAs to graduate courses or co-listed undergraduate/graduate courses.
3. Described specific duties and training requirements for Category 5 appointments.
4. Amended Category 2 to include language addressing the use of graduate TAs in co-listed undergraduate/graduate courses and provided examples of appropriate tasks.
5. Included explicit language that having full responsibilities for a class is synonymous with being the instructor of record for the purposes of this policy.
6. Added language explicitly stating that the university’s Conflict of Interest policy applies to all TAs.
7. Made some adjustments to the examples given for Category 1 and 2 duties.
8. Made editorial changes (e.g., changing “Canvas” to “course management system”; adjusting grammatical prepositions resulting from changing “level” to “category”).
9. Updated the course code for the EAP course.
10. **Graduate Bulletin Edits:**

Sections of the Graduate Bulletin have been slightly amended. The following items do not represent substantive policy changes, but editing was done to improve the clarity of the message.

1. **Graduate Admissions**-
2. Admission/Readmission Appeal Procedure Section- Revised the timing in which The Graduate School needs to notify the applicant of the committee appeal decision from seven to fifteen business days.
3. **Graduate Academic Regulations and Procedures**-
4. Student Course Load Section and Thesis/Dissertation Section- Deleted the following sentences:
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Dismissal and Reinstatement for Professional Colleges Section- Deleted the existing two paragraphs in this section and replaced them with the following language:
8. Retention and dismissal polices of the College of Law are described in Section 13 of the College of Law’s Academic Rules, Policies, and Procedures Bylaws.
9. The policies for promotion, remediation, probation, and dismissal for the College of Medicine are specified in the College of Medicine’s Student Handbook.”

1. **Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements-**
2. Professional Degree Section- Included a statement in this section that states: “The Graduate School oversees all post-bachelor programs with the exceptions as noted in this Bulletin. The Graduate Policy Committee is the governing body for all academic graduate and professional post-bachelor programs regarding general policies, procedures, and quality review. Programs seeking exceptions can apply to the Graduate Policy Committee.”

**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 2021 for TA Certification, Faculty Status, the Committee Analysis Report, Dissertation Supervisory Committees Report, Doctoral Student Annual Evaluation Review, etc.

1. **Graduate Policy Committee (GPC) Proposal Submissions:**

Units planning to submit proposals to the Graduate Policy Committee need to establish their intent to file by the end of the third week of the semester in which they plan to file. All submissions or intentions to file notification should be submitted to James Beck ([jpbeck@fsu.edu](mailto:jpbeck@fsu.edu)) in the Graduate School.

The mission of the Graduate Policy Committee (GPC) is to help units around the university deliver the best possible graduate education. To this end, the GPC conducts graduate-level program reviews as part of the QER process, considers university-wide policy relating to graduate education, reviews departmental requests for GRE/GMAT waivers and reviews applications for new and combined/joint graduate pathway programs. It’s important work, and the group takes it very seriously. To do this work well, I need to manage the GPC’s time carefully. In order to coordinate units’ new proposal submissions and regularly scheduled unit reviews, this policy was established. Having advance notice of all submissions that will come in during any given semester will allow me to properly allocate adequate time for each agenda item. I would also like to point out that you are welcome to submit either your intent or your actual proposal early. In fact, the first few weeks of any semester are the best time for the GPC to be reviewing proposals. Thus, feel free to contact me as soon as possible in order to get scheduled for early fall semester.

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. **Graduate Certificate Policy:**

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.

\*Additionally, 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 an undergraduate certificate shall not require the completion of graduate courses.

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 Fall 2021 to submit a dual enrollment or time extension request form for review/approval, if the student actually needed it back in Spring 2018. It is imperative that units carefully monitor their graduate students and be sure these forms are submitted at the correct time to ensure proper advisement and avoid any delays in graduation clearance.

All the best,

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