

GPC: Graduate Bulletin Changes

Motion: to approve Bulletin edits to four sections, the “Course Load,” “Thesis,” and “Dissertation” sections as presented, and one other section on p. 58. We will refer to all of these changes by the umbrella term of “course load policy changes.”

To support the motion, three documents are submitted,

- 1) This “Explanation” document, which briefly explains the logic behind the changes and presents justifications for three potential questions or points of criticism that may be raised.
- 2) The “Summary” document, which outlines (and provides minimum explanation) the structural and content changes made to the Bulletin language, as approved by the GPC
- 3) The “Course Load” document, which provides the current Bulletin language with all edits (as approved by the GPC) highlighted. The Course Load document is provided as a Word document so Senators can choose between seeing either “simple” edits (only highlights and completed edits) or “all” edits (every deletion and insertion), per personal preference.

Explanation of Changes

Process began as

- Language clarification regarding underloads

Recognition that

- International students affected because FSU language and federal language conflict/overlap/sound similar but mean different things

Realization that

- One policy cannot capture all needs

Solution: two policies

Integrating a 2nd policy required restructuring of section(s) in addition to content changes (see “Summary” document).

Why does it have to be this way?

- Revised policy contains repetitive language.
 - For consistency
 - Referring to “above” will cause confusion, especially over time
- Revised policy still seems complicated, wordy, and/or confusing.
 - It’s a complicated issue. Specificity matters a great deal.

- State, national, and federal standards all play into this, in addition to FSU's own jargon.
- Vetted by CGE, Registrar's Office, a Provost Office's rep, and several Dean's Office reps.
- Revised policy still involves Dean's Offices.
 - Practices vary across campus; a university-wide policy must accommodate this
 - All Dean's Offices need to assess special cases

Potential examples in which the Academic Dean's Offices should be involved in the evaluation/review process of graduate students dropping down and taking a reduced course load:

Graduate students,

- Who are on probation
- Who need to follow externally (to FSU) set enrollment requirements and whose wish to reduce enrollment may conflict with those requirements (e.g., students receiving certain fellowships or scholarships; those following federal guidelines such as financial aid, immigration, or veterans administration; athletes)
- Whose academic progress is unusually slow or even questionable (e.g. those who need extensions of time, retake their prelims, seem to intentionally halt their progress, enroll in excessive number of dissertation hours, etc.)
- Who are on an assistantship and wish to drop below 9 hrs