

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Recommendation
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: 28 March 2023

FROM: School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS)

SUBJECT: Revised Graduate Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing Policy

MANDATE:

- Under the Policy Framework, Policy Owners must consult with deliberative bodies before presenting draft policy instruments to the approval authority for approval
- The GSC has a mandate of maintaining the academic standards set by Academic Council and to serve as a deliberative body for academic policy instruments
- Under the Policy Framework, changes to academic items which are editorial in nature are presented to the deliberative body and Academic Council for information

EDITORIAL/AMENDMENT:

With the implementation of the new Doctorate of Education (EdD) program, some policy language is not inclusive of this program, specifically the use of 'PhD' only. Editorial amendments are being made to replace any use of the term 'PhD' with 'doctoral' in the Graduate Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing Policy to ensure they are clear that it is applicable to all doctoral students.

CONSULTATION:

Deliberative Body: GSC February 2023 for information
Academic Council for information: March 2023

NEXT STEPS:

- Following presentation of the informational items to Academic Council, the Graduate Academic Calendar text will be updated effective Fall 2023. Updates will also be made to reflect the change on the SGPS website, handbooks and any relevant forms as applicable.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- Revised Graduate Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing Policy



Classification	ACD 1519
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Dean, Graduate Studies
Approval Date	February 25, 2020
Review Date	March 2023
Supersedes	Academic Regulations, Graduate Academic Calendar 2019-2020

GRADUATE GRADING SYSTEM, RESEARCH PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC STANDING POLICY

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Policy is to provide the framework for the University's graduate-level letter grade system, research progress evaluations and graduate Academic Standing.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

"Academic Standing" means a student's official status of enrolment at the University as evaluated at the end of each Semester; used to assess whether students are meeting the standards prescribed for continuing in the University and/or their programs.

"Coursework Reappraisal" means a graduate student request to review a specific piece of tangible coursework.

"Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)" means the weighted average of the grade points awarded in all courses completed and included for the achievement of the degree and/or major the student is registered in.

"Deferred Examination" means an Examination written outside of the originally scheduled day and/or time.

"Examination" means a form of testing intended to assess the level of students' knowledge, ability, skills, comprehension, application, analysis, and/or synthesis of the subject matter in a course of study. This includes, but is not limited to in-person, online, take-home, practical, and laboratory examinations. This does not include [PhD-doctoral](#) candidacy, master's or doctoral thesis examinations.

"Final Grade Reappraisal" means a graduate student request to review a final grade in a course.

"Grade Point Average (GPA)" means the weighted average of the grade points awarded on the basis of academic performance during a single Semester.

"Semester" means sixty days of lectures and a final Examination period.

"Transcripts" means the complete report of a student's academic record.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. This Policy applies to the graduate-level letter grading system, research progress evaluations and graduate Academic Standing.
4. This Policy does not apply to the undergraduate-level letter grading system and Academic Standing. For more information regarding the undergraduate-level grading system or Academic Standing please refer to the Undergraduate Grading System and Academic Standing Policy.
5. The Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of this Policy.

POLICY

6. Grading System

- 6.1. Final grades for all courses will be submitted to the Registrar's office on a letter grade scale.
- 6.2. Credit is granted only for those courses completed with a grade of B-minus or better.
- 6.3. Faculties may require higher grades in some courses to meet degree requirements.
- 6.4. If a student's grade is not available when final grades are approved at the end of a Semester, special designation is temporarily added to their record.
- 6.5. The following grading scheme outlines the quality of work associated with each letter grade. Percentage-to-grade equivalencies are included as a guideline for conversion.
 - a) **A+**: Percentage 90-100; Grade Point 4.3; Grade Point Description: Very Good to Excellent. Student demonstrated mastery of the course material.
 - b) **A**: Percentage 85-89; Grade Point 4; Grade Point Description: Very Good to Excellent. Student demonstrated mastery of the course material.
 - c) **A-**: Percentage 80-84; Grade Point 3.7; Grade Point Description: Very Good to Excellent. Student demonstrated mastery of the course material.
 - d) **B+**: Percentage 77-79; Grade Point 3.3; Grade Point Description: Acceptable to Good. Student demonstrated adequate knowledge of course material.
 - e) **B**: Percentage 73-76; Grade Point 3; Grade Point Description: Acceptable to Good. Student demonstrated adequate knowledge of course material.
 - f) **B-**: Percentage 70-72; Grade Point 2.7; Grade Point Description: Acceptable to Good. Student demonstrated adequate knowledge of course material.
 - g) **F**: Percentage 0-69; Grade Point 0; Grade Point Description: Inadequate. Student did not perform to academic expectations
 - h) **PAS or FAL**: Courses designated for pass/fail grading will be assigned a grade of PAS (pass) or FAL (fail). For such courses, only failing grades are included

in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA). The grade of FAL has a weighting of 0.0 grade points.

- i) **T:** A grade of T will be assigned at the time that a transfer credit is awarded.
- j) **WF:** A failing grade of WF may be assigned if a student is administratively withdrawn for non-attendance.
- k) **AW:** A grade of AW may be assigned for administrative withdrawal.
- l) **CO:** Graduate continuance courses are assigned a grade of CO (continuance) and are not included in GPA calculations.
- m) **DEF:** If a Deferred Examination has been granted, a grade of DEF will be assigned.
- n) **INC:** If a portion of the work required for the course is incomplete, a grade of INC may be recorded. These grades may satisfy prerequisites for further courses on a temporary basis, but not beyond the end of the subsequent Semester after which these grades revert to F.

- 6.6. For graduate students taking a standard undergraduate Course, the minimum grade required for a pass is B-minus.
- 6.7. For undergraduate students taking a Course at a graduate level, the student's work should be graded according to the existing undergraduate grading scheme.
- 6.8. Exceptional undergraduates who enrol in a graduate-level course should have a minimum 3.7 GPA in their last two years of undergraduate studies. Undergraduate students must be enrolled in their fourth year of undergraduate studies in order to be eligible for consideration to enrol in a graduate-level course.

7. Grade Changes

- 7.1. After grades have been officially approved and released, any grade changes must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar.
- 7.2. Grade changes may result from the submission of course work, the writing of a Deferred Examination, clerical errors, or an approved examination re-read.
- 7.3. All grade changes must be approved by the course instructor and the graduate program director or designate.

8. Coursework Reappraisals

- 8.1. Matters concerning Semester work normally fall within the authority of the instructor.
- 8.2. Students unable to comply with given deadlines must contact their instructor prior to the deadline if an extension to the deadline is requested.
- 8.3. All Semester work must be submitted by the last day of classes, unless an earlier date has been specified.

- 8.4. Instructors may grant extensions beyond their own deadlines or beyond the last day of classes up to the last day of the examination period provided that a student presents valid reasons of illness, etc., with appropriate documentation.
- 8.5. In the event that a student wishes a grade on a specific piece of tangible work to be reappraised, they should, in the first instance, bring the disputed piece of work directly to the course instructor to seek informal resolution.
- 8.6. A Coursework Reappraisal may result in the original grade on the disputed piece of work being raised, lowered or confirmed.
- 8.7. If this course of action does not satisfy the student, they may seek a Final Grade Reappraisal.

9. Final Grade Reappraisals

- 9.1. Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that a final grade in a course be reappraised.
- 9.2. A Final Grade Reappraisal may result in the original grade being raised, lowered or confirmed.
- 9.3. The deadline for submitting Final Grade Reappraisal is three weeks after the release of final grade reports in any Semester.
- 9.4. A Final Grade Reappraisal will comprise only the review of specific pieces of tangible, but not oral, work.
- 9.5. Grounds not related to academic merit are not relevant for Final Grade Reappraisals.
- 9.6. **Informal Grade Reappraisal**
 - a) Students are expected to contact the course instructor first to discuss the final grade received and to request that their tangible work be reviewed.
- 9.7. **Formal Grade Reappraisal**
 - a) Following the outcome of the informal Final Grade Reappraisal, the student may subsequently make a formal request to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to have a final grade in a course reappraised.

10. Research Progress

- 10.1. Student research progress is evaluated at the end of each Semester for every student in programs with a thesis, project or major paper, starting when the student is engaged in their research.
- 10.2. The student's research supervisory committee is responsible for evaluating their research progress in relation to the student's overall research plan.
- 10.3. Students may receive an evaluation of Satisfactory Research Progress, Difficulties with Research Progress or Unsatisfactory Research Progress.
 - a) Satisfactory Research Progress means that the student is developing their research adequately relative to the stage in their research program. There

may be minor problems with progress in an overall evaluation of satisfactory progress.

- b) Difficulties with Research Progress indicates that a student has some important issue or issues that need to be addressed in order for the student to attain reasonable progress relative to the stage in the student's research program.
- c) Unsatisfactory Research Progress indicates that a student has some fundamental problem or problems with their research progress relative to the stage in the student's research program.

- 10.4. Normally, students who are not progressing well will be given an evaluation of Difficulties with Research Progress as their first indication of serious lack of progress.
- 10.5. Students with an evaluation of Difficulties with Research Progress must subsequently receive a satisfactory evaluation on their next research progress report in order to remain in clear standing.
- 10.6. Students with an evaluation of Difficulties with Research Progress who do not achieve a satisfactory evaluation on their next research progress report will receive an Unsatisfactory Research Progress evaluation.
- 10.7. Clear and significant cases of lack of research progress may result in an Unsatisfactory Research Progress evaluation without first receiving an evaluation of Difficulties with Research Progress.
- 10.8. Students who receive an Unsatisfactory Research Progress evaluation will be assigned an Academic Standing of probation and will remain on probation until such time as they successfully achieve a satisfactory evaluation on their research progress report.
- 10.9. A student who receives a second Unsatisfactory Research Progress evaluation will be dismissed. Student research progress reports are submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to determine Academic Standing.

11. Review of Unsatisfactory Research Progress Evaluation

- 11.1 Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that an unsatisfactory research progress evaluation be reviewed.
- 11.2 The deadline for submitting a request to review a research progress evaluation is the last day of the final examination period or three weeks after receiving the evaluation, whichever is later.
- 11.3 **Informal Resolution**
 - a) Students are normally expected to contact their research supervisor to discuss their evaluation and seek an informal resolution.
- 11.4 **Formal Resolution**

- a) If the concern is not resolved, they may request a research progress evaluation review.
- b) The student will lodge the review with the supervisor's dean(s), specifying the rationale for the request and making clear the components to be re-evaluated.

12. Academic Standing

Graduate Academic Standing is determined based on academic progress which includes course work and research progress (in research or project-based programs), and is recorded on the student's Transcript.

12.1. Academic Standing is determined each Semester.

12.2. The minimum Cumulative GPA required for graduation is 2.7 and satisfactory completion of thesis, project or major paper, where applicable.

12.3. Academic Standing Scale:

a) **Clear Standing:** Students are required to maintain a minimum grade of B-minus (GPA: 2.7) in all graded components of the program as well as satisfactory research progress in programs with a thesis, project or major paper.

b) **Probation:** Students are placed on probation if they receive a failing grade in a course or if they receive an evaluation of unsatisfactory on a research progress report.

Students placed on probation for failing a course will remove this reason for probation when they have successfully completed the failed course or an approved alternative course, as outlined by their graduate program director.

Students on probation for unsatisfactory research progress remove this reason for probation when they receive a satisfactory evaluation on a research progress report.

c) **Dismissal:** Students will be dismissed for lack of academic progress. Lack of academic progress includes, but is not limited to: an evaluation of Not Acceptable in a thesis, project, major paper, or a second unsatisfactory evaluation in a [PhD-doctoral](#) candidacy examination for students in a doctoral degree program; or any of the following: two failed courses; two unsatisfactory research progress reports; or one failed course and one unsatisfactory research progress report.

Graduate students who have been dismissed from the University are not eligible to apply for readmission.

12.4. Repeating Courses

- a) Graduate students who fail one course are assigned an Academic Standing of probation and remain on probation until such time as they successfully complete the required course (within a maximum period of 12 months).
- b) They are required to maintain good standing (minimum B-minus grade) in all course work and satisfactory performance in all project/thesis work undertaken during this probationary period.
- c) The graduate program director or designate provides progress reports to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies each Semester for the duration of the probation. Once the course in question has been completed successfully, the Academic Standing is updated to clear standing.
- d) Graduate students who fail two courses, whether in the same Semester or in different Semesters, students who do not repeat their failed course, or approved alternative, within 12 months, and/or students who do not receive a satisfactory performance in all projects/thesis work during their probation status are dismissed from the University.

12.5. The impact on Academic Standing of a research progress report with a determination of difficulties with research progress or unsatisfactory research progress is outlined under the Research Progress section of this policy.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 13.** This Policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- 14.** This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

- 15.** Graduate Grade Reappraisal and Review of Research Progress Procedures
Graduate Academic Appeals Policy
Graduate Academic Calendar