

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 Program Changes and Program Transfer 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 Program Changes and Program Transfer 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 the 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 Program Changes and Program Transfer Policy (Tracked Changes)



Classification Number	ACD 1531
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Dean, Graduate Studies
Approval Date	June 2, 2020
Review Date	June 2023
Supersedes	Academic Regulations, Graduate Academic Calendar 2019-2020

GRADUATE PROGRAM CHANGES AND PROGRAM TRANSFERS POLICY

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for graduate-level Program changes and Program transfers.

DEFINITIONS

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

“Graduate Program Director” means academic administrators with a graduate faculty appointment within an academic unit and help to ensure the success of the Program and its students.

“Program” means a complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma), provided all other academic and financial requirements are met.

“Master’s Degree” means an advanced degree that is normally completed after receiving a first degree in a related subject area. It contains a prescribed set of courses, and/or other units of study, research or practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, normally requiring at least 30 credit hours of study. Master’s Degrees may comprise a thesis component, a project or major paper, or be primarily comprised of coursework:

- a) A **Master’s Degree with thesis** is a research oriented Program comprised of advanced courses and intensive research culminating in a thesis. The thesis constitutes at least nine credit hours and involves an oral examination with assessment by an external examiner.
- b) A **Master’s Degree with a project or major paper** is a research oriented Program comprised of advanced courses and intensive research culminating in a project or major paper. The project or major paper constitutes at least six credit hours of supervised research and assessment by a research supervisor and a second reader.
- c) A **Master’s Degree by coursework** is comprised primarily of course work, and may also include other units of study, research and practice.

“Doctoral Degree” means an advanced degree in a specific area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study that includes course work and a candidacy exam. It is normally completed after receiving a Master’s Degree in a related subject area. A Doctoral Degree requires intensive

research and the creation and defence before an examining committee of a thesis that constitutes an original contribution to a field of study.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. This Policy applies to graduate-level Program changes and transfers between one graduate Program and another.
4. This Policy does not apply to undergraduate-level Program changes and Program transfers. For more information regarding undergraduate-level Programs please refer to the relevant policies or procedures in the University's policy library.
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. Program Changes

- 6.1. Students wishing to pursue a Program of study other than the one to which they were originally admitted must contact the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- 6.2. Such requests are subject to the admission requirements of the new Program of study and final approval rests with the graduate admissions committee of the Program.
- 6.3. Changes are permitted only if space is available and all academic requirements are met.
- 6.4. Students may be required to complete another application for admission.
- 6.5. Requests must be submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies before the last day to submit a program change request in the Graduate Academic Schedule each Semester.

7. Transfer from a Thesis-based Master's Degree Program to a Doctoral Degree Program

- 7.1. This transfer option is for exceptional students who have demonstrated superior academic credentials and outstanding research potential in their Master's Degree Program.
- 7.2. Applicants are considered on a case-by-case basis and may not be considered at all in some Programs.
- 7.3. If a transfer from a Master's Degree Program to a Doctoral Degree Program is allowed in a Program, the following criteria must be met before a transfer from a Master's to a Doctoral Degree Program can be considered:
 - a) Completion of a full Master's Degree Program of course work with at least an A-minus average.
 - b) Significant progress in the student's Master's research project.
 - c) Strong evidence of ability for advanced independent research.

- d) Approval of the transfer by the Research Supervisor(s), supervisory committee, the Graduate Program Director and the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
 - e) Satisfactory completion of the ~~PhD~~doctoral candidacy exam.
- 7.4. A judgment of satisfactory in the candidacy exam allows the student to transfer from a Master's Degree Program to a Doctoral Degree Program.
 - 7.5. Upon transferring, the student must fulfill all other requirements for the Doctoral Degree Program.
 - 7.6. If the judgment is unsatisfactory, the student will continue in the Master's Degree Program.
 - 7.7. There will be only one examination allowed for the transfer from a Master's Degree Program to a Doctoral Degree Program.
 - 7.8. Some faculties may have specific requirements pertaining to transfer from a thesis-based Master's Degree Program to a Doctoral Degree Program. Refer to the Graduate Academic Calendar for more information.

8. Transfer for a Doctoral Program to a Master's Program

- 8.1. In exceptional circumstances, Graduate students may apply to transfer from Doctoral Degree Program to a Master's Degree Program.
- 8.2. Transfers are only permitted if they are appropriate for the graduate student's personal and/or professional goals.
- 8.3. Doctoral students who are not performing at a satisfactory level in their Doctoral Degree Program normally will not be considered for transfer to a Master's Degree Program.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9. 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

- 10. This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

- 11. Graduate Academic Calendar
Graduate Admission and Application Requirements Policy
Graduate Admission Categories and Decisions Policy
Responsibilities of Graduate Program Directors, Faculty Advisors, Research Supervisors and Graduate Students Policy