



Policies for Graduate Program Administration

The Provost and Academic Deans have endorsed the following policies for the administration of graduate programs.

1. Purpose and Principles

Good administrative procedures ensure fairness and accountability in the administration of graduate programs. Recommendations for admission and assistantships, as well as graduate program director appointments, will be based on the following principles:

- criteria and requirements will be stated in writing and made readily available;
- recommendations are based on the individual's qualifications and/or ability to do the work in relation to the stated criteria and requirements;
- candidates or applicants will receive a written notification of the admission action or decision;
- processes will be conducted and actions will be recommended and taken in accordance with university policy, principles, and codes.

Similar principles for accountability - that is, basis in criteria and qualifications, documentation, and recommendation(s) - also apply to other significant actions taken concerning a student, such as award of scholarships, appointment to internships, or dismissal from a program.

These general principles are applied in the specific policies stated below.

2. Administrative Organization

In the case of graduate programs contained within a single academic department, an individual serves as Graduate Program Director (two individuals may serve as Co-Directors), and selected program faculty may serve as a graduate program committee. The Department Chairperson may serve in the Graduate Program Director role in a small department or a department that offers primarily or only graduate instruction. Similarly, an administrative appointment such as an Associate Dean may perform the Graduate Program Director role.

Graduate programs offered across departments within a college or school, or across colleges/schools, must also have an individual identified as serving in the Graduate Program Director role (or Co-Directors) and a graduate program committee representing the program's active faculty. An administrative appointment such as an Associate Dean may perform the Graduate Program Director role.

Presented here are general characteristics and criteria. Each program, department, or college/school will realize these in specific ways, with specific duties, criteria for participation or committee membership (for example, whether to include student members and requirements for seniority or tenure status), nomination processes, lengths of term of office, and so forth. Additional positions may be identified and other committees or subcommittees utilized.

The person in the graduate program director role has responsibility for administration of the graduate program, including the following duties and functions (in person and/or through designees):

- the timely and accountable processing of applications for admission recommendations as well as recommendations for assistantship/fellowship awards;
- representing the needs of the program when resources are allocated and teaching assignments are made;
- effective and accurate communication of program characteristics and requirements;
- interactions with prospective students to help recruit them and encourage them to matriculate;
- academic advising of graduate students;
- monitoring student progress, communicating with students in difficulty or otherwise in need of assistance; and initiating corrective actions;
- transactions and communications with the administration regarding graduate students (for example, verifications of full-time status for international students);
- coverage of duties during summers and intersessions;
- membership on the Graduate Council.

Composition of the Graduate Program Committee:

- the graduate program committee is representative of the program's active faculty;
- a graduate program committee must have at least three faculty members, including a member or members from a different unit if there are not enough immediate program faculty to meet this minimum number;
- the composition of the graduate program committee may be limited, for example, to those with tenure and/or a certain seniority, and a length of term may be set;
- the committee is selected by governance processes determined for the department or college/school and endorsed by the dean (a dean may require that she/he approve the committee's membership);
- the committee may include students, either advisory or voting;
- the committee may include administrators, either ex-officio or voting.

Functions of the Graduate Program Committee may include:

- recommend to department, college, and/or school officials the criteria for admission; duties and qualifications for assistantship/fellowship positions; requirements for academic progression; requirements for comprehensive examinations, projects, theses, and dissertations; and program goals, objectives, and assessment;
- review and make recommendations on applications for admission (either all applicants or those with exceptional features or borderline situations);
- review and make recommendations for assistantship/fellowship awards;

- review and make recommendations on other awards, honors, or recognitions associated with the graduate program;
- review and make recommendations on appointment of the Graduate Program Director;
- review and make recommendations on issues involving student status and progression.

3. Admission to a Graduate Program

General and program specific criteria are to be stated officially, for example, in the graduate catalogue. Students apply for admission and submit official transcripts as well as other documents, statements, and materials in support of their application. Interviews and/or portfolios may be required.

The graduate program committee will review applications according to stated criteria and make formal recommendation of an action in each case. Rather than acting on every application, the committee can determine a set of minimum criteria and then allow a staff member or administrator, such as the Graduate Program Director, to apply those criteria referring exceptional or borderline cases to the committee. The recommended action will be based on the program's stated criteria and the applicant's qualifications and materials submitted. The recommended action will be documented sufficiently that program representatives can later explain the specific basis for the recommendation if necessary. The committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Graduate Program Director and then to the Office of Graduate Admissions for final decision and official action. Applicants have a right to be informed of the reason(s) for the recommendation made on their application, such as a denial of admission (but not to actual documents, unless the University is presented with a subpoena or court order).

Each applicant will receive from the Office of Graduate Admissions official, written notification of the decision, be it acceptance, denial, deferral, or other action. Until that occurs, admissions recommendations made by program faculty and college/school administrators are only recommendations and must be so described in any communications that precede the official action of the Office of Graduate Admissions.

4. Award of Assistantships and Fellowships to Graduate Students

Only active students matriculated in a graduate degree program in good academic standing may be awarded assistantships or fellowships.

Programs offering teaching assistantships/fellowships will state the main duties of those appointments and the qualifications required. These opportunities should be made available to anyone interested, for example, on a program website. Teaching Fellows have sole responsibility for teaching a course section or sections and Teaching Assistants teach laboratory sections or lead discussion of a lecture course. Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants must also hold office hours.

Availability of teaching assistantships/fellowships is announced, and candidates shall have the opportunity to apply (however, a program may limit availability of positions to a certain group, e.g., to prospective students only). Those to be considered for award of an

assistantship/fellowship constitute a pool of candidates, although assistantships/fellowships may also be awarded on a rolling basis or may be awarded by invitation. Appointment to any assistantship/fellowship requires the recommendation of the graduate program committee as well as program administrators.

Students who wish to be considered for a teaching assistantship/fellowship may be required to submit materials, documents, and/or information to support their qualifications or to participate in an interview. Other relevant materials, documents, and/or information may also be considered, such as a prospective student's application documentation or the academic record of a current student. By campus policy, the English/communication skills of Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants must be verified and documented on the recommendation form prior to appointment.

The graduate program committee will review teaching assistantship/fellowship candidates and make formal recommendation of an action in each case. The recommended action will be based on the stated duties and required qualifications as well as the evidence of the candidate's qualifications, and it will be documented sufficiently that program representatives can later explain the specific basis for the recommendation. Utilizing a recommendation form provided by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, the committee's positive recommendations are submitted to the Graduate Program Director and then the college/school Dean for their subsequent recommendations, and then forwarded to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies for final decision and action. (This form also documents details of the appointment and funding for the award.) Applicants have a right to be informed of the reasons for the recommendation made on their case, such as non-award of an assistantship/fellowship, upon request (but not to actual documents, unless the University is presented with a subpoena or court order).

The process for recommendation of clinical assistantships and studio assistantships to students within the College of Nursing graduate programs and the Master of Fine Arts program respectively, parallels the process outlined for teaching assistantships/fellowships.

A grant's principal investigator may select a student for a research assistantship without review by the graduate program committee; however, research assistantship recommendations are reviewed by the dean and require approval of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

Graduate assistantship recommendations are initiated after an interview by staff members of the unit recommending the appointment. Graduate assistantship recommendations require approval from the Graduate Program Director of the student's program of study and the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

See the Guidelines for Graduate Student Financial Support on the Graduate Studies website for additional detail regarding assistantship/fellowship appointments.

All assistantship/fellowship awards are issued through an official, written letter of appointment from the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. Until that occurs, the assistantship/fellowship recommendations of faculty and school/college representatives are only recommendations and must be so described in any communications that precede the official action of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

The official letter of appointment will state the terms of the appointment (duration, hours per week, stipend, as well as tuition and/or fee credits or other benefits) and conditions for cancellation (poor performance of duties, inadequate academic performance or progress, loss of funding, or there being no continuing need for services). Each letter of appointment constitutes a contract between the student and the University and requires the signature of the student as accepting the terms of the appointment. A copy of the signed contract is submitted to the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

Communicating the specific duties and such matters as assignments, schedules, and participation in training or program specific orientation is the responsibility of the program officials, although the Office of Associate Provost for Graduate Studies is pleased to enclose packets of information along with assistantship award letters.

In order to best serve both prospective and current students, decisions on award of assistantships/fellowships should be made as early as possible. Depending on specific circumstances, prospective students may receive notification of admission and notification of an assistantship/fellowship award separately or at the same time.

5. Appointment of the Graduate Program Director

Graduate Program Directors (commonly referred to as GPDs) - whether so named or in another administrative position and serving in that function - have important responsibilities and should be capable of performing them. Graduate Program Directors need to serve their students and program well and be available the entire calendar year to act on admissions recommendations, advise students, monitor students' progress, etc.

Stated here are criteria for selecting an individual from within a department or from among the faculty active in an interdepartmental or cross-college graduate program to serve as Graduate Program Director:

- when a department has a Graduate Program Director vacancy to fill, the graduate program committee will recommend a name to the Department Chairperson who will forward a recommendation to the Dean along with the individual's qualifications and a description of how the appointment will serve students and will help fulfill the goals of the graduate program. In the case of interdepartmental programs within a college/school, the recommendation is submitted to the Dean. For cross-college/school programs involving Co-Directors from each college/school, the recommendation is forwarded to the Dean of the college/school of the Co-Director, who will consult the Dean of the other college as well as the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies before making a decision;
- before making the appointment, the Dean will consult the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies regarding the individual being considered;
- the Dean will make the formal appointment which will be recorded in the offices of the Provost, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, and Human Resources;
- appointments shall be for a stated length of term, may be renewable, and are subject to recall. The performance of incumbents in the Graduate Program Director role is subject to evaluation. These matters are determined by the Dean, in accordance with governance processes in the college/school.

Individuals in an administrative position, such as an Associate Dean, who serve in the Graduate Program Director role are appointed by processes customary for those positions. The graduate program committee(s) for the program(s) concerned will participate in recommending qualifications and reviewing candidates.

May 2018