

Graduate College Policy Updates for Academic Year 2023-2024

Revision to the Graduate College Leave of Absence Policy

Approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee on February 1, 2023

This revision seeks to remove the language in the policy around academic standing to better reflect actual academic record practices. The current language states that a student's academic standing will not change while on an approved leave. However, it is possible that grade updates are processed, including the I to F by Rule process. These grade updates could result in the student's GPA being impacted, either by improving their GPA and removing a probation standing or by placing them on academic probation upon return for low GPA.

Revision to the GC 599 Registration Option

Approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee on February 1, 2023

The intent of GC 599 registration is to allow advanced doctoral students to be reported as full-time students and avoid moving into repayment status for their student financial loans. To ensure students do not move into this repayment status, students must be registered by the 10th day of classes. This revision is to add a 10th day deadline for requesting this registration option, so to allow this process to take place as it is intended.

Revision to the Graduate College Policy for Credit/No-Credit

Approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee on February 1, 2023

This proposal seeks to revise the required administrative approvals to allow for the student's academic department to approve credit/no-credit requests instead of the student's faculty advisor.

Revision to the Academic Standing policy

Approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee on February 1, 2023

This proposal seeks to revise the semester GPA minimum required of graduate students. Currently we require that graduate students maintain a semester minimum GPA of at least 2.75 and a cumulative GPA of the minimum required by their academic program. We have many graduate students who enroll in only one standard letter graded course and the remainder of their hours are S/U grading mode. If the student earns a B- in that one standard letter graded course, they end up on academic probation. The revision will lower the required semester minimum from a 2.75 to a 2.25.

Proposal to the Graduate College Executive Committee

Leave of Absence Policy

1/19/2023

PROPOSAL: Revise policy on leave of absence

CONTACT: Associate Dean Alexis Thompson, 300-3983, athmpsn1@illinois.edu

BACKGROUND: The leave of absence policy provides students an option to take a semester or two away with a clear path for resuming the program. We are recommending a revision to the policy to more accurately represent how academic standing could change while a student is on leave.

JUSTIFICATION: The current policy states that the student's academic standing does not change while the student is on leave. The intention behind this statement was to be consistent with other statements that students are not expected to make progress on the degree and that degree timelines for preliminary exam completion and graduation are extended due to the leave.

However, because course grades for previously completed semesters can change, either through grade changes being entered or an Incomplete grade rolling to an F, the GPA calculation and therefore academic standing may be updated. We are recommending removing these sentences about Academic Standing in the Leave of Absence policy so that the student's academic standing on return can accurately reflect their performance. The modification would allow either for a student to be placed on academic probation or returned to good standing.

The purpose of the leave of absence policy is to provide a mechanism for students to take time away from their program with clarity about how to resume their studies and move forward to successful completion of the degree. This update will allow students to have a clear understanding of steps they need to take as they re-enter the program.

COMMUNICATION PLAN: Graduate programs and students will be notified by email and the Graduate College handbook will be updated to reflect the change with the start of next academic year.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: August 2023

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO POLICY STATEMENT:

2.5 Academic Leave of Absence

Academic Leaves of Absence

An academic leave of absence provides an opportunity for a student to not enroll for one or more semesters. An academic leave of absence may be used for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, health reasons, personal reasons, active military service, or dependent or family care responsibilities. Students who are on an approved academic leave of absence are not expected to make progress on the degree. In addition, students on academic leaves of absence should not expect that faculty will provide feedback on academic work, including proposals or drafts of theses.

Enrolled students who need to take time away after the semester has begun are not eligible for academic leaves of absence. Students should consult with their program on academic and registration options and human resources regarding employment leave options.

Graduate students in degree-seeking programs are eligible for a total of two terms (fall and/or spring semesters) of academic leave. Students must document their request for a leave and meet the eligibility requirements. Students who anticipate not being enrolled for one or more terms, (fall or spring semesters, not summer), for whatever reason should meet with their program adviser before the first day of classes of their period of non-enrollment to request an academic leave of absence.

Academic Standing

~~Student status does not change during the period of an approved leave of absence. The student's academic standing that was in place when the leave began will be in place for the approved re-entry term.~~

Timing and Limits

All academic leaves should be requested before the term begins and cannot be approved for a term in which the student had registered and withdrawn. An academic leave of absence cannot be requested for a previous term.

Students are eligible for a two terms of academic leaves of absence (spring or fall semesters) during a student's degree program. These terms may be consecutive or approved individually. In exceptional circumstances a student may, upon submitting a petition, receive approval for additional academic leave after exhausting the two initial terms.

When an enrolled student withdraws from the current term, this term will not be counted towards an academic leave of absence.

Degree Time Limits

An approved academic leave of absence extends the Graduate College time limits for completion of the preliminary examination and the time to degree by the number of approved leave terms (up to a maximum of two terms).

If the student's time to degree will have expired by the start of their academic leave, then they will need to petition for a time extension when requesting the academic leave of absence.

Summer-only Graduate Programs

Students who are enrolled in summer only programs must apply for a leave of absence before taking a summer term off. Students in summer only programs are eligible for two summer terms of leave.

Reentry after Leave of Absence

At the time their leave of absence is approved, students will be approved to re-enter the same graduate program for the designated term following their leave.

Procedures to Request a Leave of Absence

Requests for a leave of absence should be approved by the student's academic department prior to the first day of classes. To request a formal academic leave the student should complete the Request for Academic Leave of Absence form before the first day of classes of the term of non-enrollment.

Absent Without Leave Policy

Degree seeking graduate students are required to request a formal academic leave of absence before not being enrolled for one or more terms, (fall / spring, not summer). Students in summer-only programs are required to request a formal academic leave of absence before taking a summer term off from their enrollment. There are potentially negative consequences for failing to request an academic leave of absence. Students who do not enroll and do not meet with the program and document their status with an approved academic leave of absence before a period of non-enrollment are considered absent without leave. A program may put an advising hold on a student who is absent without leave. A student who is absent without leave may be prevented from reenrolling, may have additional degree requirements to complete if allowed to return, or may be subject to new degree requirements.

Proposal to the Graduate College Executive Committee for New/Revised Graduate College Policy

PROPOSAL TITLE: Revision to the Graduate College Policy for GC 599.

SPONSOR: Elizabeth Spark, Assistant Dean, Admissions, Registration, and Enrollment Services

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: We are proposing a revision to the GC 599 policy to assign a 10th day registration deadline.

JUSTIFICATION: The intent of GC 599 registration is to allow advanced doctoral students to be reported as full-time students and avoid moving into repayment status for their student financial loans. To ensure students do not move into this repayment status, students must be registered by the 10th day of classes.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: None

COMMUNICATION PLAN: Policy changes for AY23-24 will be communicated to all faculty/staff and students by the end of the Spring 2023 semester.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Fall 2023

NEW/REVISED POLICY STATEMENT: (Graduate College Handbook, page 19)

GC 599

Graduate College (GC) 599 GC 599 is a 0 credit hour registration option for advanced doctoral students who do not have any financial assistance (such as an assistantship, fellowship, etc.) that would cover their tuition and fees for the semester, however they must maintain full-time enrollment to defer student loans. To be eligible to register for GC 599, a student must:

- have a guaranteed student loan that would require immediate repayment if the student were not registered for the minimum credit required by the lender to defer the loan;
- have passed the preliminary examination prior to the term in which they wish to register for GC 599;
- have completed all Graduate College and departmental requirements for the degree except for completing the dissertation, defending, and depositing;
- not have any financial assistance that would cover tuition and fees; and
- complete and submit the appropriate form to the Graduate College [by the tenth day of classes](#).

Proposal to the Graduate College Executive Committee for New/Revised Graduate College Policy

PROPOSAL TITLE: Revision to the Graduate College Policy for Credit/No Credit.

SPONSOR: Elizabeth Spark, Assistant Dean, Admissions, Registration, and Enrollment Services

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: We are proposing a revision to the Credit/No Credit policy to move the approval requirement from the student's advisor to a departmental authorized signatory

JUSTIFICATION: This change would significantly streamline the process for students, provide students with the necessary administrative advising, and align the approval process with that of other registration requests.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: None

COMMUNICATION PLAN: Policy changes for AY23-24 will be communicated to all faculty/staff and students by the end of the Spring 2023 semester.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Fall 2023 (with plans to put into practice in late Spring 2023)

NEW/REVISED POLICY STATEMENT: (Graduate College Handbook, page 19) and Student Code

Credit-No Credit

Credit-no credit is a permanent notation on the academic record that may be requested by a student with [the adviser's approval from the academic department](#). Grades for study abroad and transfer credit are also designated on the transcript as credit-no credit.

Students on limited status admission or probation are not allowed to register for credit-no credit course work until the limited status or probation has been removed. Students are advised to check the Class Schedule to be sure that the course desired is graded using a standard letter grade mode. Courses set up with S/U grading mode may not be taken for credit-no credit.

In any one semester, a student may take no more than 4 semester hours on a credit-no credit basis, except in these cases:

- students registering for Study Abroad or Domestic Study Away, or
- students enrolling in one five-hour undergraduate language course.

Over the entire degree program, a student must earn at least two hours of graded (A-D) course work for each hour of credit-no credit course work.

The form to request credit-no credit notation must be completed and submitted to the Graduate College before the deadline published in the Graduate College Academic Calendar. After the request is approved

and processed, the letter grade reported by the instructor will change to the credit-no credit notation as follows. A grade of D- or better will be converted to CR (credit), and a letter grade of F or a grade of ABS (absent from final) will be converted to NC (no credit).

A student may amend a credit-no credit request and return to a regular grade mode by filing a second credit-no credit form and submitting it by the published deadline as indicated in the Graduate College Academic Calendar. Additional information about credit-no credit can be found in the Student Code.

Student Code Revision

<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part1/3-105/>

Graduate Students

1. Graduate students may elect the credit-no credit option through the last day allowed for dropping a course without academic penalty. Students may elect to return to the regular grade basis by filing an amended request by the deadline date for dropping a course without academic penalty as indicated in the Graduate College calendar. The credit-no credit option form must be properly approved and submitted to the Graduate College.
2. The student's ~~adviser~~ department must approve the election of this option in accordance with the policy established by the major department.
3. Over the entire course of a degree program, a student must earn at least two credit hours of standard graded (A+ to D-) course work for each hour of earned credit-no credit course work.
4. In any one semester, a student may take no more than four credit hours on a credit-no credit basis, except in these cases: (A) Students registering for Study Abroad or Domestic Study Away (B) Students enrolling in one 5 hour undergraduate language course.
5. Hours transferred from another higher education institution cannot be used as part of the "graded course work."
6. If a student is admitted on a limited basis, or if a student falls below the Graduate College minimum grade-point average of 2.75 (or below the departmental minimum grade-point average) and is placed on probation, the student will not be allowed to register for credit-no credit course work for hours until the grade-point average has been raised to the minimum and the probation designation has been removed.

Proposal to the Graduate College Executive Committee for New/Revised Graduate College Policy

PROPOSAL TITLE: Revise the Graduate College Academic Standing policy

SPONSOR: Allison McKinney, Assistant Dean

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: This proposal seeks to revise the minimum semester GPA required for graduate students. Currently the minimum semester GPA is a 2.75 and the minimum cumulative GPA is tied to the established program minimum (2.75, 3.0 or 3.25).

BACKGROUND: The current requirement of a semester minimum of 2.75 results in students who earn a B- in one course in a semester being placed on academic probation. We are seeking to lower the minimum for required semester GPA to 2.25.

A 2.25 minimum would allow graduate students who register for only one standard letter graded course to earn a C+ and still be considered in good academic standing. Students earning grades below a C+ or a combination of standard letter grades that result in a semester GPA of below 2.25 would place the student on academic probation.

The academic standing report from Fall 2022 identified 461 students who were placed on academic probation for a semester GPA of less than 2.75. Of the 461 students, 215 students had a semester GPA above 2.25.

JUSTIFICATION: The purpose of monitoring semester GPA is to identify any issues with students at the earliest opportunity. This allows for advising conversations to happen with students in order to make necessary referrals to resources and develop plans for academic success. Undergraduate students are required to earn a 2.0 semester GPA or higher in cases where a student's cumulative GPA is below a certain threshold (see page 73 of the Student Code).

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: None

COMMUNICATION PLAN: Policy revisions will be communicated to all graduate students and all graduate departmental staff and faculty in late Spring 2023. Updates will be made to the Graduate College Handbook for publishing during Summer 2023.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Fall 2023

NEW/REVISED POLICY STATEMENT:

Minimum GPA (Page 23 of the Graduate College Handbook)

Campus policy requires a student to maintain a minimum cumulative graduate GPA of 2.75 and a semester GPA of ~~2.75~~ 2.25 in order to continue in an advanced degree program, and to have a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 2.75 to graduate. Many departments, however, require a higher for the cumulative graduate GPA. The Graduate College enforces the department's

minimum based on the calculated graduate cumulative GPA. Students enrolled in joint degree programs must meet the minimum GPA requirements of both degree programs in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress and to graduate.

Student Code Revision - <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part1/3-103/>

Graduates

The graduate GPA includes all hours and grades for all courses taken while enrolled as a graduate student. The GPA component of academic status is calculated at the end of each semester. At the point of calculation, graduate students must have a cumulative graduate GPA at or above their department's minimum and a semester GPA of at least 2.75 to be in good standing. To be eligible for an advanced degree, a graduate student must have a grade-point average of at least 2.75. Some departments require a higher average. See the Graduate College Handbook for Students, Faculty and Staff for more information about repeated courses and grade points used in computations.