

Policy Title: Graduate Student Retention Standards

Policy Type: Academic **New/revised:** New Exist in graduate catalog

Old Policy #: from the graduate catalog; no numbering system exists

Approval level: Board of Trustees
 President
 Vice President
 Other (specify here)

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide requirements for progressing in graduate certificate or degree programs.

Policy

I. Graduate Course Load

The full-time course load for graduate students is nine (9) graduate credits. Graduate course loads in excess of 15 credits require approval of the departmental chair and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

II. Academic Probation

To remain in good standing, a graduate student (degree or non-degree), must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better on all graduate work attempted. In order to graduate, students must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average overall, and on the program of study. When the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0, the graduate student will be placed on academic probation. If the student does not achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of one probationary semester, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and appropriate college/departmental/program officials will determine whether the student should be dismissed from graduate study at East Tennessee State University or continued on probation. No student will be allowed more than two probationary semesters, whether consecutive or cumulative. At the end of a second probationary semester a student whose cumulative grade point average is still below 3.0 will be dismissed from graduate study. Students whose performance results in a GPA so far below 3.0 as to make it mathematically impossible to attain an overall GPA of 3.0 after one semester may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term. A student will be removed from probationary status upon attaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average. When an "I" grade converts to an "F" after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term.

III. Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the School of Graduate Studies for such reasons as academic misconduct, failure to meet conditions of admission, failure to meet a requirement of the program, or for exceeding the allowed number of probationary semesters.

IV. Reinstatement

A. Students who have been dismissed from the School of Graduate Studies for academic reasons may address a written request for reinstatement to the chair of their department or major. The request should include reasons why the reinstatement should be considered.

- B. The department will review the request for reinstatement and make recommendations to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. If the request is denied at the departmental level, the student may then direct a written appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School, and a final decision will be made in accordance with policies established by the Graduate Council.

V. Adding a Course

A course(s) may be added through the late registration/late add period without special permission, unless the course has reached the established maximum enrollment. To add any class that has reached the enrollment limit requires permission of the instructor and department chair. After the late registration/late add period, special permission must be obtained from the instructor, the department chair, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and the registrar and may be granted only in extenuating circumstances.

VI. Dropping a Course

- A. A course(s) may be dropped during the first eight calendar weeks of a regular semester. Courses dropped during the first two weeks will not appear on the student's permanent record. Students who drop a course after the second full week of classes through the eighth calendar week will receive a grade of "W". (During the summer session or when courses do not conform with established term dates, this schedule is adjusted appropriately to fit the condensed time frames. Consult the Academic Calendar for exact dates.)
- B. After the eighth week a student may not drop a course, except where verifiable extenuating circumstances can be documented. A petition for a late drop may be presented by the student for consideration by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Verifiable extenuating circumstances may include illness, accidental injury, or other appropriate reasons. A course may not be dropped if there is an unresolved charge of academic misconduct.
- C. If a late drop is approved by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, the student will receive a grade of "W" (Withdrawn) or "WF" (Withdrawn-Failing), as assigned by the instructor of the course. All approved petitions for late drops must be received in the Office of the Registrar no later than 4:30 p.m. two days before the end of classes for all academic terms. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to drop a course after that time.

VII. Auditing Courses

- A. Students are permitted to enroll in regular university courses as auditors. Registration fees are the same for audit as for credit. Regular attendance is required. Audit enrollment will not be considered part of the minimum credits required for full-time enrollment. Audit enrollment will be counted in determining overloads.
- B. After the published "Last Day to Add a Course" students may not change their enrollment status in a course from credit to audit or from audit to credit. Instructors may administratively drop auditors for unsatisfactory class attendance.

VIII. Change of Field of Study

Students seeking to change their field of graduate study from one program to another must formally apply to the new graduate program. The student is responsible for ensuring that all admissions materials required by the new program are on file in the School of Graduate Studies prior to any program deadlines. Students must resign from the program in which they are currently enrolled prior to accepting admission into the new program. Students seeking to change concentrations within a program may do so by completing a Change of Program of Study form, which can be obtained from the School of Graduate Studies.

IX. Class Attendance

It is expected that students will attend class regularly and provide the faculty with a reason for any absence. Failure to attend class regularly can affect students' grades and financial aid. East Tennessee State University does not specify a fixed number of class absences as university-wide policy, but each department within the university has the right to set a maximum number of absences (including absences due to university activities and illnesses) permitted during an academic term. Departmental class absence policy is subject to approval by the dean of the school/college. At the beginning of the course each faculty member must provide a written statement governing attendance policy (including laboratory/clinical sessions where applicable) for the course so that all students may be fully informed of their attendance responsibilities, including penalties that may be imposed for failing to meet these responsibilities. If a student is not in attendance during the class meeting in which the class attendance policy is discussed it is the student's responsibility to ascertain the policy in that class.

X. Classification of Courses by Level

Enrollment in the 5000, 6000, and 7000 series is limited to graduate students. Undergraduate students may not enroll in courses numbered higher than one year above their current classification unless the undergraduate student meets an exception. (Please see Advanced Admission for Undergraduates in the undergraduate catalog for more information.) At least 70 percent of all courses taken in a master's program must be in the 5000 series; at least one-half of all courses taken on the doctoral level must be in the 6000 and 7000 series.

XI. Enrollment

Every student is required to enroll at the time and in the manner prescribed by the registrar. All charges for the ensuing semester must be paid, or otherwise provided for, before registration is completed.

XII. Combined Graduate and Undergraduate Enrollment (5xx7 and 5956 Courses)

- A. In some curricula, master's level students may enroll in 5xx7 and 5956 courses which are co-listed with 4xx7 and 4956 undergraduate courses. A student who has taken the 4xx7 or 4956 course for undergraduate credit cannot repeat the course for graduate credit. Graduate students enrolled in 5xx7 and 5956 courses shall be required to do specified work over and above that required of undergraduate students enrolled in companion 4xx7 and 4956 courses.
- B. Specialist degree students may not enroll for 5xx7 and 5956 courses (except for 5957 "Topic in" courses); they must choose courses from the regular graduate-only series of 5000 and 6000 level courses, with at least one-half of all courses being at the 6000 level.
- C. Doctoral students may not enroll for 5xx7 and 5956 courses (except for 5957 "Topic in" courses); they must choose from the regular graduate-only series of 5000, 6000, and 7000 courses, with at least one-half of all courses being at the 6000 and 7000 levels.
 1. Limitation on 5xx7 and 5956 Courses: No more than 30 percent of all courses taken in any program may come from the 5xx7 / 5956 series. Some doctoral programs disallow 5xx7 and 5956 courses.

XIII. Independent Studies, Problems, and Workshops

- A. Students who wish to pursue individual studies, problems, or workshops of special interest may enroll for these courses provided that the topic for study has been defined and approved by the professor and the student's advisor. Under no circumstances should registration for independent studies, problems, or workshop courses be used to attend a course with a different number or title at any level of course classification.
- B. Limitations on Independent Studies, Problems, and Workshops - No more than 30 percent of the semester credits for a graduate degree program may be taken in

independent studies, problems, or workshops or in any combination of these types of courses.

XIV. Incomplete Grades

A grade of "I" (incomplete) indicates that a student was passing the course at the end of the semester, but due to circumstances beyond the student's control, was unable to complete the course requirement. It also indicates that the student has received consent from the instructor to complete the work for which an "I" is assigned. The "I" grade cannot be used to allow a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade or to repeat a course. An "I" grade must be removed no later than one calendar year from the time the grade is awarded. Time extension requests for removal of "I" grades must be submitted to and approved by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies before the allotted time expires. An "I" grade not removed under the guidelines noted above will be converted to an "F." When an "I" grade converts to an "F" after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term. A student cannot withdraw from or drop a course after a grade of "I" has been assigned or after one year has elapsed. To remove an "I" grade, the student must complete the work independently and must not register for the course a second time or attend the same course at a later time in order to complete the course requirements.

XV. Repeating a Course

If a student chooses to repeat a course, all grades earned are computed in the grade point average. The grade earned on the repeat does not replace the original.

XVI. "S", "SP", and "U" Grades

The letter grades of "S" (Satisfactory Completion), "SP" (Satisfactory Progress), and "U" (Unsatisfactory) are given for Readings and Research, Capstone Projects, Thesis, and Dissertation. A grade of "S" carries graduate credit and indicates satisfactory completion of the course. Each program must specify the number of credits required for Thesis/Dissertation. Degree completion requires an "S" on the most recent credits associated with Thesis/Dissertation or Readings and Research. "SP" indicates progress toward project or research completion, but carries no credit. This grade does not affect the student's GPA. Students who receive an "SP" must, in subsequent semesters (including summer), enroll in additional credits of Thesis/Dissertations or Readings and Research until the requirements are completed. The "U" grade carries no credit and indicates unsatisfactory progress toward research or project completion. Students who receive a "U" must enroll for the course the following semester, including summer. The "U" is equivalent to an "F". The first "U" does not affect the GPA; however, all subsequent "U" grades will convert to an "F" and will be figured into the GPA.

XVII. Continuous Enrollment

- A. Students who wish to use support services of the university (computer, library, laboratories, studios, etc.) and/or require faculty guidance for studies, research, or preparation of a prospectus and are not enrolled for coursework, thesis, or dissertation must be registered for the appropriate non-degree credit course (5990, 6990, 7990) in Readings and Research each term university support or facilities are being used, including summer term. Students who have previously registered for thesis, dissertation, and/or readings and research must be continuously registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour every subsequent semester, including summer, until completion of the degree.
- B. Readings and Research cannot count toward degree requirements.

- C. Candidates for a master’s degree with a thesis option must continue to register each semester (minimum of one credit) from the time of the initial registration for 5960- Thesis until the thesis is accepted by the School of Graduate Studies. (Individual programs may require minimum enrollments of up to 3 graduate credits.) No less than three credits nor more than six credits of thesis may be applied toward the master’s degree.
- D. Candidates for doctoral degrees must continue to register each semester from the time of the initial registration for 7960-Dissertation until the dissertation is accepted by the School of Graduate Studies. (Individual programs may require minimum enrollments of up to 3 graduate credits.) No less than 12 credits nor more than 21 credits of dissertation credit may be applied toward the doctoral degree.
- E. A student must be enrolled for a minimum of one graduate credit hour during the term of graduation, with one exception: a student who does not meet the deadlines for completing degree requirements, including thesis/dissertation defense and orals, but does complete all requirements, including approval of the thesis/dissertation by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, before the first day of classes for the following semester, will not be required to register for the term in which the degree is awarded.

XVIII. Experiential Learning Credit

- A. No graduate credit can be awarded for experiential learning that occurs prior to admission into a graduate program and which has not been under the supervision of the institution.
- B. Extension and Correspondence: All work completed at any approved ETSU site is residential and not extension credit. No correspondence work can be applied to any graduate program at East Tennessee State University.

XIX. Time Limits (Matriculation Limits)

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| Graduate Certificate | 4-6 years | Specialist Degree | 5 years |
| Master’s Degree | 6 years | Doctoral Degree | 7 years* |
| | | <i>*(5 years for persons previously awarded an Ed.S.)</i> | |

**Time for completion of the degree is counted from the date of registration for the first course applied toward the degree requirements, including transfer work.*

XX. Withdrawal from the University

Students withdrawing from the university-discontinuing matriculation in the university- during the first eight weeks of classes will receive a grade of “W” in all courses. Withdrawals from the university after the eighth week will be recorded with “W” or “WF” at the discretion of the instructor. (During the summer semester, or other shortened terms, this schedule is adjusted appropriately to fit the condensed time frame.) All requests for withdrawal must be received in the Office of the Registrar no later than 4:30 p.m. two days before the last day of classes of any academic term. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to withdraw from the university after that time.

A student who does not withdraw by the official procedure will receive an “F” for each course. (Consult the Schedule of Classes for more details.)

XXI. Grade Reports and Appeals

Grade reports are available through *GoldLink* to all students who complete registration each term. Academic departments are required to retain grade documentation for a period of one year. Specific student concerns regarding academic records, other than the Grade Appeal process described in the graduate catalog must be addressed within one academic year from the date of posting of grades for the term in question.

3/24/2017 – approved by the Board of Trustees.