



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, Directors, Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students

FROM: Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School, Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor

SUBJECT: **Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures**

DATE: August 21, 2015

****IMPORTANT POLICY REMINDERS AND UPDATES****

BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF FACULTY, STAFF, AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

This memorandum highlights key policies and procedures that are relevant to graduate education at FSU. Generally, the issues are summarized with pointers and links to websites and the pdf version of the Graduate Bulletin containing the complete information. Please give careful attention to this memorandum, but please note that it is not exhaustive and faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with all policies affecting graduate education at FSU.

The policies and procedures affecting graduate education are posted on the following websites.

- "[GradSpace](#)" Blackboard® site: located under campus organizations
- "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site - located under campus organizations
- Faculty Handbook - <http://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu/>
- Florida State University Graduate Bulletin 2015-2016
<http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/apdefault.htm>

REVISED POLICY – Please note the following policy revision approved by the Graduate Policy Committee and Faculty Senate in 2014-2015.

1. University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants (Graduate Bulletin, p. 91)

Substantive changes were made e.g. the number of different teaching levels were condensed from seven to four. Some changes were also made regarding the English language requirement.

REMINDERS REGARDING SOME POLICIES

1. IRB and ACUC approval

Students must seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval prior to commencing any research involving human or animal subjects. **This includes all secondary data analysis.** The student's name must appear on the IRB approval and/or application form as a PI or co-PI for the period of time when the student's research and data analysis were conducted. Students must be listed on an ACUC protocol in order to conduct any animal research. IRB requires that students have their own approval.

Please note that certain research activities involving human subjects are exempt from the requirement that they receive IRB full or expedited review. However, the FSU Assurance with federal government's Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) provides that all research, including those which may qualify as exempt, receive review and approval by the FSU IRB. Only the IRB may determine which activities qualify for an exempt review. Investigators are not authorized to make an independent determination that research involving human subjects is exempt and must contact the IRB concerning the status of proposed research or changes in ongoing research.

Failing to get the appropriate approvals is a serious breach of research integrity and standards. The Manuscript Signature Form requires major professors and committee members to acknowledge that proper approvals were obtained prior to the commencement of research. The Graduate School also has a reporting procedure that will send reminders to students who are registered for thesis, treatise, or dissertation hours as well as to their major professors.

2. Membership in the Graduate Faculty

A person must hold an appropriate general faculty appointment in order to be considered for status as a member of the Graduate Faculty. **Graduate Faculty Status (GFS)** is limited (except for special circumstances) to faculty who hold tenure or tenure-earning appointments. This status is necessary to teach graduate courses. Limitations, if any, as to who is eligible to serve on and supervise thesis and dissertation/treatise committees rests with the programs and must adhere to criteria previously approved by the GPC. Only tenured faculty with GFS can serve as the University Representative on doctoral committees. Persons holding

specialized, non-tenure track or visiting in lieu of adjunct faculty appointments must be approved for **Graduate Teaching Status (GTS)** to teach graduate courses. In addition, specialized, non-tenure track and courtesy faculty may be nominated for and granted **Co-Masters Directive Status or Co-Doctoral Directive Status (Co-MDS and Co-DDS)** to serve on student committees. As such they may also co-chair a student committee.

The policy on Graduate Faculty Status and Graduate Teaching Status is incorporated into the Faculty Handbook, Section 5: Faculty Development; Graduate Faculty Membership (<http://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu>). The forms and procedures for nominating faculty for GFS, GTS, co-MDS, and co-DDS are available on the "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site under the "Forms" and "Graduate Faculty Status" tabs in the left-hand menu. The forms are also available on the Graduate School Website (<http://gradschool.fsu.edu/Forms>).

Departments and colleges must request graduate status for all new eligible tenure track faculty by submitting a completed *Graduate Faculty Status Appointment Recommendation for Tenure-Track Faculty Form* ([Form# GFS-01](#)) with a curriculum vitae. Such nominated faculty require at least a 2/3 majority affirmative vote of all faculty holding GFS in the program. The completed form and CV should then be sent to the academic college dean and subsequently the Dean of the Graduate School for approval.

The graduate faculty categories for specialized, non-tenure track, visiting in lieu of adjunct faculty and courtesy faculty include Graduate Teaching Status (GTS), Co-MDS, or Co-DDS. The forms ([Form# DS01](#) and [Form#GTS01](#)) for these requests are available on the Graduate School Blackboard® site and website. Once completed these forms should be sent to the academic college dean and subsequently the Dean of the Graduate School for approval. Such approval must be obtained prior to engaging in these activities.

Fully retired faculty (includes Emerita/Emeritus status) may continue to serve as major professors for those students who have already begun their thesis/dissertation/treatise at the time of the professor's retirement. Fully retired faculty, however, may not accept additional students in this capacity. Fully retired faculty may serve as an additional member beyond the minimum number required on Master's and Doctoral committees of new students if they choose. Appointment to courtesy is not necessary, but department chairs must send a memo to The Graduate School indicating the names of the student committees on which the professor serves and the approval of this continued service.

For faculty who depart the University for any reason other than retirement, the department or program that wishes to continue the faculty member in some or all of these roles must provide a courtesy appointment and nominate the faculty member for master's or doctoral co-directive status, as needed, so the faculty member may continue as co-chair or an additional member for those students who have already begun their thesis/dissertation/treatise at the time of the faculty member's departure. If the faculty member is serving as committee chair, the department will then designate a current or new member of the committee with appropriate directive status as co-chair of the committee. Faculty members who depart the

University may not accept additional students in this capacity, nor may they serve as the University Representative on committees.

3. Appointment of graduate students on assistantships

The UFF-FSU-GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) set forth the terms and conditions that affect the employment of students who are supported on graduate assistantships. These documents can be found on the FSU Human Resources website: http://hr.fsu.edu/?page=elr/collective_bargaining/collective_bargaining_home by clicking the link for UFF-FSU-GAU Bargaining Unit.

Recently, negotiations concluded regarding a Successor Agreement for 2015-2018. Many updates and changes were discussed this year in negotiations in a collaborative effort to enhance the experience for our Graduate Assistants. Once the Agreement is fully ratified, the new provisions will go into effect. Faculty and staff should familiarize themselves with the revised CBA. It is important to note that the Agreement, once ratified, outlines new minimums for stipend rates and raises, and entitles Graduate Assistants to certain employment rights, including, but not limited to the following:

- Graduate Assistants must be appointed using the proper job code. A listing of the job codes with descriptions can be found in the "Graduate School - Faculty/Staff" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Waiver/Info Forms" in the "Graduate Student Waiver Management Manual" under page 12. These job codes are also defined on the FSU Human Resources website under Policies and Procedures (**4-OP-C-7-H2**).
- Employment performance evaluations are required for each appointment period. The revised CBA will also include a requirement for a "follow-up" evaluation to any previous evaluation with a rating less than "Satisfactory." This evaluation is distinct from the annual academic evaluation (see item 11 below). A standard employment performance evaluation form is recommended, but not required, and can be found on the "Graduate School - Faculty/Staff" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Forms" and "Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form" or on the FSU Human Resources website, located under "HR Forms."
- Workloads for Graduate Assistants greater than 0.50 FTE are inconsistent with the expectation that a Graduate Assistant is pursuing a full-time course of study. Under special or occasional circumstances, a Graduate Assistant may carry a greater FTE assignment (not to exceed 0.75 FTE). However ongoing workloads greater than 0.50 FTE should be scrutinized critically for financial impacts (related to benefits) and any negative impact on the student's academic progress. In addition, departments need to review the workloads of their Graduate Assistants and consider factors such as class size, credit hours, and previous experience, when determining assignments, particularly teaching assignments where the Graduate Assistant is the instructor of record.
- Departments or programs may institute a policy that restricts outside employment or activity for Graduate Assistants; however, these policies cannot apply to Graduate Assistants with a stipend less than \$7,750 per semester. If a department or program employs a policy to restrict outside employment or activity for Graduate Assistants

with stipends greater than \$7,750, those policies must first be approved by the Academic Dean and then subsequently approved by The Graduate School.

4. Graduate Assistant stipends

As a result of this year's negotiations, there is an expected increase in the minimum stipend. This new minimum is subject to ratification of the Agreement. Upon ratification, Human Resources and The Graduate School will distribute further communication on the implementation of the increased minimum stipend.

- The new minimum stipend will be \$12,000 for Graduate Assistants on 0.50 FTE appointments for the entire academic year (19.5 pay periods).

5. Health insurance subsidy for graduate students for 2015-2016

Due to an increase in the price of the student health insurance plan, the University will increase Health Insurance Subsidies for Graduate Assistants with a qualifying appointment. This increase in subsidy amounts is subject to ratification of the Agreement.

- Health Insurance Subsidies are now \$1,662 for Graduate Assistants on a 0.50 FTE appointment for both fall and spring semesters; \$1,012 for Graduate Assistants on a 0.25 FTE appointment for both fall and spring semesters; and \$1,212 for Graduate Assistants on a 0.50 FTE appointment for one semester and a 0.25 FTE-0.49 FTE for the other semester.

For information regarding the process and payroll deduction dates, please visit <http://gradschool.fsu.edu/Funding-Awards/Subsidy-Benefit>.

6. Tuition Waivers

Information concerning tuition waiver policies and procedures can be found in the "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Waiver Info/Forms." Students should access the "[GradSpace](#)" Blackboard® site, under the submenu "Funding and Awards". The GS contact is Brian Barton, bbarton@fsu.edu, at 644-3501.

The Waiver Receipt Form is now auto-generated in the Student's Service Center and must be printed and signed by each student receiving a waiver and given to the academic unit issuing the waiver for retention by the end of the first week of classes each semester. It is critical that each student signs the form as this is the official certification from the student regarding fee-liability should they withdraw or lose their assistantship. It is equally important that the academic unit has a record of the signed form in the event a student questions their fee liability at a later date.

Waiver entry requests that occur after the deadline for waivers should be made through the FSU Service Center at:

<https://crm.omni.fsu.edu/psp/sprdcn/?cmd=login&service=https://crm.omni.fsu.edu/psp/sprdcn/EMPLOYEE/EMPL/h/?tab=DEFAULT&languageCd=ENG&>

Please note that entry of the late waiver by the Graduate School is not automatic. If the late waiver causes a Financial Aid overaward, the College or Department will be responsible for correcting the overaward with the Office of Financial Aid. Every effort should be made to enter waivers by the established deadlines due to the fact that the University is now disbursing financial aid earlier and we do not encourage overaward situations.

7. Thesis, treatise, and dissertation committees

The department or college must enter the composition of the supervisory committee into the online Graduate Student Tracking system in a timely manner, but no later than the second week of classes in the semester that the student intends to graduate. (Graduate Bulletin, Supervisory Committee, pp. 74 and 76).

All doctoral committees appointed after August 24, 2009, must meet the minimum university standard of four members with GFS. Included among these four members will be the University Representative who must also be a tenured member of the faculty. Specialized, non-tenured tenure track faculty from outside the degree program, department or college and holding GFS are eligible to serve as one of the four members, but they cannot serve as the University Representative. Specialized and non-tenure track faculty holding Co-DDS or Co-MDS are eligible to serve as additional members of the committee (beyond the minimum of four) and those with Co-DDS can serve as a co-advisor, (Graduate Bulletin, Supervisory Committee, p.76).

8. Program of Study

A Program of Study should be prepared for each graduate student. The guidelines and timelines differ slightly for master's and doctoral students. For details, consult the Graduate Bulletin, pp. 74 and 76 respectively.

9. Preliminary Examination for doctoral students

Satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination shall be required for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. No student may register for dissertation or doctoral treatise hours prior to the point in the semester in which the preliminary examination was passed. An admission-to-candidacy form must be completed and filed in the Office of the University Registrar prior to registration for dissertation/treatise hours. After completion of the admission to candidacy process, the student may retroactively add dissertation hours for that semester in which the preliminary examination was completed. Retroactive changes are only permitted if the preliminary examination is passed by the end of the seventh week of the semester. For term specific deadline dates, please refer to the "Academic Calendar" in the *Registration Guide*. (Graduate Bulletin, Preliminary Examination, p. 76).

10. Submitting the thesis, treatise or dissertation in electronic format (ETD)

All information pertaining to the submission requirements for Electronic Thesis, Treatise and Dissertation content can be found exclusively on The Graduate School's Blackboard ® websites. All ETD content and information is located in the "Manuscript Clearance" submenu, found on the left-hand side of the screen. Students should access the "[GradSpace](#)" Blackboard ® website. Faculty and Staff should access the "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard ® website. In order for students to submit their manuscript successfully, they must adhere to the formatting rules found in the "Guidelines and Requirements for Electronic Theses, Treatises, and Dissertations," as well as meet the deadlines outlined in the semester they intend to graduate. Manuscripts not formatted in full accordance with the Guidelines brochure will NOT be reviewed and will NOT count as an initial submission to meet any deadline.

The Graduate School recommends that students submit their manuscript to the Manuscript Clearance Adviser for the initial format check when it is submitted to the supervisory committee in preparation for the defense. In any case students must submit the initial version of their manuscript by the appropriate deadline to submit for initial format review in the semester they intend to graduate. Students must then submit their final version and all forms by the deadline to submit the final version of a successfully defended thesis, dissertation, or treatise and all required forms. However, in all cases students must have their manuscript cleared* within 60 days of a successful defense or the student must be re-examined. In some cases, the 60-day deadline may occur before semester deadlines; in those cases, the 60-day deadline takes precedence over the semester deadlines.

Semester deadlines are posted in the Manuscript Clearance menu of GradSpace in the Dates and Deadlines submenu. For Fall Semester 2015 the last day to submit a doctoral dissertation or treatise for initial format review is October 19. The last day to submit master's thesis for initial format review is November 2. The last day to submit the final version of a successfully defended thesis, dissertation, or treatise, and all required forms is November 16. The last day for thesis, dissertation, or treatise students to receive an email from Manuscript Clearance confirming final clearance of their manuscript for Fall 2015 graduation is December 11.

For Spring 2016, the last day to submit doctoral dissertation or treatise for initial format review is March 21. The last day to submit master's thesis for initial format review is April 4. The last day to submit the final version of a successfully defended thesis, dissertation or treatise, and all required forms is April 18. The last day for thesis, dissertation or treatise students to receive an email from Manuscript Clearance confirming final clearance of their manuscript for Spring 2016 graduation is May 6.

*Cleared = Manuscript formatting approved by the Manuscript Clearance Adviser AND all forms received by the Manuscript Clearance Adviser.

11. Annual review of graduate students

The policy states –“Each year the supervisory committee, the major professor, or the student’s advisor, prior to the selection of a major professor, will assess the progress of the student in writing and make available copies of the annual review to the student, the department chair, and the academic dean.” (Graduate Bulletin, Supervisory Committee, p. 76)

The Graduate School recommends that programs use standard templates to facilitate the review process of all students. The Graduate School has posted examples of such forms on "[Graduate School - Faculty/Staff](#)" Blackboard® site in the section for Graduate Program Directors.

Programs must use the online Graduate Student Tracking system to indicate that a student has had his/her annual review. **The written review should be uploaded into the system.** The Graduate School also recommends that master’s students be evaluated annually (e.g., review of timely progress towards completion of coursework and thesis research as appropriate).

12. Full-time and Part-time Status of Students

The required full-time or part-time status of graduate students is affected by their appointment or fellowship status, as well as their progress towards the degree. This status in turn affects eligibility for Financial Aid. Federal guidelines stipulate certain requirements for enrollment. The complete policy is highlighted in the Graduate Bulletin (p.66), under the Academic Regulations and Procedures section, Full-Time Student Course Load.

13. University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants at Florida State University

There are University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants at Florida State University that were updated this past year as noted above. The standards are posted on various websites and are also included in the Graduate Bulletin (p. 91). These are meant to be University-wide minimum standards; departments may adopt additional or more stringent standards.

14. EthicsPoint

The Florida State University has established an EthicsPoint Hotline to provide members of the FSU community a simple anonymous way to confidentially report activities that involve certain suspected misconduct or violations of our policies and procedures, regulations, or state and federal laws. To report a potential issue using the hotline, please click the EthicsPoint link: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/32441/index.html> or call toll-free 855-231-7511 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year).