

## **Graduate Academic Policies and Regulations**

### **Academic Advisement**

Students accepted into a graduate program are assigned a faculty advisor by their Graduate Program Director. Graduate students should consult with their advisor in selection of courses, degree requirements, and related matters.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

For a Master's degree student, official admission to the graduate program constitutes admission to candidacy, unless the specific program has additional requirements. No graduate student will be allowed to register for a master's level course after completion of fifteen (15) fifteen hours at Delaware State University unless he/she has been admitted to the program and to candidacy.

Each doctoral program is required to state clearly and to communicate to its students the requirements for candidacy. Students in doctoral programs must apply for candidacy after they have completed the program's core required coursework with an average of B or higher, and have successfully passed the qualifying examination. A program may use an alternative assessment process comparable to the qualifying examination and appropriate to the discipline to allow the student to demonstrate the content knowledge and other skills deemed to be essential prerequisites for entering the dissertation phase.

Applications for admission to candidacy must be submitted for approval prior to the dissertation phase, and in no cases later than two semesters prior to graduation. Admission to doctoral candidacy must be approved by the respective Graduate Program Director and by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to become familiar with the policies and procedures governing admission to candidacy in his/her degree program.

### **Degree Requirements and Application for Graduation**

In order to earn a master's or a doctorate degree, graduate students must satisfy all of the institutional requirements as well as the specified requirements of the program in which they are enrolled. At a minimum to earn a Master's degree, a student must have earned at least 30 graduate credits, of which no more than 6 may be thesis, internship, or other special project. At a minimum to earn a doctoral degree, a student must have earned at least 60 graduate credits (including those previously applied toward a Master's degree and accepted as part of the doctoral curriculum), of which not more than 12 may be for the dissertation. Students may take additional thesis or dissertation credits, as needed, for the duration of their project. In no cases may additional thesis/dissertation credits be substituted for core or elective courses in determining qualification for the degree.

To earn a graduate degree, the graduate student must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) for all work taken on the graduate level.

Graduate students who expect to graduate in May must file an Application for Graduation with the Office of Records and Registration and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research by February 1 of that year.

### **Participation in Graduation Exercises**

Graduate students may participate in the annual graduation exercises in May only if the following conditions are met:

1. File the application for graduation by February 1;
2. Enroll in all courses required to complete degree requirements;
3. Successfully complete those courses of current enrollment and satisfy all degree program requirements; and
4. Submit any required thesis or dissertation to the library for binding not later than the last day of the Final examination period.
5. Satisfy all financial obligations to the university.

Graduate degree recipients interested in participating in Commencement ceremonies must submit the Application for Graduation according to the procedures and deadlines in place, even if they completed the requirements the previous August or December.

### Submitting an Appeal

Appeals concerning reevaluation of a final course grade should be submitted as follows:

1. Graduate students should file, in writing, the complaint or appeal to the appropriate Graduate Program Director for resolution. The Graduate Program Director shall reply to the student within 10 working days;
2. If the disposition is not favorable, the graduate student may appeal to the respective College Dean, by submitting the previous appeal documents, the Graduate Program Director's response, and any additional relevant information. The Dean shall reply to the student within 10 working days.
3. If the disposition is not favorable, the final appeal may be brought in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. All prior documents plus additional information must be submitted. The Dean of Graduate Studies and Research shall reply to the student within 10 working days.

Appeals concerning reinstatement from dismissal from a graduate program must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The appeal must be in writing, include documented support from the Graduate Program Director and College Dean, and provide an explanation from the student describing how he/she will complete the degree program successfully, if reinstated

### Thesis

A master's degree student, who elects or is required to complete a thesis, must have a Thesis Committee established not later than the end of the second semester of full-time residency. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of four (4) members equivalent to the rank of Assistant Professor or above, at least one of whom shall be from outside the department.

A graduate student initiating a thesis project should select a topic in consultation with the Research Advisor and the Graduate Program Director. The graduate student must file for and receive approval from the Thesis Committee during the semester prior to beginning work on the thesis. At a minimum this request will require the student to submit a brief written thesis proposal to the Committee for its approval. Graduate Programs may have additional requirements, including but not limited to oral presentation of the project proposal.

Due to the nature of research and creative work at the graduate level, it is expected that the thesis project may evolve in unanticipated ways. Graduate students are strongly advised to consult frequently with their Research Advisor and to keep their thesis committee members apprised of progress. In the event that the student and the Advisor decide to make substantive changes in the project's goals, aims, or scope, a revised thesis proposal should be submitted, reviewed, and approved in the same manner as the original one was.

The application for approval of the Thesis Committee membership is available in the Department Office, from the Graduate Program Director, and from the School of Graduate Studies and Research. The style manual to be used in writing the thesis will be designated by the respective department. Certain mandatory formatting requirements are described in the Delaware State University Thesis Handbook, available at [www.desu.edu](http://www.desu.edu) [1], from the Graduate Program Director, and from the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

A graduate student preparing a thesis or dissertation must present and satisfactorily defend the thesis in an oral presentation and examination by the Thesis Committee during the student's final semester. The thesis defense has four components: (a) presentation of the work by the student; (b) defense of the thesis by the student through questioning in an open session by the Committee members and others in attendance and, if requested by the Committee, at a closed session for the Committee and the student only; (c) discussion by the Committee in a closed session to determine whether or not the thesis, including its defense, is satisfactory; and (d) communication to the student by the Committee chairperson the outcome of the defense.

The Committee has five alternatives: (a) to accept the thesis without any recommended changes, and for all members to sign the approval page; (b) to accept the thesis, subject to the student making the recommended changes, with all Committee members, except the chairperson signing the approval page, and the chairperson responsible for checking the revised thesis to ensure the changes were made, and signing approval at that time; (c) to recommend revision to the thesis, but not to sign until the revised thesis has been submitted to and reviewed and approved by the Committee members; (d) to recommend revision of the thesis and a second meeting of the Committee with the student to review the thesis and complete the defense; or (e) to determine the thesis, including its defense, to be unsatisfactory, and therefore the student fails. The Committee chairperson will communicate the

decision to the student and except for alternatives (a) and (e) the expected time period for completing the revisions and process.

The thesis defense should be scheduled and publicly announced at least three (3) weeks in advance, so that interested persons can attend the presentation portion. All members of the Committee shall be given a copy of the final draft of the thesis at least one week (7 days) prior to the examination for master's theses.

Graduate students must have the thesis completed, defended, approved, and submitted to the library for binding prior to the date grades are due for the term. Students whose final signed theses/dissertations are not submitted to the library before the Spring semester grades are due will not be eligible to participate in the May Commencement Ceremonies. For further information relative to the thesis, a copy of the Thesis Handbook may be requested from the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

The thesis and all related procedures must be completed by April 15 for those planning to graduate at the conclusion of the Spring Semester. The finished thesis, which includes changes resulting from the oral examination along with a completed approval form, must comply with criteria described in the Thesis Handbook. The University Library will bind the required bound copies of the Thesis at the student's expense. Once completed, the student will distribute the thesis as follows:

1. one bound original to the Department
2. one bound copy to the University Library
3. one bound copy to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
4. one copy to each committee member (binding not required)
5. one copy to the student (binding not required)

A graduate student who requires more than one semester to complete the thesis will receive the symbol Q (Thesis incomplete) for each semester in which progress is satisfactory, until the thesis/dissertation is satisfactorily completed. A graduate student who has previously registered for thesis and completed all course and research requirements may choose not to register for, or work on the thesis but must pay the current Sustaining Fee (all other fees waived) for each semester until the degree is completed. Semesters not registered will count toward the time limit allotted to complete the degree. The Graduate Program Director and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research must approve all registrations for the Sustaining Thesis beyond one semester.

### **Dissertation**

A doctoral degree student must have a Dissertation Committee established not later than the end of the third semester of full-time residency and before his or her dissertation project begins. For a doctoral dissertation, the Committee will be augmented by an additional expert member from outside the University at the time of dissertation defense. The Committee membership must be approved by the Research Advisor, Graduate Program Director, College Dean, and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

A graduate student initiating a dissertation project should select a topic in consultation with the Research Advisor and the Graduate Program Director. The graduate student must file for and receive approval from the Dissertation Committee during the semester prior to beginning work on the dissertation. At a minimum this request will require the student to submit a brief written dissertation proposal to the Committee for its approval. Graduate Programs may have additional requirements, including but not limited to oral presentation of the project proposal.

Due to the nature of research and creative work at the graduate level, it is expected that the dissertation project may evolve in unanticipated ways. Graduate students are strongly advised to consult frequently with their Research Advisor and to keep their dissertation committee members apprised of progress. In the event that the student and the Advisor decide to make substantive changes in the project's goals, aims, or scope, a revised dissertation proposal should be submitted, reviewed, and approved in the same manner as the original one was.

The application for approval of the Dissertation Committee membership is available in the Department Office, from the Graduate Program Director, and from the School of Graduate Studies and Research. The style manual to be used in writing the dissertation will be designated by the respective department. Certain mandatory formatting requirements are described in the Delaware State University Dissertation Handbook, available at [www.desu.edu](http://www.desu.edu) [1], from the Graduate Program Director, and from the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

A graduate student preparing a dissertation must present and satisfactorily defend the dissertation in an oral presentation and

examination by the Dissertation Committee during the student's final semester. The Dissertation defense has four components: (a) presentation of the work by the student; (b) defense of the dissertation by the student through questioning in an open session by the Committee members and others in attendance and, if requested by the Committee, at a closed session for the Committee and the student only; (c) discussion by the Committee in a closed session to determine whether or not the Dissertation, including its defense, is satisfactory; and (d) communication to the student by the Committee chairperson the outcome of the defense.

The Committee has five alternatives: (a) to accept the dissertation without any recommended changes, and for all members to sign the approval page; (b) to accept the dissertation, subject to the student making the recommended changes, with all Committee members, except the chairperson signing the approval page, and the chairperson responsible for checking the revised thesis to ensure the changes were made, and signing approval at that time; (c) to recommend revision to the dissertation, but not to sign until the revised dissertation has been submitted to and reviewed and approved by the Committee members; (d) to recommend revision of the dissertation and a second meeting of the Committee with the student to review the dissertation and complete the defense; or (e) to determine the dissertation, including its defense, to be unsatisfactory, and therefore the student fails. The Committee chairperson will communicate the decision to the student and except for alternatives (a) and (e) the expected time period for completing the revisions and process.

The Dissertation defense should be scheduled and publicly announced at least three (3) weeks in advance, so that interested persons can attend the presentation portion. All members of the Committee shall be given a copy of the final draft of the dissertation three weeks (21 days) prior to the examination for a doctoral dissertation.

Graduate students must have the dissertation completed, defended, approved, and submitted to the library for binding prior to the date grades are due for the term. Students whose final signed dissertations are not submitted to the library before the Spring semester grades are due will not be eligible to participate in the May Commencement Ceremonies. For further information relative to the dissertation, a copy of the Dissertation Handbook may be requested from the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

The dissertation and all related procedures must be completed by April 15 for those planning to graduate at the conclusion of the Spring Semester. The finished dissertation, which includes changes resulting from the oral examination along with a completed approval form, must comply with criteria described in the Dissertation Handbook. The University Library will bind the required bound copies of the Dissertation at the student's expense. Once completed, the student will distribute the dissertation as follows:

1. one bound original to the Department
2. one bound copy to the University Library
3. one bound copy to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
4. one copy to each committee member (binding not required)
5. one copy to the student (binding not required)

A graduate student who requires more than one semester to complete the dissertation will receive the symbol Q (dissertation incomplete) for each semester in which progress is satisfactory, until the thesis/dissertation is satisfactorily completed. A graduate student who has previously registered for thesis/dissertation and completed all course and research requirements may choose not to register for, or work on the dissertation, but must pay the current Sustaining Fee (all other fees waived) for each semester until the degree is completed. Semesters not registered will count toward the time limit allotted to complete the degree. The Graduate Program Director and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research must approve all registrations for the Sustaining Dissertation beyond one semester.

### **Change of Program**

If an admitted student wishes to change to a different program offered at DSU, a request must be made by the student, in writing, to the Graduate Program Director of the different program. Upon receipt of the request, the student's file will be forwarded to the Chairperson of the desired program for review. If both the Chairperson of the desired program and the respective Dean of Graduate Studies and Research approve, the formal transfer of program will be made in the respective Graduate Studies Offices with notification to the former program Chairperson, new program Chairperson, the student, and the Registrar. The time limit for completion of the degree runs from the date of acceptance into the new program, with credit brought in subject to the appropriate transfer limitation.

### **Time Limitation**

## Graduate Academic Policies and Regulations

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For full time students a maximum of five years is permitted to complete Masters degree requirements and a maximum of seven years is permitted to complete Doctoral degree requirements. For part time and under extenuating circumstances, these time limitations can be extended.

### Summer Sessions

Some graduate programs offer courses during the Summer sessions for graduate students who wish to accelerate their degree programs.

### Notification of FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides graduate students with certain rights with respect to their education records: They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the graduate student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access. Graduate students should submit to the Registrar, respective Dean, head of the academic department, or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The University official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the University official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the graduate student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the graduate student's education records that the graduate student believes to be inaccurate or misleading. Graduate students may ask the University to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the University official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the graduate student, the University will notify the graduate student of the decision and advise the graduate student of his or her right to a hearing. Procedures will be provided to the graduate student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the graduate student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, or assisting another school official performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the University discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Delaware State University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

### Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act permits the release of directory-type information to third parties outside the institution without written consent of the student provided the student has been given the opportunity to withhold such disclosure.

The University releases, upon inquiry to third parties outside the University, directory information without written consent of the student. Directory information at Delaware State University includes:

Name  
Address (including e-mail address)  
Telephone number  
College/school  
Classification  
Major field of study

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Dates of attendance

Enrollment status

Honors

Degree(s) conferred (including dates)

Graduate students who do not wish to have the above information released should fill out an information exclusion card at the Records Office.

**Source URL:** <http://www.dsu.edu/academics/graduate-academic-policies-and-regulations#comment-0>

### Links

[1] <http://www.dsu.edu/>