UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree

Policy Statement

1. PROGRAM OF STUDIES: Each student admitted to a Graduate Program will have a specific program of studies agreed upon in consultation with and approved by the appropriate committee or administrator for that degree program. A completed Program of Studies form will be filed in and approved by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to the student's registration for his or her 1. 19th semester credit hour to be counted toward a master's degree, or 2. 40th semester credit hour taken beyond the bachelor's degree to be counted toward a doctoral degree. The form will be completed and revised, if necessary, under the guidance of the student's graduate advisor.
    1. Exception: Common Master's Program: In those Graduate Programs where a common program of studies is prescribed for all Master's students, differing only in elective courses comprising less than one-third of the total required degree semester credit hours, the Graduate Program can file a model "Program of Studies" with the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Any student wishing to deviate from that approved model Program of Studies must file an Individual Program of Studies developed and approved by the appropriate committee or administrator for that program prior to the student's registration for his or her 19th degree semester hour taken at U. T. Dallas.
    2. Exception: Common Doctoral Core: In those Graduate Programs where a common doctoral core is prescribed for all students, differing only by the area of specialization chosen, the Graduate Program can file a model "Program of Studies" with the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Any student wishing to deviate from that approved model Program of Studies must file an Individual Program of Studies developed and approved by the appropriate committee or administrator for that program prior to the student's registration for his or her 50th degree semester hour taken at U. T. Dallas.
    3. Additional Master's Degrees: Students wishing to earn additional Master's degrees at U. T. Dallas must develop an approved Program of Studies through the Program offering that degree prior to enrolling in additional courses. The program can allow up to 15 semester credit hours earned in a previous degree program toward the additional degree. Additional credits may be accepted from the previous degree upon the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. In no case will credits counted for a previous degree be allowed to exceed one-half the total hours required for the additional master's degree program.
    4. Graduation Under a Particular Catalog: Provided the requisite courses continue to be offered, the student is bound by the course work requirements of the catalog in force at the time of admission, within a six-year limit for the completion of the master's degree and ten years for the doctoral degree. With the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies the student may elect to be bound by the catalog in force at the time the student applies for graduation.

This regulation applies to specific course work and the number of semester credit hours for the academic degrees set forth in the catalog. All other requirements will change or be continued with the issuance of new graduate catalogs.

5. TRANSFER CREDIT: To qualify for transfer credit, the grade earned in the course must be a B or better and the course must not be a correspondence, extension or pass/fail course. Courses delivered in a distance learning format will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Petitions for transfer of credit must be prepared by the Graduate Program and submitted for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Petitions may be approved at the time of the student's first enrollment; however, no actual acceptance of transfer credit will occur until after the student has completed 9 semester credit hours of courses at U. T. Dallas with a grade point average of at least 3.0. Petitions for transferring courses taken before enrolling as a graduate student at U. T. Dallas must be submitted prior to filing the Program of Studies. Petitions for transfer credit must be accompanied by a copy of the student's transcript showing the course(s) in question.
    1. No more than 25% of the total requirement of a masterâ€™s degree may be transfer credits. Some degree programs have more restrictive transfer of credit requirements.
    2. Doctoral Degree: A master's degree or its equivalent may be transferred from another university for up to 36 semester hours of credit towards a doctoral degree.
    3. Non-Degree Students: No more than 15 semester credit hours taken as a Non-Degree Student may be subsequently transferred to a degree program at U. T. Dallas. No petition is necessary for any of this coursework to be included in a student's Program of Studies.
    4. Exceptions: Exceptions to these transfer policies may be granted only on petition to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such a petition could be for the program of an individual student or for the model Program of Studies (See "Exceptions" on page 1 of this policy).
5. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: The student will complete the course work degree requirements when he or she completes the previously filed program of studies with acceptable grades.
    1. Required Semester Credit Hours: The minimum required semester credit hours in a Program of Studies required for the degree will be those shown in the catalog applicable to the student at the time of his or her admission or readmission to the program. In no case will a student be allowed to graduate with less than 30 approved graduate semester credit hours (including approved graduate transfer credit hours) for the master's degree.
    2. Required Grade Point Average: In order to qualify for graduation, students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average in their degree programâ€™s core courses. However, individual programs may have more stringent grade point requirements in selected courses, which must be satisfied for graduation. The minimum acceptable University grade point average for graduation is 3.0 for all graduate courses taken in the studentâ€™s degree program at U. T. Dallas.
    3. Research Involving Animal or Human Subjects
        1. Research Involving the Use of Animals (Policy Memorandum 79-I.2-30): Any student who intends to conduct research, (whether funded or not funded) which would involve animals must obtain

permission from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Permission to use an animal in research must be obtained prior to ordering, bringing to campus or housing on campus an animal. The required form to request approval may be obtained from the Office of Research Compliance.

2. Research Involving Human Subjects (Policy Memorandum 79-I.2-31): Any student who intends to conduct research, on or off campus, in partial or complete fulfillment of a course requirement, thesis or dissertation, which would involve human beings as subjects must obtain permission, prior to undertaking the research, from the University's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB). Any research activity, including but not limited to surveys, questionnaires, interviews, standardized and non standardized tests, and/or simple research experiments, which include the participation of human beings, regardless of age of participant, must have approval from the IRB. The required forms to request approval may be obtained from the Office of Research Compliance.

3. Admission to Doctoral Candidacy: The research potential and ability of each doctoral student to both understand and integrate previous coursework will be evaluated before a student can be admitted formally to doctoral candidacy. The format of this evaluation, hereafter referred to as a qualifying examination, varies amongst the degree programs, and can be obtained from the student's Graduate Program Office. A student failing the Qualifying Examination is terminated as a doctoral student in that program unless a two-thirds majority of the examining committee vote that a second examination be permitted. All committee members should have all the evidence of the student's academic record and Qualifying Examination performance prior to this vote. The second examination typically would be taken no sooner than six months after the first examination, and no later than one year after the first examination. Students failing the second examination will not be allowed to pursue a doctoral degree in that program. **Under no circumstances will a third examination be allowed**. The student will have advanced to candidacy when the student has
    1. passed the qualifying examination,
    2. been assigned an approved Supervising Committee, and
    3. satisfied any other Program or School candidacy requirements.: Candidacy must be achieved before a student is eligible to enroll in dissertation courses.

4. THESIS AND DISSERTATION REQUIREMENT
    1. Dissertation Proposal: Content: The Dissertation Proposal should be prepared by the student in consultation with the student's Supervising Committee. The proposal should include:
        1. A tentative title of the dissertation describing the topic as accurately and briefly as possible.
        2. The background of the research, the hypotheses to be tested or concepts to be explored, and the methodology to be employed. It should also address the relationship of the proposed work to existing work in the field, at U. T. Dallas or elsewhere, its intended outcome, and its contribution to the field.

    3. A schedule of the remaining research activities, including major completion milestones.
    4. A set of up to five "key words" to assist in establishing the Data Base on Theses and Dissertations.
5. Dissertation Proposal: Approval: After its approval at the Department, Program, School, or Interdisciplinary Degree Committee level, the proposal will then be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies, together with the Departmentâ€™s or Program's nominations for Supervising Professor and members of the Supervising Committee and the anticipated time of completion. The proposal should be prepared by the student in consultation with thestudent's Supervising Professor, who will approve the document before its submission to the appropriate committee or administrator for that Department or Program.
6. Supervising Committee: General: The recommended Supervising Committee for the student is submitted by the appropriate committee or administrator for that Department or Program to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. Subsequent changes in membership must also be subject to approval by the appropriate committee or administrator for that Department or Program, and in, turn the Dean of Graduate Studies. Individuals qualified for service on the Supervising Committee will be voting members of the General Faculty (as defined by The University of Texas at Dallas Handbook of Operating Procedures), Adjunct Faculty, Clinical Faculty, Distinguished Scholars in Residence, Emeritus Faculty, Research Professors, Research Scientists, Senior Lecturers, or Visiting Faculty who hold the highest earned degree in the field or fields concerned or exhibit an equivalent record of accomplishment. In addition to the masterâ€™s and doctoral degree membership composition as defined in sections D and E below, additional members outside the General Faculty may serve with the special approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Members of the Supervising Committee will also be members of the Examining Committee. (*In the case of Adjunct Faculty, a General Faculty member will be appointed to co-chair the Supervising Committee).
7. Supervising Committee: Master's Degree with Thesis: Appointment of a Masterâ€™s thesis Supervising Committee consisting of at least three members is a function of the degree program expected to confer the studentâ€™s degree. Additional members may be appointed. All appointments must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The appropriate committee or administrator of the program in consultation with the student, will nominate:
    1. the Chair, who serves as the supervisor of the research, will ordinarily be a voting member of the General Faculty holding the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor. Adjunct Faculty, Clinical Faculty, Distinguished Scholars in Residence, Emeritus Faculty, Research Professors, Research Scientists, Senior Lecturers, or Visiting Faculty who hold the highest earned degree or exhibit an equivalent record of accomplishment in the field or fields of the research or aesthetics may be appointed as Chair if he/she receives a 2/3 majority recommendation of the Professors of the academic discipline and approval of the Academic Dean of the School offering the degree.

2. not less than two voting members of the General Faculty from the graduate degree program expected to confer the student's degree; and
3. if necessary, a third representative appointed by the appropriate committee or administrator for that discipline.

Any school varying from the above procedures in constituting Supervising Committees must have had prior approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

8. Supervising Committee: Doctoral Degree: Appointment of a Doctoral dissertation Supervising Committee consisting of at least four members is a function of the degree program expected to confer the studentâ€™s degree. Additional members may be appointed. All appointments must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The appropriate committee or administrator of the program, in consultation with the student, will nominate:
    1. the Chair, who serves as the supervisor of the research, will ordinarily be a voting member of the General Faculty holding the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor. Adjunct Faculty, Clinical Faculty, Distinguished Scholars in Residence, Emeritus Faculty, Research Professors, Research Scientists, Senior Lecturers, or Visiting Faculty who hold the highest earned degree or exhibit an equivalent record of accomplishment in the field or fields of the research or aesthetics may be appointed as Chair if he/she receives a 2/3 majority recommendation of the Professors of the academic discipline and approval of the Academic Dean of the School offering the degree.
    2. not less than three voting members of the General Faculty, from the graduate degree program expected to confer the student's degree; and
    3. if necessary, a fourth representative appointed by the appropriate committee or administrator for that discipline.

    Schools varying from the above procedures in constituting Supervising Committees must have had prior approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

2. SUPERVISION: The Supervising Committee will meet with the candidate soon after the Dean of Graduate Studies has approved membership of the Committee. The intention of this initial meeting should be to discuss potential problem areas in the proposal and to establish a procedure that the Committee wishes to adopt to follow the research to a successful conclusion, e.g., the frequency and format of contact between candidate and Committee. The Supervising Committee must meet at least once annually, assess the student's progress, and send a report on that progress to the appropriate committee or administrator for that program and to the Dean of Graduate Studies. This report should describe any problems which have the potential to delay the research beyond its anticipated completion date. A copy of this report must also be sent to the student. The student can request a meeting of the Supervising Committee through a written request to the appropriate committee or administrator for that program. The appropriate committee or administrator for that program will be responsible for convening such a meeting, generally within two weeks of the student's request, unless this timing is impossible owing to the absence of the Supervising Professor. No more than one student-initiated meeting can be called within an academic year. Provision for coverage of leaves of absence of either students or committee members will have been discussed at the initial meeting of the Supervising Committee. Any arrangements for surrogate supervision or changes in the student's plans will be communicated to the appropriate committee or administrator for that

program, in writing, with a copy to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Because of the relationship between the student and the Supervising Committee, committee members on leave of absence or who have left their positions with the university may be given permission to remain on the committee by the Dean of Graduate Studies. However, they must agree to be active participants in supervisory activities and to be present for the final examination. If this is not possible, the committee member must be replaced and a new member of the General Faculty must be submitted for approval.

1. Manuscript Preparation: Style and format requirements have been established for theses and dissertations prepared at U. T. Dallas. Prior to submitting manuscripts, candidates should consult the Guide for the Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations which can be obtained from http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/dgIndex.htm.
2. Committee Approval of the Manuscript: Approval of the thesis or dissertation to go forward for examination can only be given after the members have considered the entire manuscript. Members of the committee who do NOT agree that the manuscript is examinable, whether in the majority or not, should inform the Department Head or program administrator immediately, and in writing, so that such objections may be discussed with the Supervising Professor and the candidate.
3. Independent Research Competence: The dissertation must demonstrate an independent research competence on the part of the candidate that substantially adds to knowledge in the candidate's field with respect either to its intellectual substance or professional practice. The dissertation should be of such standard as to warrant publication in peer reviewed journals or scholarly books or monographs or equivalent.
4. Submission of the Final Draft of the Thesis or Dissertation: Once the candidate has, in the judgment of the Supervising Professor, prepared an examinable thesis/dissertation manuscript, it should be distributed to the other members of the Supervising Committee, allowing them a minimum of two weeks to review the document. After reading the document, a majority of the Supervising Committee members must agree that the document is ready to be defended before a request for a Final Oral Examination may be submitted and an examination date scheduled. Committee members should ensure that the manuscript is complete, has been rigorously proofread (preferably by a professional proofreader), and meets scholarship standards for theses or dissertations. The Supervising Professor then submits a copy of the dissertation and the Request for Final Oral Examination form, signed with no more than one dissenting vote by the Supervising Committee members to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, which shall approve the scheduling of the Final Oral Examination. Members of the committee who do NOT agree that the manuscript is examinable should inform the appropriate committee or administrator for that program immediately, and in writing, so that such objections may be discussed with the Supervising Professor and the candidate. The Final Oral Examination cannot be scheduled until a resolution has been reached with, at most, one dissenting vote.
5. Required Copies
    1. Thesis Copies: Three official hard copies of thesis are required. After final approved copies have been bound, one hard copy shall be available to the public in the university library; one copy will be sent to

the supervising professor and one copy will be sent to the department/ program office. One disk with the thesis in a PDF file is required. This electronic copy will be sent to UMI who will make it available in hard copy and on the web.

2. Dissertation Copies: Three final approved copies are to be bound; one hard copy shall be available to the public in the university library; one copy will be sent to the supervising professor and one copy will be sent to the department/program. One disk with the dissertation in a PDF file is required. This electronic copy will be sent to UMI who will make it available in hard copy and on the web.

6. FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION
    1. Examining Committee: Upon the submission of the dissertation to the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Dean will appoint the Examining Committee. The membership of the Examining Committee will include all members of the Supervisory Committee plus a non-voting representative appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The representative serves as the Chair of the Examining Committee. An examiner external to the University may also be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of a member of the Supervising Committee or the candidate.
    2. Conducting the Examination: Formal arrangements, such as time and place for the Final Oral Examination, are made by the appropriate committee or administrator for that program, in consultation with the candidate and the Examining Committee, and with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. All members of the Examining Committee must be present for the examination to be valid, unless a prior written exemption has been granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies. If a member of the Examining Committee is absent without the approval of the Dean, then the Chair of the Examining Committee shall not hold the defense. The defense shall be rescheduled by the Dean of Graduate Studies. In any case, only one member may be absent without requiring a substitute. The examination will be conducted by the Chair in a manner appropriate to the material presented, and in accordance with current University regulations. The discussion will primarily focus on the candidateâ€™s research, although aspects of the general field in which it was conducted may also be covered.
        1. The final oral examination shall be conducted in three phases.
            1. Phase I. The candidate will make a formal public presentation of the research. That presentation is open to the public, and members of the audience may ask questions. The Supervising Professor will chair this phase and supervise the questioning.
            2. Phase II. Following the public presentation, the candidate will be examined by the members of the Examining Committee. This part of the examination is not open to the public. Depending upon the schoolâ€™s policy, other members of the faculty may also attend that part of the examination. This portion of the examination will be chaired by the representative of the Dean of Graduate Studies.
            3. Phase III. After the completion of the oral examination, the Examining Committee will vote on the results of the Final Oral Examination The committee will reach agreement on one of the

five possible outcomes listed below with no more than one dissenting vote. If the committee cannot reach agreement on one of the options, then the candidate will have failed the oral examination and the manuscript will not be accepted.

1. Passed the oral examination and manuscript accepted,
2. Passed the oral examination and manuscript accepted pending specified revisions,
3. Second oral examination required, but manuscript accepted or accepted with specified revisions,
4. Major revisions of the manuscript and a second final oral examination required,
5. Oral examination failed, manuscript not accepted and the committee recommends dismissal from the program.: Following the vote of the Examining Committee, the Dean's representative shall complete the Examination Report, to be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

4. Procedures concerning Acceptance, Specified and Major revisions, and Failure are as follows:
    1. Accepted - The committee agrees that the dissertation is acceptable either without any revisions, or with minor revisions such as corrections of typographical errors or changes of a minor editorial nature. It is the Supervising Professorâ€™s responsibility to ensure that such corrections are made. The final corrected and approved copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies within the same semester. If the final approved copy is not submitted within the semester, the results of the examination will be changed to Accepted Pending Specified Revisions and will be dealt with as specified under that result.
    2. Accepted Pending Specified Revisions - The Committee agrees that the dissertation is acceptable pending changes, which may include insertions or deletions. Such changes would be of the kind which do not radically modify the development/argument of the dissertation but which go beyond minor revisions. The practical criterion will be that the committee is able to specify such changes with precision. It is the responsibility of the Supervising committee to certify that all such changes have been made. If the final approved copy is not submitted by the end of the semester following the examination, the results of the examination will be changed to Referred Pending Major Revisions and will be dealt with as specified under that result.
    3. Referred Pending Major Revisions - The Committee agrees that the dissertation requires substantive changes in order for the dissertation to be acceptable. Detailed reasons for this decision must be supplied by the Chair of the Examining committee to the Dean of Graduate Studies, the appropriate committee or administrator for that program, and the candidate concerned. These recommendations on required changes must be

approved by all members of the Committee. The committee reconvenes within a period not to exceed twelve months to conduct a second Final Oral Examination. This second attempt on the Final Oral Examination will be the final attempt by the student. If the Final Oral Examination and the written manuscript are not *graded within the* Accepted category, the student is dismissed from the program.

4. Failure - If the majority of the Examining Committee votes for failure of the oral and the non-acceptance of the manuscript, the student will be dismissed from the program. In no case will a third oral be given.

5. Registration During Manuscript Revision: Regardless of the revisions to be made, the student will be required to register for three credit hours and pay fees until the revisions are accepted by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies.
6. Impact of revisions upon time limit for degree completion: The ten-year time limit for completion of the degree is still in effect while these revisions are being completed.
7. Intellectual property right protection: In order to protect patent or other intellectual property rights, the Dean of Graduate Studies may, upon request, delay for a period of one year the binding, distribution, and/or publication in microfilm of the dissertation.

3. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS
    1. Examinations or Proposal Presentation: A student must be registered for at least three semester credit hours of graduate course work during the semester in which any major degree examination, such as the Qualifying Examination, Final Written Examination, or Final Oral Examination, is taken, or during the semester in which the proposal is submitted for approval
    2. Procedures are outlined in the Graduate Catalog - Continuous Enrollment for Thesis or Dissertation: Once a student has enrolled in thesis or dissertation unless a leave of absence has been granted, that student must maintain continuous enrollment (not necessarily for thesis or dissertation) of at least three semester hours during consecutive long semesters until the final approved copy of the manuscript has been deposited in the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies. If the approved copy of the manuscript has been deposited in the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies too late to permit graduation during that semester, but before the Census day of the Full-Term session (as defined in the academic calendar) of the subsequent semester, the student may register in absentia for his/her final semester of graduation.
    3. Enrollment During the Semester of Graduation: With the exception of in absentia registration, doctoral students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour in the semester in which they graduate. Enrollment for 1 semester credit hour in the final semester is only allowed once. However, the individual degree program may require more than 1 credit hour be taken during the graduation semester.
4. TIME LIMITS: All requirements for a graduate degree, including transfer of credit must be completed within the specified time period. Students exceeding the specified time limit will not be eligible for their degree and will be dismissed from that graduate

program. An approved leave of absence will not alter the time limits placed on graduate degrees.

1. Master's Degree: All requirements for the Master's degree must be completed within one six-year period. Work over six years old, whether done at this University or elsewhere, will not count towards the Master's degree except through the petition process described in the "Time Limit: Exceptions" section.
2. Doctoral Degree: All requirements for the Doctoral degree must be completed within one ten-year period. Work over ten years old, whether done at this University or elsewhere, will not count towards the Doctoral degree except through the petition process described in the "Time Limit: Exceptions" section. Students whose masterâ€™s degrees are accepted for full credit toward a Ph.D. must complete all requirements for the doctoral degree within one eight-year period. Work exceeding these limits, whether done at this university or elsewhere, will not count towards the degree.
3. Exceptions â€" Course Work: The time limits affecting course work taken early in a graduate program can be waived only when a student can demonstrate to the appropriate committee or administrator for that program that:
    1. the substantive material in the course is still relevant to the curriculum and,
    2. the student still retains a substantial grasp of the material taught in the course.

    In such case, the acceptability of the course work in the student's Program of Studies must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the appropriate committee or administrator for that program.
4. Exceptions â€" Research: The time limits can be waived only for research extending beyond the prescribed limits and only in exceptional cases where the student, Supervising Professor, and the appropriate committee or administrator for that program can demonstrate that:
    1. substantial progress has been made in the research effort and the student can successfully complete the thesis or dissertation within a two term extension, including the summer term, and
    2. a schedule to complete the research has been developed including major milestones of accomplishments. In such a case, the acceptability of the plan to finish the research must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the appropriate committee or administrator for that program.
3. Procedures Prior to Graduation: An Application for Graduation must be filed during the semester of graduation on or before the date stipulated in the Academic Calendar.

Policy History

- Revised: May 15, 1990
- Revised: March 1, 1992
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- Revised: June 24, 1997
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Policy Links

- Permalink for this policy: http://policy.utdallas.edu/utdpp1052
- Link to PDF version: http://policy.utdallas.edu/pdf/utdpp1052
- Link to printable version: http://policy.utdallas.edu/print/utdpp1052