

6/09

ADMISSIONS AND PROGRESS COMMITTEE
Procedures & Guidelines for Student Cases

The Admissions and Progress Committee is a sub-committee of the Board of Graduate Studies. The Committee shall a) keep under review policies regarding admissions of applicants and progress of graduate students in their programs, and b) take action on behalf of the Board with respect to unsatisfactory progress and special requests by graduate students. The guidelines below are a mixture of general procedures and specific requirements provided to offer information about the normal procedures of the Committee.

In-course students who wish to petition the Committee should take note of the procedures, general requirements, and requirements for documentation listed below, but they should also consult with staff in Graduate Program Services. Note, applicants may not petition the committee directly. The information provided in this document is a guideline; the Admissions and Progress Committee gives individual attention to each request.

1. **ADMISSIONS: UPGRADING STANDARDS**

a) **Applicants to a Master's program who do not hold an honours equivalent degree as assessed by Graduate Program Services**

Every such applicant (who has not completed any additional undergraduate courses above the 30 required for a three-year general degree) will be required to complete one full year (ten semester courses) of senior level (3000 or 4000) undergraduate courses (5.0 course credits) and maintain a minimum average of 70%. These courses will be evaluated independent of their previously completed coursework. If the student does not achieve the required minimum average of 70% on these courses, s/he should then complete an additional 2 senior level (3000 or 4000) undergraduate courses (1.0 course credits) and the evaluation will be repeated on the full 6.0 course credits.

In cases where the student has completed additional undergraduate courses, these will be deducted from the number of courses required. For example, if the student has completed 32 semester courses, s/he will only be required to complete an additional eight semester courses or 4.0 course credits.

b) **Applicants to a Master's program who hold an honours equivalent degree at a level of performance marginally below the minimum university requirement**

Every such applicant will be required to complete three senior level (3000 or 4000) undergraduate courses (1.5 course credits) and maintain a minimum average of 70%. These courses will be evaluated independent of their previously completed coursework. If the student does not achieve the required minimum average of 70% on these courses, s/he should then complete an additional two senior level (3000 or 4000) undergraduate courses (1.0 course credits) and the evaluation will be repeated on the full 2.5 credits.

In both a) and b) above, courses taken as upgrading will NOT subsequently be considered for advanced credit toward a Master's degree at this university.

c) **Applicants to a Doctoral program who hold a Master's degree at a level of performance marginally below the minimum university requirement**

These applicants will be required to complete a minimum of three semester courses (1.5 course credits) at the graduate level. They must maintain a solid B average with no individual grade below 70%.

In all cases (a, b, and c above), the applicant will be directed to the department of interest for assistance with the selection of courses and for information about departmental admission requirements. The department requirements may be higher than those listed here, but must be consistent across all applicants. For example, if a department has established an admission requirement of 75% instead of the University's 70% minimum, they must apply that standard to all entering and upgrading students.

2. **DIRECT ADMISSION to PhD** programs from an Honours Baccalaureate

The applicant normally requests admission to the Doctoral program on the initial application for admission.

The applicant must have a superior record in the last two years of full time equivalent study. A superior record is normally defined as a **first class average, A-, A or A+**.

The letters of recommendation sent in support of the application should rate the student as “outstanding”.

On receipt of a completed file which potentially meets direct admissions standards, the program should contact the applicant and referees directly and request evidence of research aptitude. The applicant must provide an articulate and well-reasoned statement of research interests and other evidence of research aptitude and capability.

Following review of all these materials, the departmental graduate studies committee will recommend to the Dean of Graduate Studies, in writing, the direct admission of the applicant to the PhD program. The Graduate Admissions Officer, on behalf of the Dean of Graduate Studies, will examine all application documentation and, if acceptable, will issue an offer of admission. All students admitted directly to the PhD will be considered provisional for the first one or two semesters of study.

Department regulations will determine the course credits required. However, in programs which do not require courses, the Board of Graduate Studies strongly urges the Advisory Committee to incorporate graduate level courses into the student's program of study.

We urge departments to pay special attention to the evaluation of the student's progress during the first year, using the Graduate Student Evaluation Report that requires comments regarding both course work and research progress.

Doctoral Student Funding forms to guarantee funding for a minimum of nine semesters are required for all full-time doctoral entrants.

3. **ADMISSION OF APPLICANTS** Already Holding A Doctoral or Master's Degree

An applicant for admission who holds a recognized doctoral degree deemed to be equivalent to a Canadian doctoral degree in the same field of study as the proposed (applied for) program will not be considered for admission. A person in this situation who wishes to study here could come as a “visiting scholar”.

In cases where it is not sufficiently evident that the applied for program is different from the completed program and where the department wants to admit the applicant, the department will be required to clarify in writing the differences between the completed and proposed areas of research.

An applicant who holds a recognized doctoral degree in one field and who wishes to study at the master's or doctoral level in a different field could be admissible.

A parallel policy will apply to applicants holding a recognized master's degree deemed to be equivalent to a Canadian master's degree.

4. **ALTERNATE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

Occasionally programs receive applications from people whose background preparation is unusual but who may be excellent candidates for graduate education. Applicants can fail to meet normal university admissions requirements in two ways: not enough academic preparation, and academic preparation of insufficient quality. If an applicant has completed an honours degree or equivalent in the recent past and the cumulative average does not meet our standards, upgrading (see section 1 above) is the normal route to admissibility. If, a number of years after graduation, an applicant can demonstrate a significant, prolonged record of experience and relevant task performance sufficient to compensate for the insufficient quality of the undergraduate program, alternate admissions criteria may be applied. Similarly, if an applicant has not completed an honours degree or its equivalent, but has demonstrated relevant skills development over a prolonged period of time, alternate admissions criteria may be applied.

When a program proposes the admission of an applicant on the basis of alternate criteria, the file will be scrutinized in Graduate Program Services to determine if admission is appropriate. If it is determined that the criteria have not been met, the recommendation for admission will be denied. As with other admissions cases, the program may appeal a negative decision to the Admissions & Progress Committee of the Board.

While all graduate programs are welcome to apply alternate admissions criteria, alternate admissions must remain the exception. Students admitted through the alternate criteria will be classified as provisional. Alternate criteria may not be applied to doctoral-level programs.

a) **University-Wide** (unless specified below)

Normally, at no point should more than 15% of the graduate students in a program (or one student in very small programs) represent alternate admissions. An applicant who does not meet the university minimum academic requirements for admission may be considered for admission to a masters or diploma program if the following criteria are met:

- A significant record of relevant experience, normally at least five years. The nature of the relevant experience for admission to a program will be specified by that program.
- Positive references in which the applicant's aptitude for graduate education is specifically addressed, from people who can judge such matters.
- Positive responses from the graduate committee to the applicant's interview (verbal) and statement of purpose (written).
- Identification by the program of an advisor and a plan of study for the applicant, including anticipated time to completion.
- Appropriately high levels of performance on any standardized examinations which the program may wish to require (e.g. GMAT, general GRE, disciplinary GRE, etc.) A program may choose not to require such tests.

b) **Master of Fine Arts**

No more than 50% of applicants admitted in any given year may represent alternate admissions. An applicant to any of these programs who does not meet the university minimum academic requirements for admission may be considered for admission if the following criteria are met:

- A significant record of relevant experience, normally at least five years. The nature of the relevant experience for admission to a program will be specified by that program.
- Positive references, in which the applicant's aptitude for graduate education and, in the case of admission to the executive programs, ability to cope with distance education are specifically addressed, from people who can judge such matters.
- Positive responses from the graduate committee to the applicant's interview (verbal) and/or statement of purpose (written).
- Demonstration of continuous successes in continuing education or professional development, possibly supplemented by appropriately high levels of performance on standardized examinations (e.g. GMAT, general GRE, disciplinary GRE.). A program may choose not to require such tests.

c) **Master of Arts (Leadership)**

Distance Master of Business Administration

Residential Master of Business Administration

There is no limit to the number of applicants admitted to these programs through alternate admissions. An applicant to any of these programs who does not meet the university minimum academic requirements for admission may be considered for admission if the following criteria are met:

- A significant record of relevant experience, normally at least five years. The nature of the relevant experience for admission to a program will be specified by that program.
- Positive references, in which the applicant's aptitude for graduate education and, in the case of admission to the executive programs, ability to cope with distance education are specifically addressed, from people who can judge such matters.
- Positive responses from the graduate committee to the applicant's interview (verbal) and/or statement of purpose (written).
- Demonstration of continuous successes in continuing education or professional development, possibly supplemented by appropriately high levels of performance on standardized examinations (e.g. GMAT, general GRE, disciplinary GRE.). A program may choose not to require such tests.

5. PROVISIONAL CATEGORY

a) An applicant whose qualifications for meeting the minimum university or program requirements appear uncertain may be considered for admission as a provisional student. *This category is unavailable for applicants who clearly do not meet the minimum university admission requirements as assessed by Graduate Program Services.* While provisional, the student's program will include at least one graduate course in each semester and may include active involvement in supervised thesis research.

b) An applicant who does not meet the normal admission requirements may be admitted by a decision of the Admissions

and Progress Committee of the Board of Graduate Studies as a “Provisional” student. These students will be required to complete a minimum of at least one graduate course in each provisional semester. They must maintain a solid “B” average with no individual grade below 70%.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of the department to notify the student, in writing, of the number of courses to be completed, the course number/title and the grade level to be attained.

If at the end of one semester the department is satisfied with the student's progress, it will recommend to the dean that the student be transferred to regular status. Upon such transfer, the student will receive credit for courses completed. If transfer to regular student status is not achieved at the end of one semester, the student may be permitted to continue for a second semester as a provisional student. At the end of this time, the record will be reviewed as before. If transfer to regular student status is not recommended, the student may be required to withdraw.

In some rare instances, Provisional status may be extended for a third semester through petition to the Admissions and Progress Committee, where circumstances beyond the control of the program or student have prevented the student from completing the provisional requirements originally set out. These circumstances may include documented illness or cancellation of a course requirement.

6. **ADVANCED (TRANSFER) CREDITS**

Students who leave an unfinished Master's program elsewhere to enter a Master's program here and who expect to receive advanced course credits for graduate courses completed in the unfinished program may indeed receive such credit, provided that the courses are relevant. The student must submit an Application for Transfer Credits form. Graduate credit courses taken in non-degree programs (at either the graduate or undergraduate level) may also be considered for transfer credit. Courses cannot have been used for credit towards any degree or honours equivalent qualification, and cannot have been a part of the basic minimum admissions requirement for the University of Guelph graduate program. Students may not complete more than half of their prescribed course requirements outside of the University of Guelph graduate program, either through the Letter of Permission, Ontario Visiting Graduate Student program or advanced credit transfer procedures.

7. **TRANSFERS OF PROGRAM** **Transfer Application Procedures**

- Documentation for all actual/potential transfer requests must be submitted before the end of the fourth semester (unless otherwise specified below). Requests should not be initiated prior to the end of the second semester.
- The formal request must be initiated in writing by the student within the department/school. The student must provide a written report of progress in research to the Advisory Committee and the departmental Graduate Studies Committee. This report should include a review of research conducted for the master's thesis and any papers presented, published or submitted, research seminar title, etc.
- The Advisory Committee must comment on the candidate's aptitude for doctoral level research and on the suitability of the Master's research project for expansion to a doctoral project. The student should be highly rated by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee's recommendation must be supported by the Department Chair and by the departmental Graduate Studies Committee which forwards the student's request for transfer and report along with its own recommendation to the Board of Graduate Studies.
- The Admissions and Progress Committee, on behalf of the Board of Graduate Studies, examines the documentation, including the official academic record, and, if appropriate, recommends admission to the PhD/DVSc program without completing the Master's program. The Admissions and Progress Committee may review the application directly with the student concerned and/or with the faculty proponent(s) of the transfer.

a) **From Master's to Doctoral** (student does not hold the equivalent of a Master's degree from a Canadian university)

- The “Application for Transfer to Another Program” form must be initiated by the student during semesters 3 or 4 for consideration. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services.
- The student must have a good quality undergraduate degree (normally B+ to A).
- The student must have completed at least 1.0 graduate level course credits (two 0.5-credit graduate courses), plus a Seminar or equivalent course, recognized for credit at the University of Guelph, with at least A- grades.
- A statement concerning research potential is essential.

- Supporting documentation from the advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the department chair is required.
- A doctoral funding form is required.

b) From Master's to Doctoral (student holds recognized Master's degree in related field)

- The "Application for Transfer to Another Program" form must be initiated by the student during semesters 3 or 4 for consideration. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services.
- The student must have good quality undergraduate and graduate degrees (normally B+ to A).
- The student must have completed at least 0.5 graduate level course credits (one 0.5-credit graduate course), plus a Seminar or equivalent course, recognized for credit at the University of Guelph, with at least A- grades.
- A statement concerning research potential is essential.
- Supporting documentation from the advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the department chair is required.
- A doctoral funding form is required.

c) From Graduate Diploma to DVSc

- The "Application for Transfer to Another Program" form must be initiated by the student *not later than the end of the student's second semester*. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services.
- The student must have a good quality DVM degree.
- The student must have achieved a superior record to date in the Graduate Diploma program and must show a particular aptitude for applied studies.
- Supporting documentation from the advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the Interdepartmental DVSc committee is required.
- A doctoral funding form is required.

d) From DVSc to PhD

- The "Application for Transfer to Another Program" form must be initiated by the student for consideration. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services.
- In cases where the student already holds a good quality Master's degree and has not yet had the DVSc Qualifying Examination, transfer requests are normally approved.
- Where the student has successfully completed the DVSc Qualifying Examination, it may be considered to be equivalent to the PhD Qualifying Examination. In cases where there will be a considerable change in the field of study, the Department may require that an additional Qualifying Examination be held.
- Supporting documentation from the advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the department chair is required.
- A doctoral funding form is required; funding must be guaranteed for a minimum of nine semesters, including funding already provided in the DVSc program.

e) From PhD to DVSc

- The "Application for Transfer to Another Program" form must be initiated by the student for consideration. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services. The student must hold a good quality DVM degree.
- In cases where the student has not yet undergone the PhD Qualifying Examination, transfer requests are normally approved.
- Where the student has successfully completed the PhD Qualifying Examination, it may be considered to be equivalent to the DVSc Qualifying Examination. In cases where there will be a considerable change in the field of study, the Department may require that an additional Qualifying Examination be held.
- Supporting documentation from the advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the Interdepartmental DVSc committee is required.

- A doctoral funding form is required; funding must be guaranteed for a minimum of nine semesters, including funding already provided in the PhD program.

f) From Doctoral to Master's or Graduate Diploma (prior to the Qualifying Examination)

- The "Application for Transfer to Another Program" form must be initiated by the student for consideration. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services.
- Requests are normally approved as a result of the student changing goals/career paths.
- On some occasions, the department may recommend a transfer to Master's or Graduate Diploma after having determined that the student's aptitude and/or background preparation for research are not adequate for PhD/DVSc studies. In some cases, in which the student has failed the first attempt at the Qualifying Examination and has decided, in consultation with the advisory committee that a transfer to the Master's or Graduate Diploma program would be appropriate, transfer may be approved.
- Where the student already holds a Master's degree, the department must demonstrate that the Master's degree being undertaken as a result of the requested transfer is different in focus and content from the original Master's degree.
- Supporting documentation from the advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the department chair is required.

g) From Doctoral to Master's or Graduate Diploma (after successful completion of the Qualifying Examination)

- The "Application for Transfer to Another Program" form must be initiated by the student for consideration. The \$35 transfer fee is payable when the application is submitted to Graduate Program Services.
- Requests are normally approved as a result of the student changing goals/career paths, or for medical/compassionate reasons.
- Where the student already holds a Master's degree, the department must demonstrate that the Master's degree being undertaken as a result of the requested transfer is different in focus and content from the original Master's degree.
- Supporting documentation from the student's advisory committee, the program graduate studies committee and the department chair is required.

h) From Doctoral to Master's (after failing 2nd attempt at the Qualifying Examination or the Final Oral Examination)

- No transfer will be permitted.
- A "Required to Withdraw" indicator (RTW) will be entered on the transcript on the student's last PhD/DVSc registration.
- If the student wishes to enter the Master's program, the student must apply formally for entry to that program. If accepted the student will be considered to be in semester 1.0 of the Master's program.
- Where the student already holds a Master's degree, the department must demonstrate that the Master's degree being undertaken in this instance is different in focus and content from the Master's degree already held.
- The Master's degree, if undertaken must be completely self-contained. In other words, the student must complete the required courses, thesis, thesis defence, etc. as for a normal Master's degree program. The Department/School will determine and recommend any credits to be carried over from the incomplete PhD/DVSc.

8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE (HIATUS) REQUESTS

Multiple semester requests (normally not more than three semesters) are granted for a variety of reasons, the most common of which are: parental leave, financial/employment constraints, documented medical, personal/family circumstances, attending other university programs (e.g. teachers' college), etc.

Open-ended requests or repeat requests for multiple semester leaves when the student is vague regarding plans for completing the degree are normally denied, with the suggestion that withdrawal from the program until more definite plans are in place would be more appropriate. It is understood that students on hiatus will not be functioning in any way as graduate students (this includes all research/writing activity and completion or any incomplete courses from previous semesters.)

9. CHANGING HISTORICAL ACADEMIC RECORDS

Occasionally the Committee is asked to remove the record of course failures from a student's transcript. Requests of this nature are usually denied. In some instances a student's **entire semester record** may be deleted for documented medical and compassionate reasons; however, not only would the failed courses be removed, but also the courses with satisfactory grades. The student may wish to present a case for deleting some, but not all, of the term record (i.e. explaining *why* part of the semester was successful while part was not). Such requests will be considered on an individual basis.

Requests to add courses, whether for credit or audit, to student records at grade reporting time or after semester end will normally be denied. Similarly, requests to delete credit courses or change them to AUDIT at grade reporting time or after semester end would not normally be considered.

Students/faculty are responsible for ensuring that course registration is correct no later than the published deadline for course drops.

10. EXTENSION OF INCOMPLETE COURSES

A student who receives an INC or MNR grade and for whom the final grade is not received in Graduate Program Services prior to the first day of the next semester, must complete the course in the next registered semester, at the end of which it is required that the INC be replaced by a grade of INF (incomplete: failure). If the student is not registered in the semester in which the course is completed, any submitted grade will not be accepted and the student will receive INF as a final grade.

Requests to permit the extension of INC courses are sometimes considered for documented medical or compassionate reasons. If the reasons for the request are compelling, the requests are normally granted.

11. COURSE GRADE APPEALS

The Admissions & Progress Committee does not deal with student appeals of grades. A graduate student who wishes to request re-assessment of a final grade must, within 14 working days after receiving notification of the grade, make a submission in writing to the Chair of the Department offering the course. It is the responsibility of the Chair to review the request and take appropriate action. A student may subsequently appeal any departmental decision to the Senate Committee on Student Petitions. See *Grade Reassessment* in the *General Regulations* section of the Graduate Calendar for more information.

12. POSTHUMOUS DEGREES

A degree may be awarded posthumously to a student whose studies were interrupted by death if the following criteria are met:

for Doctoral degrees:	Normally, the Qualifying Examination must have been successfully completed; the average grade of any prescribed courses taken must meet the minimum level (B-) for graduation.
for Master's degrees:	Normally, all course requirements for the program must have been completed; the average grade of prescribed courses must meet the minimum level (B-) for graduation.

13. **FAILED COURSES/UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

When a student fails a course, the program Graduate Committee must recommend one of the following options:

The student will be required to:

- (1) replace the failed course as soon as possible with another course of equal relevance, rigour and credit value, preferably in the following semester;
- OR (2) complete remedial studies through registration in a directed study course of equal credit value tailored to meet the requirements of the student, preferably in the following semester;
- OR (3) repeat the failed course when it is next offered;
- OR (4) fulfil a supplemental condition;*
- OR (5) withdraw from the program.**

*Recommendations for a supplemental condition are discouraged, but may be approved under certain circumstances, provided the following information is supplied:

- a) a breakdown of the marking scheme for the failed course
- b) indication of the student's performance in each component of the course, as in a) above
- c) indication of how much of the course the supplemental examination is expected to cover
- d) a signed statement from the instructor of the course indicating a willingness to provide such an examination
- e) a brief explanation of the reasons the supplemental condition option has been chosen.

**Recommendations for a student's withdrawal from program would not normally be made on the basis of one course failure, but would be appropriate only after a series of some concerns/unsatisfactory evaluation reports. Such recommendations would only be approved after normal procedures (see *Unsatisfactory Progress* in the *General Regulations* section of the Graduate Calendar) have been followed. See also section 14, below.

14. **REQUIRED to WITHDRAW (RTW) PROCEDURES**

The following is the appropriate process for initiating a recommendation that a student be required to withdraw from his/her program of study. This process has been approved by the Board of Graduate Studies.

- Department submits a letter recommending withdrawal, including a chronology of events leading up to the recommendation, relevant evaluation reports and documentation from the Advisory Committee. The recommendation normally would be submitted by the Graduate Coordinator on behalf of the departmental graduate studies committee, and is submitted to staff in Graduate Program Services for action.
- Graduate Program Services sends out a letter to the student notifying him/her of the recommendation. Included with the letter will be a copy of the letter from the department and the chronology. The student will be given the option of submitting something in appeal or of withdrawing voluntarily. Any appeal from the student will be required not less than 10 working days prior to the meeting.
- If there is a response, and if it contains information that may not have been previously available to the department, the department will be given the opportunity to review the response and comment on it. Any such comments will have to be received in Graduate Program Services not later than two working days prior to the meeting.
- The case, including any written submission from the student and any subsequent submission from the department, is presented at the Admissions and Progress committee meeting.

If the student submits a withdrawal notice for voluntary withdrawal prior to the meeting, the case will not be taken to the Admissions and Progress Committee. The student's program will be closed and the record flagged with a PWD (program withdrawal), rather than the RTW (required to withdraw) flag that will result if the Committee upholds the department recommendation for withdrawal. The withdrawal, in either scenario, will be effective as of the date the original recommendation was submitted to Graduate Program Services, thus affording the student the best refund possible for the semester.

A student who is required to withdraw may request reconsideration of that decision to the Admissions and Progress Committee if there is new information to present.

Because of the need to give the student sufficient time to put together a response, recommendations for withdrawal from the department should be submitted to Graduate Program Services at least one month before the Admissions and Progress Committee meeting at which the case will be reviewed.