

# The Graduate School handbook

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Handbook Website: <http://handbook.unc.edu/>



UNC  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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# Preface

## The Graduate School Handbook

The Graduate School Handbook contains most of the policies and procedures of The Graduate School, as established by the actions of the Administrative Board of The Graduate School over a period of years. Each student should become familiar with the material pertaining to his or her degree program, and, together with a faculty advisor, make certain that the chosen program of study complies with all policies.

Section I of this Handbook contains information related to graduate education at UNC-Chapel Hill, including a description of The Graduate School and its Academic Policy Committee, a staff directory, and links to graduate education references. Section II describes the policies and procedures pertaining to the general academic requirements of The Graduate School. Section III provides a detailed outline of requirements for the Master's and Doctoral degrees. All graduate degree-granting entities at UNC-Chapel Hill including departments, curricula, schools, and programs will be referred to as *academic programs* throughout this Handbook.

Although we have attempted to include most of the regulations governing graduate academic programs, many programs have additional requirements and regulations of their own. Sometimes these requirements are more stringent than the general requirements of The Graduate School.

The Graduate School reserves the right to make changes to this Handbook at any time. In instances of discrepancy between this document and The Graduate Record, this Handbook takes precedence.

**It is the student's responsibility to be aware of, and comply with all regulations, policies, procedures, and deadlines.**

Twenty-fourth Edition, 2009-2010  
(Last Updated: August, 2009)

## Changes and Updates to the Current Edition

Changes to the current edition of The Graduate School Handbook include:

- Updated sections related to meeting the foreign language requirement in English and the native language for international students.
- Clarified the roles of faculty advisor and committee chair, including the use of co-advisors. Note these updates also include changes to the [Master's Comprehensive Exam or Approved Substitute Form](#), the [Report of Doctoral Committee Composition Form](#), and the [Doctoral Exam Report Form](#).
- Clarified the language on failure of written or oral examinations and the subsequent reinstatement process.
- Separated the defense of a thesis or dissertation and the approval of the formal document. Note these updates also include changes to the [Master's Comprehensive Exam or Approved Substitute Form](#) and the [Doctoral Exam Report Form](#).

# Graduate Education at UNC-Chapel Hill

## The Graduate School and the Administrative Board

In 1903, a separate graduate school with a dean was established. Several graduate degrees were awarded before the turn of the century, however, including the first degree of doctor of philosophy conferred in 1883.

In 1922, the graduate faculty voted, first, to vest in the Administrative Board of The Graduate School legislative powers in matters that affected graduate education; second, to authorize the Administrative Board to admit members to the teaching faculty of The Graduate School; and, third, to vest in the Administrative Board the responsibility for authorizing curricula and courses carrying graduate credit.

With the exception of the master of business administration (MBA), the master of accounting (MAC), and the master of school administration (MSA) degree in educational leadership, all master's degrees offered by the University and the degrees of doctor of philosophy and doctor of public health are conferred by The Graduate School.

Work toward advanced degrees at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill proceeds under policies and regulations established by the graduate faculty. The immediate direction of The Graduate School is in the charge of the Administrative Board, of which the Dean is chair. At present, the board consists of academic and health affairs faculty representatives appointed by the Chancellor upon nomination by the Dean of The Graduate School.

## Academic Policy Committee

The Academic Policy Committee is a subcommittee of the Administrative Board of The Graduate School. This body is responsible for approving academic policies in graduate education, including any substantive changes to

this Handbook. This body is also responsible for hearing student petitions when multiple policies may be involved or when there are differences between the student and his/her academic program concerning a policy in this Handbook.

## The Graduate School Staff Directory

Directory information for the staff of The Graduate School can be found on [The Graduate School's website](#). The Enrolled Students Services staff is available to assist students with questions about the policies and procedures in this Handbook.

The Graduate School's homepage is located online at <http://gradschool.unc.edu/>.

## Graduate Education References

- [Graduate Record](#)
- [Student Resource Guide](#)
- The Graduate School's [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#)
- [Academic Integrity and Ethics](#)

## The Graduate School Calendar

For the most current information, please refer to [The Graduate School Calendar](#).

# General Academic Requirements and Regulations

## Admission and Matriculation

An individual is admitted to The Graduate School to pursue a single specified degree program beginning in the semester designated in the offer of admission letter. There is no transfer process between programs once admitted to The Graduate School. A desire to pursue a different degree requires a new application to the new degree program. For example, an individual who is admitted to a PhD program in Department A may not transfer to a PhD program in Department B. The individual must formally apply and be admitted to the PhD program in Department B in a subsequent semester.

## Non-degree Students

An individual admitted to The Graduate School as a non-degree student may remain in that status for no longer than one calendar year. If that individual decides at any time to pursue a degree, s/he must formally apply for new admission, and all Graduate School and program criteria standards must be met. If that individual is granted admission and subsequently wishes to transfer credits earned while in non-degree status into the academic program, The Graduate School's transfer policy will apply.

See [Transferring Course Credit](#).

## Readmission

A formal request for readmission to The Graduate School is required whenever a student fails to register for a regular (fall/spring) semester or withdraws during a semester for any reason—whether the student had an approved leave of absence, withdrew during the semester, or simply did not register. To resume their studies, such students must submit an [Application for Readmission](#) according to the following deadlines:

- July 1 for the fall semester
- December 1 for the spring semester
- April 1 for the first summer session
- June 1 for the second summer session

Readmission after a long absence is not automatic and will be reviewed carefully by the academic program prior to making a recommendation to The Graduate School.

A new application for residence status for tuition purposes must be submitted with all readmission requests.

If a student is not registered for as long as two academic years, a new immunization record and [Medical History Form](#) must also be submitted to Student Health Service to avoid future registration cancellation.

## Reapplication

An individual must formally apply for new admission ([Admission Application](#), application fee, current GRE scores, etc.) in the following circumstances:

- An individual remains unregistered for five years or longer and wishes to resume graduate study. The academic program and The Graduate School will consult to determine if credits previously earned will meet current degree requirements.
- An individual fails to register or withdraws during the first semester of enrollment in an academic program and wishes to pursue the degree at some future date.
- A student exceeds the time limit for degree completion and wishes to continue his or her studies. See [Time limit for Master's degree](#) or [Doctoral degree](#).

A new application for residence status for tuition purposes must be submitted with all reapplication requests.

## Faculty as Students

Members of the General Faculty of UNC-Chapel Hill may not pursue a graduate degree at this institution except under the following conditions:

- The course of study and the conditions of employment are approved annually by The Graduate School; and
- The employing academic program chair(s) and dean must certify annually that the degree to be pursued is of demonstrable value to the institution.

## Eligibility

A student may become ineligible to continue studies at UNC-Chapel Hill and The Graduate School for academic reasons and/or student code violations. For more information, please refer to the [University Registrar's Policy Memo No. 7: Cancellation, Withdrawal, and Suspension](#).

## Academic Eligibility

If, in the judgment of the academic program and the Administrative Board of The Graduate School, a student fails to make satisfactory progress towards the completion of the degree or to demonstrate sufficient promise in the discipline, the student will not be allowed to continue in The Graduate School. Registration in following semesters for academically ineligible students will be canceled automatically.

A student becomes academically ineligible to continue in The Graduate School for the following reasons:

1. S/he receives a grade of F, F\*, or nine or more hours of L.
  - The computation of hours taken will include courses for which the student has received a grade of H, P, L, or F, as well as equivalent grades for courses taken through inter-institutional registration where other permanent letter grades may be assigned.
  - Undergraduate courses taken as a graduate student will not be included in this computation.
  - If a student completes or withdraws from one academic program and begins study in another academic program, all grades remain part of his or her permanent record. The grades for any courses to be credited toward the new program

will be included in the calculation of academic eligibility.

- Students may refer to [Graduate Grading](#) for a more detailed description of grading policies.
2. S/he fails a written or oral examination for the second time.
    - Once a student is notified of failing a written or oral exam for the second time, s/he automatically becomes ineligible for further graduate work.
    - See [Failure of Examinations for Master's degree](#) or [Doctoral degree](#).

## Reinstatement

When special circumstances warrant, a student made academically ineligible under the conditions stated above may be reinstated upon petition initiated through the student's academic program. Students and academic program representatives must fill out the [Request for Reinstatement to Graduate School Form](#).

The student's director of graduate studies must submit the petition together with a statement endorsing or declining to endorse the student's request to The Graduate School. Final approval rests with The Graduate School. Graduate School staff are authorized to consider routine, first instances of reinstatement requests. If there is a disagreement between the student and his/her academic program, or for any subsequent reinstatement requests, the Academic Policy Committee of the Administrative Board of The Graduate School will hear and vote on the situation. Decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

After academic eligibility reinstatement, any subsequent grade below P or failure of the third attempt of written or oral examinations will result in the student becoming academically ineligible again.

## Student Code Violations

Students are subject to the regulations of student government under the Honor Code and the Campus Code. Students may become ineligible to continue studies at UNC-Chapel Hill for student code violations. Instances of suspected plagiarism, cheating on examinations,

or other violations of the Honor Code or Campus Code should be reported either to the [Office of the Graduate Student Attorney General](#) or the [Office of the Dean of Students](#).

### **Honor Code**

It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the [Honor Code](#), which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

### **Campus Code**

It shall be the further responsibility of every student to abide by the [Campus Code](#); namely, to conduct oneself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.

## **Course Credit**

### **Transferring Course Credit**

#### **General Guidelines**

Requests for courses to be transferred for credit toward a graduate degree are reviewed by The Graduate School upon recommendation by the student's academic program. Such work must represent graduate-level courses relevant to the degree being sought, with course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of currently enrolled students as determined by the academic program. Students seeking transfer credit must provide the following to their academic program:

- Published course description;
- Course reading list;
- Course requirements, including assignments and grading criteria;
- Information on the types of tools and methods that were used to engage students in learning; and
- Official transcripts noting earned credit for the course. Note: Transcripts received from other universities cannot be released to students or third parties.

- Students should then submit the [Transfer Credit Recommendation Form](#) to The Graduate School for processing.

In addition, the following guidelines apply:

- Transferred credit will not be included in the program residence credit calculation.
- Grades earned on transferred work must be equivalent to B or better (B- is not equivalent to B).
- Courses taken on a pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis may not be included in transfer credit.
- Transfer of thesis or dissertation credit, or of credit for any thesis or master's project from another academic program in this institution, is permitted if the academic program agrees the project complies with the general standards of their own requirements.
- A student who wishes to take one or more courses at another institution (other than by inter-institutional registration) must first consult his or her academic program if s/he wishes to receive credit for such courses. Once such course credit is earned, the procedure for transferring the credits earned is the same as that described above.
- The Graduate School does not accept transfer credit for non-credit courses, including lifetime learning seminars and programs, or courses taken for Continuing Education Units.

### **Master's Degree Guidelines**

#### **The 20 Percent Rule**

Upon recommendation of the academic program and approval by The Graduate School, up to 20 percent of the total hours required for the master's degree may be graduate-level courses transferred from another approved institution, or from this institution for courses taken before admission to an academic program in The Graduate School (e.g., courses taken as a Continuing Studies student, an undergraduate, or as a non-degree student).

Credit received for graduate-level courses taken as an undergraduate may be transferred into an academic program with the program's approval provided the course did not count toward the requirements of the undergraduate degree.

Transferred credits will not be included in the program residence credit calculation.

### **Doctoral Degree Guidelines**

Upon recommendation of the academic program and approval by The Graduate School, a doctoral student may transfer into his or her degree program relevant graduate courses from approved institutions or from other graduate programs within this institution.

The doctoral student may be examined on all transferred courses at the time of the doctoral oral examination.

There is no limit to the number of hours that can be transferred into a doctoral program to meet course requirements—with the academic program’s approval.

Transferred credits will not be included in the program residence credit calculation.

### **Pass/Fail Courses**

All required graduate courses, including those taken on this campus or elsewhere (via inter-institutional registration, Study Abroad, etc.), may not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

### **Undergraduate Courses**

Courses approved for undergraduate credit only (at UNC-Chapel Hill, those numbered below 400), including required prerequisite courses, will not be counted toward academic program requirements, do not count toward full-time enrollment status, do not carry either course or residence credit, and will not be entered into the student’s Graduate School academic eligibility calculation.

### **Special Language Courses**

Students enrolled in special language courses, such as Spanish/German/French/Latin 601 or 602, receive either S or NG as a grade. Credit hours earned for these courses are not included among the credit hours earned toward the degree or for residence credit, but they do count towards full-time enrollment in the semester in which they are taken.

Foreign Language Proficiency Assessments are offered as an alternative to the special language

courses. For more information, see [Foreign Language Proficiency Assessment](#).

## **Continuing Studies and Summer Sessions**

Degree-seeking students must register for all courses through The Graduate School (not Continuing Studies or Summer School).

### **Auditing Courses**

To audit a course, students must get the written permission of the course instructor and the academic program chair. Students can request this permission only after the end of the official registration period.

Full-time students cannot audit courses in the Friday Center for Continuing Education or a course preparing a student for “Credit-by-Examination.” Students officially registered for other courses during a semester or summer session may audit a course without paying a fee.

For more information, please refer to the [Office of the University Registrar](#) and the [University Registrar’s Policy Memo No. 9](#).

## **Registration**

### **Full-Time Registration**

A full-time student is one who is matriculated and meets the conditions noted below:

- Registers for 9 or more graduate credit hours in a fall or spring semester; or
- Registers for 3 or more graduate credit hours in a summer term; or
- Registers for a minimum of 3 hours of thesis substitute (992), thesis (993), or dissertation (994) in a fall or spring semester. Note: A student may register for additional courses as needed, but if registering for less than 9 hours, this must include a minimum of 3 hours of 992/993/994 to be considered full-time; or
- Registers for fewer than 9 graduate credit hours in a fall or spring semester, exclusive of 992/993/994, and has been granted a “waiver of hours” for that semester.

Graduate School approval of a waiver of hours is contingent upon the student submitting a [Waiver of Hours Form](#). This form must also include a statement from the academic program certifying that the student's overall academic involvement—teaching assignments, research projects—is consistent with the workload of a full-time student.

A student who was registered for the immediately preceding fall and spring semesters does not need to enroll during either of the summer terms to maintain status as a full-time matriculated student.

## Required Registration

Students are required to be registered whenever University resources (including faculty time) are being consumed to appropriately reflect work being done. Academic programs and students should be aware that students who lapse enrollment lose official student status and recognized University affiliation. Relinquishing formal student status can disadvantage students by eliminating their eligibility for financial aid and student campus services and benefits.

In addition, the following specific registration requirements apply.

### Assistantships and Fellowships

Each student holding a service (assistantship) or non-service (fellowship) appointment must be registered full-time in order to hold that position during the fall and spring semesters. Students must be on-campus unless the award requires their presence at another campus or research center.

### Examinations and Thesis/Dissertation

A student must be registered during the semester(s) in which any written and/or oral exams examinations are taken. Students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992), thesis (993), or dissertation (994) during the semester(s) or summer term in which the thesis/dissertation is defended or a thesis option is completed.

Registration for the prior semester will cover events that occur during a break between semesters. This registration covers a student from the first day of class in a semester until the day before classes begin for the next semester.

For example, if a student is registered for a minimum of three credit hours of 992/993/994 in the fall semester and intends to defend in the same term, s/he must defend between the first day of fall classes and the day before the first day of spring classes. Similarly, summer registration would cover a defense occurring anytime between the first day of summer session I classes until the day before the first day of fall classes. If the defense takes place during a summer, students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of 992/993/994 during either the first or second summer session to be covered for the entire summer term.

Once the student has completed all courses, including a minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992)/thesis (993) or a minimum of six credit hours of dissertation (994), s/he must continue to register for 992/993/994 each academic semester (fall/spring) until the degree is completed in order to use University resources (including faculty time).

## Credit/Course Load

Students should register for no more than 16 hours in any semester. A student enrolled in the summer may not register for, and will not receive graduate credit for, more than eight hours a session. Overload requests are considered on an exceptional basis and should be initiated by the student's academic program and forwarded to The Graduate School for approval.

A student who holds a service appointment within the University or is employed either on- or off-campus is advised to register on the following basis:

- A student engaged in teaching three to six credit hours or in performing other part-time duties for 10 to 20 hours weekly is advised to register for no more than nine hours of course credit.
- A student engaged in teaching more than six credit hours or in performing other part-time duties for more than 20 hours weekly is advised to register for no more than six hours of course credit.
- A student engaged in full-time employment is advised to register for no more than three hours of course credit.
- During a summer session, a student who holds a service appointment should register

for no more than three hours of course credit.

## Adding Courses

Courses may be added only during the official add period. Please refer to the [University Registrar's Calendar](#) for official add period dates.

## Dropping Courses

Drop deadlines are given in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#). To drop a course after the close of the normal drop period ("census date" is generally two weeks after classes begin) and before the last two weeks of a semester, the student must complete and obtain the required signatures on the Registration Drop/Add Form, available through the student's academic program or the Office of the University Registrar.

No course may be dropped in the last two weeks of classes in a fall or spring semester or during the last week of a summer session.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Dropping a course after the census date may have financial and academic consequences. Please refer to the [Academic and Financial Policy Regarding Tuition and Drop Dates](#).

A student registered for and wishing to drop an inter-institutional course follows the same procedures and deadlines as required for dropping courses at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Official [withdrawal from the University](#) is required if a student wishes to drop all courses after a semester begins.

## Inter-Institutional Registration

Students may take a maximum of two graduate-level courses through inter-institutional registration during a fall or spring term or a maximum of one graduate-level course during a summer term, provided that the student is also registered for the balance of his/her normal load (at least three credit hours) at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Students may take these courses at North Carolina State University, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, North Carolina Central University, or Duke University.

No inter-institutional course may be taken pass/fail (satisfactory/unsatisfactory, etc.) and all courses must earn a specific grade. Please refer to the [Graduate Grading](#) section of this Handbook for the policy concerning inter-institutional grading.

To [register for an inter-institutional course](#), the student must complete an [Inter-Institutional Approval Form](#) and obtain his/her director of graduate studies' signature certifying the following requirements:

- the course is appropriate for the student's degree program, and is a graduate-level course according to the current numbering schemes below:
  - Duke – 200 and above (except Divinity courses)
  - NCCU – 4000 and above
  - NCSU – 500 and above
  - UNC-C – 5000 and above
  - UNC-G – 500 and above;
- an equivalent course is not available on this campus; and
- the course does not earn a pass/fail grade.

The student then submits the request form to the UNC-Chapel Hill Office of the University Registrar for approval and processing.

Courses taken by inter-institutional registration earn residence credit as if they were courses on this campus.

The exchange of inter-institutional grades between universities is a time consuming process and grades may not appear on a student's record at the same time as grades from their home campus. Students opting to take inter-institutional courses during their final semester should closely monitor their academic record for posting delays that may prevent graduation.

## International Students

### English Prerequisite to Registration

All new international students subject to TOEFL must take the University's English Proficiency Test before registering for their first semester of study. Students who do not achieve a passing score will be required to enroll in and attend a non-credit course entitled "ENGL 601: Academic Writing for International Students".

## Full-time/Continuous Registration

International students must observe all enrollment conditions required by their student visa, including remaining enrolled full-time in the program to which they were admitted. Changes in the enrollment status of international students must be reported to the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#) by the student as soon as possible. **Failure to maintain continuous and accurately reported full-time registration can have severe consequences, including, but not limited to, loss of visa status and deportation.**

## International Teaching Assistants

International teaching assistants may be evaluated for their teaching ability and choose to register for "[GRAD 810: Communicating in the American Classroom](#)." This course focuses on interpersonal communication, teaching skills, and classroom phrases and pronunciation.

## Cancellation of Registration

Registration is canceled under the following circumstances:

### Academic Ineligibility

The Graduate School will automatically cancel the registration of those students who become academically ineligible. See [Academic Eligibility](#).

### Nonpayment of Tuition and Fees

A student's registration will be canceled if s/he does not pay tuition and fees (or properly arrange for their deferment) by the payment deadline given in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#). To register subsequent to such cancellation, students must pay tuition and fees in advance and add courses no later than the last day for adding courses specified in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#).

### Failure to Submit Student Health Services Forms

If a new or transfer student, or a matriculated student not registered for two years, fails to submit the immunization record and [Medical History Form](#), registration will be canceled.

## Residence Credit

Students have a minimum number of required semesters of UNC-Chapel Hill registration. The program residence credit hour requirement is earned in the process of fulfilling course credit requirements and requires UNC-Chapel Hill registration, although not necessarily physical presence on campus (for example, the student may be doing field research).

## Calculation

Semester credit hours are converted to program residence credit on the same basis as tuition:

- 9 or more credit hours earn a full semester of residence.
- 6 to 8.9 credit hours earn three-fourths semester of residence.
- 3 to 5.9 credit hours earn one-half semester of residence.
- 0 to 2.9 credit hours earn one-fourth semester of residence.

Credits earned in any summer session count toward residence credit on the same basis as courses taken in a fall or spring semester.

Residence credit earned on work for a master's degree at UNC-Chapel Hill is applicable as program residence credit for a doctoral degree.

Courses taken by inter-institutional registration earn residence credit as if they were courses on this campus.

Teaching or other service duties do not count as part of the residence computation for the degree.

Transferred credit will not be included in the program residence credit calculation.

Special Language Course credit does not count toward the residence credit requirement.

See [Credit and Residence Requirements for Master's degree](#) or [Doctoral degree](#).

# Graduate Grading

## Grade Scale

Students enrolled in courses numbered 400 or above must receive one of the following grades:

### Graduate Permanent Grades

H	High Pass
P	Pass
L	Low Pass
F	Fail

### Special Grading Symbols

F*	Fail-Administratively Assigned; equivalent to F
S	Satisfactory progress on research courses, thesis, dissertation, and courses taken to fulfill language requirements
NG	No grade assigned

### Temporary Grades

AB	Absent from final examination
IN	Work incomplete

## Special Grading Symbols

### Administrative F (F\*) Grade

The Office of the University Registrar automatically converts the temporary grades of AB and IN to F\* when the time limit for a grade change on these temporary grades has expired. Receiving a grade of F\* results in the student becoming academically ineligible to continue in The Graduate School.

See [Academic Eligibility](#).

### Satisfactory (S) Progress

The grade of S is used to indicate satisfactory progress in research and thesis courses taken by students in cases where such courses are not completed during a term and when there is need for a grade to indicate that the student has been actively engaged in productive research. A grade of S is also used to indicate satisfactory completion of language requirements, including the computer science substitute.

### No Grade (NG) Assigned

The symbol of NG is recorded as a notation for failure of the language requirements, for authorized professional school non-degree courses which are not assigned a grade, and for Judicial Pending cases.

### Temporary Grades

Failure to remove temporary grades of IN and AB by the last day of classes of the term in which a student plans to graduate will prevent graduation. A temporary grade converts to F\* unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.

When extenuating circumstances warrant, The Graduate School may grant a student a time extension to complete a course and replace a temporary grade. The student must first complete the [Request for Extension of Time Form](#) and receive approval from their academic program, after which time the program's director of graduate studies may forward a petition for extension to The Graduate School.

### Absent (AB) Grade

An AB grade must be given to a student who did not take a final exam regardless of the reason, but might have passed the course had they done so. AB is a temporary grade that converts to F\* unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.

An AB must be requested by the student within 30 days following the missed examination.

If the absence is officially excused by the instructor, the student must take the final examination at a reasonable time designated by the course instructor, in no case to exceed one year from the original examination.

### Incomplete (IN) Grade

A grade of IN is given when the course instructor determines that exceptional circumstances warrant extending the time for the student to complete the course. Instructors should assign an IN when the student took the final examination but did not complete some other course requirement. IN is a temporary grade that converts to F\* unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later. An

incomplete grade may not be submitted when a student is absent from the final examination; in such cases, AB is the appropriate grade.

The instructor may set the maximum allowable period for completing the course, but in no case will this extension exceed one year. If the time allowed is to be less than one year, this information should be transmitted in writing to the student and copied to The Graduate School. It is the sole responsibility of the student to complete the course and initiate the grade change prior to the one-year deadline.

Since the grade of IN is given after the deadline to change courses in that semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course where an IN was received. The student must complete the work in the timeframe expected or earn F\*.

## Grade Change

Course grades of H, P, L, F, and F\* are permanent grades. A permanent grade may be changed upon the initiative of the instructor, only in cases of arithmetic or clerical error, and then only with the approval of the director, chair or dean of the instructor's academic program and of The Graduate School. Such a change may be made no later than the last day of classes of the next succeeding regular semester. More information about graduate grade changes can be found in the [University Registrar's Policy Memo No. 24](#).

## Grade Appeals

The following summary details the steps involved in a grade appeal, which are elaborated on more fully immediately below the summary:

- 1) The student should first address his or her concerns to the instructor who assigned the grade.
- 2) If, after consultation with the instructor, a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student may lodge an appeal of the instructor's decision, in writing, with:
  - a) the chair/director of the academic program which is the home unit of the course instructor, or
  - b) the instructor's dean, in cases where the school is the instructor's home unit.

All appeals must be in writing and signed by the student. They must contain a summary of the evidence and arguments that the student believes supports his or her position in the appeal.

It is the responsibility of the University official noted above to determine whether the evidence cited by the student warrants further investigation. If the determination is made that the evidence cited warrants further investigation, it is the responsibility of the University official noted above to investigate the complaint.

The burden of proof falls upon the student to show that (a) an impermissible element existed in the instructor's evaluation of the student's coursework, and (b) that element influenced the grade assignment to the detriment of the student.

- 3) If the outcome of this first level of appeal is not satisfactory to the student, s/he may lodge an appeal of the chair's/director's decision, in writing, with:
  - a) the chair's dean, in cases where the appeal was initially reviewed by the chair of the instructor's home unit, and the chair's school has a process for review at the dean's level, or
  - b) The Graduate School, in cases where the school is the instructor's home unit, or the school in which the chair's academic program is based does not have a process for review at the dean's level.
- 4) In cases where the student has appealed to the chair's dean, subsequent to appealing to the instructor's chair (3 (a) above), and the outcome is not satisfactory to the student, the student may lodge an appeal of the dean's decision, in writing, with The Graduate School.

In appealing an appeal decision (Steps 3 and 4, above), the burden of proof falls upon the student to show that (a) an impermissible element existed in the review of the appeal, and (b) that element influenced the chair's/dean's determination of the outcome of the review to the detriment of the student.

- 5) Decisions of The Graduate School are final and cannot be appealed.

Before filing any appeal of a course grade, the student should first address his or her concerns to the instructor who assigned the grade. Should the instructor detect an arithmetic or clerical error that negatively influenced the grade assignment, a grade change form should be executed reflecting the corrected grade. An instructor may not initiate a change of a course grade as a result of reevaluating the quality of the student's performance or as a result of additional work performed by the student.

If, after consultation with the instructor, a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student may appeal the grade to the instructor's chair or dean. Such an appeal should be lodged by the student in writing with the instructor's chair or dean, with a copy to be provided by the student to the instructor, and should cite the evidence by which the student judges (a) that an impermissible element existed in the instructor's evaluation of the student's coursework and (b) that it influenced the grade assignment to the detriment of the student. Appeals should be submitted no later than the last day of classes of the next succeeding regular semester.

For an appeal of a course grade to be considered, it must be based upon one or more of the following grounds and upon allegation that the ground or grounds cited influenced the grade assignment to the student's detriment: (1) arithmetic or clerical error; (2) arbitrariness, possibly including discrimination based upon the race, gender, age, disability, religion, or national origin of the student; (3) personal malice; and/or (4) student conduct cognizable under the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance.

The chair or dean will evaluate the material presented and determine whether the evidence cited warrants further investigation of the charges. The burden of proof shall fall upon the student. The determination by the chair or dean shall be made only after providing the instructor with the opportunity to reply to the charges as cited in writing by the student. If, in the judgment of the chair or dean, the evidence cited by the student is insufficient to warrant further investigation of the charges, the appeal may be denied by the chair or dean. In this case, the student has the right to appeal the ruling in writing to the Administrative Board of

The Graduate School. If, in the judgment of the chair or dean, or the Administrative Board (if the ruling has been appealed to that body), the evidence cited is sufficient to warrant further investigation, the chair or dean of the academic program in which the course was offered will appoint a committee of no less than three members of the Graduate Faculty to investigate the charges and to render a written set of findings and recommendations. The findings and recommendations shall be transmitted to the student by the chair or dean, with a copy to the Graduate School. Should a change of permanent course grade be recommended, the Graduate School shall present that recommendation for action by the Administrative Board of The Graduate School. Should change of grade not be recommended, the student retains the right to appeal in writing to the Administrative Board of The Graduate School. A change of grade following these appeal procedures requires a vote of no less than two-thirds of those Administrative Board members who are present and voting. The decision of The Graduate School is final and cannot be appealed.

Other types of official academic decisions, (e.g., evaluation of oral or written examinations, of theses/dissertations, or of student performance or promise), may be appealed according to the above criteria and procedures, with the single exception that protest of non-grade academic evaluations may call for the reevaluation of student performance.

## Inter-Institutional Grading

A grade received for a graduate-level course taken by inter-institutional registration that is the lowest non-failing grade for the partner institution will be interpreted as L. F will transfer as F.

Institution	Minimum Passing Grade
• Duke	C
• NCSU	C
• NCCU	C
• UNC-C	C
• UNC-G	C

For an inter-institutional course to apply towards a UNC-Chapel Hill student's graduate degree, the inter-institutional course may not be taken pass/fail. Grades earned for courses taken via

inter-institutional registration do factor into a student's academic eligibility calculation.

## Pass/Fail Courses

All required graduate courses, including those taken on this campus or elsewhere (via inter-institutional registration, Study Abroad, etc.), may not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

## Assistantships and Fellowships

Students may be awarded a service (research or teaching assistantship) or a non-service (fellowship) appointment. As part of this award, students may receive a [Tuition Remission Award](#), reducing tuition to in-state rates, and/or an [In-State Tuition Award](#).

The Graduate School recognizes that graduate students are first and foremost "students" and their making continual significant progress toward their degree is paramount to the ethical training and education of students. The Graduate School recommends that students should not normally conduct service work (research or teaching assistantships) in excess of 15-20 hours per week on average. This policy enables them to work on their own studies and research for at least the remaining 20-25 hours per work week. However, it is not simple to set maximum service work hours due to the complexity inherent in the education and training of graduate students. Directors of graduate studies, therefore, need to be thoughtful about the specifics involved in each particular student's situation and sensitive to the incremental gains in knowledge and skill acquisition in the particular situation.

The University asks graduate students to perform work that is simultaneously both training and service. Their training may take various forms, including apprentice-type training under faculty mentors within the research lab, classroom or community, as well as more traditional coursework. This training often is the primary way in which students learn the core skills, expectations, norms, ethics, and content of aspects of their graduate disciplines/fields. However, when examining a particular student's educational/training program, it may be seen that while initial training is requisite to acquiring

appropriate knowledge and skills, additional similar training may add only incrementally to their development. In such cases, the standard of not exceeding 15-20 hours per week should apply.

Directors of graduate studies in each graduate program are best informed to make these judgments on an individual basis and should be responsible for monitoring that service expectations do not impede any student's significant progress toward their degree.

All policies on graduate teaching assistants should adhere to the UNC System policy [Guidelines on Training, Monitoring, and Evaluating Graduate Teaching Assistants](#). The [Office of the Provost](#) maintains policies about the Professional Development of Graduate Teaching Assistants, as well as an Eligibility Waiver Request Form.

## Tuition and Other Charges

### Payment Schedule

All students must pay tuition and fees according to the schedule printed in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#) unless they qualify for a deferment under policies described in the Directory of Classes. Refer to the [University Cashier's Office](#) for current cost of attendance information.

### Residence Status for Tuition Payment

As a state supported institution, the tuition rate for legal residents of North Carolina is less than the tuition rate for nonresidents. Information regarding residency requirements is available on [The Graduate School's residency website](#).

A new application for residence status for tuition purposes must be submitted with all reapplication or readmission requests.

### Tuition Remission and In-State Tuition Awards

A non-resident student who is awarded a fellowship or assistantship appointment may be

eligible for a [Tuition Remission Award](#) reducing tuition to in-state rates. In addition to tuition remission, non-resident and resident students who are awarded a fellowship or assistantship appointment may be eligible for an [In-State Tuition Award](#). Requests for tuition remission and in-state tuition award privileges are initiated by the academic program in which the student is enrolled.

Tuition remission and in-state tuition awards are available fall and spring semesters only. No summer awards are made. Students must be on-campus unless the award requires their presence at another campus or research center.

### Eligibility

Students must meet the following criteria to qualify for tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards:

- 1) Students must be full-time, degree seeking, and on-campus.
- 2) Students enrolled in master's/doctoral sequence programs or [free-standing master's programs](#) must receive a minimum stipend level per semester, as set by the Tuition Remission Allocation Committee. Stipend levels are subject to change each year. Students may contact The Graduate School for the current stipend level.
- 3) Students must have an appointment as a teaching assistant, research assistant, or fellow/trainee. The appointment must be in effect for a period of not less than one full semester for the student to be eligible for, and to retain, tuition remission and/or an in-state tuition award.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students determined at any point in the semester to no longer meet the eligibility requirements to receive a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award will have the full amount of any tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award rescinded, and are then personally responsible for paying the full costs of tuition for that semester.

### Duration of Support

- Free-standing master's program students are eligible for tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards for **four (4) semesters**;

- Doctoral students (or students in master's/doctoral sequence programs) are eligible for tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards for **ten (10) semesters**.

Semesters in which the student does not receive a tuition award (remission and/or in-state tuition) from the Graduate School do not count toward the four or ten semester limit. Students who complete a degree in one academic program and then enroll in another academic program or change academic programs without receiving a degree are only eligible for the maximum semesters of eligibility as noted above during their enrollment at the University. In any case, no student is eligible for more than a total of **ten (10) semesters** of tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards during their enrollment at the University, regardless of rate of remission or award.

When a student is no longer eligible for tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards from Graduate School remission funds, there may be other resources available from state, private or grant funds at the departmental level. If such resources are available, it is permissible to use those funds to provide the tuition award (in-state or out-of-state rate), as long as the student is paid a salary from the funding source and any payments meet specific criteria of those funding sources.

### Consequences of Academic Actions

#### Resignation from Appointment

Students who have received a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award who resign from their University appointment prior to the end of the semester (for personal, financial, medical, or any other reason) will have the full amount of their tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award rescinded and **are then personally responsible for paying the full costs of tuition for that semester**. Tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards are not prorated. Appeals to the above policy must be directed to The Graduate School, along with a written recommendation from the dean, chair, or director of the student's academic program, and a letter of confirmation from the director of Student Health Service if the resignation is for medical reasons.

### Adding a Course

Students who have received a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award and add a course **before** the end of the official registration add period, which results in additional tuition charges, will receive additional tuition remission and/or in-state award funds to cover the cost of the hours added should funds be available. Students who add a course **after** the official add registration period, which results in additional tuition charges, will not receive additional tuition remission and/or in-state award funds to cover the credit hours added and are then personally responsible for paying the additional cost for the credit hours added.

### Dropping a Course

Students who have received a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award who drop a course at any point in the semester will be re-evaluated to ensure that they still meet the eligibility requirements to receive a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award.

Students determined to still meet the eligibility requirements, for whom the reduction in credit hours occurs **before** the last date to drop and still receive credit on their financial account ("census date" is generally two weeks after classes begin), may have their financial account adjusted with no penalty.

Students determined to still meet the eligibility requirements, for whom the reduction in credit hours occurs **after** the last date to drop and still receive credit on their financial account ("census date" is generally two weeks after classes begin), will have the tuition remission and/or in-state award to cover the credit hours for the course dropped rescinded and **are then personally responsible for paying the tuition costs for the credit hours dropped.**

Please refer to the [Academic and Financial Policy Regarding Tuition and Drop Dates](#) for further details on the consequences of dropping a course after the census date.

### Withdrawal

Students who have received a tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award who withdraw from the University (i.e., drop all classes) prior to the fulfillment of their term commitment (for personal, financial, medical, or any other reason) will have the full amount of their tuition

remission and/or in-state tuition award rescinded and **are then personally responsible for paying the full costs of tuition for that semester.** Although tuition charges may be prorated according to established policies of the University Cashier, tuition remission and/or in-state tuition awards are not prorated. Appeals to the above policy must be directed to The Graduate School, along with a written recommendation from the dean, chair, or director of the student's academic program, and a letter of confirmation from the director of Student Health Service if the withdrawal is for medical reasons.

### Partial Tuition Remissions

Programs with [stand-alone master's degrees](#) will now be allowed to provide students a partial tuition remission, equal to 50% or 75% of full tuition. This plan was designed to accommodate students who have reduced Research Assistant responsibilities as master's degree students. In order to qualify for these partial tuition remissions, students must receive a minimum stipend level per semester, as set by the Tuition Remission Allocation Committee. Please note that this program is voluntary. Students in stand-alone programs are still eligible for a full tuition remission, provided they meet the eligibility criteria as described above for teaching or research assistants.

## Graduation

Students must notify The Graduate School of their plan to graduate by submitting an [Application for Graduation](#) no later than the deadline shown in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#) for the semester in which they expect to graduate. Applications should only be submitted when the student realistically intends to graduate that semester and are valid for one semester only. If a student does not graduate in the semester expected, s/he must submit another application for graduation in a future semester.

Students in officially recognized dual degree programs, other than the MD-PhD program, must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time, even if the requirements for one degree are completed sooner than the second degree. Academic programs are asked to provide flexibility so students may be able to

walk ceremoniously with their cohort even if they do not earn the degree that semester. See [Dual Degree Programs](#) for additional information.

Master's and doctoral degrees are awarded at the end of each semester and the second summer session. Formal commencement exercises are held in May and December.

All students receiving their degrees in May are encouraged to participate in the May commencement ceremony. All students receiving their degrees in August and December are encouraged to participate in the December commencement ceremony.

Doctoral students are also encouraged to participate in the Hooding Ceremony, held in May only, recognizing those who are graduating in May or those who graduated in the prior most recent December or August terms. Students planning to participate should contact The Graduate School.

Although students must be registered in the semester in which they defend, they need not be registered in the semester in which the degree is to be awarded, provided that no use of University faculty time or facilities is required, and as long as they were registered appropriately in prior terms, unless other conditions (employment, immigration, etc.) require registration.

## Medical Issues

### Medical History Form

All new, transfer, and readmitted students (who have not attended UNC-Chapel Hill for the previous two years) must submit a completed immunization record and [Medical History Form](#) to Student Health Service to avoid registration cancellation.

### Withdrawal from the University for Medical Reasons

A student who receives a medical withdrawal may be required to receive medical clearance before being readmitted. See [Withdrawal from the University](#).

## Parental Leave Policy

The UNC-Chapel Hill [Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy](#) is designed to assist a full-time graduate student who is the primary child-care provider immediately following the birth or adoption of a child. This policy will ensure the student's full-time, registered status and will facilitate their return to full participation in class work and, where applicable, research and teaching in a seamless manner. All matriculated, full-time graduate students are eligible to apply for this leave. A [Parental Leave Application Form](#) must be completed and submitted to The Graduate School at least eight weeks prior to the anticipated birth or adoption of the child.

## Withdrawal from the University

Official withdrawal from the University is required if a student wishes to drop all courses after a semester begins. The student must obtain a Withdrawal Form from the student's academic program and complete the withdrawal steps as indicated on the form. If at the time of withdrawal the student is failing any course, a grade of F is assigned to the student's permanent record and the student becomes ineligible to continue in The Graduate School.

A student who withdraws during the first semester of enrollment in an academic program must formally apply for new admission ([Admission Application](#), application fee, etc.) to that program if s/he wishes to pursue the degree at some future date.

Withdrawal from the University is not equivalent to a formal leave of absence from The Graduate School. See [Leave of Absence for Master's degree](#) or [Doctoral degree](#).

A student who receives a medical withdrawal may be required to receive [medical clearance](#) before being readmitted.

International students who withdraw from the University may face critical consequences regarding their visa status. International students should contact the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#) to

discuss the implications of noncompliance well in advance of processing a withdrawal.

Withdrawal from the University also has financial consequences for students who have been awarded tuition remission and/or in-state tuition award through a fellowship or assistantship appointment. See the withdrawal policy for students receiving tuition support under [Tuition and Other Charges](#).

## Policies and Procedures

Campus Policies and Procedures can be found online at:

- [Campus Policies and Procedures](#)
- [The Office of the Provost](#)
- [The Office of the Dean of Students](#)
- [The Graduate Record](#)

The following are selected Policies and Procedures that may be of immediate interest for students.

- [Honor Code](#)
- [Ethics in Research](#)
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [Illegal Drug Policy](#)
- [Student Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Immunization Requirements](#)
- [Improper Relationships between Students and Employees](#)
- [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#)
- [Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination](#)
- [Student Grievance Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Faculty Grievance Committee](#)
- [Residence Status for Tuition Purposes](#)
- [Sexual Assault Response Plan](#)
- [Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy](#)

## Students as Faculty

A student pursuing a graduate degree at this institution may not be appointed as a member of the General Faculty, except under the following conditions:

- The appointment may be made only if the appointment begins in the same semester that the degree is awarded.

- The appointment may be made only if the conditions of employment are approved by The Graduate School, the academic program chair and dean, if appropriate, of the program in which the student is pursuing a degree, and the employing academic program chair and dean, if appropriate.

## Graduate Students Teaching Graduate Students

Graduate students normally do not teach other graduate students from the same academic program. Academic programs may apply for exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis by submitting a [Request for Permission for a Graduate Student to Teach a Graduate Course within His/Her Own Academic Program Form](#) to The Graduate School for evaluation. In such cases, a full-time faculty member must be designated as the graduate student's teaching supervisor and the instructor of record.

## Certificate Programs

For information on graduate certificate programs and course transfer policies, please see [Graduate Certificates](#).

## Dual Degree Programs

The Graduate School encourages the development of programs in graduate education that are responsive to changing disciplinary, professional, economic, and social circumstances. Only academic programs have the authority to propose and receive approval for new dual degree programs. Programs should reference the [Policy on Transdisciplinary Programs of Study](#).

Dual degree programs must balance structural efficiency with individual program integrity. They result in the awarding of two degrees from two different disciplines, generally at the master's degree level (exceptions: JD, MD, and MD/PhD programs). Note that a master's degree student continuing on for a PhD in the same academic program is not considered a dual degree student under these guidelines.

Students must apply to and be accepted by both programs individually before beginning in the

dual degree program. In a practical sense, this means that students should apply to both academic programs at the same time, or apply to the second program no later than during their first year of the first program. Dual degrees will not be awarded after the curricular requirements have already been met without initial application.

Course credit transfers allowed above the normal [20 Percent Rule](#) are specified in the dual degree program approvals from The Graduate School. Students who do not apply to both programs before beginning the curricular requirements will be subject to the [20 Percent Rule](#).

Students in officially recognized dual degree programs, other than the MD-PhD program, must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time, even if the requirements for one degree are completed sooner than the second degree. Academic programs are asked to provide flexibility so students may be able to walk ceremoniously with their cohort even if they do not earn the degree that semester. See [Graduation](#) for additional information.

## Degree Requirements

### Master's Degree Requirements

#### Credit and Residence Requirements

The Graduate School requires a minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate course credit, 24 of which must be taken in residence. Individual program credit hour requirements may be higher, and must be satisfied.

Master's students are required to complete a minimum program residence credit of two full semesters either by full-time registration or by part-time registration over several semesters.

See [Residence Credit](#).

### Transfer Credit

Please refer to the general guidelines for [Transferring Course Credit](#) and the [20 Percent Rule](#) for Master's students.

### Major Course Requirements

Course requirements in the major field must be fulfilled as specified by the student's academic program. The student is expected to complete a program of study that will provide mastery of his or her field, with at least 18 course credit hours in the major field. It is recommended that at least half of the courses taken for a graduate degree be numbered 700 and above.

Major courses must also include a minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992) or thesis (993) registration.

### Electing a Minor

With the approval of the major and minor academic programs, a student may elect to declare a formal minor in any program that offers a graduate degree. The student should submit an approved [Minor Declaration Form](#) [\[note link\]](#) to the Graduate School.

The minor must comprise at least nine credit hours beyond the major. All credits must be for courses listed (or cross-listed) in programs other than that of the major, and cannot also be counted toward the major. A minor may consist of a set of related courses, some of which are listed by one program and some of which are listed by another. In most cases, the minor would not include courses from more than two programs. Only one program name will be listed as granting the minor, and the director of graduate studies in the minor program must agree to accept any courses from outside the minor program offerings.

The minor must be approved in advance by the director of graduate studies in both the major and minor programs. When a satisfactory minor has been planned and approved by both programs, a copy of the proposed minor course of study should be signed by the director of graduate studies in the major and minor programs and sent to The Graduate School to become a permanent part of the student's record.

## Foreign Language or Research Requirement

Language and research skill requirements differ for each academic program. All students must acquire competence in those foreign languages needed for research or teaching in their disciplines. At an early stage, a student should consult his or her academic program advisor concerning what foreign languages, if any, will be required.

Graduate students must satisfy the foreign language requirement from a list of acceptable languages other than English as approved by their academic program.

Each academic program determines at what point a student must fulfill language or research skill requirements, provided that all such requirements are satisfied before a student graduates. The student's director of graduate studies will need to certify on the [Application for Graduation](#) that all such requirements have been met.

## Examinations

A written or an oral examination (or both) is required for degree completion. Only academic programs have the authority to request approved substitutes in meeting these requirements, normally within the guidelines of field or accreditation requirements. Programs should reference the [Academic Policy Regarding Approved Substitutes for Master's Degree Comprehensive Exam Requirements](#).

The definition of "comprehensive" varies by academic program, but here means an examination whose thoroughness in all ways conforms to the best accepted practices within the discipline.

Neither examination may be taken until all courses are completed or until the final courses are in progress. The examination(s) must be scheduled in conformance with deadlines shown in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#).

## Registration Requirement

Students must be registered during the semester(s) in which exams are taken.

See [Required Registration](#).

## Examining Committee

A student passes an examination only after the approval of at least two-thirds of the examining committee members. The Graduate School considers the examining committee's vote to be final. Typically, the examining committee is the same as the student's [thesis committee](#).

## Final Oral Defense

If a thesis is required, a final oral defense may be required in addition to the examination(s) or as part of an oral examination. If a final oral defense is required, it should be held only after all members of the committee have had adequate opportunity to review a draft of the master's thesis. The thesis advisor is responsible for determining that the draft is in an appropriate form for committee evaluation. If substantial revisions are necessary, they should be completed before the final oral defense is scheduled. All committee members are expected to be present at the defense.

The final oral defense may be open to the public or limited in attendance to the candidate and the committee. Questions that relate the thesis to the field are appropriate. A thesis is accepted only after the approval of at least two-thirds of the committee members. At the conclusion of the final oral defense, all committee members should sign Part III, and if appropriate Part IV, of the [Master's Comprehensive Exam or Approved Substitute Form](#).

At the time of the final oral defense, but no later than the oral, the committee may require alterations and corrections, but these should constitute relatively minor changes agreed to by a majority of the committee members. The thesis advisor is responsible for verifying that the changes required by the committee have been made. If not done already, all committee members should sign Part IV of the [Master's Comprehensive Exam or Approved Substitute Form](#). When all changes have been verified, the committee chair should initial Part IV.

The student should submit the thesis in final form designed to meet the standards as defined in the Graduate School's [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#). The program should submit the [Master's Comprehensive Exam or Approved Substitute Form](#) to the Graduate School for final processing.

## Failure of Examinations

A graduate student who fails either a written or oral examination may not take the examination a second time until at least three months after the first attempt. The student should work with his or her academic program to identify areas needing additional emphasis and to establish an action plan to prepare for taking the exam a second time.

A student who fails an examination for the second time becomes academically ineligible to continue in The Graduate School. See [Academic Eligibility](#).

## Rescheduled or Remote Examinations

The Graduate School permits examinations to be rescheduled or held via distance-based capabilities in cases of extreme hardship (usually for international students whose visas have expired). This applies both to course examinations and to written and oral master's examinations. The Honor Code remains in effect for any examination taken outside the regularly scheduled time or off campus. The student and faculty should work together to find a mutually agreeable time for the examination.

## Thesis or Approved Substitute Requirements

For the master's degree, a thesis *or* an approved substitute is required. A minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992) or thesis (993) registration is required. A maximum of six such credit hours may be counted as part of the required 30 credit hour minimum for the degree.

Only academic programs have the authority to request approved substitutes in meeting these requirements, normally within the guidelines of its field or accreditation requirements. Programs should reference the [Academic Policy Regarding Approved Substitutes for Master's Degree Thesis Requirements](#). Once a student completes the approved substitute, the academic program must submit the [Report of Approved Substitute for a Master's Thesis Form](#) to The Graduate School.

## Registration Requirement

Students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of thesis (992) or thesis

substitute (993) during the semester in which they defend or complete the thesis option.

See [Required Registration](#).

## Committee Composition

A committee of at least three members approves any thesis required and administers any oral examination that may be given. A majority of the persons signing a master's thesis must be regular members of the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate Faculty from the student's major academic program. Other members may be special appointees to the Graduate Faculty. The committee is approved by the academic program's director of graduate studies, after consultation with the student.

A student should have a faculty research advisor and a committee chair. One individual faculty member may serve in both roles if approved by the academic program. Both roles should be filled by regular members of the Graduate Faculty in the student's major academic program; however, at the request of the program and approval of The Graduate School, they may be fixed-term graduate faculty members or from another UNC-Chapel Hill program.

The *advisor* typically oversees the research progress and serves as the primary mentor. A student may elect to have co-advisors as long as one is from the student's major academic program.

The committee *chair* typically oversees committee meetings and the associated documentation.

If the student has a minor field of study, at least one member of the committee must represent the minor field. In the case of a joint minor involving two academic programs, one faculty representative on the committee for both minors is sufficient, provided that both minor programs agree that the faculty member can adequately represent each minor course of study.

## Preparation

### Format

The Graduate School will accept only theses produced according to the standards in the Graduate School's [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#). Theses must be prepared in a form

consistent with approved methods of scholarly writing and research. On matters of form, the student should also consult published manuals of style. It is suggested that a draft copy of the thesis be pre-approved by Graduate School staff well before the submission deadline.

The thesis is expected to be written in English. In special cases, languages other than English may be used; the substitution is not permitted for the student's convenience but may be allowed when the student has sufficient skill at composition and has a thesis topic that is, in the advisor's judgment, especially suited to treatment in the second language. Approval to use a language other than English must be obtained in advance from The Graduate School, and a title page must be submitted in English.

### **Abstract**

Each copy of a thesis submitted to The Graduate School must include an abstract. The abstract should be placed after the title page and before the table of contents.

### **Submission of Theses**

Theses must be submitted to The Graduate School according to the schedule in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#) in final form designed to meet the standards defined in the Graduate School's [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#). Documents submitted electronically will not require front page signatures.

It is strongly suggested that every thesis be submitted well before the deadline to ensure ample time for format revisions.

### **Publication**

Receipt of an approved thesis in The Graduate School results in the publication of the thesis by the University, with the thesis being made available to the public in electronic, paper and potentially other forms through the University libraries. No exceptions will be made to this policy. As a condition of enrollment, each student grants the University a limited, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to reproduce the student's thesis, in whole or in part, in paper and electronic form to be posted on the University's library database and made available to the general public at no charge.

Prior publication is not forbidden if the work is the student's and is judged to be an adequate

contribution to knowledge. However, the student must secure from the publisher (or whoever holds the copyright to the published piece) written permission for the thesis to be submitted in paper and electronic format to the University where it will be placed in a database and may be made available through the University Library to the general public at no charge via the internet.

Long term preservation of master's theses is required by The Graduate School. Once theses are submitted electronically, the University will contract UMI Publishing (ProQuest Information and Learning), Ann Arbor, Michigan, to retain a permanent copy of each thesis. Once electronic submission is required, each student must license his/her thesis to UMI permitting it to publish an abstract of each thesis in Dissertation Abstracts International and make available copies of the thesis for a fee (with royalties to the author).

### **Internet Distribution**

All theses will be included in the UMI database and the University's library database and made available to the general public over the internet. UMI search services allow different levels of access depending on payment, ranging from metadata only searching, to accessing only the first portion of the paper, to the entire paper. UMI collects fees from anyone that orders a thesis from it and, then, shares a portion of the fee with the author. Students will sign an agreement with UMI setting forth the terms of UMI's services.

The University library database will make theses available in their entirety to the general public for free. As a condition of enrollment, each student grants the University a limited, non-exclusive royalty-free license to reproduce the student's thesis, in whole or in part, in electronic form to be posted on the University's library database and made available to the general public at no charge.

Under certain circumstances, students may restrict distribution of a portion of their theses over the internet. Such restrictions, if allowed, will only be for a limited period of time.

### **Printing Options**

Please note the Graduate School cannot take responsibility for your printing job, although we

have researched some options for students. You may order your copies through the UMI site, or there are several campus and library-recommended options available to you.

Option 1) A student can usually get better quality by printing out his or her thesis on acid-free paper (sometimes called archival or legal bond) and sending it to a company that does library binding. The Bull's Head Bookshop in the UNC Student Stores will send documents out to a library bindery on behalf of students. The Bull's Head handles payments, provides on-campus customer service, and takes care of the shipping and order tracking. For more information, visit the Bookshop or call 919-962-5060.

Option 2) Lulu is a digital marketplace business, and they have a service specifically for theses and dissertations. For more information, please visit their website at: <http://www.lulu.com/en/products/dissertations/>.

Option 3) A self publisher company called Blurb may also assist with publishing theses and dissertations. For more information, please visit their website at: [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com).

## Permission to Proceed

A student admitted to The Graduate School to pursue a master's degree in an academic program where doctoral studies are available is not automatically advanced to doctoral-level studies upon completion of the requirements for a master's degree. Upon completion of all requirements for a master's degree, the academic program must evaluate each student and submit the [Recommendation to Proceed Beyond Master's Degree Form](#) to The Graduate School for each student who is considered qualified and recommended for doctoral study.

Upon award of the master's degree, the student's eight-year doctoral time limit begins. Students must register in the following fall or spring semester. A leave of absence between degrees is not allowed.

## Time Limits

A master's student has five calendar years from the date of first registration in the master's program to complete the master's degree (Example: if the date of first registration is August 2005, the five-year time limit expires at

Commencement, August 2010). [Reapplication](#) is required to continue pursuit of the degree if the five-year limit expires.

## Extension of the Time Limit

When extenuating circumstances warrant, a student in good academic standing may request one extension of the degree time limit for a definite, stated period of time (up to one year). The student must first complete the [Request for Extension of Time Form](#) and receive approval from their academic program, after which time the program's director of graduate studies should forward a petition for extension to The Graduate School. Ordinarily, an extension of the degree time limit may not be extended.

## Interruption of Study

If graduate study is interrupted by active military service, or service in the Peace Corps, VISTA, or the equivalent, as much as two years of that time will not count toward the time limit for the degree. In such an event, an official letter from the appropriate agency should be sent to The Graduate School to document the interruption.

## Leave of Absence

Within the five-year limit, a student in good academic standing may request one leave of absence from graduate study for a definite, stated period of time (up to one year) during which the student does not plan to make academic progress. To be eligible for a leave of absence, a student must not have received an extension of the degree time limit and must not have temporary grades of IN or AB on courses taken. A leave of absence between degrees is not allowed.

In advance of the leave period, the student must complete and submit a [Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) to The Graduate School. This form requires approval by the academic program. If The Graduate School approves the leave of absence, the time of that leave will not count against the total time allowed for the degree. [Readmission](#) to The Graduate School after an approved leave of absence is generally a formality. Ordinarily, a leave of absence may not be renewed.

Students should be aware that while on leave, they cannot be considered enrolled students and therefore will not have access to campus services and benefits afforded to enrolled

students, including eligibility for holding student employment positions (e.g., TA or RA) or student health insurance, among other services.

Students taking advantage of the [Parental Leave Policy](#) do not need to file a separate Leave of Absence request.

## Doctor of Philosophy Degree Requirements

### Credit and Residence Requirements

Individual program credit hour requirements are established by the student's academic program and must be satisfied. Doctoral students are required to complete a minimum program residence credit of four full semesters, either by full-time registration, or by part-time registration over several semesters. At least two of the required four semesters of residence must be earned in contiguous registration of no fewer than six credit hours at UNC-Chapel Hill. While summer session registration is not required to maintain consecutive registration, any credits of three to six hours per session will be computed on the usual basis as part of the required two-semester contiguity.

See [Residence Credit](#).

### Transfer Credit

Please refer to the general guidelines for [Transferring Course Credit](#) and [Doctoral degree guidelines](#).

### Major Course Requirements

Course requirements in the major field must be fulfilled as specified by the student's academic program. The student is expected to complete a program of courses that will provide mastery of his or her field. Major courses must also include a minimum of six credit hours of dissertation (994) registration.

### Electing a Minor

With the approval of the major and minor programs, a student may elect to declare a formal minor in any program that offers a graduate degree. The student should submit an

approved [Minor Declaration Form](#) [\[note link\]](#) to the Graduate School.

The minor must comprise at least 15 credit hours. All credits must be for courses listed (or cross-listed) in programs other than that of the major, and cannot also be counted toward the major. A minor may consist of a set of related courses, some of which are listed by one program and some of which are listed by another. In most cases, the minor would not include courses from more than two programs. Only one program name will be listed as granting the minor, and the director of graduate studies in the minor program must agree to accept any courses from outside the minor program offerings.

The minor must be approved in advance by the director of graduate studies in both the major and minor programs. When a satisfactory minor has been planned and approved by both programs, a copy of the proposed minor course of study should be signed by the director of graduate studies in the major and minor programs and sent to The Graduate School to become a permanent part of the student's record.

### Foreign Language or Research Requirement

Language and research skill requirements differ for each academic program. All students must acquire competence in those foreign languages needed for research or teaching in their disciplines. At an early stage, a student should consult his or her academic program advisor concerning what foreign languages, if any, will be required.

Graduate students must satisfy the foreign language requirement from a list of acceptable languages other than English as approved by their academic program.

Each academic program determines at what point a student must fulfill language or research skill requirements, provided that all such requirements are satisfied before a student is admitted to candidacy. The student's director of graduate studies will need to certify on the [Application for Admission to Candidacy](#) and the [Application for Graduation](#) that all such requirements have been met.

## Examinations

A doctoral written examination, a doctoral oral examination, and a final oral examination covering the dissertation and other topics as required by the examining committee are required for doctoral degree completion.

The first two items together constitute a comprehensive examination of the student's command of his or her field. If the student declares a minor, the student will be examined on the minor in at least one of the two doctoral examinations. Together they should:

- assess the extent and currency of the candidate's knowledge in a manner that is as comprehensive and searching as the best practices of that field require;
- test the candidate's knowledge of all transferred courses;
- discover any weaknesses in the candidate's knowledge that need to be remedied by additional courses or other instruction; and
- determine the candidate's fitness to continue work toward the doctorate.

The final oral examination is primarily a true defense of the dissertation. It may be open to the public, limited in attendance to the candidate and the committee, or a combination of the two. Questions that relate the dissertation to the field are appropriate.

### Registration Requirement

Students must be registered during the semester(s) in which exams are taken.

See [Required Registration](#).

### Examining Committee

A student passes an examination only after the approval of a majority of the examining committee members. The Graduate School considers the examining committee's vote to be final. Typically, the examining committee is the same as the student's [dissertation committee](#).

### Exam Order

Academic programs determine the order of doctoral written and oral examinations. In general, it is desirable that only a short interval separates the two examinations. If the second doctoral examination involves the examination of the dissertation prospectus, the [Report of](#)

[Doctoral Committee Composition Form](#) must be submitted to and approved by The Graduate School before the examination. This form may be submitted any time prior to the second doctoral examination.

Immediately after each examination has been given, results should be sent to The Graduate School on the [Doctoral Exam Report Form](#). If the report of the first doctoral oral shows that the dissertation prospectus has not been examined or that it has been considered but not accepted, a separate report must be filed with The Graduate School as soon as the prospectus is approved.

### Final Oral Defense

The final oral defense will be held only after all members of the committee have had adequate opportunity to review a draft of the doctoral dissertation. The dissertation advisor is responsible for determining that the draft is in an appropriate form for committee evaluation. If substantial revisions are necessary, they should be completed before the final oral defense is scheduled. All committee members are expected to be present at the defense.

The final oral defense may be open to the public or limited in attendance to the candidate and the committee. Questions that relate the dissertation to the field are appropriate. A dissertation is accepted only after the approval of a majority of the committee members. At the conclusion of the final oral defense, all committee members should sign Part III, and if appropriate Part IV, of the [Doctoral Exam Report Form](#).

At the time of the final oral defense, but no later than the oral, the committee may require alterations and corrections, but these should constitute relatively minor changes agreed to by a majority of the committee members. The dissertation advisor is responsible for verifying that the changes required by the committee have been made. If not done already, all committee members should sign Part IV of the [Doctoral Exam Report Form](#). When all changes have been verified, the committee chair should initial Part IV.

The student should submit the dissertation in final form designed to meet the standards as defined in the Graduate School's [Thesis and](#)

[Dissertation Guide](#). The program should submit the [Doctoral Exam Report Form](#) to the Graduate School for final processing.

### Failure of Examinations

A graduate student who fails either a written or oral examination may not take the examination a second time until at least three months after the first attempt. The student should work with his or her academic program to identify areas needing additional emphasis and to establish an action plan to prepare for taking the exam a second time.

A student who fails an examination for the second time becomes academically ineligible to continue in The Graduate School. See [Academic Eligibility](#).

### Rescheduled or Remote Examinations

The Graduate School permits examinations to be rescheduled or held via distance-based capabilities in cases of extreme hardship (usually for international students whose visas have expired). This applies both to course examinations and to written and oral doctoral examinations. The Honor Code remains in effect for any examination taken outside the regularly scheduled time or off campus. The student and faculty should work together to find a mutually agreeable time for the examination.

### Application for Admission to Candidacy

Admission to candidacy recognizes the achievement of a significant milestone in the career of a doctoral student and signifies that the only outstanding requirement for the degree is the dissertation. The student is then designated ABD—all but dissertation. Students may apply for admission to candidacy by filling out the [Application for Admission to Candidacy](#) after they have passed both the doctoral written and oral examinations, have submitted an acceptable dissertation prospectus, have completed all courses required by the major and minor programs, and have satisfied any foreign language or language substitute requirements.

The transcripts for students admitted to candidacy will contain the statement “Advanced to Candidacy for Doctorate” at the end of the term in which posted. Note that this remark does not in any way confer additional time to

earn the degree or remove registration requirements. See [Time Limits](#) and [Registration](#).

### Dissertation Requirements

A dissertation is required, with a minimum of six credit hours of dissertation (994) registration.

### Registration Requirement

Students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of dissertation (994) during the semester in which the dissertation prospectus is approved (if the dissertation prospectus was not approved at the time of the second doctoral examination), and the semester in which the dissertation is defended.

See [Required Registration](#).

### Committee Composition

A committee of at least five members is required. A majority of the members of a doctoral committee (and a majority of the people passing the student on an examination or approving a doctoral dissertation) must be regular members of the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate Faculty from the student’s major academic program. Other members may be special appointees to the Graduate Faculty. Doctoral programs are encouraged to include scholars from outside the program to serve as members of doctoral committees. The outside members may be selected from among scholars from other academic programs or from other institutions where scholarly work is conducted. The committee is approved by the academic program’s director of graduate studies, after consultation with the student.

A student should have a faculty research advisor and a committee chair. One individual faculty member may serve in both roles if approved by the academic program. Both roles should be filled by regular members of the Graduate Faculty in the student’s major academic program; however, at the request of the program and approval of The Graduate School, they may be fixed-term graduate faculty members or from another UNC-Chapel Hill program.

The *advisor* typically oversees the research progress and serves as the primary mentor. A student may elect to have co-advisors as long

as one is from the student's major academic program.

The committee *chair* typically oversees committee meetings and the associated documentation.

This committee examines the prospectus, either as part of the first doctoral oral examination or subsequent to it, consults with the student throughout the progress of the research, and participates in the final oral examination. Each doctoral student is expected to consult with members of the dissertation committee at frequent intervals throughout the progress of his or her research and will be required to submit a progress report to each member of the committee at least once a year. The [Report of Doctoral Committee Composition and Report of Approved Dissertation Project Form](#) should be submitted to The Graduate School before or filed concurrently with any action reflecting prospectus approval.

If the student has a minor field of study, at least one member of the committee must represent the minor field. In the case of a joint minor involving two academic programs, one faculty representative on the committee for both minors is sufficient, provided that both minor programs agree that the faculty member can adequately represent each minor course of study.

## Preparation

### Format

The Graduate School will accept only dissertations produced according to the standards in the Graduate School's [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#). Dissertations must be prepared in a form consistent with approved methods of scholarly writing and research. On matters of form, the student should also consult published manuals of style. It is suggested that a draft copy of the dissertation be pre-approved by Graduate School staff well before the submission deadline.

The dissertation is expected to be written in English. In special cases, languages other than English may be used; the substitution is not permitted for the student's convenience but may be allowed when the student has sufficient skill at composition and has a dissertation topic that is, in the advisor's judgment, especially suited to

treatment in the second language. Approval to use a language other than English must be obtained in advance from The Graduate School, and a title page must be submitted in English.

### Abstract

Each copy of a dissertation submitted to The Graduate School must include an abstract. The abstract should be placed after the title page and before the table of contents.

### Submission of Dissertations

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### Publication

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Long term preservation of doctoral dissertations is required by The Graduate School. In order to provide for such preservation, the University contracts UMI Dissertation Publishing (ProQuest

Information and Learning), Ann Arbor, Michigan, to retain a permanent copy (currently microform) of each dissertation. Each student must license his/her dissertation to UMI permitting it to publish an abstract of each dissertation in Dissertation Abstracts International and make available copies of the dissertation for a fee (with royalties to the author).

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### Printing Options

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customer service, and takes care of the shipping and order tracking. For more information, visit the Bookshop or call 919-962-5060.

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<http://www.lulu.com/en/products/dissertations/>.

Option 3) A self publisher company called Blurb may also assist with publishing theses and dissertations. For more information, please visit their website at: [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com).

### Time Limits

A doctoral student has eight calendar years from the date of first registration in the doctoral program to complete the doctoral degree (Example: if the date of first registration is August 2005, the eight-year time limit expires at Commencement, August 2013). A student admitted to a master's program and later given formal permission to proceed to the doctoral degree has eight calendar years from the date of receipt of the master's degree to complete the doctoral degree. [Reapplication](#) is required to continue pursuit of the degree if the eight-year limit expires.

### Extension of the Time Limit

When extenuating circumstances warrant, a student in good academic standing may request one extension of the degree time limit for a definite, stated period of time (up to one year). The student must first complete the [Request for Extension of Time Form](#) and receive approval from their academic program, after which time the program's director of graduate studies should forward a petition for extension to The Graduate School. Ordinarily, an extension of the degree time limit may not be extended.

### Interruption of Study

If graduate study is interrupted by active military service, or service in the Peace Corps, VISTA, or the equivalent, as much as two years of that time will not count toward the time limit for the degree. In such an event, an official letter from the appropriate agency should be sent to The Graduate School to document the interruption.

## Leave of Absence

Within the eight-year limit, a student in good academic standing may request one leave of absence from graduate study for a definite, stated period of time (up to one year) during which the student does not plan to make academic progress. To be eligible for a leave of absence, a student must not have received an extension of the degree time limit and must not have temporary grades of IN or AB on courses taken. A leave of absence between degrees is not allowed.

In advance of the leave period, the student must complete and submit a [Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) to The Graduate School. This form requires approval by the academic program. If The Graduate School approves the leave of absence, the time of that leave will not count against the total time allowed for the degree. [Readmission](#) to The Graduate School after an approved leave of absence is generally a formality. Ordinarily, a leave of absence may not be renewed.

Students should be aware that while on leave, they cannot be considered enrolled students and therefore will not have access to campus services and benefits afforded to enrolled students, including eligibility for holding student employment positions (e.g., TA or RA) or student health insurance, among other services.

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