

University of Cincinnati

Graduate School

Graduate Handbook

2014-2015

Graduate students are subject to the most current university rules and regulations. Returning students are subject to the current rules, policies and regulations in effect at the time of their re-admission and thereafter.

The Graduate Handbook clarifies minimum university-level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students throughout the University of Cincinnati. Beyond these, each student is also expected to adhere to requirements, policies and procedures specific to his/her own degree program and college.

Document Navigation Tools

- 1. Please open the bookmark function on the left side of this PDF to navigate this document more easily.***
- 2. Also notice that each chapter title, listed in red, in the Table of Contents can be clicked to place the user directly on the corresponding page in the document.***

2014-2015

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Introduction

The University of Cincinnati is a state-supported institution that is recognized with a Carnegie Classification of Very High Research Activity. UC is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Facilities include a main academic campus, a medical campus, a suburban branch campus in Blue Ash (Blue Ash College) and Clermont College, a rural branch campus in Clermont County. Over 300 graduate and professional programs are offered in 11 colleges:

College of Allied Health Sciences
McMicken College of Arts and Sciences
Carl H. Lindner College of Business
College-Conservatory of Music
College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
College of Engineering and Applied Science
College of Law
College of Medicine
College of Nursing
James L. Winkle College of Pharmacy

Faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized professors and researchers in their fields who are dedicated to providing students with an environment fostering innovative scholarship and research. This commitment to excellence in scholarship and research is expressed in the university's mission statement:

The University of Cincinnati serves the people of Ohio, the nation, and the world as a premier, public, urban research university dedicated to undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, experience-based learning, and research.

We are committed to excellence and diversity in our students, faculty, staff, and all of our activities. We provide an inclusive environment where innovation and freedom of intellectual inquiry flourish.

Through scholarship, service, partnerships, and leadership, we create opportunity, develop educated and engaged citizens, enhance the economy and enrich our University, city, state and global community.

This *Graduate Handbook* is intended to identify available resources and help new and returning students understand university policies that affect them.

Graduate School

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ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS

APPLICATION PROCESS

Where to Obtain an Application

Students [apply](#) to graduate school at the University of Cincinnati online via the [Graduate School](#) website. For information on graduate programs and application deadlines, please see the [Graduate Program Outlines](#). A non-refundable application fee is required, and it is only payable by credit card or electronic check.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The University of Cincinnati welcomes graduate applications from students who:

- hold a baccalaureate degree from a college or university regarded as standard by a regional or general accrediting agency and
- have at least a *B* average in relevant undergraduate course work or otherwise give evidence of promise as judged satisfactory by the admitting program.

Decisions concerning admission to graduate programs rest with the programs, and criteria used for determining admission are established by the programs. Program admission decisions are final unless, in very rare instances, it can be demonstrated that the program violated a policy established by the university or the Graduate School or that the program failed to consistently apply the criteria established by the program or college. Programs have the authority to set their application deadlines, to require certain pre-admission examinations, to require satisfactory completion of certain course work prior to admission, and to establish other pre-admission requirements. The process for making graduate program admission decisions varies slightly from program to program; however, all programs have established written criteria for judging the admissibility of applicants. These criteria are published in each program's graduate handbook.

Faculty and Administrators' Eligibility for Graduate Degrees

No holder of an academic administrative title of assistant dean or equivalent or above at the University of Cincinnati who holds faculty rank above instructor (full-time or adjunct) may matriculate or be granted a graduate degree from the University of Cincinnati.

No graduate degree or certificate from the University of Cincinnati will be granted to any faculty member at the University of Cincinnati above rank of instructor (full-time or adjunct) who teaches in the same department, division or school in which the degree is to be granted. This rule also applies to adjunct appointments at any level and to interdisciplinary degrees when the same college is one of the

interdisciplinary colleges.

College deans may petition the associate dean of the Graduate School for a waiver of this policy on an individual faculty member's behalf. The written request should include a statement about the teaching responsibilities of the faculty member indicating whether they are teaching graduate students and a plan for managing potential conflicts of interest.

ADMISSIONS CATEGORIES

Full graduate status may be granted to an applicant who meets the criteria discussed in the above "Admissions Policy" section.

Note that a student is not considered "fully matriculated" until all criteria are met. In order to confirm that the student holds a baccalaureate degree from a college or university regarded as standard by a regional or general accrediting agency, the student **must** submit a final transcript from the awarding institution, and the transcript must convey degree conferral and the date of degree conferral. On the 15th day of the term in which a student begins, the student must be fully matriculated. Students who do not satisfy matriculation requirements by the deadline will be removed from their program at the end of their first semester for failure to satisfy matriculation requirements.

Unclassified graduate status allows non-matriculated students to take courses for graduate credit when they have not been admitted into a graduate degree program. Should the student subsequently matriculate into a program, the number of credits a degree program accepts toward the degree requirements from the student under this classification may not exceed 12 semester hours. Additionally, students are not eligible for awards allocated by the Graduate School while in unclassified (non-matriculated) graduate status. This policy and other funding policies are further explained in the [*Financial Support*](#) chapter.

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

The university offers the opportunity for students to pursue two complementary degrees simultaneously through structured, official dual degree programs (see below for a complete listing). Admission to these programs requires the submission of two completed online application forms—one for each program—but only one application fee is required. Each program's entrance requirements must be met in addition to university requirements, and the applicant must be accepted by both programs. Students pursuing multiple degrees of their own choosing are still required to complete two online applications and submit two separate application fees. Below is a listing of the Dual Degree programs:

- Business Administration/Arts Administration MBA/MA
- Business Administration/Nursing MBA/MSN
- Law/Women's Studies JD/MA
- Law/Business JD/MBA

- Urban Planning/Community Planning BUP/MCP
- Law/Political Science JD/MA
- Law/Political Science JD/PhD
- Law/Social Work JD/MSW

Please see the [Graduate Credit from Other Institutions or Other Graduate Programs at UC](#) section for information on the maximum amount of cross credit that can be applied to the dual degree programs.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION

[UC International Services](#) supports the needs of international students at the University of Cincinnati. The office assists international students in understanding the rules, regulations, and procedures that must be followed during their stay in the United States and provides support services and cultural information to students. UC International Services is located in Suite 3134, One Edwards Center (556-4278). Information about admission to University of Cincinnati for international students is available on their website. International students with F-1 visas can be granted admission with full graduate status only. Most international students with J-1 visas can be granted admission with full graduate status only, with some exceptions. Students with J-1 visas should inquire with UC International Services to determine the regulations that apply to them. Students with green cards (U.S. resident aliens/permanent residents) are not defined as international students and, therefore, are not governed by the university's international student policies. However, the English proficiency requirement does apply to green card holders (see The English Proficiency Requirement, below).

In instances where an international student holds a degree for which the U.S. equivalent is not known, or if it is determined by the program that the applicant does not have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, the program must submit a petition for admission without the bachelor's degree, with supporting documentation and rationale, to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

All international students are required to carry University of Cincinnati student health insurance unless they qualify for a waiver. Semester fees are automatically assessed each registration period. Please see [here](#) for more information on the Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Award.

English Proficiency Requirement

English proficiency is required of all applicants whose native language is not English. Students can demonstrate proficiency in a number of ways at the graduate level. Most students fulfill the English requirement by taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Testing System (IELTS), or the PEARSON Test of English (PTE).

For IELTS an overall band score of 6.5 is sufficient for graduate admission. For PEARSON a score of 47 is sufficient. TOEFL requirements vary based on the

type of TOEFL test taken and scores are valid for up to two years. The minimum university requirement is:

- 520 (paper-based test), or
- 190 (computer-based test), or
- 68 (internet-based test)

However, many colleges and programs have higher score requirements than those listed above. Applicants can contact the programs of colleges to which they are applying for details.

Students who have received a baccalaureate or higher degree in English from the following countries are exempt from the English proficiency requirement:

Antigua & Barbuda	China (Hong Kong Public Universities only)	Singapore
Australia	Dominica	South Africa
Bahamas	Fiji	St. Kitts & Nevis
Barbados	Grenada	St. Lucia
Belize	Ireland	St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Bermuda	Jamaica	United Kingdom
British Virgin Islands	Liberia	United States of America
Canada (except Quebec)	Malawi	
Cayman Islands	New Zealand	

The English proficiency requirement is also met for students who have completed level 112 of Intensive English instruction at ELS Language Centers. The University of Cincinnati uptown campus is home to the [ELS Cincinnati Center](#).

Request for a waiver of the English proficiency requirement must be made by the applicant's Program Director (with appropriate documentation justifying English proficiency) to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT)

The OEPT tests the spoken language skills of non-native speakers of English. An overall score of 3.0 is the minimum passing score for the test. If you score less than 3.0, you are recommended to take ESL courses before retaking the test. Non-native speakers of English who are awarded teaching assistantships at the University of Cincinnati are required to take the [Oral English Proficiency Test \(OEPT\)](#) before they are able to begin their instructional duties. Score requirements and information regarding waiver based on standardized test scores are detailed in the [Graduate Assistantships](#) section.

Compulsory Health Screening

The University of Cincinnati requires a health screening of all international students at [University Health Services](#). It is imperative that the student consult the letter included in the pre-arrival packet. It contains an immunization record sheet that must be completed, signed, and sealed by a medical official. Failure to complete the evaluation upon arrival will result in cancellation of classes for the

subsequent term. If classes are cancelled, the student will be in violation of immigration status.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, GENERAL INFORMATION

Following are some key definitions and regulations pertaining to international students. Additional information is provided in the electronic [*International Student Handbook*](#).

Key Terms for International Students

I-20 A/B: Immigration and Naturalization Form (Certificate of Eligibility) for F-1 Visa

Uses:

1. To obtain an F-1 visa from the American Embassy/Consulate in his/her home country
2. To enter the U.S. for the first time
3. To re-enter after a short visit outside the U.S.
4. To transfer to another school
5. For entry of family
6. To extend expected graduation date

DS2019: Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J-1 Visa)

Uses:

1. To obtain a J-1 visa from the American Embassy/Consulate in his/her home country
2. To enter the U.S. for the first time
3. To extend stay and renew Entry Permit (I-94)
4. To re-enter after a short visit outside the U.S.
5. For entry of family
6. To extend expected graduation date

I-94: Arrival/Departure Record

The I-94 is the small white card in the passport on which the visa classification and expiration date of the student's authorized stay is written when he/she enters the U.S. International students must be in possession of their I-94 card at all times. It should be turned in each time a student leaves the U.S. and a new one issued upon reentry to the U.S.

All students should have F-1 (exchange students should have J-1) written as the visa classification.

D/S stands for duration of status, which means the period during which the student is pursuing a full course of study, one year to twenty-nine months for practical training (18 months to three years for J-1 students), and 60 days in which to depart the country (30 days for J-1 students). **Passport:**

A passport is a person's country's identification of him or her as a citizen. The passport must remain valid at all times and may not expire. It may be renewed by contacting one's home-country Embassy/Consulate within the U.S.

Visa: Stamped Page in Passport

A visa normally is a stamp placed in one's passport by an official of the U.S. (or the country being entered) that permits entry. Unless someone is visa-exempt, he/she must have a valid visa to enter the U.S.; however, unlike a passport, a visa is allowed to expire once in the U.S.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, MAINTAINING IMMIGRATION STATUS

The responsibility for maintaining immigration status lies with the student. Key information on maintaining immigration status is listed below. Full information is available in the [*International Student Handbook*](#). To maintain immigration status, international students must:

- 1. Maintain full-time enrollment and normal progress toward their degree.** An international student must be registered for 10 hours of graduate coursework leading to a specific graduate degree during each consecutive semester of an academic year, excluding summer, in order to meet federal requirements to maintain immigration status. Once an international student has completed all course work and is working on his/her thesis or dissertation, he/she must register for at least one research credit each academic year to retain proper university and immigration status. Such students must submit a Reduced Course Load Certification Form to UC International Services upon completion of all required course work.
- 2. Work no more than 20 hours per week on campus.** An international student is permitted to engage in on-campus employment only and is limited to working no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. Working more than 20 hours per week is a violation of student status and could lead to any number of penalties, including deportation. During summer and other breaks there is no hourly limitation.
- 3. Obtain extensions of their permission to stay in the U.S., as required.** DHS regulations state that a student on an F-1 visa may stay in the U.S. for the duration of an educational program or a series of educational programs (for example, from an undergraduate degree through a master's degree) plus the duration of optional practical training and then an additional 60 days. However, a student who does not complete the stated education program within the time indicated on his/her I-20 form must request a program extension prior to the completion date. A student who does not request a program extension is out of status and must be reinstated by the DHS. There are laws that severely penalize

non-immigrants who violate their status through overstays. Please make sure an I-20 does not expire.

A J-1 student may stay in the U.S. for the duration of an educational program or series of educational programs plus the duration of academic training and an additional 30 days.

All J-1 students sponsored by the University of Cincinnati must make an appointment with UC International Services in Suite 3134, One Edwards Center prior to the expiration of the DS-2019. A J-1 student sponsored by organizations other than the University of Cincinnati (for example, Fulbright, LASPAU, etc.) must contact his/her sponsoring agency (the organization issuing the DS-2019).

- 4. Get approval from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or UC International Services to work off campus.** An international student is not eligible to work off-campus until s/he has been a full-time student for at least one academic year. At that point the student *may* be eligible provided there is a legitimate “academic” or “economic necessity.” The student must make an appointment with an International Services staff member to discuss eligibility. As very few students are approved for off-campus employment by the DHS, it is important that international students have sufficient financial support to fund their entire stay at the University of Cincinnati. A student can work off campus through Curricular Practical Training if the work is an integral part of degree completion. Such employment must be authorized through UC International Services.
- 5. Maintain a valid passport!** Each student’s passport must be valid for a minimum of six months beyond his/her expected date of entry into the U.S. For example, if the student will enter the U.S. on September 1, 2009 his/her passport should be valid until at least March 1, 2010. Renewal applications must be made with the Embassy or Consulate of the country issuing the passport, and a certification of student status from the University of Cincinnati will be required. (This can be obtained from UC International Services.)
- 6. Notify UC International Services of transfer to another school or a change in educational program.** An international student planning to transfer to another school should confer with an adviser in International Services. The new school will require certification of proper student status and eligibility to transfer. UC International Services will need to “release” the student’s SEVIS record to the new school in order to transfer. A transferring student must report to the international office of the new school within 15 days of the beginning of classes to have the transfer processed.

Reporting a Change of Address

An international student is required to report any address change to the university within 10 days of the change. This includes address changes of any dependents as well.

Changing Degree Programs

Any time an international student changes majors (such as chemistry to math) or degree levels (such as masters to doctoral) he/she must obtain a new I-20. No later than the 15th day after starting the new program, the student must obtain a new I-20 from UC International Services. A student must provide evidence of acceptance to the new program and proof of financial support for the new program.

Visa Expiration/Renewal

This procedure is only necessary when the student intends to travel outside the U.S. and the visa is expired. The visa need not be renewed if the student is traveling in Canada, Mexico, or other contiguous U.S. territories for less than 30 days. A student cannot renew a visa in the U.S.; he/she must visit the American Consulate/Embassy Office in the country he/she is visiting in order to get the renewal date issued. The following documentation is required: a valid passport, a properly executed I-20 or DS2019, proof of financial support, and/or a letter of certification.

Traveling Outside the United States

An F-1 visa holder needs the following documents to re-enter the U.S. after a temporary absence: 1) page 3 of form I-20 endorsed by International Services, 2) a valid passport and U.S. visa, 3) verification of adequate financial support, and 4) verification of enrollment.

Note: A new I-20 is required only if there has been a change in the student's field of study, degree level, in the source or amount of funding, or if all the endorsement lines are complete. Requests for a new I-20 or for a signature on page 3 must be made **at least 5 business days before a student's planned departure.**

A J-1 visa holder needs the following documents to re-enter the U.S. after a temporary absence: 1) a valid DS-2019 (pink copy) endorsed by International Services (or sponsoring agency), 2) a valid passport and U.S. visa, 3) verification of adequate financial support, and 4) verification of enrollment.

Note: A new DS-2019 is required if the student's current DS-2019 will expire before he/she plans to re-enter the U.S. or if the program of study, degree level or finances have changed. Requests for a new DS-2019 or for a signature on the pink copy must be made **at least 5 business days before the student's planned departure.**

More information for international students (varying from immigration regulations to cultural issues) can be obtained in the [*International Student Handbook*](#).

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDITS FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION

Students who have completed graduate work at other schools may petition their graduate program director for transfer of credits earned elsewhere to be applied towards a master's or doctoral degree at the University of Cincinnati. This petition is evaluated by the program that has been petitioned. Should the program choose to accept the credits, they will forward an Advanced Standing form to the Graduate School on behalf of the student to initiate processing of the transfer of credits. Note that the Advanced Standing form can only be accessed by the program through the Graduate School internal administrative site for graduate staff and faculty, *Admin Central*. The number of credit hours transferred from a course taken at another institution into a program at the University of Cincinnati cannot exceed the number of credit hours given for a University of Cincinnati course that covers equivalent material. (When converting quarter hours to semester hours, 3 quarter credit hours are equal to 2 semester credit hours; 1 quarter hour equals 2/3 semester credit hours.)

A University of Cincinnati graduate program can accept or reject transfer credits at its own discretion, regardless of the graduate degree program or discipline in which they were earned.

Normally, credits are not transferred if they were earned more than five years prior to the date of the student's application to the University of Cincinnati program accepting the transferred credits.

Certificate Program, Allowable Transfer Credits

Eligibility for graduation requires that no more than 50% of the final certificate requirements be satisfied by transfer from another institution.

Master's Degree, Allowable Transfer Credits

Eligibility for graduation requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, at least 50% of which must be completed while matriculated in the graduate program granting the degree. Many programs require more credits for the degree, and students should confer with their individual programs to ascertain program requirements.

In no case may more than 50% of the final program requirements be satisfied by transfer from another institution. Students who wish to transfer credits taken outside the university after matriculating into a program must obtain approval from their program for those transfer credits in advance of taking the outside courses.

Doctoral Degree, Allowable Transfer Credits

Doctoral degrees are conferred on the basis of sustained study and high scholarly attainment in a special field of learning. In no case will the degree be granted for less than three years of full-time graduate study or its equivalent, of which the last year must be in residence in the University of Cincinnati or under the university's direction. Eligibility for graduation requires either a minimum of 90 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree or 60 graduate credits beyond a master's degree. The last 30 must be completed while matriculated in the graduate program granting the degree under the direction of University of Cincinnati faculty.

CHANGING TO ANOTHER DEGREE PROGRAM AT UC

Students are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the given degree program in which they are matriculated. In order to change from one degree program to another, a student must submit a complete application to the new program. If the degrees are housed in the same department, and the change is made over consecutive term enrollments, the application fee is waived. If the new degree program is in a different administrative program, the student is responsible for paying the application fee.

If a student is changing from one graduate degree program to another graduate degree program, the program into which the student is transferring can accept up to 50% of the graduate credits required for the master's degree. A doctoral degree requires a minimum of 90 graduate credits or 60 graduate credits beyond a master's degree. The last 30 must be completed in the program that grants the degree at the University of Cincinnati.

The maximum number of credits that a student can transfer from unclassified (or undeclared major) status at University of Cincinnati to a specific degree program is 12. If students must take undergraduate courses to satisfy prerequisites, the student may be accepted by the program on a provisional basis contingent on satisfying those prerequisites. These procedures ensure the student will be successfully transferred into the new program, and the integrity of student records will be maintained.

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Please see the complete listing of University of Cincinnati graduate [programs and degrees](#) offered.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Several departments and colleges at the University of Cincinnati offer graduate certificate programs. In some instances, certificates can be earned only in conjunction with a degree; in other programs, a master's degree is a prerequisite. Applicants must [apply online](#) for admission.

Graduate School general guidelines are as follows:

- Students must hold a baccalaureate degree.
- Degree seeking and non-degree seeking students may be enrolled in the same program.
- Credit hours earned under a certificate program may count toward a degree in the same program, and if requirements for the certificate and degree are completed the student will be awarded both.
- If a student wishes to enroll in a certificate program concurrent with his/her current degree program, the student must complete the [online Certificate Application](#). Non-refundable Application fees are only accepted online and payable by credit card or electronic check. A student who is not enrolled in a degree program but wishes to enroll in a graduate certificate program, must also complete the [online Certificate Application](#) and prior to beginning the program, complete and submit the Graduate Supplemental Information Form.
- Students enrolled in a graduate certificate program only are not eligible for any University General Funds support, even if they attend full-time. These students must complete a Graduate Supplemental Information Form, which is available through the department.

If a student is interested, she or he should contact the appropriate program office to obtain the unique criteria and prerequisites for the desired program. Please see the Graduate School's website for a complete listing of [certificate programs](#) offered.

Note: Students interested in the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) program must submit the online [Application for Graduate Admission](#) found on the Graduate School's website.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Graduate students may obtain financial support from several sources.

- The University of Cincinnati provides merit-based graduate awards in the form of tuition scholarships (known as Graduate Incentive Awards (GIA) and Graduate Assistant Scholarships (GAS)), graduate assistantships (including teaching and research assistantships), and program-specific scholarships and fellowships.
- Scholarship and fellowship support is also available from a diverse collection of external sponsors at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- Need-based support may be obtained from federal and state sources.

Financial support from each of these sources is described below.

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE AWARDS

The University of Cincinnati offers several types of merit-based graduate awards. The three most common types – GIA/GAS, graduate assistantships, and fellowships – are described below. Most university graduate awards are underwritten by university funds allocated by the Graduate School to each college, which are then awarded to students by the individual programs. Some awards are competitive and granted by the Graduate School upon recommendation of an individual graduate program. Students must maintain satisfactory progress to meet the minimum GPA of 3.0 to remain eligible to meet the requirements for University of Cincinnati Graduate Award Funding. Awards can only be guaranteed for a maximum period of one academic year, and renewal of a University Graduate Award is not automatic. Awards that are appointed by individual programs are awarded at the sole discretion of the program, provided that a student is eligible for the award based on student status, award criteria, and that the student has not exceeded the 174 rule. Programs are not obligated to renew awards for prior awardees, even if previously awarded students met all minimum guidelines. Students who are taking classes as non-matriculated students are not eligible for graduate awards allocated by the Graduate School. In addition, students enrolled only in a graduate certificate program are not eligible for an award allocated by the Graduate School.

The Graduate School does not regulate or audit any outside fellowships or other outside funding a student may receive. However, it is advised that students with outside funding consult with the [Financial Aid Office](#) to see if and how the outside funding may or may not affect other Financial Aid eligibility.

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE INCENTIVE AWARD (GIA)/ GRADUATE ASSISTANT SCHOLARSHIP (GAS)

The Graduate Incentive Award (GIA) and Graduate Assistant Scholarship (GAS) are university-funded scholarships that cover all or part of a full-time or part-time student's tuition and fees. The appointing program sends offers of scholarship awards in writing, including information about the amount and duration of the award and the terms of the offer. Students receiving a GIA or GAS must be registered for at least the number of graduate credit hours covered by the GIA or GAS in each semester for which they are receiving support. The GIA is for Graduate Students who are not graduate assistants and therefore no service is required in return for the award. The GAS is for graduate students who are graduate assistants. These students must maintain all of the required eligibility requirements in their Graduate Assistant letter to maintain their GAS. Students registered for more than 18 credits in a semester will be billed tuition and general fees on a per-credit-hour rate for each credit over the 18.

If a student withdraws from a class funded by a GIA or GAS, with the remaining enrolled hours totaling less than the minimum required for the award, the GIA or GAS is cancelled immediately, and the student is responsible for the tuition balance, based on the date of withdrawal. Students may receive GIA/GAS support for audited courses only after the first 10 graduate credit hours if supported by a GIA, 12 if supported by a GAS and/or UGA.

All rules that govern recipients of GIA/GAS support pertain to all students with GIA/GAS awards, including international students. Other rules and policies that apply specifically to international students are independent of GIA/GAS regulations. Both sets of regulations must be met. Neither set of regulations negates or takes the place of the other. (See [Requirements for University of Cincinnati Graduate Awards](#).)

Note: Financial awards that require no service may reduce eligibility for educational loans. Please notify the Student Financial Aid Office of your GIA/GAS if you apply for aid from that office.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate assistantships (UGAs) are awarded to approximately 2000 full-time graduate students each year at the University of Cincinnati. A student awarded a graduate assistantship receives a financial stipend for services rendered in addition to a full or partial tuition scholarship. Also, graduate assistants are entitled to a discount at the University Bookstore. In addition, graduate assistants may be eligible for one of the two Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Awards (See [Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Awards](#) section.)

Graduate assistants must be registered for 12 graduate credit hours or more at UC *exclusive of audit credits* for each semester they receive the assistantship. University assistantships will be cancelled if the awardee does not meet his/her

enrollment obligation. The exception to this rule is summer semester. See [Summer Employment without Full-time Enrollment](#) section.

Assistantships are awarded for designated periods of time by the graduate programs with funds allocated and monitored by the Graduate School. Minimum stipends are set by the Dean of the Graduate School. The current minimum stipend must be the equivalent of a minimum of \$14.93 per hour. Graduate students who have 174 graduate credit hours (including attempted credits with grades F, I, UW, SP, IP, UP, etc.) at the University of Cincinnati are not eligible for an award funded by the university for enrollment beginning with the semester in which said student will exceed the 174 attempted hours. (See [Requirements for University of Cincinnati Graduate Awards](#) later in this section.) This is due to the fact that the state no longer awards subsidy money for graduate students for students who have attempted over 174 graduate semester credit hours. Because this rule is established by the state, it is not possible to make an exception. It should be noted that courses taken for audit credit and past official withdrawals do not count toward the 174 attempted graduate semester credit hours for the purpose of determining stipend eligibility.

The appointing academic program, college, or area of responsibility determines workload requirements of students who hold assistantships, although the awards obligate awardees to no more than 20 hours per week of services that make a substantive contribution to the student's academic and professional development. If the student determines that he/she cannot meet the requirements of the award, it is imperative that he/she notifies the program to initiate renegotiation or reassignment of the award with correspondingly less support. A student is not required to be available during break periods unless given additional compensation.

A student who receives a graduate assistantship devotes effort to a combined program of formal study and assigned duties of teaching, research, or administrative service. The stipend received by the graduate assistant is in recognition of these services. Those with teaching duties are teaching assistants (TAs), and those with research duties are research assistants (RAs). During the appointment, the goal is to produce a graduate student who becomes a more learned, creative, and professional individual through formal instruction, interaction with faculty, research, and administrative experience. Any assignments that result from a graduate award should be consistent with the student's academic pursuits.

Graduate assistants' duties are governed by their program. If awarded an assistantship outside their program, graduate assistants' duties are governed by the academic program, college, or the area of responsibility that made the award.

Non-native speakers of English who are awarded teaching assistantships at the University of Cincinnati are required to score at least a 3.0 on the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT). The OEPT evaluates the spoken language skills of non-native speakers of English. Students who pass are certified for oral English proficiency and may assume the full range of duties associated with their

teaching assistantship. Students whose oral English proficiency has not been officially certified may not assume instructional responsibilities. Students are required to take the test at the beginning of their first term of study. However, students who score 26 or above on the speaking section of the TOEFL IBT or students with a score of 50 or above on the Test of Spoken English are exempt from the OEPT. A student is permitted to take the OEPT twice without charge during an academic year. Each year the assistantship is in effect, the appointing program, college, or area sends an award letter to the recipient of the assistantship. The letter must state the amount and duration of the award; any tuition and/or fee not paid by the program; the specific academic requirements for completion of the degree; the expected time per week or per semester of required duties; a description of the duties assigned to the student; a description of the conditions under which either the student or unit may terminate the award prior to its end-date; criteria for reappointment of the award; criteria for determining variations in stipend levels where such variations exist; information on current IRS guidelines, Medicare, and the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS); and graduate appointment procedures if any of the documents have been modified since the student's initial appointment. The program's handbook for graduate study must be available to the student. Upon the student's acceptance of the offer, the program and the student are bound by the terms and conditions set forth in the letter of appointment. Award letters are valid for only one academic year.

Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Awards

The Graduate School offers two types of health insurance awards. Award A applies in the fall semester and continues to apply to the spring semester health insurance costs if the student qualifies in the spring semester. Award B applies ONLY to spring semester health insurance costs. To qualify for these award funds, you must apply by their respective deadline and be in a UC-employed, graduate assistantship position that pays a minimum of \$2,400 per term.

If you receive a health insurance award in the 2014-2015 academic year, a credit of \$625 will be put towards your health insurance costs at the start of each semester you are eligible for the award. For Award A, this is \$625 for fall or \$1,250 for both fall and spring semesters. For Award B, this applies \$625 award just for spring semester. Health insurance coverage purchased for spring semester continues through the summer term for no additional cost.

Important Information

At the end of the award semester, the university will re-confirm students' eligibility to make sure that all requirements have been met (see below for description requirements). Students who fail to maintain award eligibility are notified via their UConnect account that their award is rescinded and they will be charged \$625 within 7 days, regardless of if the student paid UC health insurance or not.

- **It is the student's responsibility to check with the program that sponsors their Graduate Assistantship to make sure the pay dates**

for the minimum \$2,400 in pay falls within the pay date ranges below. These date ranges will be used to pull information from UC payroll records to verify eligibility.

Please visit <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/awards/gshi.html> for award criteria and application deadlines. Direct any questions to gshi@uc.edu.

Multiple Appointments/Employment

Graduate Assistants are limited to 20 hours of service per week (.50 FTE) while school is in session. Graduate Assistants who hold a student worker position in addition to their Graduate Assistant position are limited to 4 hours of service per week in their student worker position while school is in session. In instances like this, the following policies regarding multiple appointments must be followed:

Departments are responsible for monitoring of hours worked by student employees assigned to their unit; this is especially important for students who hold multiple student appointments.

The program must closely monitor academic progress.

The additional appointment must be terminated if a student does not maintain academic progress deemed to be acceptable by the program.

This limit applies only while school is in session. Students can be employed for a maximum of 40 hrs./wk. during scheduled breaks.

International students are limited to working 20 hours per week while school is in session and are limited to 40 hours per week during schedule breaks. All International Students must have onboarding conducted by the International Services Office.

Summer Employment without Full-time Enrollment

For summer semester **only**, students who are not registered for graduate credit hours or are registered for less than 12 credits hours are eligible to be employed by their respective program, usually by performing the duties of their assistantship such as teaching or lab work. In this case, the student will receive a stipend for the work performed. Retirement funds and taxes will be withheld from the student's check. Questions about options with retirement funds once separated from the university should be directed to [Human Resources](#) and/or [OPERS](#).

Graduate Assistants on Jury Duty

All graduate students are encouraged to participate when they are subpoenaed for jury duty. The student must seek his/her adviser's and program director's permission with the expectation that every effort will be made to accommodate the jury service. If the student's absence from UC will create a hardship, he/she should seek a deferral or make arrangements to cover his/her responsibilities during his/her absence. Such arrangements must be approved by his/her

program director. Students serving on jury duty will be paid their normal university stipend during the period of service, with the understanding that any compensation received for jury service must be returned to the university if his/her assistantship responsibilities remain uncovered. If the student makes arrangements to cover his/her assistantship commitment for the period in which he/she serves on jury duty, and those arrangements are approved by his/her program director, he/she may keep the jury duty compensation in total. The student may also keep any travel reimbursement fees.

Strike Policy for Graduate Assistants

In the event of a strike, graduate assistants are expected to fulfill commitments associated with their assistantships. Graduate assistants assigned to teach a course as part of their assistantship agreement are expected to teach the course during a strike. Graduate assistants who choose not to teach can lose their assistantship. If the student's responsibilities are associated with a course taught by a faculty member and the strike results in the course not being taught, which makes it impossible for the student to fulfill his/her responsibilities, the student will not be held responsible.

UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

University of Cincinnati fellowships are financial awards that include tuition scholarships and stipends with no associated duties. The purpose of a fellowship award is to allow the recipient to concentrate exclusively on his/her studies; therefore, multiple appointments and/or employment by the University of Cincinnati are not permitted.

The appointing program sends offers of fellowship awards in writing, including information about the amount and duration of the award; a general description of the academic obligations accepted by the student as part of the award; a reference to sources of information about academic requirements for degree completion; a description of the conditions under which either the student or unit may terminate the award prior to its end-date; and criteria for reappointment.

Students receiving fellowships should check with [Student Financial Aid](#) to be informed about the potential impact on their eligibility for aid. Income received that is not for services rendered (whether it be in the form of a fellowship, grant, or award) will be calculated in whether a student meets the Cost of Attendance for the University of Cincinnati.

If an awardee does not meet his/her enrollment obligation of at least 12 graduate credits toward his/her degree, the fellowship will be cancelled and the student is responsible for the tuition balance based on the date of cancellation or withdrawal. Graduate students who have accumulated more than 174 graduate credit hours (or 140 if their master's degree is from another institution) are not eligible for fellowships. (See [Requirements for University of Cincinnati Graduate Awards.](#))

For information on university-sponsored awards, please see the [Graduate School website](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI GRADUATE AWARDS

University of Cincinnati administered funding (ex., graduate assistantships, fellowships, and GIA/GAS) is awarded on academic merit. All students on academic probation or those admitted without regular, degree-seeking graduate status are ineligible. Non-matriculated students and students seeking only a certificate are ineligible for University of Cincinnati Graduate Awards. Graduate students are not permitted to assume workloads in excess of 20 hours per week during academic semesters since the graduate appointee is first and foremost a student.

Students receiving any university award and who receive funds from the State of Ohio are governed by the requirements and limitations described in the following paragraphs. Any student who becomes ineligible to receive state subsidy is not eligible to receive general funds financial aid (i.e., a stipend and/or tuition).

Graduate students who have attempted 174 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati are not eligible for a university award for enrollment at or beyond the 174 hours. Hours attempted include hours for which credit has been awarded, as well as hours in progress or incomplete. **All graduate hours attempted at the University of Cincinnati**, regardless of program or student status, count toward the 174 total. Attempted hours do not include hours withdrawn.

If a student earned master's credits at the University of Cincinnati (for either a partial or full degree), the exact number of these credits are deducted from the 174 credit hour total for which he/she can receive funding. This is true if the credits are earned at an earlier time and the student returns to the University of Cincinnati to continue graduate education, and it is true regardless of the discipline in which those credits were earned. For example, if a student has earned a master's degree in engineering and then chooses to pursue a master's and a doctoral degree in math, the credits earned to get the engineering degree are deducted from the 174 credit hours for which the student can receive state financial support (e.g., fellowships, assistantships, and scholarships).

Graduate students who have earned a master's degree or other equivalent or higher advanced degree at another institution are not eligible for a university scholarship or fellowship once they have attempted 140 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati. If a student enters the University of Cincinnati with a master's degree from any institution other than the University of Cincinnati, he/she is credited with 34 graduate credit hours toward the 174 credit hour limit for state funding eligibility. Ohio can subsidize up to the remaining 140 credit hours. The 34 credit hours are deducted from the 174, regardless of the discipline and regardless of the graduate level at which the student enters the University of Cincinnati. For example, if a student has earned a master's degree

in engineering at The Ohio State University and then chooses to pursue a master's and a doctoral degree in math at UC, the credits they earned to get their engineering degree are deducted from the 174 credit hours for which they can receive state financial support in the math program. Note that professional degrees, like a juris doctorate or medical doctorate do not count as a master's or higher equivalent for the purpose of comparative funding. Students who enter graduate school at the University of Cincinnati with a professional degree and no other advanced degrees are still eligible to receive up to the 174 credit hours of funding.

If a student enters the University of Cincinnati with only partial credit toward a degree from another institution, those credits are not deducted from the 174 total—even if the program he/she is entering at the University of Cincinnati agrees to accept transfer of those credits toward the student's degree requirements at the University of Cincinnati. The student can still receive state subsidy for up to 174 credit hours earned at the University of Cincinnati beyond those transferred in.

A student is not eligible for funding beginning with the semester in which said student will reach the 174 (or 140) attempted hours. For example, if a student has earned 167 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati by the close of summer sessions and registers for (i.e., attempts) 12 credit hours for fall semester, he/she is ineligible for a university graduate scholarship or fellowship in the fall semester.

Any student ineligible to receive state funding is not eligible to receive university general funds financial aid, i.e., a stipend and/or tuition.

Note: For the purposes of this policy, a master's degree is one awarded by an American institution or a degree of equivalent value from a foreign institution. Students holding a master's degree from a foreign institution that is the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in the U.S. will have the higher limit. The higher limit will not be affected by a student's completion of course work short of a master's degree at another institution.

TAXATION OF CINCINNATI GRADUATE AWARDS

The university maintains a position that all income, from whatever source, is taxable and may be subject to withholding. The IRS maintains final authority on the taxability of all stipends, and in all cases the university cannot guarantee that any stipend is tax-exempt. The Graduate School will not review an individual award nor provide legal advice to individual students. In addition, students (not the university) are responsible for the withholding information which they submit on their W-4 forms at the time of appointment. Those students who receive a stipend during any academic semester and are not enrolled for at least half time will have Medicare tax and Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS) payments deducted from their checks. If a student is enrolled half-time or more, he/she may apply for an exemption from these fees in his/her program office. No

taxes are withheld from fellowships, but students may still have a tax liability and should consult a tax adviser.

EXEMPTION FROM OPERS/MEDICARE FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

As of April 1, 2005, the optional exemption from participation in Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) and the corresponding exemption from Medicare taxation are no longer available to student employees not “enrolled and regularly attending classes.” Therefore, doctoral candidates who have completed other requirements and are working on their dissertations are not eligible for the exemption.

Note that eligibility for the OPERS exemption continues to be based upon the statutory exception from social security and Medicare for student employees under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). In final regulations issued on December 20, 2004 and effective April 1, 2005 the IRS narrowed the definition of a student such that individuals who are no longer engaged in classes or structured, supervised research activities that are necessary to complete degree requirements clearly do not qualify.

The final regulations also make the overall assessment of student status for purposes of the FICA exception subject to more stringent criteria than in the prior rules. One important change is that a “full-time” student employee (i.e., one whose normal work schedule is 40 hours or more per week) is ineligible.

Students enrolled during any semester on at least a half time basis (5 graduate or 6 undergraduate credit hours), and whose employment at UC is “incident to and for the purpose of pursuing a course of study” will continue to be eligible for the Medicare and optional OPERS exemptions during that semester and through the subsequent intersession.

EXTERNAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

Tuition scholarship and fellowship funding is provided to graduate students by a wide variety of governmental and private sponsors. UC’s [Financial Aid website](#), the [Office of Nationally Competitive Awards](#) and local and university libraries are potential sources of information about these funding opportunities. Students may also visit the [Office of Research](#) for more information on upcoming grant opportunities, grant writing workshops, and searchable research opportunity databases.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

See the [Student Financial Aid website](#) for more information on federal financial aid (including summer aid).

GRADUATE CREDIT AND GRADES

GRADUATE CREDIT POLICIES

Credit can only be earned for those courses in this university that are listed as graduate in the [Schedule of Classes](#) or which have been approved in writing by appropriate program authority for inclusion in the curriculum.

Graduate Credit from Other Institutions or Other Graduate Programs at UC

Students who have completed graduate work at other schools may petition their graduate program director for transfer of credits earned elsewhere to be applied towards a master's or doctoral degree at the University of Cincinnati. This petition is evaluated by the program that has been petitioned. Should the program choose to accept the credits, they will forward an Advanced Standing form to the Graduate School on behalf of the student to initiate processing of the transfer of credits. The number of credit hours transferred from a course taken at another institution into a program at the University of Cincinnati cannot exceed the number of credit hours given for a University of Cincinnati course that covers equivalent material. (When converting quarter hours to semester hours, 4.5 quarter credit hours are equal to 3 semester credit hours; 1.5 quarter hours equal 1 semester credit hour.)

At the discretion of the graduate program director, a student can transfer up to 12 graduate credits from unclassified, undeclared major, or non-matriculated status at UC to a specific degree program as part of the 50% allowable transfer credit.

A University of Cincinnati graduate program can accept or reject transfer credits, up to the permitted number (first 50% for master's degree; up to last 30 credits for doctoral degree) at its own discretion, regardless of the graduate degree program or discipline in which they were earned. (See [Transfer of Credits from Another Institution](#).)

Normally, credits are not transferred if they were earned more than five years prior to the date of the student's application into the University of Cincinnati program accepting the transferred credits.

In the case of a student who is enrolled in an official UC Dual Degree program, the maximum cross-credit that can be applied is 10 semester credit hours. This means that up to 10 semester credit hours can be applied as credit toward both degrees. Please see the [Dual Degrees](#) page of the Admissions section for a listing of official Dual Degree programs at UC.

Summer Credit Equivalencies

Eight summer terms of 3.5 weeks each at the University of Cincinnati, or at other qualified accredited universities, are regarded as the equivalent of one academic year. Not more than four semester credits are accepted for work in a single summer term of three weeks.

Enrolling in Non-UC Classes through the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities

The University of Cincinnati is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities. Consortium classes are those not generally available at the University of Cincinnati but which can be used to satisfy degree requirements. The student must have met all tuition commitments at the University of Cincinnati and must observe all regulations of the host institution. For additional information, participating institutions, and registration instructions, consult the “Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities” page of the [Registrar’s Office website](#). **Ultimate approval is at the discretion of the program.**

Graduate Credit for Undergraduate Students

Any program may allow seniors to register for graduate courses for graduate credit before those students have completed the baccalaureate degree. It is recommended, if the program permits such registration, to limit the privilege to students with senior status and a grade point average of at least 3.0 (higher in some programs). This is evidenced by a written request from the student that is signed by an authorized member of the program. Upon approval by the program and the course instructor, graduate credit will be given for the courses. A maximum of 12 semester graduate credits may be earned in this manner. Credit will not be given toward both graduate and undergraduate degrees for the same course.

Graduate Credit Earned in 6000-Level Courses

A graduate student earning graduate credit in 6000-level courses that are available for both undergraduate and graduate credit may be required to complete academic work beyond that required of undergraduates in the course. Graduate students must register for the graduate level designation (G).

GRADING

Final Exams

Exams are held during the last week of the semester after classes have ended. For each term’s full final examination schedule, consult the “Calendars” page of the [Registrar’s Office website](#).

Make-up Final Exams

Special policies may govern the taking of missed final exams. Students and faculty members should check the college office or program office for specific details. Every student is responsible for the material presented in his/her class. Arrangements for make-up work and tests are determined by the instructor. Absences incurred by students officially representing the university will be

excused, provided that official notification of such absence has been given in advance to the instructor.

Grade Reports

Grade reports may be viewed [online](#) immediately following submission of final grades by the instructor. Grade reports include total graduate hours and hours for the current semester. Credits carried and earned, and quality points, are computed each semester. In addition to appearing on students' grade reports, these hourly totals are posted on the permanent academic record. "Credits carried" include all credit hours with grades other than *P, U, T, I, W, UW, SP, UP* and *N/NG* (no grade reported). Credits earned includes all credit hours for which grades of *A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+,* or *C* are reported. "Credits carried" differs from credits earned by the sum of credit hours with grades of *F, UW* and *I/F* "Total graduate hours" is the sum of credits earned, *P* hours, *SP* hours, *UP* hours, *NG* hours, and advanced standing. All graduate work, regardless of the University of Cincinnati college in which the work was done, is accumulated for graduate students. Approved transfer credits are included in the sum of credits earned, but quality points for those credits are not included in the grade point average.

For the complete graduate grading scale and a definition of all grades, consult the "Grading Scales and Definitions" page of the [Registrar's Office website](#).

Grades Assigned to Research Courses That Are Repeated

If students are working on dissertation or thesis research beyond the required 7 research credits for dissertation or the number required for thesis by their program, they should be registered in the appropriate research course* (e.g., Individual Dissertation or Individual Master's Thesis), and the course work should be graded as *SP* or *UP*, not *NG* or *I*, until the semester in which they submit the document (i.e., report, thesis or dissertation) and are graded for it. This will reflect the reality that the dissertation or thesis is in progress. The appropriate course should be identified and routed through the college and university approval process for *SP/UP* grading by the program director. It is the program director's responsibility to communicate this to all faculty advisers and graduate students in his/her program so that it is used consistently.

Students must receive a grade for the last semester they are registered in the research course. An *SP* or *UP* recorded for this same course in earlier semesters need not be changed on their transcripts in order for them to be certified for graduation as long as the research credits are not required for graduation; only the course in the final semester needs to be graded *A, B, C, F, P,* or *S*. However, for a student to retain on his/her transcript the unchanged *SPs* and *UPs* that were recorded for each semester prior to the final semester, it is essential that he/she be registered for the same research course (with the same number) each semester. If the courses are different (even if they are all "research"), the *SPs* and *UPs* must all be changed before the student can be certified for graduation.

***Note:** In this context, the definition of a “research course” is a course outside of formal class work or instruction that allows a student to be registered as a graduate student while he/she is working independently on his/her thesis or dissertation under the guidance of his/her adviser or dissertation committee. This policy also applies to internships and other multiple semester or series courses.

Pass/Fail Grades

An instructor may request approval for pass/fail grading for an individual student in his/her class prior to the first day of class. A graduate student can take a course on a pass/fail basis (*P* or *U* grade) when approved by his/her adviser and instructor. An instructor is not required to accept a student on such a basis.

Grade Changes

Instructor Grade Changes

A change of grade is only appropriate for an *I*, an *NG*, an *SP/UP*, or an error made by the instructor. Instructors may change an *I*, *NG*, *SP* or *UP* grade online for one calendar year minus eight days. While the grade can no longer be changed online by the instructor, note that a grade change is still possible if the instructor determines that a change should be made.

To request a change of grade for a non-research course for graduate credit after this period, the instructor must do an official, paper change of grade form and forward to the Associate University Dean of Graduate Studies along with a reason for requesting the grade change. The Associate Dean will approve or deny the request as the consideration of the reason for the change. In no case is the student to have possession of an official change of grade form.

Change-of-grade forms for research courses are initiated by the instructor and submitted directly to the Registrar’s Office.

Previously recorded *NG* grades may not be changed to *W* since *W* reflects an official withdrawal that took place by the 58th calendar day of classes and would already have been recorded for the student. It is also not appropriate for other recorded grades or registration status to be changed to *W*. **Students cannot withdraw from a class retroactively.**

If a student is assigned an *I* (incomplete) in a course, he/she has one year in which to complete the course requirements and earn a grade. If the student completes his/her course requirements to the instructor’s satisfaction within the year, the instructor changes the *I* to a letter grade online as described above. If the student does not meet the instructor’s requirements, the *I* automatically converts to an *I/F* after one year. Once the *I/F* is on the transcript it can only be removed if the course instructor determines that a change of grade is appropriate and then forwards an official, paper change of grade form to the Associate University Dean of the Graduate School with a rationale for the change. The change is subject to the approval of the Associate University Dean of the

Graduate School. Note that at no time should a student be in possession of a change of grade form, and the process cannot be initiated by a student. The course instructor of record **must** send the form. Note that an *I/F* grade is governed by the same policies that govern the *F* grade and is weighted into the student's GPA in the same fashion.

MAINTAINING GRADUATE STUDENT STATUS

Maintaining graduate student status signifies that the student is actively engaged in making progress towards his/her degree and meeting program requirements. Graduate status determines which students may use facilities of the university, may participate in the university governance process and student organizations, and are covered by the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the grievance process. A University of Cincinnati graduate student must hold a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent and must have been accepted for admission into graduate study by the appropriate graduate program. A student may pursue a graduate degree on either a part or full-time basis.

MINIMUM CREDITS/REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To maintain graduate status at the University of Cincinnati, students must register at UC for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) in an academic year. If the student is registered for at least one graduate credit, he/she will maintain graduate student status throughout the entire academic year, fall through summer. (Credits that are audited or in which a student receives a *W* or *UW* do not count toward the minimum credit requirement). A student whose status has automatically terminated because of failure to register during an academic year will no longer be considered a graduate student but may seek reinstatement (see [Reinstatements](#)). Also note that students must register for at least one graduate credit hour during each semester (excluding summer semester) if they are using university resources such as libraries, university housing, campus laboratories, office space, equipment, recreational or computer facilities.

Dual Degree Programs: In dual degree programs, students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements in one of the two programs (as determined by the program) during the academic year in which they graduate with their dual degrees.

FULL-TIME COURSE LOAD

Students must be registered for 10 or more graduate credits each semester to be considered full-time students, 12 if holding a university sponsored graduate assistantship or fellowship. Audit credits do not count toward full-time status and may not be supported by a University Graduate Award.

PART-TIME COURSE LOAD

Students who can devote less than full time to graduate study may register for the number of graduate credits judged by their program advisers to represent the appropriate fraction of a full-time load. However, doctoral students must still

achieve residency through the enrollment requirements. Enrollment requirements for achieving residency cannot be reduced for doctoral students, regardless of whether a student will be enrolling part-time after achieving residency. Students should confer with their program to ascertain program policies pertaining to part-time student status.

REDUCED COURSE LOAD (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS)

Once an international student has finished all required course work and will no longer be enrolling full time, she/he may choose to enroll with a reduced course load. In order to do this, the student must obtain a "reduced course load certification" from UC International Services. International graduate students who have completed all required course work MUST register for at least one graduate credit hour during an academic year (preferably fall semester) to maintain university and immigration status. However, an international student must register for one graduate credit hour each semester (excluding summer) if: he/she lives in university housing; has office space or uses university equipment, or laboratories; uses any university facilities including computer labs, libraries, practice facilities or recreational facilities; or if he/she is authorized for Curricular Practical Training. Unless an international student registers for 6 credit hours or more he/she will not be charged for the university student health insurance policy. An international student can obtain it if he/she is a graduate student and registered for one credit hour. However, the student MUST go to the student health insurance office and enroll to get it. If the student decides not to get the university policy, she/he MUST have insurance while in U.S. Information on policies that can be purchased can be obtained from UC International Services (3134 Edwards Center One) or the office's [website](#).

An international student needs to be aware of how reduced course load affects his/her ability to work on campus. International students are permitted to work on campus 20 hours a week while school is in session. There is no hourly limitation during scheduled breaks (i.e., summer semester, spring break, break between the end of fall semester and the beginning of spring semester). While registering for 1 credit hour (or not enrolling at all), it is assumed that the student is writing her/his thesis or dissertation full-time for that semester as well as the semesters not enrolled. As such, international students can only work 20 hours a week except during the breaks stipulated above. Students who are "enrolled and regularly attending classes" are eligible for the optional exemption from withholding in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Such students are also exempt from withholding of Social Security and Medicare taxes. "Enrolled and regularly attending classes" is generally defined as half-time enrollment for the current term. That is 5 or more credit hours for graduate students. Graduate students actively working on a thesis who are registered for 1 credit hour are not considered enrolled and regularly attending classes. As such, PERS deductions would be taken from a student's paychecks.

Graduate Assistants on Reduced Course Load will need to register for at least one credit hour for each semester they will be working as grad assistants (whether as a teaching assistant or research assistant). Students funded by grants do not need to be registered for 12 credit hours.

Many international graduate students who have completed all required course work decide to return to their home country while working on their thesis/dissertation. It is important to understand that if an international student leaves the US for more than 5 months his/her current SEVIS record will be terminated. In order to return to the US, UC International Services will need several things. First, the office needs the student's college/department to certify that she/he is still a student in good standing and when she/he will complete the program. Next the student will submit proof of financial support for the remainder of her/his program of study. Upon receipt of these two things UC International Services will create a new SEVIS record for the student and send him or her a new I-20. Federal regulations will require that the student pay the \$200 SEVIS fee again and go to the US embassy and get a new F-1 visa stamp before he/she can reenter the US. If the student plans to leave the US for a period of at least 5 months, she or he should notify UC International Services prior to departure.

MEETING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students who continue on active status in their program without interruption are responsible for meeting all current requirements, including requirements that are added or revised since the student first entered the program. *Students reinstated into their program are responsible for meeting the program requirements applicable at the time of reinstatement.*

MINIMUM ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

A student must accumulate a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 to obtain a master's degree at the University of Cincinnati. At least 20 of the graduate semester credit hours applied toward a master's degree must be derived from formal course work. A doctoral student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in all doctoral course work.

Note: See your adviser or director. Programs establish minimum academic standards that may exceed the overall university standards provided above.

TIME TO DEGREE

Master's Degree

- The minimum requirement for the master's degree is the equivalent of one academic year of full-time graduate study, consisting of at least 30 graduate credits completed to the satisfaction of the student's program.

- All master's requirements must be completed no later than five academic years from the date of matriculation into the degree program for students beginning their program Autumn 2007 or thereafter.
- All master's requirements must be completed no later than seven academic years from the date of matriculation for students beginning their programs prior to Autumn, 2007. (See [Master's Degrees Policies and Procedures, Course of Study.](#))

Doctoral Degree

- The doctoral degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study.
- All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine consecutive academic years of the date of matriculation into the program.
- A doctoral student must be enrolled for at least 10 graduate credits in his/her program in each of two semesters (including summer semester) during a span of four consecutive semesters. (See [Doctoral Degrees Policies and Procedures, Course of Study.](#))

Extensions of Time to Degree

Under extenuating circumstances, students may petition the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, through their program office, for extension of the time limit for attaining their degree. To apply for an extension, the student must download a [Graduate Petition for Reinstatement and/or Extension Form](#) and submit the completed form (signed by his or her adviser) to the graduate program director. The form must include:

- a projected timeline for program completion; the program director must acknowledge the plan as realistic
- a reason for the delay in time to degree completion
- signatures of the student's graduate program director, dean and faculty adviser
- a letter of support from the graduate program director

Reinstatements

Students who have not been registered for at least one graduate credit hour at UC that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) in an academic year are considered inactive. To regain active student status, students may petition the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, through their program, for reinstatement. Reinstatements are available to students who have been inactive for **up to three academic years**. Students who have not been enrolled for any credits in their graduate program for a period longer than three consecutive academic years are not eligible for reinstatement

and must apply for readmission to the university. (See [Readmission](#).)

Students who have not completed their requirements by their time-to-degree limit and neglected to get an extension before reaching the limit are on inactive status regardless of registration in each academic year and are required to apply for reinstatement if they wish to continue in their program. These students must also apply for an extension of their time-to-degree. (See [Extensions of Time to Degree](#).)

Readmission

Students who have been inactive (not enrolled in their program) for **more than three consecutive academic years** are not eligible for reinstatement and must apply for readmission to the university. Readmission does not change the student's **original entry date**. Time to degree will be calculated from his or her first entry date. To apply for readmission, the student must submit a completed [Readmission Form](#) with the processing fee to his or her program director. Additionally, if the student has exceeded time to degree limits, the student should submit a [Reinstatement/Extension form](#) with the Readmission to specify the term in which the student will graduate.

The readmission process is an opportunity for careful consideration of the former student's progress and length of time between his or her inception into the program and completion of remaining requirements. This may result in readmission, readmission with conditions, or denial of readmission.

The readmission application must include a written plan for completing remaining degree requirements and removing any standing impediments to graduation, including any I/F, F, NG grades and courses required for graduation. This plan should include timeline that describes the student's progress toward degree completion to date.

Upon approval, the student must pay a readmission fee equivalent to in-state tuition in effect at the time of readmission for three graduate credits. The processing fee will be applied to the readmission fee.

Note: Include instructions for plan for completing degree requirements and removal of F, I/F, and NG grades on the form.

Leaves of Absence

Under special circumstances, graduate students may apply for leave of absence from full-time study at the university for a specific period up to one academic year. Assuming appropriate documentation is provided, the circumstances justifying a leave include but are not limited to personal or family medical conditions, call to active military duty, maternity leave, or death in immediate family. The rationale must be documented by the applicant.

An approved leave of absence preserves the student's status in his or her degree program, and the time off will not be counted against the time limits for awarding degrees. Consequently, registration is not required during the leave period. A leave may be renewed for up to one additional academic year if the student applies for a leave extension at least four months prior to the end of his or her initial leave. Renewal of a leave is subject to the approval of the program, college, and the Graduate School.

While the Graduate School leave of absence is only necessary for students who will be unable to register for a full academic year, programs may have more strict and specific registration policies and leave of absence policies. Students should also consult their program handbook if there is a legitimate need not to register for any amount of time.

To apply for a leave of absence, a student must download the [Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) and submit the completed form with appropriate documentation to the program director. The program director will forward the application to the department head and college dean for approval. Upon approval of the dean, the dean forwards the application to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The Associate Dean will notify the student in writing of the approval or denial of the request. The program director, college dean, and Associate Dean of the Graduate School must approve the leave.

Note: Students with financial aid or student loans should confer with the Financial Aid Office prior to requesting a leave of absence to ascertain the consequences of a leave on their loan status.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

Students must notify their departments in writing and copy the Graduate School regarding their intent to withdraw from their programs.

DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM

Students must consult with individual programs concerning dismissal policies. If a program dismisses a student, the program must copy the Graduate School on the notification to the student.

MASTER'S DEGREE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COURSE OF STUDY

The course of study for the master's degree is planned with the adviser and is subject to approval by the program graduate committee or its equivalent. It must show a reasonable degree of concentration on interrelated subjects.

Programs will recommend students for degrees only after students have developed and demonstrated the necessary intellectual maturity and have fulfilled all other university requirements. At least once an academic year, the graduate program director or the graduate student's adviser shall inform the student in writing of his/her academic progress in the master's degree program.

Students must take a minimum of one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) per academic year to maintain active status. If a student does not maintain active status, he/she may apply for reinstatement within three years or apply for readmission to his/her program thereafter. There are fees associated with these steps. (See [Maintaining Graduate Student Status](#), [Reinstatements](#) and [Readmission](#).)

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

The University of Cincinnati is on a semester system. Although qualification for the master's degree is not based exclusively upon the completion of a definite number of hours of course work, the satisfactorily completed graduate work must consist of a minimum of one academic year of full-time graduate study consisting of at least 30 graduate semester credit hours, including any thesis or research project. Credits earned in professional law or medicine programs are not applicable to the 30 credit minimum. Some master's programs are completed in one year whereas other programs require two or three years. At least 20 of the graduate semester credit hours applied toward a master's degree must be derived from formal course work, i.e., any course taken for graduate credit for which the graduate student receives a letter grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, or C.

Students enrolled in full-time graduate study must register for a minimum of 10 graduate credit hours per semester. Students receiving scholarships must register for the number of graduate credit hours for which they are funded (see Tuition Scholarships link on [Graduate School's website](#)). Students receiving university-sponsored assistantships or fellowships must register for a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours for each semester they are funded.

Repeated Research Courses

If students are working on their thesis research beyond the research credits required by their program, they should be registered in the appropriate research course (e.g., Individual Master's Thesis), and the course work should be graded

as *SP/UP* not *NG* (no grade) or *I* (incomplete) up until the semester in which they submit the document and are graded for it. This course must have the same course number each semester. Students must receive a grade for the last semester they are registered in the research course. The appropriate course should be identified by the program director and communicated to all faculty advisers and master's students. Complete details of this policy are provided in [Grading, Grades Assigned to Research Courses That Are Repeated](#).

CANDIDACY

There is no formal candidacy status for the master's degree. However, some programs do have defense requirements, so each student should confer with his/her adviser or program director to ascertain the requirements of his/her specific program.

Time Restrictions

A master's student must complete all requirements in his/her master's program no later than five years from the date of matriculation into the degree program for students beginning their program Autumn 2007 or thereafter. All master's requirements must be completed no later than seven years from the date of matriculation for students beginning their programs prior to Autumn 2007. Under extenuating circumstances, an extension may be requested from the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

THESES, RESEARCH PROJECTS, EXAMINATIONS

A master's thesis is required by some programs. Preparation of a thesis demonstrates the student's ability to communicate and to evaluate critically. Information about preparing an electronic thesis is available [on the Graduate School's website](#). The student must obtain any special thesis requirements of his/her specific program from his/her program office.

Thesis Evaluation Process

Each master's degree student undergoes an individual evaluation process at the end of his/her program. This evaluation process is defined as satisfactory demonstration of mastery of subject matter in which the graduate student is seeking the master's degree. This demonstration is an individualized evaluation of each master's candidate that is monitored and documented by at least two faculty members, at least one of whom must be a member of the graduate faculty.

Faculty with emeritus status may remain on the committee if they were members when the proposal was accepted and were full-time tenured, graduate faculty. A faculty member originally on a student's committee who leaves UC to take an academic position elsewhere may also continue to serve on the student's committee if both the faculty member and the student agree to continue the relationship. However, neither an emeritus nor a faculty member from another

institution may serve as chair of the committee. The student must submit the completed thesis to the thesis committee for critical evaluation.

Submission of Thesis

Once a thesis has been approved by his/her committee, the candidate for the master's degree must submit an electronic thesis by following the most current detailed instructions online at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>. Master's students who are not required to complete a thesis should consult their academic programs for the capstone experience required in their programs.

In some programs the final evaluation may be in the form of a comprehensive exam or research project; in others, the final evaluation may appropriately be a recital, performance, or exhibition. The specific nature of the final evaluation is determined by the academic unit offering the master's degree program. If questioned, the appropriateness of a final evaluation will be decided by the University Graduate Council. Students who have written a thesis are expected by the Graduate School per their program requirements to make a public announcement of their thesis defense, such as time, date.

GRADUATION

One semester prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduating, the student should:

1. confer with his/her program office staff;
2. consult the [Graduate School's website](#) for deadlines, instructions on submitting his/her electronic thesis;
3. visit the [Graduate School's website](#) to determine if he/she is defined as a thesis or non-thesis student or consult with your program.

Application to Graduate

Students must: 1) complete academic requirements, 2) complete the official online [Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline for the semester in which they expect to graduate. Deadlines are firm and failure to meet them will delay students' graduation until the following semester, when they must then submit a new application for their revised graduation date.

All students applying to graduate will be assessed a **non-refundable** graduation application fee. The fee will be assessed each semester a student applies for graduation.

Graduation from Dual Degree Programs

The online [Application to Graduate](#) will allow a student to apply for graduation from both degree programs in an official dual degree program.

Each of the two programs must follow the certification processes and procedures necessary to facilitate a student's graduation from their own program.

In dual degree programs, students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements in one of the two programs (as determined by the program) during the academic year in which they graduate with their dual degrees.

4+1 Degree Programs

For students who are already enrolled as undergraduates at the University of Cincinnati, some departments offer a coordinated bachelor – master's degree program, often called a 4+1, providing an accelerated path to a master's degree. Students who enter these programs will still complete all of the requirements of each respective degree, in turn. However, the knowledge that they will be pursuing the master's degree upon completion of the bachelor degree allows them to (A) begin taking graduate-level coursework as an undergraduate student, and (B) begin focusing on thesis-related, independent research at an earlier date.

Students who are considering this program should note the following:

- Students who enroll in graduate-level coursework prior to formally matriculating as a graduate student are allowed to apply 15 quarter, or 12 semester, graduate-level credits toward the requirements of the master's degree. These credits cannot have been used for the bachelor's degree. Students in the 4+1 program will complete the rest of their graduate coursework after formal completion and certification of the bachelor degree. Please see the section of this handbook containing the requirements of the master's degree and speak with your individual program.
- All students, including 4+1 students, wishing to matriculate into a master's program **must complete a formal graduate admission application online and pay the graduate admission application fee to transition to graduate status and begin the master's degree.** Finally, students have five years from matriculation to complete all requirements of the master's degree. While the 4+1 program creates an accelerated path to completing a master's degree, students are permitted up to five years to finish if needed.

Eligibility

To be eligible for entry to the Bachelor – Master's track, students must have junior standing (a minimum of 95.5 quarter credits or 64 semester credits). In addition, students must meet all College and departmental graduate program admission requirements for this track.

Graduation Requirements for Master's Degrees

Students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) each academic year, including the academic year in which they graduate from that program. Students must also complete degree requirements within a five academic year period unless they have an approved extension (See [Maintaining Graduate Student Status, Extensions of Time to Degree](#)). They should contact their program office for any additional program requirements or deadlines to be completed prior to graduation.

Certification for Graduation

The finalization and submission of a student's Application to Graduate will activate the process by which the student will be certified for graduation. The student should confer with his/her program office to assure that any problems related to these requirements are resolved in a timely manner and avoid delay of graduation until a subsequent semester.

Specifically, the student's records will be reviewed to verify satisfaction of the following requirements:

- finalization and submission of his/her online [Graduation Application](#) by the deadline;
- instructor's submission of passing grades for his/her final semester credits;
- removal of all *I* grades from his/her transcript;
- removal of all *UP/SP* grades from unapproved courses and/or the final semester in the approved courses were taken; assignment of letter grades rather than *UP/SP* grades for courses in the final semester of the student's program;
- removal of NG grades
- confirmation of satisfactory repetition or waiver of required courses in which an *F* was originally received;
- confirmation of completion of work and changes of *I* grades within the one-year limit;
- confirmation that the student was registered for at least one credit in his/her graduate program in each academic year;
- confirmation that the student completed his/her degree requirements within the prescribed time-to-degree;
- satisfactory completion of at least 30 graduate credits completed to the satisfaction of the student's program including at least 20 derived from formal course work (many programs have higher requirements);
- completion of all program requirements for the degree;

- ensure that the admissions application fee has been paid by consulting with your program;
- 3.0 GPA has been earned;
- if a thesis is required, upload the electronic thesis (ETD) for chair approval by the deadline date:
<http://gradapps.uc.edu/graduationdeadlines/graduation-deadlines.aspx>.

Note: The requirements clarified here are university requirements. Students must contact their program's office for any additional program-level requirements or deadlines that must be completed prior to graduation.

Please see the [*Doctoral Hooding and Master's Recognition Ceremony*](#) section for details on the event.

DOCTORAL DEGREE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COURSE OF STUDY

The course of study for the doctoral degree is arranged with each student by his/her adviser and reviewed by the program's graduate committee or its equivalent. The program should provide a concentration and breadth of study for the student to develop competence in research, scholarship, teaching, and professional performance in general, with knowledge of his/her chosen specialty in relation to allied branches of learning. A written assessment of performance for each doctoral student is required at the end of his/her first year; an annual Academic Progress Report or some other form of formal evaluation of progress is required throughout each student's program.

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

The doctoral degree requires a minimum of three years of full-time graduate study in the student's degree program and either a minimum of 90 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree or a minimum of 60 credits beyond a master's degree, including at least 7 hours in dissertation research. Some program credit requirements may be higher. Credits earned in professional law or medicine programs are not applicable to a graduate degree. The last 30 credits must be completed under the direction of University of Cincinnati graduate faculty. In no case, however, will a degree be granted solely on the basis of the accumulation of the required number of credits. A program will recommend students for degrees only after they have developed the necessary intellectual maturity and have fulfilled all other requirements of the program and the university.

Students enrolled in full-time graduate study must register for a minimum of ten graduate credit hours per semester. Students receiving scholarships must register for the number of graduate credit hours each semester for which they are funded. Students receiving university-sponsored assistantships or fellowships must register for a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours for each semester they are funded. To maintain graduate status, students must register in their program for at least one graduate credit hour in each academic year.

RESIDENCY

Prior to admission to doctoral candidacy, all doctoral students shall complete a residency requirement by enrolling in 10 graduate credit hours (12 if funded by a Graduate Assistantship) per semester for two out of three consecutive semesters of study (including summer). Part-time students are not exempt from enrollment requirements to achieve residency. All doctoral students must complete a residency requirement prior to achieving candidacy. Exceptions to this policy are rare and must be submitted for approval to the Graduate Council.

RESEARCH COURSES CONTINUING BEYOND ONE SEMESTER

If students are working on dissertation research beyond the research credits required by their program, they should be registered in the appropriate research course (e.g., Individual Dissertation), and the course work should be graded as *SP/UP*—not *NG* (no grade) or *I* (incomplete)—until the semester in which they submit the document and are graded for it. This course must have the same course number each semester. This will reflect the reality that dissertation is in progress. Students must receive a grade for the last semester they are registered in the research course. The appropriate course should be identified by the program director, and it is the program director's responsibility to communicate this to all faculty advisers and doctoral students in their program so that it is used consistently. (See [Graduate Credit and Grades](#); [Grading, Grades Assigned to Research Courses that Are Repeated](#) for complete details of this policy.)

CANDIDACY

Time to Candidacy

The Graduate School no longer tracks time to candidacy. However, students must complete their doctoral degree within nine consecutive academic years of the date of matriculation into the program.

Exam

Doctoral students are required to complete a department certification process according to the program's established standards before advancing to candidacy. The student must have at least a 3.0 grade point average in doctoral coursework and fulfill all other pre-candidacy requirements specified by the doctoral program in which the student is enrolled.

Verification

The student's program must promptly submit candidacy verification on behalf of the student to the Graduate School upon the student's completion of the requirements noted above. The Graduate School will then send a formal letter to the student notifying him or her of admission to candidacy. Once admitted, the student must register for at least one graduate credit hour in each academic year in the program to maintain graduate student and candidacy status.

TIME RESTRICTIONS

The doctoral degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine consecutive **academic** years of the date of matriculation into the program. For details, please visit the [Time to Degree section](#).

DISSERTATION

Each PhD and EdD student must produce and defend a dissertation showing high scholarly achievement based on his/her original research. The student is expected to submit an electronic document as evidence of this research. Students in all other doctoral programs should consult their academic programs for the capstone experience required in their programs.

Dissertation Adviser and Committee

When the student has been admitted into doctoral candidacy and has selected a dissertation subject and committee chairperson, a dissertation committee will be appointed by the Graduate School upon recommendation of the program director or director of graduate studies (in consultation with the committee chair and student). Students have the right to request a change in the committee but must do so in consultation with the graduate program director and his/her program must make the change in UniverSIS. Preferably, the dissertation committee will include at least one person from outside the program. This might be someone from the university faculty who has competence or interest in the dissertation area or, in special circumstances, someone from outside the university. The committee should be appointed as soon as feasible after the student has selected his/her topic and adviser.

A dissertation committee must be composed of a minimum of three full-time graduate faculty members at UC with professorial rank (tenure-track full, assistant, and associate professors). Research faculty may serve on the committee and chair if members of the graduate faculty. Faculty with emeritus status may remain on the committee if they were members when the proposal was accepted and were full-time tenured, graduate faculty. A graduate faculty member originally on a student's committee who leaves UC to take an academic position elsewhere may also continue to serve on the student's committee if both the graduate faculty member and the student agree to continue the relationship. However, neither an emeritus nor a faculty member whose only appointment is from another institution may serve as the chair of the committee. If a faculty member or appropriate professional practitioner has special expertise in a dissertation topic, such a person may be added to the dissertation committee if he/she is nominated by the candidate and approved by both the chairperson of the dissertation committee and the director of graduate studies for the academic unit involved, and the associate dean of the Graduate School. Such a person would serve as a full voting member of the dissertation committee without compensation from either the university or the candidate.

A copy of the completed dissertation must be submitted to each committee member for critical evaluation. If it is considered to be satisfactory with respect to form and content by the committee, a final defense of the dissertation can be scheduled.

Final Defense of Dissertation

Students should check with their program office for the final deadline for their dissertation defense. The student's final defense of the dissertation will be open to the public and all members of the academic community. Students are required to enter details of their dissertation defense, such as time, date, and location, online at the Graduate School website through the Graduation checklist steps. Begin at: <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>. Students can also browse scheduled dissertation defenses by visiting the [defense announcement page](#).

The candidate answers questions posed by members of the committee following an oral presentation of his/her dissertation. After the committee members have completed their questioning, others present may pose questions or comments. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee will withdraw, make a decision with regard to the acceptability of the dissertation and its defense, and report its decision to the candidate. At least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the voting members of the dissertation committee (including at least one representative of each major area involved, in the case of interdisciplinary programs) must approve the dissertation.

When the student's dissertation committee chair has approved a defense, the student should assure that they have met all requirements for graduation including those in the graduation information obtained online.

Use of a Moderator

Although an outside moderator is not required, a moderator may be assigned by the Dean upon the request of the candidate, the chairperson of the dissertation committee, or the person empowered to approve the composition of a dissertation committee (the director of graduate studies for the academic unit involved). Moderators should be members of the all-University Graduate Faculty from outside the academic unit involved. The duties of the moderator are limited to observing the oral defense of the dissertation and reporting in writing to the Dean on the academic propriety of the proceedings.

SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

After a dissertation has been approved, the candidate for the doctoral degree must submit his/her electronic dissertation by following the most current detailed instructions found at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>. Students in all other doctoral programs should consult their academic programs for the capstone experience required in their programs.

GRADUATION

One semester prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduating, the student should:

1. confer with his/her program office staff;

2. consult the [Graduation page](#) on the Graduate School's website for deadlines, instructions on submitting his/her electronic dissertation, and doctoral hooding ceremony information.

Application to Graduate

Students must: 1) complete academic requirements, 2) complete the official online [Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline for the semester in which they expect to graduate. Deadlines are firm and failure to meet them will delay students' graduation until the following semester, when they must then submit a new application for their revised graduation date.

All students applying to graduate will be assessed a **non-refundable** graduation application fee. The fee will be assessed each semester a student applies for graduation.

Dual Degree Programs Graduation

The online [Application to Graduate](#) will allow a student to apply for graduation from both degree programs in a dual degree program.

Each of the two programs must follow the certification processes and procedures necessary to facilitate the student's graduation from their own program.

In dual degree programs, students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements in one of the two programs (as determined by the program) during the academic year in which they graduate with dual degrees.

Graduation Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) during the academic year in which they graduate from that program. Doctoral students must also complete degree requirements within a nine-year period unless they have an approved extension (See [Maintaining Graduate Student Status, Extensions of Time to Degree](#)). They should contact their program offices for any additional program requirements or deadlines to be completed prior to graduation.

Certification for Graduation

Finalization and submission of a student's Application to Graduate will activate the process by which the student will be certified for graduation. The student should confer with his/her program office to assure that any problems related to these requirements are resolved in a timely manner and avoid delay of graduation until a subsequent semester.

Specifically, the student's records will be reviewed to verify satisfaction of the following requirements:

- finalization and submission of his/her [online Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline;
- instructor's submission of passing grades for his/her final semester credits;
- removal of all *I* grades from his/her transcript;
- removal of NG grades
- removal of all *UP/SP* grades from unapproved courses and/or the final semester in which the courses were taken; assignment of letter grades rather than *UP/SP* grades for courses in the final semester of the student's program;
- confirmation of satisfactory repetition or waiver of required courses in which an *F* was originally received;
- confirmation of completion of work and changes of *I* grades within the one-year limit;
- confirmation that the student was registered for at least one credit in the graduate program in each academic year;
- confirmation that the student reached candidacy and completed the degree;
- requirements within his/her prescribed time-to-degree;
- satisfactory completion of at least 60 graduate credits in the student's doctoral degree program, including at least 7 research credits (many programs have higher requirements), if the student has officially earned a master's degree that required at least 30 credits; if the student did not earn a master's degree, 90 graduate credits are required.
- completion of all program requirements for the degree;
- ensure that the admissions application fee has been paid by consulting with your program;
- 3.0 GPA has been earned;
- If a dissertation is required, upload the electronic dissertation (ETD) for chair approval by the deadline
<https://gradapps.uc.edu/roadmapint/default.aspx>.

Note: The requirements clarified here are university requirements. Students must contact their program office for any additional program-level requirements or deadlines that must be completed prior to graduation.

DOCTORAL HOODING AND MASTER'S RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Doctoral and master's students who are graduating or who have graduated during the academic year will receive an invitation from the Dean of the Graduate School to participate in the university's prestigious Doctoral Hooding and Master's Recognition Ceremony held each semester. Please visit the [Commencement website](#) or the **Graduate School website** (<http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>) for up-to-date details. This is a joyous occasion in which students celebrate their accomplishment with family and friends as they are recognized by faculty and administrators, and receive their hoods.

Graduates must confirm their intent to participate (or not) by reserving a seat online for the celebratory event and providing current home and email addresses for notification purposes.

INSTITUTIONAL RULES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

PROGRAM STANDARDS

This Graduate Handbook clarifies minimum university-level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students throughout the University of Cincinnati. Beyond these, each student is also expected to adhere to requirements, policies, and procedures specific to his/her own degree program and college.

All graduate programs must publish in writing in accessible format the minimum academic standards for each graduate program offered, including the following:

- minimum grade point average, including grades earned in required courses;
- acceptable grade distribution, including grades earned in required courses;
- nature and number of programmatic examinations, such as preliminary or qualifying, and the consequences of failing all or part of each examination;
- specified research requirements;
- a time-related definition of normal progress for all full and part-time students;
- standards and procedures for the mandatory annual review of academic performance;
- standards and procedures for probation, suspension, and dismissal from the program.

RECORDS PRIVACY, FERPA, AND THE RIGHT TO REVIEW

The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**, is the federal law that governs the release of and access to student education records. FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. For the complete FERPA information, consult the “FERPA and Records Privacy” page of the [Registrar’s Office website](#).

DISCRIMINATION

The University of Cincinnati reaffirms its policy that discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, status as a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era or age shall not be practiced in any of its activities. Furthermore, where past or present discrimination continues to have an adverse impact upon protected class members such as minority groups, women, disabled, Vietnam era veterans, or disabled veterans, the university will take affirmative action in carrying out its policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all.

Complaints involving violations of the University of Cincinnati's nondiscrimination policy are addressed by the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Access](#) (University Hall, Suite 340).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense that cannot be tolerated in an academic community. Dishonesty—including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, and/or unauthorized assistance—may result in a failing grade in a course and/or suspension or dismissal from the university.

Each graduate program or college must adopt and publish procedures for investigating charges of academic dishonesty. These procedures must take into account due process and rules of evidence, and they must conform to the university's [Student Code of Conduct](#).

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) defines behavior expected of all University of Cincinnati students. **It is each student's responsibility to know and comply with the university's Student Code of Conduct**, and sanctions or penalties are outlined. (Law and medical students are subject to their respective honor codes. However, these students are covered by the appeal process of the university's Student Code of Conduct.) Academic behavior considered to be misconduct is defined in the Student Code of Conduct. The code also addresses nonacademic misconduct (such as disturbing the peace, destruction of property, and theft). Disciplinary procedures are explained in a step-by-step manner, and the procedures for appeal of decisions are stated.

In addition to this code, students must adhere to their college's professional code of conduct and honor codes where applicable. Students should contact the office of the dean for their college to inquire about any applicable conduct and honor codes to ensure compliance.

RESEARCH CONDUCT

Furthering of research is a major institutional goal of the University of Cincinnati. Research includes not only intellectual activity and exploration designed to expand knowledge and understanding, but also activities in the creative and performing arts designed to interpret and create. The university is unequivocally committed to ethical conduct of research. Individuals charged with supervision of research, as well as all individuals directly engaged in it, and collaborators of investigators outside their own units are responsible for the quality of the data generated in their own laboratories as well as the laboratories of their collaborators.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR NIH- AND NSF-FUNDED STUDENTS

At the University of Cincinnati, we recognize the importance of mentoring students and trainees in career development. Our plan is to enhance this effort by phasing in the use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) as part of career development for our graduate students and postdoctoral trainees over the upcoming years. IDPs include trainee self-assessment, career exploration, and setting short- and long-term career goals.

In the first phase of using IDPs here at UC, we encourage graduate students and postdoctoral trainees supported by NIH or NSF funds to develop a personal IDP that can be used to promote discussions with mentors and advisors on career development. We are not requiring students to create an IDP, but to consider this on a voluntary basis. Trainees on NIH or NSF funding who do wish to make an IDP at the University of Cincinnati are asked to use the online interactive IDP system developed by FASEB/AAAS at <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/> so that all our trainees are working on a uniform platform. Graduate programs who wish to build IDPs into their career development and mentoring of all trainees are free to do so, but should notify the [Dean of the Graduate School](#) of their intent.

Background

NIH is ramping up plans for NIH-supported trainees to have Individual Development Plans (IDPs) as part of their career development. This has been part of NSF funding for several years already. There is a new NIH mandate: **In any grant progress report submitted Oct 1, 2014 or later, NIH is requiring a description on the institutional use of IDPs to develop the careers for NIH-supported graduate students and postdocs.** The policy above can be used as the required description.

As described in [latest NIH IDP policy notice](#), "NIH will not require but strongly encourages institutions to develop and use IDPs for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NIH awards, regardless of their position title. IDPs provide a structure for the identification and achievement of career goals. Therefore, NIH encourages grantees to develop institutional policies that employ an IDP for every graduate student and postdoctoral researcher supported by NIH awards."

As of yet, there is no requirement to show the outcomes of those IDPs in any progress report, but we are all anticipating this is coming. It is time to start. IDPs are a good idea, and FASEB/AAAS has created an interactive on-line tool creation of IDPs that makes them easy to implement for science trainees (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>). Creation of this policy is the first step, and we anticipate auditioning new tools to advance this realm of career development in the future.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, or performing research, reviewing research proposals, or reporting research results ([No. 10-17-05, Rules of the University](#)).

Official university policy governing research misconduct is available in its entirety in Rules of the University, Conduct and Ethics. One can find the [policy for investigation of research misconduct](#) online.

Misconduct that has been established may constitute grounds for administrative action including termination of the individual's appointment at the university. Accusations of falsifying or misrepresenting data or authorship are among the most serious charges that may be lodged against an investigator. A person contemplating such accusations must fully consider the gravity of the accusation and its consequences. He/she must make every effort to avoid lodging charges that prove to be baseless. Frivolous or false accusations may also constitute grounds for administrative action. Likewise, it is the policy of the University of Cincinnati that no individual who, in good faith, has reported apparent scientific misconduct of research shall be subject to retaliation by the university or any member of the university community. Impermissible retaliation is subject to university discipline.

When misconduct is alleged, it is imperative that due process be followed and protection be afforded to the rights and reputation of both accuser and accused, collaborators of the accused, those investigating the allegations, any sponsoring agency, any publisher, and the university. Thus, university legal counsel will provide advice and counsel throughout the proceedings. During the inquiry into and investigation of allegations, confidentiality shall be observed in the interests of all parties except that the appropriate college dean (herein after referred to as the dean) shall inform and keep apprised of the investigation the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education. The dean may delegate any authority described herein. Appropriate administrative action may be taken as necessary to protect sponsoring agency funds and assure that the purposes of the financial assistance are met. All reporting requirements of sponsoring agencies must be observed.

Proceedings to Investigate Alleged Research Misconduct

All proceedings must be in accordance with applicable rules and contractual obligations of the University of Cincinnati. A representative may accompany all individuals meeting with an investigating committee. Each committee may establish its own rules of conduct within these guidelines.

Allegations

Charges of misconduct shall be brought to the director or head of the program in which such conduct allegedly occurred. The director or head shall immediately inform the dean of the college and the dean shall inform the Dean of the

Graduate School. If the person being accused is a department, program, or unit director or head, the charge will be brought directly to the dean of the college.

Initial Inquiry

The dean advises the accused of the allegations and appoints an inquiry committee of no more than three individuals to conduct an inquiry into the allegations. Appointments will avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest. University legal counsel advises the inquiry committee. The object of the initial inquiry is to determine whether there is sufficient substance to the allegations to warrant an investigation.

1. Private, separate sessions are conducted to hear the accuser, the accused, and others as determined by the inquiry committee. All relevant evidence produced is reviewed and secured.
2. The inquiry committee makes a written report and recommendation to the dean within 15 working days after the dean has been informed of the charge. The dean may extend this time under exceptional circumstances. The written report includes what evidence was reviewed, the information from relevant interviews, the reason for any delays, and the recommendation of the inquiry committee.
3. As a result of this initial inquiry, a recommendation is either made that the allegations are without merit or that the allegations have sufficient evidence to warrant further investigation. In either case, subsequent action may be recommended.
4. The dean reviews the recommendation of the inquiry committee and decides whether to request a complete investigation (see below) or to take any other appropriate action pursuant to university rules or contractual agreements. This decision is delivered in writing with the inquiry committee report and recommendations to the accused, accuser, the inquiry committee, the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education who in turn notifies the President of the University without delay. Any comments submitted by the accused may be added to the record. Records and reports of each inquiry not warranting investigation shall be maintained by the dean at least three years after the termination of the inquiry.

Investigation (if further investigation is warranted)

1. The dean of the college determines whether sponsored research is involved and informs the University Dean of the Graduate School, who determines if the sponsoring agency should be notified that an investigation is under way. Any necessary notification must clearly state that the investigation will determine the propriety of the conduct or reporting of the research and that the agency shall be apprised of the results.
2. The dean of the college appoints an investigating committee to conduct a complete investigation of the allegations to determine if misconduct has occurred. Appointments must avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest.

The investigating committee, while not being excessive in size, must include individuals with sufficient expertise and dedication to conduct a thorough and equitable investigation. University legal counsel advises the investigating committee.

3. The thorough and timely investigation provides both notice of all allegations to the accused and an opportunity for the individual(s) to fully respond to all allegations and findings. The investigation must begin within 30 days of the completion of the initial inquiry and must be completed within 120 days of its initiation. Extensions are only approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education, or the Senior Vice President and Provost for Health Affairs who first secure any necessary approvals from sponsoring agencies.
4. Necessary support (e.g., clerical, information gathering, witnesses, organizational, security, record keeping and confidentiality) is arranged by the office of the dean. Private and separate sessions are conducted to hear the accuser, the accused, and others determined necessary by the investigating committee. All relevant evidence produced (including but not limited to research data, publications, correspondence and telephone memoranda) is reviewed and secured. Interviews with individuals are recorded by tape recorder or a court reporter unless the investigating committee is otherwise advised by legal counsel.
5. The investigating committee provides a written report of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations together with all pertinent documents and evidence to the dean. Each member of the investigating committee signs the report or submits a signed dissenting report.

External Review

The dean may appoint an external committee of faculty members and/or administrators from another institution or institutions to review and provide written comment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the investigating committee.

Administrative Action

1. The dean reviews the report of the investigating committee and the comments of the external committee, if any, and recommends further action to the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education. This recommendation is delivered in writing together with the committee report and any comments from the external committee to the accused, the accuser, and the investigating committee. Any comments submitted by the accused are also part of the record. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education then inform the President of the University without delay.
2. With the advice of University Legal Counsel, the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate

Education or the Senior Vice President decide how to proceed under applicable university rules and contractual agreements. They then deliver the decision in writing to the accused, the accuser, both committees, the dean, and the President without delay. Collaborators of the accused are advised of any substantiated misconduct or questions related to their research. The President advises the Board of Trustees as necessary.

3. At any time misconduct or significant errors are substantiated in any sponsored or reported research, the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education notify the sponsoring agency or publisher in writing without delay.

RESTRICTED RESEARCH

The right to open exchange of information and opinion in faculty relations with students carries the obligation to avoid comments or violations of confidentiality that would reduce free expression or inquiry by students. Student involvement in industrial proprietary projects should be permitted only when these projects in no way restrict the student's ability to fulfill his/her degree requirements, which includes the obligation to publish dissertation results.

Faculty members have the right to publish their research findings and the right to protection against retaliation because of displeasure over their conclusions by the public, administration, government, or others. They have the concomitant responsibility to refrain from conducting secret, non-publishable research as part of their university duties.

GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The University of Cincinnati provides an opportunity for the resolution of disputes involving graduate students in a fair and collegial manner. The [Graduate Student Grievance Procedures](#) establish a formal academic process for graduate students to request review and redress of certain grievances arising out of their academic relationships with their programs, their colleges, or the university. The grievance begins with a mediation process and may proceed, if necessary, through the more formal fact-finding and decision or appeal processes. In general, however, it is expected that grievances will be resolved by the parties within their programs. Students, faculty and staff should note that Grievance Procedures are **not** a legal procedure. It is, however, an effective means to resolve conflicts. The Graduate School endorses this procedure and expects all programs and students involved to follow the procedure according to the established guidelines. No outside parties, such as lawyers, priests, family, etc., are allowed to participate in or impose on the procedure. The Graduate Student Grievance Procedure cannot supplant final sanctions stemming from the University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct process.

The procedures are applicable to the following types of grievances:

- grievances alleging improper dismissal or suspension from a graduate program;
- grievances alleging the improper withholding or termination of financial support of any kind;
- grievances alleging any other improper treatment of a graduate student by a faculty member or university agency except:
 1. allegations of discriminatory treatment arising from the student complainant's age, race, gender, sexual preference, disability, national origin, or religion;*
 2. allegations of improper evaluation of the quality and quantity of academic work;
 3. allegations of unfair recommendation for employment or further graduate study.

***Note:** Allegations of discrimination will be handled according to the university Discrimination Procedure as outlined by University of Cincinnati's [Human Resource department](#). Allegations of sexual harassment will be handled according to the [University Institutional Policy on Sexual Harassment](#) also outlined by Human Resources.

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