

**BY-LAWS OF  
THE SCHOOL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY AND  
GRADUATE STUDIES  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE**

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# BYLAWS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE SCHOOL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY AND GRADUATE STUDIES (SIGS)

## ARTICLE ONE: PREAMBLE

This document lists the bylaws for the organization and governance of the SIGS of the University of Louisville. The responsibility for guiding the development of graduate education at the University of Louisville lies with this unit as herein set forth.

### 1.1 Function

The SIGS of the University of Louisville promotes teaching and training of post baccalaureate students and serves as the central office for administrative oversight of students enrolled in academic disciplines, as well as those in interdisciplinary graduate programs. The SIGS contributes to the totality of learning and the generation and application of knowledge expected of a preeminent metropolitan research University. The SIGS encourages investigation, promotes research, scholarship and creativity, and contributes to the store and application of human knowledge. By fostering the spirit of inquiry and scholarship, graduate education strengthens the lifelong educational experience and the advancement of knowledge.

Through graduate programs in disciplines represented throughout the University, graduate education provides preparation for those planning to become investigators, scholars, artists, educators, and professional practitioners. The SIGS provides administrative support to all graduate educational programs, and serves as the enrollment unit for students in inter-unit and *ad hoc* interdisciplinary programs. For interdisciplinary degree programs, academic authority is shared among the faculties of the participating units. Academic authority (see Redbook Article 3.3.2) and responsibility for academic rigor for graduate programs in other academic units is vested in the faculty of those units and is exercised in accord with a set of Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education established by the SIGS and approved by the Board of Trustees.

## ARTICLE TWO: GOVERNANCE

### 2.1 Officers of Administration

The chief academic and administrative officer of the SIGS shall hold the title of Dean of the SIGS. Appointment of Associate and Assistant Deans will be made by the Dean, subject to the provisions of *The Redbook*.

#### 2.1.1 The Dean of the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies

The Dean of the SIGS shall be responsible for working with academic units offering graduate degree programs and with other organized scholarly groups on a University-wide basis. The Dean of the SIGS shall promote synergism between graduate education and research, with the charge by university administration to comply with the position description, as defined in Section 2.1.1.3. This position description includes both general responsibilities and specific charges relating to the Dean's involvement with graduate education and graduate programs. The term "graduate programs" refers to post-baccalaureate certificate programs, masters' and doctoral programs offered at the University of Louisville, but excludes certain professional degree programs as designated by the University Provost. These professional degree programs will not

- L. Develop, stimulate, and maintain academic and scholarly programs that encourage cooperation and interaction among the graduate programs of the University of Louisville and various external constituencies including other academic institutions, government and community agencies, business, and the arts.
- M. Oversee graduate student issues related to Human Resources, Internal Revenue Service, and the Student and Exchange Visitors Program.
- N. Implement the policies of the University and the Graduate Education Strategic Plan.
- O. Perform other duties as assigned by the Executive Vice President and University Provost.

**2.1.2 Associate and Assistant Deans of the SIGS**

Associate and Assistant Deans must be experienced in graduate education and hold tenured faculty appointments in academic units that offer graduate programs.

**2.1.2.1 Duties and Responsibilities**

The specific duties and responsibilities of the Associate and Assistant Deans are left to the discretion of the Dean of the SIGS.

The general duties will include:

- A. Service in an advisory capacity to the Dean.
- B. Participation in the development of policies and procedures of the SIGS.
- C. Service on the Graduate Council and other committees of the SIGS in an ex-officio, nonvoting, capacity.
- D. Performance of other duties as assigned by the Dean of the SIGS.

### 2.2.2 Meetings of the Graduate Council

The Graduate Council shall usually meet monthly during the academic year. Usually, the meetings in odd-numbered months shall be committee meetings and meetings in even-numbered months shall be of the full Council. Additional meetings may be called at any time by the Dean of the SIGS as needed or upon request of one-third of the elected members of the Council. The agenda of each meeting will be available to all members of the university faculty who participate in graduate education at least two days prior to the date of the meeting. Minutes of the Council's meetings shall be maintained and published electronically within two weeks of their approval.

A quorum for dispositive action shall be one-third of the elected members. Except when dealing with personnel matters, Council meetings shall be open to all members of the university faculty who participate in graduate education, as well as to interested visitors. Non-members of the Council who, at least one day prior to the meeting, state in writing (including electronic mail) their intention to do so may speak to an issue, but may not vote. The Council may establish a time limit on each speaker.

### 2.2.3 Membership

The Graduate Council shall be composed of the Dean of the SIGS plus 25 voting members as follows:

- 1) Twenty Faculty Councilors holding full-time appointments at the University of Louisville and certified by their units as qualified participants in graduate education;
- 2) Three graduate program directors appointed by the Dean of the SIGS;
- 3) Two graduate student representatives selected by the Graduate Student Association and its Council.
- 4) The Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs and Associate and Assistant Deans of the SIGS as *ex officio*, non-voting members.
- 5) One non-voting representative of each REDBOOK 3.1.1 unit without graduate programs.

Faculty Councilors shall be elected by faculties of graduate programs from the various schools and colleges having active graduate programs in proportion to the number of such programs housed in those units. No unit having active graduate programs shall have more than 4 or less than 1 member on the Graduate Council. If an academic unit is created by the Board of Trustees of the University and the unit has graduate programs, the Graduate Council will immediately grant the new unit representation, and will reapportion at the next election cycle. If an academic unit is dissolved, Graduate Council membership will not immediately change, but will be re-apportioned at the next election cycle.

The normal term of membership on the Graduate Council shall be for three years for faculty and one year for students. Members may be elected to two consecutive terms. No member's term shall be shortened by reapportionment. New and returning Graduate Council members assume their responsibilities at the August meeting of each academic year.

### 2.3.2

#### **Graduate Student Professional Development and Welfare Committee**

##### **A. Functions**

- (1) Serve as representatives of Graduate Council for considerations of policies and programming designed to promote and enhance graduate student professional development and welfare.
- (2) Advise the Dean of the SIGS on matters of graduate student professional development and welfare.

##### **B. Structure**

- (1) The Graduate Student Professional Development and Welfare Committee shall be composed of 5 faculty members of the Graduate Council representing at least 3 different units with graduate programs, plus the two student members and 1 member of the SIGS staff.
- (2) Committee faculty members shall be elected by the Graduate Council and shall serve three-year staggered terms and may be re-elected to subsequent terms.
- (3) The Staff member shall be selected to serve by the Dean of the SIGS for a one year term.
- (4) The committee chair will be elected by and from its membership no later than the second meeting of each academic year.

### 2.3.3

#### **Honorary Degrees Committee**

##### **A. Functions**

- (1) Serve as representatives of Graduate Council for considerations of nominees for university honorary degrees, in accord with Article Four of these Bylaws.
- (2) Advise the Dean of the SIGS on nominations for university honorary degrees.

##### **B. Structure**

- (1) The Honorary Degrees Committee shall be composed of 5 members of the Graduate Council representing at least 3 different units with graduate programs and 1 member of the SIGS staff.
- (2) Council members shall be elected by the Graduate Council and shall serve three-year staggered terms and may be re-elected to subsequent terms.
- (3) The Staff member shall be selected to serve by the Dean of the SIGS for a one year term.
- (4) The committee chair will be elected by and from its membership no later than the second meeting of each academic year.

### 2.3.4

#### **Academic Affairs Committee**

##### **A. Functions**

- (1) Serve as representatives of Graduate Council for considerations of all matters concerning academic standards and programs of the SIGS, the Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education, and other academic issues as required.
- (2) Advise the Dean of the SIGS on these academic issues.

## **ARTICLE THREE: INTERDISCIPLINARY, PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC AND COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS MANAGEMENT**

### **3.1 Interdisciplinary Programs**

The SIGS is charged with fostering development of tracks within the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. and Masters' programs. In developing such graduate programs the SIGS shall ensure that:

- A. The proposed programs shall be rigorous and academically sound.
- B. Policies and procedures are established for the formation and review of interdisciplinary tracks and ad hoc interdisciplinary programs.
- C. The two (or more) units engaged in an interdisciplinary program are committed to its success, that the units complement the other(s), and that the combination results in a substantially new program providing greater opportunity than any of the separate programs.
- D. The proposed programs conform to the academic regulations of the university.
- E. Joint degree programs (e.g. JD/MBA, JD/MSSW, JD/MA, JD/MUP, MBA/MAC, MBA/MEng, MBA/JD, MPA/MA, MBA/MUP, MD/MS, MD/PhD) are collaborative programs that require simultaneous or sequential satisfying of the requirements of two or more academic programs, with the subsequent award of two different degrees. Such programs are subject to the academic oversight of the collaborating faculties, are administered by the collaborating departments and units and are not considered to be Interdisciplinary Degree programs.

### **3.2 Professional/Academic Programs**

The SIGS is charged with fostering development of professional practice doctoral and masters' programs. In developing such graduate programs that involve multiple academic units, the SIGS shall ensure that:

- A. The proposed programs shall be rigorous and academically sound, and shall interface with professional practice opportunities.
- B. The units that are to engage in such programs shall be committed to its success, and new programs shall provide demonstrated opportunities for its students and for the university.
- C. The proposed programs shall conform to the academic regulations of the university.

### **3.3 Cooperative Programs with other Institutions of Higher Education**

In developing cooperative graduate programs between or among institutions, the following guidelines shall be applied:

- A. The two (or more) institutions that are to engage in a cooperative program must work in a collaborative fashion. Each academic program must be of high quality; each must complement the others, and the combination must result in a new program which is academically rigorous and which provides greater opportunity than either of the separate programs.
- B. The proposed programs must be in conformity with the academic regulations of all cooperating institutions.
- C. For international programs, the SIGS shall collaborate with the Provost's director for international program to assure academic rigor and maximum student opportunity in these programs.

**ARTICLE FIVE:   ADVANCED DEGREES FOR FACULTY**

Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Instructors who hold probationary or tenured faculty appointments (not temporary, nonvoting instructorships) are not permitted to earn advanced degrees in their own departments or non-departmentalized schools, or in interdisciplinary program tracks in which they participate as a faculty member. Nor shall any faculty members with departmental or unit voting rights concerning any aspect of graduate education be permitted to earn advanced degrees in their own departments or non-departmentalized schools, or in interdisciplinary program tracks in which they participate as a faculty member

**ARTICLE SIX: AMENDMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**6.1           Amendment Process**

These Bylaws may be amended or revised by action of the Graduate Council acting as the representative body of the university faculty involved in graduate education. Proposed changes to the Bylaws shall not be in conflict with The Redbook. Proposed Bylaws changes shall be published for review at least one week before a meeting by Graduate Council. Changes shall require approval by 2/3 of the Graduate Council present and voting at such a meeting and shall require subsequent approval in accord with Redbook Article 3.1, Sec. 3.1.3.

**6.2           Implementation**

The implementation of these Bylaws shall occur immediately upon their approval by the Board of Trustees of the University of Louisville

## Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education

To ensure high quality graduate education programs, the university maintains minimum guidelines for admission and performance of graduate students, for faculty involvement in graduate education and for proper academic administration. The faculties of the enrollment units have the academic authority and responsibility to establish rigorous and effective: admission requirements, curricula, instruction, examinations, and recommendations to the Board of Trustees for granting of degrees (Redbook Article 3.3.2.)

The faculty of each Unit shall establish and publish its own set of policies and procedures for its graduate programs in the university catalog. Individual academic units and graduate programs may establish policies that are more stringent than those set forth in this document, but may not establish standards that are lesser.

### I. Academic standards for students in graduate programs

#### A. Admissions standards

1. All applications for graduate program admissions shall include: (a) a completed application, (b) an application fee, (c) results from any standard test required by the enrollment unit (d) official transcript(s) for all previous post-secondary coursework, and (e) at least two letters of recommendation. All transcripts not in English must be certified as authentic and translated verbatim into English.
2. The minimum requirement for admission is the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution.
3. Each unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement to be considered for acceptance and admission.
4. Unconditional admission to degree seeking status shall be made only if all admission credentials shall have been received, evaluated and approved.
5. Any provisional acceptance shall be made on an individual basis and shall require a statement of the rationale for the exception, plans for monitoring progress and performance and stated success criteria. Such justification must be provided in writing and must be accepted by the faculty and Dean of the enrollment unit. This will allow consideration of special circumstances in which the potential for high quality graduate performance has been clearly demonstrated by other means.
6. Students who fail to meet performance goals or who do not meet other requirements as outlined in the admission letter, program requirements or the university's catalog may be subject to academic dismissal from their programs.

## E. Conflict resolution

Any student who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly, discriminated against, or has had rights abridged may seek resolution of this conflict. Students, faculty and administrators shall first seek to resolve the matter through informal discussion and through administrative channels, and through the University Student Grievance Officer. Should this fail, a student may initiate a grievance at the unit level within one year of the event giving rise to the complaint. The Graduate Student Academic Grievance committee (Graduate Bylaws 2.3.5) will hold original jurisdiction for students enrolled in the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies and appellate jurisdiction for all other graduate students. All grievance procedures shall be conducted in accord with Redbook Section 6.8.

## II. Faculty Participation in Graduate Education

- A. Faculty who participate in teaching graduate level courses shall meet the requirements of the University of Louisville Faculty Credentials Policy. This policy is consistent with the guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which state that faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work should have an earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline. However, units may consider other qualifications (e.g., work experience, research) when determining whether a person is qualified to teach graduate level courses. Such exceptions must be documented and approved by the Dean of the appropriate academic unit and recorded by the Dean of the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies.
- B. Faculty who serve as Ph.D. mentors, chair doctoral dissertation committees, and/or chair master thesis committees shall, in addition to the above requirement:
  - 1. Show evidence of active research, scholarship or creative activity, as defined by the faculty of the academic unit.
  - 2. Have this responsibility specified in the annual faculty work plan.
  - 3. Shall make provisions for continuous availability of student mentoring.
- C. Faculty who serve as dissertation and thesis committee members shall in addition show evidence of experience in independent research, scholarship or creative activity, or may be appointed because of specific professional expertise of value to the student's program.
- D. Doctoral dissertation committees shall be composed of a minimum of four qualified members and masters' thesis committees a minimum of three qualified members. One of the members shall come from outside the program of the student. In the case of joint programs with other universities, a committee member from the other institution may fulfill this requirement.
- E. Faculty certified for participation in graduate education or for service as a doctoral mentor shall be evaluated periodically for continuation of such status. Each Unit shall publish its criteria for certification and continuation in graduate faculty and mentor status.
- F. All dissertation and theses committees shall provide sufficient expertise in the area of study and sufficient faculty availability for necessary student guidance.