

Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education at the University of Louisville

Approved by Academic Affairs Subcommittee of the Graduate Council
Approved by Graduate Council
Approved by the Executive Vice President and University Provost
Approved by Graduate Council

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Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education

To ensure high quality graduate education programs, the Graduate Council of the Graduate School sets the 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.). 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. The Graduate Council has the academic authority and responsibility to review and approve the minimum guidelines for graduate education set by the Units. Final approval is granted by the Executive Vice President and University Provost.

The faculty of each Unit shall establish and publish its own set of policies and procedures for its graduate programs in the university catalog. The minimum guidelines for graduate education for each unit will be maintained in the Graduate School.

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 into a graduate program is the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement to be considered for acceptance and admission. No applicant with a grade-point average of less than 2.50 will be admitted to a program of graduate study without permission from the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs.
3. Unconditional admission in good standing to degree seeking status shall be made only if all application materials have been received, and all admission credentials meet the Unit/program published standards.
4. Any provisional or special conditions 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 and approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs. This will allow consideration of special circumstances in which the potential for high quality graduate performance has been clearly demonstrated by other means.

B. Academic Performance

1. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog current curricular and program offerings which include all requirements for degrees.
2. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement and any other performance criteria for maintenance of good standing and progress toward degree; units must require at minimum a 3.0 or higher on a 4-point scale, and students must be in good standing to receive a graduate degree.
3. Any student who does not satisfy the published performance criteria shall be placed in probationary status. Any student who remains in probationary status for two consecutive terms status may be considered for dismissal from the program.
4. Students receiving graduate assistantships (teaching, research or service) shall be provided adequate training and shall be required to understand and adhere to University policies related to these areas. The performance of teaching, research and service duties by such students shall be periodically evaluated. Students with teaching assistantships shall be evaluated annually.
5. 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.

C. International students

1. All international students shall comply with regulations of the U.S. Department of Immigrations and Customs, its Student and Exchange Visitor Program and all related policies of the University of Louisville International Center.
2. All international students must be registered with the University of Louisville International Center and must present evidence of financial resources adequate to support their educational and living expenses in the United States for the duration of their studies.
3. International students for whom English is not their primary language must show English language proficiency by demonstration of a specified level of proficiency on the TOEFL, IELTS or by demonstration of a degree award from an acceptable English language institution.

D. Academic program administration

1. Policies for administration of academic programs shall be promulgated by the Dean of the Graduate School following appropriate consultation with: (1) an advisory body of deans or their designees, (2) directors of graduate programs, (3) representatives of the Graduate Student Council and/or (4) the Graduate Council. Final approval of these guidelines shall be made by the University Provost.

2. These administrative policies shall be published in the university catalog, and shall include policies and procedures for: the academic calendar and catalog maintenance, requirements for maintenance of good academic standing, course, credit and degree requirements, grades and grading policies, honors and awards, requirements for theses and dissertations, residency policies, and policies for award of stipends, benefits, tuition and fee remission.

E. Conflict resolution

1. 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 Complaint Process. Should the complaint result in an academic grievance, a student may initiate a grievance at the unit level within one year of the event giving rise to the complaint. All grievance procedures shall be conducted in accord with Redbook Section 6.8.

II. Faculty Participation in Graduate Education

A. Certification for teaching graduate level courses.

1. 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. Documentation of faculty teaching credentials must be maintained by the Office of the Dean of the academic unit.
2. Certified graduate teachers may teach outside of their unit with approval of the program within that unit.

B. Certification for membership to the Graduate Faculty

1. Membership to the Graduate Faculty requires certification for teaching graduate level courses as described above, as well as certification to serve as a member of a thesis or dissertation committee member or as a committee chair.
2. Faculty who serve as members of a thesis or dissertation committee must have experience in independent research, scholarship or creative activity.
3. Faculty who serve as the chair of a student's committee must be currently active in research, scholarship or creative activity, as defined by the faculty of the academic unit.

The faculty member shall also make provisions for continuous availability of student mentoring.

4. Each Academic Unit must establish the process by which individuals are nominated and approved for Graduate Faculty status. Each Unit shall publish its criteria for participation in graduate education and the process for periodic evaluation for continuation of such status in the unit's minimum guidelines for graduate education. Each Unit will forward the graduate faculty list to the Dean of the Graduate School annually for publication in the Graduate Catalog.
5. Doctoral dissertation committees shall be composed of a minimum of four graduate faculty members and masters' thesis committees a minimum of three members. One of the members of the doctoral committees shall come from outside the program; a committee member from another institution may fulfill this requirement. All dissertation and theses committees shall provide sufficient expertise in the area of study and sufficient faculty availability for necessary student guidance.
6. Members of the Graduate Faculty may serve as committee chairs or committee members for graduate students outside of their unit with approval of the student's enrollment unit.
7. If a prospective committee member does not meet the standards for a graduate faculty appointment in the student's enrollment unit, but brings professional expertise or value to a student's program, this person may be granted ad-hoc membership to the Graduate Faculty by the Dean of the student's enrollment unit. This pertains to persons from outside the university, as well as faculty and staff employed by the university.
8. Exceptions to these guidelines for involvement with graduate education at the masters' and doctoral level must be documented and approved by the Dean of the enrollment unit and approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs.