

Summary of Graduate Academic Standards Changes

Ouachita Baptist University

November 2022

The faculty **approved** these academic standards changes at a faculty meeting on Nov. 29, 2023.

Academic Appeal Policy

Proposed Change

This policy will decrease the amount of time a graduate student has to challenge a grade. The current language states that a student has ten weeks into the following semester to file the appeal. The change will decrease that to six weeks from the time the grade is posted. The policy also adds a section regarding non-grade related academic appeals to be submitted within a two-week timeframe of the issue occurring.

Rationale

Most graduate classes are in 8-week online terms, so this time frame to submit a grade appeal is more in line with the cycle of the classes. In discussions, the Council also realized that changing this timeframe assists the Registrar's office in handling Incompletes. The added section regarding academic but non-grade-related appeals was added in order to have a clear process that can be used rather than all non-grade related issues going through the official University Complaint Form.

Catalog Entry

Grade and Other Academic Appeals

A final grade assigned in a course may be challenged by the student within six weeks of the final grade being posted. A formal grade appeal will not be considered until the student has first informally communicated with the instructor. If informal communication has not resolved the issue, the student may submit in writing an appeal first to the instructor, then, in sequence, to the program director and dean. If the appeal is denied at each level of review, the student may submit a written appeal to the Associate Vice-President for Graduate and Online Education who will convene a three-person subcommittee of the Graduate Council to consider the appeal. This subcommittee will not include any member previously involved in the appeal. The results of this subcommittee's decision may be appealed to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, whose decision is final.

In the same way, any other academic appeal follows the same process as a grade appeal. The student must initiate the appeal within two weeks of the issue arising.

**Graduate Council
Makeup (Faculty
Staff Manual,
Administrative
Committee Section)**

Proposed Change

This policy updates language regarding the make-up of the Graduate Council. The current language delineates that the Associate VP for Graduate and Professional Studies is the permanent chair, and the GPS Coordinator is the permanent secretary. To align the council with other committees, the changed proposed is that the chair and secretary be elected by the group each year. Further, it updates titles that have been changed since the inception of the Council and adds a graduate student representative liaison to the group.

Rationale

These changes would bring the Graduate Council make up more in line with other standing university committees.

Faculty Staff Manual Entry

Graduate Council

The Council consists of one tenured faculty member from each of the seven disciplinary schools; one at-large member currently serving as a program director or faculty member from an active graduate program; and the following ex-officio members with voting privileges: Associate Vice President for Graduate and Online Education; Director of Learning and Instruction for Graduate and Online Education; and Registrar and Director of Admissions. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Enrollment Coordinator for Graduate Admissions serve ex-officio without vote. A library faculty member who serves on the Graduate and Professional Studies Advisory Committee will also serve as liaison to the Council. The chair shall be elected from the committee's full-time teaching faculty. The secretary shall be selected from the full Council membership.

A graduate student representative serves as liaison to the Council for issues that arise from the graduate student body. This representative is selected by the Council through nominations from Graduate Program Directors. The student representative attends Council meetings by invitation of the Chair. The role is intended to allow for representation of graduate students in all fields of study, therefore the representative is expected to consider the interests of all graduate students. The student representative may request items be included in meeting agendas in consultation with the Chair of the Council.

Duties of the Council, which is responsible for reviewing all academic and administrative matters related to graduate education, shall include: (a) review, study, and recommend to the faculty all graduate curricular matters; (b) make recommendations to the faculty regarding standards and policies governing graduate programs; (c) monitor and approve implementation of policies, including approval of any variations from general policies requested by individual programs; (d) review and make recommendations on proposals to establish new or discontinue existing graduate degree programs; (e) serve as the review body for all graduate-related academic appeals.