

# ***University of Cincinnati Graduate School***

## ***Graduate Handbook***

**2019-2020**

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 section title in the Table of Contents can be clicked to place the user directly on the corresponding page in the document.***

## **2019-2020**

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## Introduction

This Graduate Handbook is intended to provide information about university policies that assist students and program coordinators in supporting their individual programs of study.

To which educational programs does this *Handbook* pertain? The Graduate School oversees all post-baccalaureate certificates and degrees (master's and doctoral level) EXCEPT the Juris Doctor (in the College of Law), the Doctor of Medicine (in the College of Medicine), and the Doctor of Pharmacy (in the College of Pharmacy).

Where are the UC graduate programs to which this *Handbook* pertains? 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. Faculty members throughout UC are nationally and internationally recognized scholars in their fields who are dedicated to providing students with an environment fostering innovative scholarship and research. Over 300 graduate certificate and degree programs are offered in 11 colleges:

- College of Allied Health Sciences
- 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

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## ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS

### 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 (3.0/4.0 system) in undergraduate course work or otherwise give evidence of promise that is judged satisfactory by the admitting program and the Graduate School. Programs that wish to admit applicants who lack this 3.0 minimum GPA requirement must provide supporting evidence and rationale of how such students will be able to complete a graduate program that requires achievement of a 3.0 GPA, and indicate any support offered by the program to ensure the applicant's success given the GPA deficiency.

Decisions concerning admission to graduate programs rest with the programs, and criteria used for determining admission beyond these minimal requirements are established by the programs. All programs have established written criteria for judging the admissibility of applicants, which are published in each program's graduate handbook. The program's handbook for graduate study must be available to the student. Upon the student's acceptance of the admission offer, the program and the student are bound by the terms and conditions set forth in the letter of appointment.

#### ***Faculty and Administrators' Eligibility for Graduate Degrees***

No holder of an academic administrative title at the University of Cincinnati (equivalent to assistant dean or above) may matriculate or be granted a graduate certificate or 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 (full-time or part-time above rank of instructor) 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 faculty rank 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 describe 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

Matriculated graduate status is granted to an applicant who has been accepted into a graduate certificate or degree program and has met all admissions criteria. Note that applicants first receive a provisional acceptance, and conversion to matriculated graduate status is dependent upon receipt of an official transcript that confirms that the student holds a baccalaureate or higher degree from a college or university regarded as standard by a regional or general accrediting agency. Please note that additional official documentation may be required (e.g. if the transcript does not contain information about degree conferral or if a foreign degree needs confirmation as baccalaureate equivalent). Instructions and deadlines for meeting this requirement are included in the section on [Submission of Official Transcripts for Accepted & Confirmed Students](#).

Provisional graduate status is granted to applicants who have been accepted into a graduate certificate or degree program, but who have NOT yet met all admissions criteria. As described above, one routine requirement for all students is the submission of an official transcript. However, some students must in addition take undergraduate courses or improve English language proficiency to satisfy prerequisites, and these students may be accepted by the program on a provisional basis that is contingent on satisfying those additional prerequisites. Letters of admission should be read carefully to make sure all requirements tied to provisional status are identified.

Unclassified graduate status allows students to take courses for graduate credit when they have not been admitted into a graduate degree program. Should this non-matriculated student subsequently matriculate into a certificate or degree program, a maximum of 12 semester hours may be applied to the certificate or degree program. Students are not eligible for tuition or stipend 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](#).

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### ***Where to Obtain an Application***

The application can be found on the [Graduate School](http://grad.uc.edu/admissions.html) website (<http://grad.uc.edu/admissions.html>). Applications should be completed carefully and accurately. Once an application is submitted, it can no longer be edited.

Applicants should refer to the website of individual graduate programs for the specific items required in their applications; however, a typical application to the University of Cincinnati Graduate School will include the following:

- A completed online university graduate application
- Unofficial collegiate transcript(s) uploaded during the application
- Letters of recommendation submitted through the Online Recommendation system
- Test scores from qualifying exams, for example, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)
- Test scores from English proficiency tests such as TOEFL or IELTS (see also [International Student Admissions](#)) if applicable
- A personal statement or letter of intent
- Payment of the application fee

### ***Submission of Unofficial Transcripts with an Application***

Applicants are required to upload images/scans of unofficial transcripts as part of their application. The Graduate School defines unofficial transcripts as copies (or translations) of transcripts or degree verification audits showing course work. Unofficial transcripts will be used only for admissions decisions by individual programs and will not be accepted as official documentation of baccalaureate or higher degree conferral by the Graduate School. Any significant discrepancies later found between student-provided unofficial transcripts and official transcripts **will be grounds for dismissal**.

### ***Submission of Recommendation Letters***

Applicants will be asked to supply contact information including the email address of recommenders during their online application. Recommenders could include former professors, an employer or other professional individuals if their reference will be pertinent to the field of study. Once their names and emails are entered into the pending application, recommenders are sent a request to provide their letter. Even after submitting an application, applicants can check and edit recommender names and email addresses on their status page within the application system. Modifications to the list of recommenders can be made until the minimum number of recommendation letters have been received.

Applicants using a dossier service such as Interfolio should indicate that they are using a dossier service during their application. They should request that the documentation be sent to [ucgs@uc.edu](mailto:ucgs@uc.edu).

Recommendation letters submitted by the applicant are never accepted. Recommendation letters must be received directly from the recommender or a dossier service.

### ***Submission of Application Materials***

Applicants should upload all requested materials, such as personal statements, writing samples and CVs, during the application process. Only materials that are submitted as part of the official university application will be used for review of applications. In some circumstances, programs may contact applicants to request additional information. However, applicants should under no circumstances submit unrequested supplementary materials as those materials would not be considered.

As required by the individual programs, applicants are responsible for requesting that GRE and/or score reports for tests of English proficiency be sent by the testing agency to the Graduate School. Test scores for the GRE, GRE subject tests and TOEFL can be submitted electronically to UC's institutional code 1833. IELTS scores may be sent directly from the test center through the mail or sent to UC electronically. Please note that PRAXIS tests are handled by individual graduate programs. Applicants should check with their program for how these scores are reported.

### ***Submission of Official Transcripts for Accepted & Confirmed Students***

Once an applicant has been accepted and the program has received written confirmation of offer acceptance, the applicant will need to arrange for an official transcript to be sent directly to the Graduate School. Official final transcripts should be sent as soon as all baccalaureate coursework is completed and degrees conferred. Final official transcripts submitted from awarding institutions must explicitly state in English the degree conferred and the date of degree conferral. If a transcript does not explicitly state that a degree was conferred, the degree must be shown in another document received directly from the educational institution. Such official documents must arrive directly from the school in a sealed envelope. The **deadline for submission** of final official transcripts (and, if necessary, degree certifications) is **ONE WEEK BEFORE THE END OF THE STUDENT'S FIRST SEMESTER.**

Transcripts are considered official when they arrive directly from the school administration either in a sealed envelope or electronically. The Graduate School also accepts transcripts that were first received by the applicant and then forwarded to the Graduate School, *provided that the transcripts stay in their original, sealed envelope.* Once the applicant or someone outside the

University of Cincinnati opens the transcript envelope, the Graduate School can no longer accept the transcript as official.

Students who graduated from or attended the University of Cincinnati after autumn 1999 do not need to submit a transcript to the Graduate School. It will already be available in the student information system. Any applicant that attended UC before the autumn of 1999 should contact [ucgs@uc.edu](mailto:ucgs@uc.edu) and request assistance with retrieving the historical record.

**Official transcripts can be sent to the following addresses:**

*Regular U.S. postal mail:*

Graduate School  
University of Cincinnati  
110 Van Wormer Hall  
PO Box 210627  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0627

*Delivery via FedEx, DHL, etc.:*

Graduate School  
University of Cincinnati  
2614 McMicken Circle  
110 Van Wormer Hall  
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0627

*Electronic delivery:*

[ucgs@uc.edu](mailto:ucgs@uc.edu)

***Student Status Prior to Receipt of Official Transcript(s)***

Students will be allowed to register for classes, obtain UCIT credentials and apply for student visas during the provisional acceptance period before official transcripts are received by the Graduate School. However, students **will not** be allowed to complete a full semester of graduate school without appropriate qualifications being verified. Any significant discrepancies between student-provided unofficial transcripts and official transcripts obtained after admission is grounds for dismissal. For international students, lack of an official transcript and/or lack of verification of completion of an appropriate undergraduate degree can lead to UC revoking their student visas. Registration holds will be placed on student accounts and will not be lifted prior to receipt of official transcripts by the Graduate School. Any issues with providing official documents must be communicated by the program to the Graduate School as early as possible.

When inquiring about whether transcripts have been received, please provide as much identifying information as possible. Very often, the problem is that this information was missing from the transcript or incorrectly entered in the Student Information System (Catalyst). Useful information includes the following:

- Applicant's full name
- Any names used by applicant (e.g., maiden names)
- M# or Empl ID
- Date of Birth
- Last four digits of Social Security Number
- Name of institution issuing expected transcript

- When the transcript was supposed to have been sent
- Whether they were sent electronically or through the mail

While it is not necessary to have all this information, the more detail that is available, the quicker the request can be answered.

### ***Application Fees***

A non-refundable fee is required at the time of application, and is only payable by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover accepted) or electronic check.

Application fees vary by program and college:

\$65.00 for most colleges/ degree programs

\$125.00 (\$65 for application & \$60 for audition) for College-Conservatory of Music

\$140.00 for the Physiology (MS) program

\$75.00 for College of Engineering

\$70.00 for the Psychology program

\$20.00 for most Graduate Certificates

\$5.00 surcharge for International Applications

Physical Therapy additional application fees found at [PTCAS](#)

Communication Sciences and Disorders additional application fees found at [CSDCAS](#)

Nursing additional application fees found at [NURSINGCAS](#)

Public Health additional application fees found at [SOPHAS](#)

### ***Application to 4+1 Degree Programs***

If an undergraduate student plans to matriculate into a master's degree program upon completion of the bachelor degree, they can consult with advisors to begin (A) taking graduate-level coursework as an advanced undergraduate student, and (B) focusing on thesis-related, independent research at an earlier date. This advising plan to achieve an articulated path to a master's degree is called a 4+1 program. Students who enter these programs must complete all of the requirements of each respective degree and must apply separately for both degree programs at the appropriate time.

To be eligible for entry to a 4+1 program, 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 the particular program.

4+1 students should note the following:

- 4+1 students who enroll in graduate-level coursework prior to formally matriculating as a graduate student are allowed to apply up to 12 semester graduate-level credits toward the requirements of the master's degree. These credits cannot be 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. Students should refer to the section of this handbook containing the general requirements of the master's degree and speak to the directors of the graduate program about specific requirements.

- 4+1 students wishing to matriculate into a master's program **must complete a formal graduate admission application online in their junior or senior year to be admitted to the graduate program and begin the master's degree.** Students should speak to the directors of the graduate program about specific admission and application requirements.

### ***Application to Accelerated Integrated Master's (AIM) Programs***

The university has a limited set of programs that allow for a single application and admission to obtain a bachelor plus master's degree in a single course of study. These programs are tightly structured around co-op experiences and allow undergraduate students to accumulate more than 12 graduate credits prior to transitioning to a matriculated graduate student.

Applicants apply to an AIM program at the time of application to UC as an undergraduate, but are still required to formally apply to transition to the graduate portion of their program at a time defined by their AIM program. There is a free and abbreviated application for UC undergraduate students transitioning to the associated master's degree that is part of their AIM program.

### ***Application to Multiple Graduate Programs***

There is no restriction on the number of programs to which a student may apply. A student must submit an application fee with each application.

There are a limited set of programs (see next section) that grant students two graduate degrees. Dual-degree applicants seeking to enter more than one program must complete and submit a separate application for each program. Only a single account is needed in the application system for both applications.

For information on graduate programs and application deadlines, please see the [Graduate Program Outline](#).

### ***Expiration of an Application***

An application can stay viable for admissions for three semesters if the program has rolling admission. Within this time, the program may request a change in an applicant's intended entry term within the same program without penalty. After three semesters, the applicant must reapply. A student can make a request to their program for a deferment to a fourth semester, but they must have just cause and be approved by the program director.

### ***Program Application Deadline***

Application deadlines vary across colleges and programs. Applicants inquiring about deadlines should contact their program. They can check the [graduate contact list](#) to determine who the admissions contact is for their program.

## **DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS**

The university offers the opportunity for students to pursue two complementary graduate degrees simultaneously through structured, official dual degree programs (see below for a complete listing). The advantage of these programs is that they may require fewer credits than completing each degree program separately.

Each program's entrance requirements must be met in addition to university requirements, and the applicant must be accepted by both programs. Below is a listing of the Dual Degree programs:

- Accounting MBA/MS
- Business Analytics MBA/MS
- Business Administration/Arts Administration MBA/MA
- Business Administration/Nursing MBA/MSN
- Community Planning/Landscape Architecture MCP/MLA
- Community Planning/Law MCP/JD
- Finance MBA/MS
- Human Resources MBA/MA
- Information Systems MBA/MS
- Marketing MBA/MS
- Law/Women's Studies JD/MA
- Law/Business JD/MBA
- Law/Political Science JD/MA
- Law/Political Science JD/PhD

Please see the [Multiple Degree Exemptions section](#) for information on the maximum amount of transfer credit that can be applied to the dual degree programs.

## **CHANGING DEGREE PROGRAMS AT UC**

In order to change from one degree program to another within the university, 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.

Students are always responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the given degree program in which they are matriculated. Please see the [Graduate Credit from Other Programs at UC](#) section for information on the amount of graduate credits that can be transferred if a student is changing from one graduate program to another within the university, or if a student is changing from unclassified graduate status at the university.

## **GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS**

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

## **GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

The University of Cincinnati offers graduate certificate programs. Certificates vary in both credit hours and in how they are configured: for instance, some can be earned only in conjunction with a degree; some require a master's degree as a prerequisite, and some can be earned outside of a degree program. Applicants must [apply for admission to a certificate program](#)).

Graduate School general guidelines are as follows:

- Students must hold a baccalaureate degree.
- Certificate programs may enroll degree seeking and non-degree seeking students.

- For students matriculated into a degree program, credit hours earned under a certificate program may count toward a degree in any program if approved by the program director, and if requirements for the certificate and degree are completed the student will be awarded both. Credits earned while matriculated in a certificate program will count as credits matriculated in a degree.
- Students can apply a single course to multiple certificates but only to ONE master's or doctoral degree.
- Students can obtain more than one certificate within the same program prior to attaining their master's degree.
- Students apply for a certificate program just like applying for a degree program, and must pay any relevant application fee.
- Students enrolled only in a graduate certificate program are not eligible for tuition or stipend support with University funds (UGA/GAS/GIA funds).

If a student is interested, she or he should contact the appropriate program office to obtain the specific criteria and prerequisites for the desired certificate. Please see the Graduate School website for [a complete listing of certificate 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 7148, One Edwards Center (1-513-556-4278). Information about admission to the University of Cincinnati for international students is available on their website. International students with F-1 visas can only be granted admission as matriculated graduate status in a degree-seeking program. (Most international students with J-1 visas can be granted admission with matriculated 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 or the Graduate School 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 insurance fees are automatically assessed each registration period. Please visit the Graduate School website for more information on the [Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Award](#).



## ***Official Transcripts for Applicants with Degrees Received in China***

Those admitted students who have received a degree in China will not submit the usual official transcripts. Instead, they **must** have their degrees verified by the [China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center \(CDGDC\)](#). For admissions review purposes (during the application process only), these students will apply with unofficial transcripts and translations like all other applicants.

After being accepted to join a graduate program, applicants who have earned a degree from China must submit electronic (or scanned originals) of the Degree Certificate in English and Chinese and electronic CDGDC degree certificate verification report in Chinese. Send these items to [grad.info@uc.edu](mailto:grad.info@uc.edu) along with your name and M# (your UC student ID number).

The subject line of the email should read: "CDGDC [Your Name] [M#]"

Applicants with Chinese transcripts must contact the CDGDC after their degree is completed. Students who request a verification report prior to degree conferral will be required to submit a second report after degree conferral.

Students who have completed coursework in China but not received a degree will not be required to submit verification through the CDGDC.

China Qualification Verification from the CDGDC

- [Chinese language page for ordering a verification report](#)
- [English language page for ordering a verification report](#)

### **When are Student Verification Reports from CDGDC Due?**

CDGDC verification reports should be sent to the Graduate school as soon as possible after admission. The final deadline for submission of official transcripts is **one week before the end of classes in the student's first semester**. Failure to submit verification reports will result in students being placed in non-matriculated status, which will result in UC revoking the student's visa.

### **How much is a Verification Report?**

CDGDC has moved to an electronic only service and no longer charges a fee for verification. This may be subject to change in the future.

## ***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. PLEASE NOTE, many colleges and programs have higher requirements than those listed below. Applicants should contact the programs to which they are applying for details.

### ***Standardized Tests of English Proficiency***

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). All test scores are valid for up to two years.

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. For the TOEFL exam, the minimum university requirements are either:

- 80 (internet-based test, iBT)
- 550 (“paper-based test” that will be soon be phased out), or
- a score of **20** or higher on **each** of the three components of the new “paper-delivered test” (this test does not have a single composite score).

For applicants or students who are on campus, there are two other tests that can satisfy the English proficiency requirement.

- For students who have joined UC as conditional admits, satisfactory completion of level 112 of Intensive English instruction at ELS Language Centers. Visit the [website for the ELS Language Center at UC](#) for more information.
- For exchange students or visiting scholars on campus, achieving a score of 3 or better on the Graduate Placement Test (GPT-VS) administered on campus by the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) in CECH. Programs, and not students, must initiate the request for CESL testing (contact CESL at [oept1@uc.edu](mailto:oept1@uc.edu)). There is a \$50 fee for the GPT-VS test.

### ***Automatic Waiver of English Language Testing***

When completing a graduate school application, international students will automatically be exempted from the English Proficiency testing requirement if they have received a baccalaureate or higher degree from one of the following countries where English is the official language:

Anguilla	Guyana	Singapore
Antigua & Barbuda	Hong Kong (public Universities only)	Solomon Islands
Australia	Ireland	South Africa
Bahamas	Jamaica	St. Kitts & Nevis
Barbados	Kenya	St. Lucia
Belize	Lesotho	St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Bermuda	Liberia	Swaziland
Botswana	Malawi	Tanzania
British Virgin Islands	Malta	Tonga
Cameroon	Mauritius	Trinidad and Tobago
Canada (except Quebec)	Montserrat	Turks and Caicos Islands
Cayman Islands	Namibia	Uganda
Dominica	New Zealand	United Kingdom
England	Nigeria	United States of America
Fiji	Papua New Guinea	Vanuatu
Gambia	Scotland	Wales
Ghana	Seychelles	Zambia
Gibraltar	Sierra Leone	Zimbabwe

### ***Conditions for Programs to Request a Waiver of English Proficiency Tests***

Based on the criteria below, request for a waiver of the English proficiency requirement must be made by the applicant’s Program Director (with appropriate documentation) to the Director of the Graduate School. The Director will approve or deny the language-proficiency waiver requests submitted by the program.

Waivers will be considered if the applicant has fulfilled one of the following:

- received a baccalaureate or higher degree from an entirely English-instructing institution. This requires that all programs at the institution are taught in English, not just the program in which the applicant earned their degree.
- passed a nationally administered professional test that requires evaluation of both oral and written English (e.g. USMLE Steps 1 and 2 (CK and CS) exams, Cambridge CPE passed with a B).
- holds a US immigrant visa for permanent residency (also known as green card) and has been a full-time resident of the United States for at least 3 years.
- the applicant has taken the TOEFL (or PEARSON, or IELTS) in order to enter another institution in an exempt English-speaking country, is currently actively enrolled in that institution, and can document achieving our minimum standardized test scores.

### ***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 a score is less than 3.0, students 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 issued electronically upon admission to the U.S. It includes the visa classification and expiration date of the student's authorized stay written when he/she enters the U.S. International students can download the I-94 card from the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection website](#).

### **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 Student Fee**

At UC, international students are charged the same tuition fees as other U.S. students who are not Ohio residents. The university incurs additional expenses associated with hosting international students, which include federal tracking and monitoring requirements associated with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). The university also provides services and resources necessary to international students for academic and personal success. To help support these goals, international students pay a \$125 fee per semester.

Please contact [UC International Services](#) at 513-556-4278 or [international.students@uc.edu](mailto:international.students@uc.edu) for more information.

## 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 MERIT-BASED 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.

Not all graduate students are eligible for graduate awards. Graduate awards allocated by the Graduate School are not available to students (1) taking classes as non-matriculated students, (2) enrolled only in a graduate certificate program, (3) who have not maintained satisfactory progress to meet the minimum GPA of 3.0, (4) who are on academic probation, or (5) who have exceeded the [174 rule](#). 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. Programs are not obligated to renew awards for prior awardees, even if previously awarded students met all minimum guidelines.

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

The Graduate School funds scholarships that cover all or part of a 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 must maintain all of the required eligibility requirements in their offer letter to maintain their tuition scholarship.

In most colleges, there are two types of scholarship awards supported by the Graduate School, the Graduate Incentive Award (GIA) and Graduate Assistant Scholarship (GAS). The GIA is for graduate students who do not receive university stipend support and therefore no service is required in return for the award. The GAS is for graduate students who are graduate assistants that receive stipend support and have service requirements.

Students receiving a tuition scholarship must be registered for at least the number of graduate credit hours covered by the award in each semester for which they are receiving support. Full tuition scholarships cover a maximum of 18 credits per semester. 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. Prior to using scholarship support for any audited courses, students

must register for a minimum credit load of graded courses (10 graduate credit hours if supported by a GIA, 12 if supported by a GAS) in the same semester. If a student withdraws from a class funded by a tuition scholarship, with the remaining enrolled credit hours totaling less than the minimum required for the award, the award is cancelled immediately and the student is responsible for the tuition balance, based on the date of withdrawal.

All rules that govern recipients of tuition support pertain to all students, 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 [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#).)

Note: Financial awards that require no service may reduce eligibility for educational loans. Students should notify the Student Financial Aid Office of their tuition support if they apply for aid from that office.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

A student awarded a graduate assistantship receives a financial stipend for services rendered in addition to a full or partial tuition scholarship. Graduate assistants are also entitled to a discount at the [University Bookstore](#) and may be eligible for one of the two [Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Awards](#).

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 that is designed to enhance their university education. 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 such service assignments should be consistent with the student's academic pursuits.

UGA awardees must be registered for 12 graduate credit hours or more, exclusive of audit credits, for each semester they receive the assistantship and they must be appointed to a position that is consistent with their field of academic study. 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. Graduate Assistants are considered exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements, and are paid on a salaried basis. 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, W, etc. and audited classes) 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 [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#).) This is due to the regulations governing state support of the university, so exceptions are not considered.

The appointing academic program, college, or area of responsibility determines service requirements of students who hold assistantships. 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. In all cases, the award 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's hours are prorated for weeks with a holiday or school closure and students are not required to be available during break periods unless given additional compensation.

Assistantship awards are contingent upon student status, satisfactory degree progress, and performance of service as assigned, and can be terminated at any time. Each year the assistantship is in effect, the appointing program, college, or area must notify the awardee in writing of any significant change to the services or conditions of the appointment. Such changes include, but are not limited to:

- the amount and duration of the award
- any tuition and/or fee not paid by the program
- the average expected time per week or per semester of required duties
- description of the duties assigned to the student
- 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)
- graduate appointment procedures if any of the documents have been modified since the student's initial appointment.

### ***Teaching Assistant Requirements***

All teaching assistants must be supervised by a faculty member who has the academic credentials and authorization (as defined by the Higher Learning Commission, Ohio Dept. of Higher Education, and the University of Cincinnati) to offer instruction to the students in the class. Supervising faculty must be listed (as supervisor or instructor) in any course/section overseen by a graduate teaching assistant.

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.

## ***Purchasing UC SHI Coverage***

Direct any questions about the UC student health insurance to [studins@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:studins@ucmail.uc.edu). Most students are billed each semester, but students purchasing UC SHI coverage for a dependent or spouse will be charged the full cost of coverage for the academic year on their fall semester bill. Health insurance coverage purchased for spring semester continues through the summer term for no additional cost.

## ***Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Awards***

Academic programs are required to provide eligible students with information on the [Graduate Student Health Insurance \(GSHI\) award](#), which can subsidize the cost of UC Student Health Insurance for qualified students. 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, the student must apply by the relevant deadline and be in a UC-employed, graduate assistantship or fellowship position (not hourly) that pays a minimum of \$2,400 per term through UC payroll.

The amount of support available through the GSHI award varies each year, so refer to the [Graduate Student Health Insurance Award webpage](#) for details about the amount offered in the current academic year. If the student receives a health insurance award, a credit will be put towards his/her UC health insurance costs at the start of each semester he/she is eligible for the award.

Programs are responsible for notifying graduate assistants/fellows to apply for the GSHI Award by providing them the application deadline and relevant details on GSHI Award criteria, and keeping records that they have provided this information to their students. Such information can be found at the [Graduate Student Health Insurance Award webpage](#).

**NOTE:** Students who fail to maintain award eligibility will have their award removed. It is the **student's responsibility** to check with the program that sponsors their Graduate Assistantship to make sure that the assistantship meets all criteria of the GSHI Award as outlined at the [Graduate Student Health Insurance Award webpage](#).

## ***Multiple Appointments/Employment***

Graduate assistantship awardees are limited to 24 total hours of combined service and student hourly work 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. During scheduled breaks only, if students work more than 20 hours or they work more than the prorated salary hours required, they must be compensated at an hourly rate for the extra work. Students can be employed for a maximum of 40 hrs/week 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 scheduled breaks. All International Students must have onboarding conducted by the International Services Office. An international student on F-1 or J-1 immigration status contemplating employment should contact the International Student Services Office at 1-513-556-4278.

### ***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 if 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 would not be held responsible.

### ***Sick Leave/Family Leave for Graduate Assistants***

Graduate assistants do not accrue vacation, sick leave or other paid time-off. In the event of illness, a graduate assistant shall notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible on each day of such absence.

### ***Holidays/UC Closing Policy for Graduate Assistants***

Graduate assistants are not hired as essential personnel, and thus cannot be required to work during holidays or official UC closings (such as emergency closings due to severe weather,

public emergency, etc.). Required weekly hours will be prorated based on the official holidays or closings during that week.

### ***Military Duty***

A graduate assistant who is a member of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, who is voluntarily or involuntarily ordered to extended U.S. military service, shall be granted time-off without pay. The graduate assistant should provide to the appropriate program official advance written notice of the call for impending training or active duty. Upon completion of military service or if discharged under honorable conditions, and upon prompt re-registration as a student, the graduate assistant shall be returned to his or her former assistantship in a timely manner, based upon availability.

Due to the temporary nature of graduate assistantships, if the assistantship is eliminated during the student's absence, then no obligation exists.

### ***Termination***

A graduate assistantship may be terminated at any time with or without cause, unless there is an explicit written contract between the student and the university that provides otherwise.

### ***Workers' Compensation***

The Ohio Workers' Compensation Law covers graduate assistants, who are paid by payroll and provides medical, income and survivor benefits in the event of accidental injury, occupational disease or death occurring in the course of, and arising from, employment.

### ***Unemployment***

Graduate assistants are not entitled to unemployment compensation.

### ***Social Security, Medicare Tax and Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS)***

Please see [Exemption from OPERS/Medicare for Student Employees](#).

## **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 for students receiving fellowships.

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 [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#)).

For information on university-sponsored awards, please see the Graduate School website.

## **174 GRADUATE CREDIT RULE**

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 withdrawn courses, audited courses, and 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.

If a student earned master's credits at the University of Cincinnati (for either a partial or a 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 support, 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 (174). 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 that 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**

All Ohio public employees are exempt from paying social security. 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 (including graduate assistants) not "enrolled and regularly attending classes." Therefore, doctoral candidates who have completed other requirements and are not enrolled while 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 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.

Graduate assistants may request exemption from OPERS membership by completing an OPERS Request for Optional Exemption. The form must be completed and submitted to Human Resources within 30 days of the first day of covered employment. OPERS exemption requests will be honored for the duration of a graduate assistant’s service but only during the times that they are registered for classes above the minimum number of hours to qualify for exempt status, and those classes are in session.

Upon termination of their position or graduation, graduate assistants who participated in OPERS can either leave their accumulated contributions on deposit to qualify for future retirement benefits, or request a refund of their accumulated contributions, and will be issued by OPERS.

Refunds from OPERS are subject to federal and state income tax withholding, and reporting by OPERS is a taxable income on IRS Form 1099R. Questions about retirement funds should be directed to [Human Resources](#) and/or [OPERS](#).

## **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. The [Office of Nationally Competitive Awards](#) provides workshops, application writing assistance and university endorsement (for applicable awards). 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). 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.

## GRADUATE CREDIT AND GRADES

### ELIGIBLE CREDITS

Credit towards a graduate degree or certificate 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 towards a degree will only be granted when a course is included in the graduate career category of the student record in Catalyst.

### CREDITS REQUIRED TO EARN A GRADUATE DEGREE

Graduate degrees at UC each have a stated number of credit hours that must be completed satisfactorily to earn the degree. As described below, there are multiple opportunities where coursework taken prior to matriculation into a degree program may count towards that credit hour total. In all cases, to earn a degree at UC, at least 67% of the relevant coursework credit must be earned while a matriculated student at the University.

**Students entering in Fall 2019 or later should make application to their program for such (advanced standing or transfer) credit during their first semester at UC to assure their course of study is optimized.** For all students matriculating in Fall 2019 and later, such credit will only be granted if a complete and program-approved application for such credit is submitted to the Graduate School by the end of their first year in the program, or prior to their final semester of study, whichever comes first. For students who matriculated before Fall 2019, such credit will be considered if the application reaches the Graduate School as outlined above prior to Fall 2020.

This new policy (introduced in AY19-20) is in effect for all students matriculated in Fall 2019 and later. In prior policies, master's degrees were granted when 50% of graduate credits were completed while matriculated in the graduate program granting the degree, therefore allowing up to 50% of credits to be via advanced standing. As a transition to the new policy, **for students admitted prior to Fall 2019** who are NOT in approved shared degree programs, the Graduate School will temporarily accept petitions for up to 50% of credits for advanced standing. Using the same eligibility criteria listed in this policy, such **petitions can be made to the Graduate School until the start of Fall semester 2020**. Students who are in approved shared degree programs will not have any transition to different levels of eligible advanced standing credit.

### ***Advanced Standing for Graduate Courses Taken Outside of UC***

- a. Programs are permitted to award up to one third of the credits of a UC graduate program through advanced standing (e.g. 10 credits are eligible in a 30 credit program or 13 credits in a 40 credit hour program). The relevant number of credits is based on the minimum credits required to earn the advanced degree starting from the minimum degree qualification (usually a baccalaureate degree). Note that for doctoral students the advanced standing credit total will include any use of the ODHE allowance of up to 30 credits for a prior masters degree.
- b. Any graduate course credits, including those earned from previously earned graduate or undergraduate degrees, are eligible as advanced standing credits.
- c. Advanced standing can only be offered for courses (including electives) entered in e-curriculum for the UC program.

- d. Program faculty must evaluate courses for equivalence or comparability prior to granting students Advanced Standing credit for courses taken at another institution, meeting all the following criteria;
  1. Courses taken at a recognized University or College
  2. Courses taken at the graduate level
  3. Requested advanced standing credits must be the lower of the following two choices
    - a. Credits originally earned for the course
    - b. Credits available in the UC course listed in e-curriculum
  4. For 1:1 course equivalency, one or more of the following criteria must be met when compared to the University of Cincinnati course for which Advanced Standing credit is sought:
    - i. Course was taken in the same field with the same title
    - ii. Course had similar topics
    - iii. Course had similar learning outcomes
    - iv. Course assignment and assessment requirements were similar
    - v. Course readings requirements are similar
  5. This evaluation process should be documented for each case in which it is applied
- e. The one third rule doesn't apply to dual degrees, sequential Masters to doctorate programs, or others with shared content that have received approval from the Graduate School.
- f. Advanced standing credit recommended by program faculty must first be approved by the graduate program director and then submitted for final review by the Graduate School to assure the request complies with the criteria above.

### ***Transfer Credit for Graduate Courses Taken at UC***

- a. When leaving one graduate degree program to join another at UC, all UC graduate credits taken as part of the incomplete degree are eligible for transfer to fulfill requirements in the new degree program, based on faculty evaluation of the equivalence to courses in the new curriculum and program approval. This same policy will also apply when a student matriculated in an incomplete UC graduate certificate program matriculates into a graduate degree program.
- b. When a non-matriculated student enters a graduate degree program at UC, non-matric UC graduate credits are eligible to be transferred toward obtaining the new degree, if the coursework is listed in e-curriculum as part of the degree requirements. Subject to program approval, students may transfer up to 12 credits or one third of the credits required to earn their UC graduate degree (whichever is greater).

### ***Course Exemption for Prior Knowledge, Without Credit***

Faculty in a program have the option to provide students with an examination to determine if accumulated knowledge is sufficient to be exempted from specific courses in a graduate curriculum (e.g. continuing education courses in some professional fields may provide a background that eliminates the need to take introductory courses). The form and content of that examination is at the discretion of the program. When such exemptions are granted, the student does not earn graduate credit for such knowledge. The credits required to complete their UC graduate degree remain unchanged, and the student will take alternative coursework (approved by the graduate program director) to advance their knowledge.

### ***Multiple Degree Exemptions***

- a. If the graduate faculty from a UC program has participated in designing and/or presenting the curriculum at another institution, shared degree programs between the institutions can deviate from these rules with prior approval of the Graduate School and their College leadership. In no case will a UC degree be awarded if more than 50% of the curriculum is offered by non-UC faculty.
- b. Dual degree programs can combine two UC graduate degrees into a single curriculum if approved by the University. Approved dual degree programs can share up to one-third of the combined credits of the two degrees, but the total count of unique credits to earn both degrees must always be equal to or greater than the State minimums for each degree type. In addition, note that BOT rule 50-77-15 specifies that credit cannot be given toward both graduate and undergraduate degrees for the same course.

### ***Enrolling in Non-UC Classes through the Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection***

The University of Cincinnati is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection. GCCC 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 Collegiate Connection](#) page of the Registrar's Office website. 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 graduate program. Upon approval by the graduate program and the course instructor, graduate credit will be given for the courses. A maximum of 12 semester graduate credits can 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***

In fall 2016, all 6000-level courses became graduate only. In the past, 6000-level courses were available for either undergraduate or graduate credit (to earn graduate credit, students selected the graduate level designation (G) in these courses, indicating that additional work was required beyond that required of undergraduates in the course). PLEASE NOTE: with the transition to the new use of course numbers, there will be no change to the graduate (or undergraduate) credits earned previously in the pre-fall-2016 version of these courses.

## **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***

End-of-term final grades may be viewed in the Catalyst student portal immediately following submission of final grades by the instructor. Grade reports include total graduate hours and hours for the current semester. The student's grade report differentiates between "units taken" (course credits the student enrolled in, but did not complete successfully or which are still pending a final grade) and "credits passed" (course credits successfully completed with a final grade other than "F"). These values are posted on the student's transcript as attempted hours and earned hours. A graduate grade point average (GPA) is calculated each semester. Approved transfer credits from other institutions are included in the sum of credits earned, but grades for those credits are not included in the GPA. All graduate work, regardless of the University of Cincinnati college in which the work was done, is accumulated in these tallies. For this reason, if a student record includes UC graduate courses that do not count towards the degree, this GPA may differ from the calculation of GPA in program coursework (a minimum 3.0 program GPA is essential to earn a graduate degree).

The "I" incomplete grade is awarded as a course grade (without grade point assignment) at the end of a term when a significant portion of course work has been satisfactorily completed, but not all of the required course work has been completed. The incomplete grade is appropriate when the completed course work is of passing quality and the student has had such hardship that completion of the remaining course work within the term timeline would present an additional hardship.

The instructor who assigns the incomplete grade may set a specific date by which the student must complete the remaining course work, recognizing that time must be available for any final evaluation and grade change to be made, prior to the one year deadline when the grade converts to an F. The student must work with the instructor to develop an agreement that indicates the date by which the remaining course work is to be completed and submitted to the instructor. The instructor is not obligated to provide the student with a full year to complete the remaining course work. If the remaining course work is completed within the time period agreed upon by the instructor and the student, and that completion occurs within the one year, then the instructor will submit a change of grade online (in Catalyst) based on the quality of the remaining work. If no specific time for completion is set by the instructor, the student has one year (from the end of the term in which the incomplete was assigned) to complete the remaining course work, and submit it to the instructor in time for evaluation of the work and a final grade to be approved by the Registrar. If the course-work is not completed within the one-year period (i.e., one year from the end of the term in which the "I" grade was assigned), the "I" grade automatically converts to an "I/F" grade which affects the student's GPA the same as the grade of "F".

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, they should be registered in the appropriate research course (e.g., Individual Dissertation or Individual Master's Thesis), and the course work given a final grade each semester (not using SP, NG, I grades, or any other "placeholders"). Students should be graded for each semester based on their progress and achievements in that semester.

**The use of P/F for such courses is strongly recommended** to avoid undue influence on GPA due to individual grading practices and the large amount of research credit awarded, but it is recognized that some programs will want to use letter grades. **Regardless of the grading scheme selected, it must be consistently applied across an entire program.** If a program faculty cannot agree on a single grading scheme, the program must use the P/F choice.

**Note:** 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***

A change of grade is only appropriate for an *I*, an *NG*, an *SP/UP*, or an error made by the instructor. *SP/UP* grades must be converted to a final grade by the end of the following semester. Instructors may change an *I* or *NG* grade online in Catalyst for approximately one year (the interval extends from the initial grading semester to the last working day of the same term the following year). To request a change of grade for a non-research course for graduate credit after this period, or an *F* grade any time, the instructor must do an official, paper change of grade form and forward to the Director of the Graduate School along with a reason for requesting the grade change. The Director will approve or deny the request after consideration of the reason for the change.

Previously recorded grades may not be changed to *W* or *I* after the close of the term. Both *I* and *W* grades must be awarded while the course and semester are still in progress, and cannot be awarded retroactively. *W* reflects an official withdrawal that took place by the 58<sup>th</sup> calendar day of classes, and *I* indicates work remains to be completed and the student did not earn a final grade. **Students cannot withdraw from a class retroactively or be given additional opportunities to seek a different final grade retroactively.** If an *F* is in a non-required course or the required course has since been retaken for a passing grade, the Program Director at certification may request a waiver of the *F* grade from the Associate University Dean of the Graduate School.

**Graduate students are not allowed to add or drop courses, credit hours, or change the level or grading type of a course (e.g. undergraduate to graduate course, audit to pass/fail, etc.) after students are no longer able to perform these actions themselves using the**

**Catalyst self-service tool.** Deadline dates describing each term's final opportunity for Catalyst self-service actions can be found on the Registrar's website.

***No Grade Replacements for Graduate Students***

Please note, if a graduate student re-registers and re-takes a course, both grades **will** be included in the student's overall GPA. There are no grade replacements at the **graduate school level**. The process to make a grade change cannot be initiated by a student. The course instructor of record **must** send the form. At no time should a student be in possession of a change of grade 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 the equivalent of a baccalaureate or higher degree, 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-time 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 in fall semester 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, UW or F do not count toward the minimum credit requirement. Any student that does not register in the fall of an academic year and has not registered for the previous two academic years, will automatically be exited from his/her program. A student whose status has thus automatically terminated will no longer be considered a graduate student but may seek reinstatement (see [Reinstatements](#)). Also note that students wishing to use many UC resources, such as university housing, campus laboratories, office space, equipment, campus recreation center, computer labs, etc. may need to be registered. Students should check with specific facilities for their particular requirements.

### ***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 or undergraduate credits do not count toward full-time status and cannot 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 satisfy the Board of Trustees residency requirement, which requires that they have one year of full time study (defined as being enrolled for at least 10 graduate credits in his/her program in each of two semesters [including summer semester] during a span of three consecutive semesters. Full-time UC employees using their tuition remission benefit to complete a part-time doctoral program may request a waiver of this requirement from the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. (See [Doctoral Degrees Policies and Procedures, Course of Study.](#))

## 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 six credit hours or more, he/she will not be charged for the university student health insurance policy. If needed, an international student is eligible to purchase university student health insurance 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 (7148 Edwards Center One) or [UC International'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) and students can work up to 40 hours a week.

While registering for one 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. For information regarding OPERS, Social Security and Medicare taxes exemption see section entitled [Exemption from OPERS/Medicare for Student Employees](#).

Graduate Assistants on Reduced Course Load will need to register for at least one credit hour for each semester they will be working as graduate 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 U.S. for more than 5 months his/her current SEVIS record will be terminated. In order to return to the U.S., 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, go to the U.S. embassy, and get a new F-1 visa stamp before he/she can reenter the U.S. If the student plans to leave the U.S. 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

The Graduate School requires that a student must have an aggregate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 to obtain a graduate certificate or degree at the University of Cincinnati. The GPA used for this purpose should aggregate graduate-level coursework completed since the student's matriculation into the particular degree program from which she or he seeks graduation, and only courses taken that are applicable to the degree/certificate count towards this GPA. Transfer graduate credits may also be accepted at the discretion of the degree program (and within Graduate School limits), and any transfer credit coming from courses taken at the University of Cincinnati will contribute to the GPA certified for graduation. Please note that **programs establish minimum academic standards that may exceed the overall university standards provided above**, so students need to be aware of their program requirements.

Note that there is no grade replacement for graduate students, so any failed graduate courses remain in the student record. However, if a student retakes a failed course and obtains a passing grade, and if the GPA calculated without that original failing grade is above 3.0, then the program can petition the Graduate School for a waiver of the GPA requirement for graduation. Multiple failing grades, or multiple attempts to pass a course, are examples of why a petition may be denied.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, MAINTAINING IMMIGRATION STATUS

The student has responsibility for maintaining their immigration status. 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 and students, domestic and international, can work up to 40 hours a week.

- 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 7148, 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 he/she 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, 2019 his/her passport should be valid until at least March 1, 2020. 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 master's to doctoral) he/she must obtain a new I-20. No later than the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 five 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 five 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](#).



## TIME TO DEGREE

### ***Time to Degree and Extensions***

The Board of Trustees stipulates that all degree requirements must be completed within a defined span of years starting from the date of matriculation into the degree program, regardless of whether students are full time or part time. This span is 5 years (7 years if student's entry term was prior to autumn 2007) for the master's degree and 9 years for the doctorate degree. Under extenuating circumstances, a program may petition the Director of the Graduate School, on behalf of the student, for extension of the time limit for attaining his or her degree. Prior to the program petitioning the Graduate School for an extension, the student must communicate with his or her program advisor and/or director to review his or her degree completion to date and form a plan for degree completion. All this information should be included in a petition submitted to the Director of the Graduate School who will review this petition and make a final decision.

Students who have not completed degree requirements by their time-to-degree limit are on inactive status regardless of course registration in each academic year. Such students are required to apply for an extension of their time-to-degree and for reinstatement if they wish to continue in their program.

### ***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 (fall-summer) are considered inactive. Reinstatements are available to students who have been inactive for **less than three academic years**. Students who have not been enrolled for any credits in their graduate program for three or more consecutive academic years are not eligible for reinstatement and must apply for readmission to the university. (See [Readmission](#).)

To request reinstatement, a program must petition the Director of the Graduate School on behalf of the student. Prior to the program petitioning the Graduate School for a reinstatement, the student must communicate with his or her program advisor and/or director to review his or her degree completion to date and form a plan for degree completion. The program coordinator, director or advisor will begin the reinstatement process in Gradtracker. The originator of the petition in Gradtracker will upload documents in one pdf to include degree completion information to date and a written plan for degree completion. The Director of the Graduate School will review the packet and if approved the student will also need to approve the petition and fee.

***If a student wishes to be reinstated so they can register and take classes***, reinstatement petitions must be submitted in Gradtracker prior to the start of the first day of the term to be eligible for reinstatement in that term. Petitions received after the first day of the term will be considered for the following term.

***If a student wishes to be reinstated so they can graduate without taking any further classes***, petitions for reinstatement (and extensions) must be submitted in Gradtracker no later than 3 weeks prior to graduation for the student to be certified for graduation in that semester. Petitions received after this time will not be approved in time for graduation that same semester. Late petitions will be held through the next processing period and a decision will be granted in time for the next graduation.

A reinstatement fee equal to the current tuition for one graduate credit for each of the unregistered years up to a maximum of 3 years is assessed. The reinstatement fee will be added to the student's bursar account and will become part of the student bill. Reinstatement fees are due 30 days after formal approval unless a payment plan is agreed to with the bursar's office. If the fee is not paid by the due date, service charges may accrue, a block may be placed on future registrations and/or on the release of UC diplomas and official transcripts, and the account may be sent to collections.

### ***Readmission***

Graduate students who have been inactive (not enrolled in their program) for **three or more 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. The program may petition the Graduate School on behalf of the student for readmission. Additionally, if the student has exceeded time to degree limits, the program should also petition for an extension 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.

Prior to the program petitioning for a readmission, the student must communicate with his or her program advisor and/or director to review his or her degree completion to date and form 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 a timeline that describes the student's progress toward degree completion to date.

The program coordinator, director or advisor will begin the readmission process in Gradtracker and will upload documents in one pdf to include degree completion information to date and a written plan for degree completion. The Director of the Graduate School will review the packet and if approved, the student will need to approve the petition and fee as well. 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 student will also be asked to complete, sign and return the supplemental form for residency requirements to the Graduate School office.

### ***Leaves of Absence***

Under special circumstances, graduate students may apply for leave of absence from formal study at the university for a specific period up to one 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 year. 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 complete the [Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) and upload the appropriate documentation (e.g. doctor's letter or military orders) through Gradtracker. The program will approve through Gradtracker as well. Once the program has approved the request, the Director of the Graduate School will review the petition and if approved, the student and program will receive an email notification through their UC email.

**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. Students should also be aware that any scholarships or assistantships are not guaranteed to be available when a student returns from a leave of absence.

### ***Withdrawal from Program***

Students must notify their departments in writing and copy the Graduate Admissions Program Manager in 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 Admissions Program Manager in 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. An annual Academic Progress Report or some other form of formal evaluation of progress is required throughout each student's program.

Students must take a minimum of one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) per academic year (fall-summer) 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 the equivalent 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.

### 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.

### 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 should consult with his/her program office for additional forms required other than what appears on the graduation checklist.

#### *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. (See this handbook's section on "[doctoral dissertation advisor and committee](#)" for a [full definition of the phrase "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 professor nor a faculty member from another institution may serve as chair of the committee, since they are no longer eligible to be graduate faculty. 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 current instructions online at the [Graduate School's Graduation page](#). 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 capstone event 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, including time, date, and title of the public presentation.

## **GRADUATION**

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

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

### ***Application to Graduate***

Students must: (1) complete academic requirements and (2) complete the official online [Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline for the semester in which they expect to graduate.

NOTE: for all graduate students, the application for graduation is started at the [Graduation page](#), and not within Catalyst.

**Start an application for graduation early in the semester you plan to graduate.** Deadlines posted on the [Graduation Deadlines page](#) 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. A student graduating from a dual degree program must make a formal application for graduation for each program (see details in next section).

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. Students who have applied for graduation and learn later they will not be graduating must be removed from the graduation list before they can apply again for any future semesters (**programs must notify the Graduation Program Director, [carol.gundrum@uc.edu](mailto:carol.gundrum@uc.edu), to remove a student**).

When the application for graduation is complete, the student receives an email receipt for payment of the graduation application from the registrar's office. If this receipt is not received, promptly notify your program, as your graduation application may not be completed.

Some PhD programs incorporate a master's degree. Students should contact their program for help in adding this additional degree.

### ***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 and complete 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.

### ***Certification for Graduation (Certify Online)***

The finalization and submission of a student's Application to Graduate will activate the process by which the student will be certified for graduation, and the following requirements must be met. The student should confer with his/her program office one-two weeks after the application period has ended to assure that any problems related to these requirements (reinstatements/ extensions, or grade changes) 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 previously awarded NG grades and blank grade awards;
- 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, including the year of expected graduation;

- confirmation that the student completed 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;
- completion of all program requirements for the degree;
- 3.0 GPA has been earned while a matriculated graduate student in the program;
- if a thesis is required, upload the electronic thesis (ETD) with chair approval by the deadline date, which is posted on the [Graduation Deadlines website](#).

**Note:** The requirements explained 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.

### **CONTINUING TO A DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

For a UC master's student continuing to a doctoral program in the same program area, the student will fill out the application in the [graduate admissions application system](#), and the graduate application fee is waived.

## **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 will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study. Individual program requirements vary, but eligibility for graduation typically requires a minimum of 90 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree. Doctoral students with a prior master's degree may petition their program to allow up to 30 transfer credits from the master's degree towards their doctoral degree. Degree credits must include at least 7 hours in dissertation research. Some program credit requirements may be higher.

The last 30 credits must be completed under the direction of University of Cincinnati graduate faculty. The degree will not 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.

### **RESIDENCY AS FULL-TIME STUDENT**

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. However, full-time UC employees using their tuition remission benefit to complete a part-time doctoral program may request a waiver of this requirement from the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

### **CANDIDACY, QUALIFYING EXAM**

The Graduate School does not currently track time to candidacy, but encourages programs to implement candidacy exams early in their programs to allow the students optimal feedback on their aspirations and research. Doctoral students are required to complete a department certification process according to the program's established standards. 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. Upon completion of these requirements, the student will receive a formal letter from the Graduate School informing him/her of admission to candidacy.



## 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 required 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 dissertation advisor, a dissertation committee should be appointed as soon as possible. The dissertation advisor must be qualified to serve as the chair of the dissertation committee (see description of Graduate Faculty below) and all members of the 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 GradTracker. Preferably, the dissertation committee will include at least one person from outside the program, who might be faculty from the University of Cincinnati or another institution.

The Graduate School defines the category “**Graduate Faculty**” to include permanent (i.e., tenured or tenure-track) members of the UC faculty who have been authorized by the Graduate School Dean to lead the original thesis or dissertation scholarship of graduate students, and therefore chair thesis or dissertation committees. Faculty members are nominated for graduate faculty status by the program most closely aligned with the academic unit holding their primary academic appointment, and with the approval of their college Dean or Associate Dean in charge of graduate education. Professors who serve in non-tenure-track roles (e.g., educators, research faculty and visiting professors) are not members of the Graduate Faculty. Due to their ability to support original research over extended intervals, research faculty may also serve on the committee and chair.

A dissertation committee must be composed of a minimum of three full-time faculty members at UC with permanent professorial rank (i.e., tenure-track full, assistant, and associate professors—not adjunct, educator or visiting). Research faculty may serve on the committee and chair. Other non-tenure track faculty categories may not chair dissertation committees but may, on a case by case basis approved by the Director of the Graduate School in advance, serve as additional committee members (beyond the 3 minimum) if the appointing unit demonstrates that their expertise is beneficial for the dissertation project.

Neither an emeritus professor nor a faculty member from another institution may serve as the chair of the committee. Emeriti professors may remain on the committee if they were members when the proposal was accepted. 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. 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, the director of graduate studies for the academic unit involved and the Director of the Graduate School. All such individuals serve as a full voting member of the dissertation committee without compensation from either the university or the candidate, and would serve in addition to the minimum number of three qualified full-time UC faculty.

A copy of the completed dissertation must be submitted to each committee member for critical evaluation, with sufficient time for review as determined by the dissertation committee. If it is considered 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 the [Graduation webpage](#). One can also browse scheduled dissertation defenses by visiting the [Upcoming Dissertation Defenses page](#).

The candidate answers questions posed by members of the committee and other members of the audience following an oral presentation of his/her dissertation. 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 current instructions found at the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information webpage](#). Students in all other doctoral programs should consult their academic programs for the capstone experience required in their programs. Deadlines are posted at the [Graduation Deadlines page](#).

- All thesis/dissertations must be electronically submitted by the student and approved by the advisor. Students log in via the link available on the [Graduation webpage](#).
- Advisors are sent an email when the student submits for his/her approval, and the advisor then logs in to review/approve.
- Once approved by the chair, the student is notified by email.
- A Graduate School approval email is sent to the student once reviewed.
- The program is copied on all email correspondence during the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) approval process.

## 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 and (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, 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 (Certify Online)***

Finalization and submission of a student's Application to Graduate will activate the process by which the student will be certified for graduation, and the following requirements have been met. The student should confer with his/her program office one-two weeks after the application period has ended 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 final semester credits;
- removal of all / grades from transcript;

- Removal of previously earned NG grades and blank grade awards - 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, including the year of expected graduation;
- confirmation that the student reached candidacy and has a valid dissertation committee;
- degree requirements completed within prescribed time-to-degree;
- satisfactory completion of sufficient graduate credits. In general, doctoral degrees require at least 7 research credits (many programs have higher requirements), within a total of at least 90 graduate credits for students who do not have a prior master's degree, or require a total of at least 60 credits for students beyond the master's degree. Please note that individual program credit requirements can vary widely.
- completion of all program requirements for the degree;
- 3.0 GPA has been earned while matriculated in the graduate program;
- if a dissertation is required, upload the electronic dissertation (ETD), following the instructions on the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information page](#), for chair approval by the deadline.

**Note:** The requirements explained 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.

## **GRADUATE CERTIFICATE VERIFICATION FOR UC TRANSCRIPT ENDORSEMENT**

In order for students to have their UC transcript endorsed with an earned certificate, students must [apply for graduation](#) and the program must approve the record through certify on line just like the Master or Doctoral students.

## **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 ceremony's website](#) for up-to-date details** or the [Graduate School's Graduation webpage](#). This is a joyous occasion in which students celebrate their accomplishment with family and friends as they are recognized by faculty and university leadership. Doctoral participants will be adorned with their hoods during the ceremony, by either their faculty mentor or the dean of their college.

Graduates must confirm their intent to participate by reserving a seat online for the celebratory event and providing current home and email addresses for notification purposes. If you wish to be hooded by your faculty mentor, discuss the date with them to make sure they can attend.

## **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.

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The University of Cincinnati does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity and expression in its programs and activities.

The university does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on these bases and takes steps to ensure that students, employees, and third parties are not subject to a hostile environment in university programs or activities.

The university responds promptly and effectively to allegations of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It promptly conducts investigations and takes appropriate action, including disciplinary action, against individuals found to have violated its policies, as well as provides appropriate remedies to complainants and the campus community. The university takes immediate action to end a hostile environment if one has been created, prevent its recurrence, and remedy the effects of any hostile environment on affected members of the campus community.

UC is committed to the ideal of universal Web accessibility and strives to provide an accessible Web presence that enables all university community members and visitors full access to information provided on its websites.

The [university non-discrimination policy](#) identifies the appropriate university officials designated to handle inquiries regarding: discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age, and veteran status; discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity or expression; and the accessibility of electronic and information technology.

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 of their current students. These procedures must take into account due process, and they must conform to the university's [Student Code of Conduct](#).

After graduation, alumni remain responsible for the academic integrity of the work they performed while a student at the University of Cincinnati. If evidence of academic dishonesty or research misconduct is revealed after the graduation of a student, the Office of Research, the Graduate School and the University can examine whether such concerns impact the academic integrity of the degree that was conferred on the student, with consequences including but not limited to degree revocation.

## **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.

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. Students can be suspended or dismissed from the university for unprofessional behavior.

## RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

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. Such activities require responsibilities for the ethical and safe 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. Everyone shares responsibility for the physical safety and intellectual property of individuals in the responsible conduct of creative scholarship and research.

## 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.

## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

### ***Policy about IDP***

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](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org) (http://myidp.sciencecareers.org) developed by FASEB/AAAS 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***

The National Institute of Health (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 the 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, the 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. Creation of this policy is the first step, and we anticipate auditioning new tools to advance this realm of career development in the future.

## 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 complaints 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 review and decision or appeal processes. In general, however, it is expected that grievances will be resolved by the parties within their programs. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the university [Ombuds Office](#) for possible resolution before initiating the formal grievance process. Students, faculty and staff should note that Grievance Procedures are not legal protocols. They are, however, effective means by which to resolve conflicts. The Graduate School endorses these procedures and expects all programs and students involved to follow them according to the established guidelines. No outside parties, such as lawyers, ministers, and family members, are allowed to participate in or impose upon the procedures. The Graduate Student Grievance Procedures cannot supplant final sanctions stemming from the University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct process. There is a time limit to filing a grievance: it must be filed within 60-90 working days of the alleged improper mistreatment.

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, either substantive or procedural, of a graduate student by a staff or faculty member or university agency **except**:
  - allegations of improper evaluation of the quality and/or quantity of academic work, which a student cannot grieve;
  - allegations of unfair recommendation for employment or further graduate study, which a student cannot grieve;
  - allegations of discriminatory treatment arising from the student complainant's disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity and expression, which are handled separately by the UC Office of Equal Opportunity and Access.



**Note:** Allegations of discrimination and sexual harassment will be handled according to the university [discrimination procedure](#) as outlined by University of Cincinnati's [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#).

## **APPENDIX OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES RULES**

The following text is excerpted from the University of Cincinnati Board of Trustees (BOT) rules governing the Graduate School. These excerpts contain some of the most specific and procedural directions in the BOT rules, that may be removed from the BOT rules during revision in favor of more general rules. They have been incorporated without modification into the 2019-2020 Graduate Handbook.

If these rules are deleted from the BOT rules, then the text in this Appendix comes into force as policy governing the Graduate School. The goal is to provide continuity of governance in the event that the University BOT rules are revised to delete these specific directions.

If this text comes into force as policy, it expands the role of Graduate Council to propose and consider measures and policies for the improvement of the graduate school, to include the areas previously covered by these BOT rules (e.g. aspects of admission to graduate programs, definition of a graduate student, issues related to graduate credit, interdisciplinary programs, minimum academic performance, the Greater Cincinnati Consortium, and requirements for graduate certificates, masters and doctoral degrees).

### **3361:50-77-12, The graduate school: admission to graduate degree programs**

#### **(A) Full graduate standing**

- (1) For admission to full graduate standing at the University of Cincinnati, a student must have a bachelor's degree from a college or university regarded as standard by a regional or general accrediting agency.
- (2) Applicant should have at least a "B" grade average in relevant undergraduate course work, or otherwise give evidence of promise satisfactory to the admitting department.
- (3) Judgments concerning admission or denial to particular degree programs and the criteria used for determining admission are initiated in the individual departments and schools. These criteria and judgments vary according to departments and schools and reflect not only estimates of the ability of students to do graduate work but also the ability of the department to absorb additional graduate students.

#### **(B) Provisional admission**

- (1) Provisional admission may be granted to applicants who lack undergraduate work considered essential for graduate study in the major field. Course work, without graduate credit, will be required of provisionally-admitted students to make up such deficiencies before admission to full graduate standing can be granted.
- (2) Graduates of non-accredited institutions may be granted provisional admission when their academic records warrant this status. Additional course work will be required of such students when deficiencies in their previous training are apparent.
- (3) Graduates of accredited institutions whose scholastic records are below the standards for admission to full graduate standing may be admitted provisionally when extenuating circumstances can be shown to have affected their undergraduate grade point averages or when progressive improvement in the undergraduate programs warrants provisional

admission.

- (4) Graduate students may attain full graduate standing when the deficiencies responsible for their provisional status are corrected. They must also have maintained a satisfactory academic record in all course work taken as part of their graduate programs.
- (5) Change from provisional to full graduate standing is effected, generally, by individual college and departmental graduate program directors in the department or school in which the student is seeking his/her degree. The bases for such changes in status are subject to review by the vice provost and university dean of the graduate school, and that office should, therefore, be routinely notified of each change of status.

(C) Non-matriculated student

- (1) If given permission by the course instructor, non-matriculated students may take courses for graduate credit, but the number of credits taken under this classification which are accepted for a degree program is at the discretion of the department; ordinarily it will not exceed fifteen graduate credits.
- (2) The only requirement for admission as an unclassified student, or special student, is evidence of a baccalaureate degree.

(D) Foreign student admission

- (1) No foreign student should be granted admission on any basis other than full graduate standing.
- (2) In instances where a foreign student holds a degree for which the United States equivalent is not known, or if it is determined by the department and/or the international services office that the applicant does not have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, the department must submit a petition (for admission without the bachelor's degree) to the graduate council and provide any supporting documentation deemed pertinent.
- (3) Before their admission to the university is completed, all foreign students must fulfill United States immigration service requirements and register with the international services office.
- (4) Applicants whose native language is other than English must pass one of the following examinations by scoring at least the minimum for each test. Minimum scores are TOEFL five hundred and twenty paper based, one hundred and ninety computer based, and sixty-eight internet based; IELTS minimum is six point five; Pearson minimum is forty-seven. Individual colleges or programs may establish higher than the minimum scores as a condition of admission into that college or program.
  - (a) This requirement may be waived for a foreign student who has a degree from an accredited American college or university and who can document having studied English while a student in the American college or university, or for students whose previous degree was earned in a foreign institution where instruction is entirely or primarily in English. Programs may petition the associate dean of the graduate school for a waiver if an applicant can demonstrate acceptable English proficiency without taking an examination.

- (b) The "Oral English Proficiency" (OEP) testing program is used to assess the oral English language skills of graduate students who are nonnative speakers of English and receive financial awards from general university funds.
- (c) Students whose oral English proficiency has not been officially certified may not assume instructional responsibilities.
- (d) Each student is allowed to take the OEP test twice without charge during an academic year.
- (e) As an alternative to the OEP test, applicants may take the "Test of Spoken English" (TSE) before admission is granted.

(E) Admission without a baccalaureate degree

- (1) Petitions for students without a baccalaureate degree seeking admission to the university should be filed in departmental offices and, after thorough review by the departmental graduate admissions committee, the department may recommend such admission to the graduate council. The final decision on such admissions rests with the graduate council.

(F) "Graduate Record Examination" (GRE) requirement

- (1) Applicants for admission to many, but not all, colleges and departments are required to take the GRE. Individual colleges or departments should be consulted to determine specific requirements for admission. Many departments, although not normally requiring GRE scores, may require them as additional information in special circumstances.

(G) Admission Decisions

- (1) All decisions concerning admissions to established graduate programs rest with the departments. Departments have the authority to set 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.
- (2) All departments must have established written criteria for judging the admissibility of applicants.
- (3) Departmental decisions to admit or not to admit are final.

**3361:50-77-14, The graduate school: definition of a graduate student**

A matriculated graduate student of the University of Cincinnati must be the holder of a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent, must be admitted into a graduate degree program by the graduate school, and may pursue a graduate degree on either a part-time or a full-time basis.

- (A) Status as a matriculated graduate student requires registration for at least one graduate credit hour during the academic year (including summer). Students who fail to meet this requirement must apply for reinstatement or re-admission (as applicable) should they wish to complete the degree program.

- (B) 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.
- (C) The definitions in paragraphs (A) and (B) of this rule are to be used in determining which graduate students may use facilities of the university, are covered under the statement on students' rights and responsibilities, may participate in student organizations and the governance process of the university, and are covered by the grievance process.

### **3361:50-77-15, The graduate school: graduate credits**

Credit can be earned for only those courses numbered six thousand through nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine. Upon recommendation of the departments concerned, a limited number of graduate credits may be granted for graduate work done in residence in other accredited universities. Six condensed summer terms at the University of Cincinnati or at other qualified universities are regarded as the equivalent of one academic year.

- (A) Full-time/part-time course load: students enrolled in a full-time program of graduate study should be registered for ten or more graduate credits each semester. Students with outside work, or those who for other reasons devote less than full time to graduate study, will be allowed to register for the number of graduate credits judged by their advisory department to represent the appropriate fraction of a full-time load.
- (B) Graduate assistants: students receiving graduate assistantships must carry a course load of twelve credits or more each semester.
- (C) University graduate scholarship recipients: students receiving university graduate scholarships, who are not also graduate assistants, must carry a course load of at least the number of graduate credit hours covered by the university graduate scholarship each semester for which they are receiving support.
- (D) Graduate credit for undergraduate students: any college or degree-granting unit may allow seniors to register for graduate courses for graduate credit before these students have completed the baccalaureate degree. If the college or degree-granting unit permits such registration, it should limit the privilege to the student having senior standing, a grade point average of at least three and zero tenths but higher if so desired by the student's department, as evidenced by a petition from the student signed by an authorized member of the department. Upon approval by the department and the course instructor, graduate credit will be given for the courses. A maximum of fifteen graduate credits may be obtained in this manner. Credit will not be given toward both graduate and undergraduate degrees for the same course.
- (E) Six-thousand level courses: a graduate student who is registered for six-thousand level courses carrying both undergraduate and graduate credit may be required to complete a certain amount of academic work in addition to that required of undergraduates in the same course. The extra work may consist of reading and reviewing additional books, presenting reports, or doing such supplementary work, as the instructor in charge of the course deems advisable.

### **3361:50-77-17, The graduate school: individualized interdisciplinary programs**

The interest of most students falls within the confines of existing programs in established departments. In some cases, however, a student may request to have a special committee, consisting of professors from various fields, established to direct his/her study. Such a committee and the program it formulates with the student are referred to as "interdisciplinary." The office of the vice provost and university dean of the graduate school exercises general administrative supervision over all such degree programs, and a separate committee of five members (at least three of whom must be members of the graduate faculty) is formed for each interdisciplinary student.

The student's committee serves both as a committee and, in essence, as a department for the student, helping to prepare and to evaluate the student's program of courses, determine or arrange for determining the student's qualification for candidacy, supervise the thesis or dissertation, and perform other necessary administrative functions. The chairperson of the student's committee will assume the administrative role ordinarily carried by a head of department or director of graduate studies within a department.

The interdisciplinary student is subject to all general rules and requirements of the graduate division. Although the formal requirements are comparable to those of regular graduate programs, the student interested in an interdisciplinary program should be aware that this approach might entail more time and effort.

### **3361:50-77-19, The graduate school: minimum academic performance (graduate faculty)**

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

- (A) Minimum grade point average if it is higher than the university minimum of 3.0.
- (B) Acceptable grade distribution including grades earned in a required course.
- (C) Nature and number of programmatic examination, such as preliminary, qualifying, and the consequences of not passing all or part of each examination.
- (D) Specified research requirements.
- (E) A time-related definition of normal progress for all full- and part-time students. The progress of each student must be reviewed annually.
- (F) Standards and procedures for annual review of academic performance.
- (G) Standards and procedures for probation, suspension and dismissal.

### **3361:50-77-21, The graduate school: the greater Cincinnati consortium**

Through the cross-registration procedures of the greater Cincinnati consortium of colleges and universities, full-time and part-time graduate students may enroll at consortium colleges for

courses not available when needed at the University of Cincinnati. The university will grant credit for cross-registered courses. For further information, contact the graduate program director.

### **3361:50-77-22\*, The graduate school: master's degree programs**

*\*these are only parts of this BOT rule*

#### (A) Credit hours/program-specific and university requirements.

- (1) A minimum of thirty semester credit hours of graduate work shall be successfully completed for a master's degree including credits for work on a thesis if a thesis is required. In no case, however, shall a degree be granted solely on the basis of accumulated credit hours.
- (2) Graduate programs shall recommend students for the master's degree after they have met all program-specific and university requirements for the degree.
- (3) To maintain graduate student status and eligibility for a master's degree, students shall register for at least one graduate credit hour each academic year during the fall semester.

### **3361:50-77-23\*, The graduate school: doctoral degree programs**

*\*these are only parts of this BOT rule*

#### (A) Credit hours/program-specific and university requirements

- (1) A minimum of sixty (if the student has earned a master's degree) or ninety (if the student has not earned a master's degree) semester credit hours of graduate work in one graduate program shall be successfully completed for a doctoral degree including credits for dissertation research. In no case, however, shall a degree be granted solely on the basis of accumulated credit hours. The doctoral degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study.
- (2) Graduate programs shall recommend students for the doctoral degree after they have met all program-specific and university requirements for the degree including satisfactory completion of an approved dissertation or other culminating project.
- (3) The final thirty semester credits must be completed under the direction of graduate faculty from the University of Cincinnati.
- (4) Prior to admission to doctoral candidacy, doctoral students shall complete a residency requirement of a minimum enrollment of ten graduate credit hours per semester for two out of three consecutive semesters of study including summer.

#### (B) Candidacy

- (1) Doctoral students shall complete a departmental certification process for doctoral candidacy. The nature of this departmental certification process and the rules governing its administration shall be determined by the doctoral program in which the student is

enrolled.

- (2) A doctoral student shall be admitted to candidacy when he or she has achieved a grade point average of at least 3.0 for all doctoral course work, satisfactorily completed all pre-candidacy requirements as specified by the doctoral program in which the student is enrolled, and successfully completed the departmental certification process.
- (3) Once a student is admitted to candidacy, he or she shall register for at least one graduate credit hour in the fall semester of each year to maintain his or her graduate student and candidacy status.

*\*the below sections are only parts of this BOT rule (from section E)*

- (1) The research mentor shall serve as chairperson of the dissertation committee.
- (2) A dissertation committee shall be composed of a minimum of three full-time faculty members with professorial rank at the University of Cincinnati. The committee chair must be a member of the graduate faculty.
- (3) Individuals with appropriate expertise may be added to a dissertation committee if nominated by the candidate and approved by the committee chairperson and doctoral program. Such persons shall serve without compensation from the university or candidate, and shall be full voting members of the committee.

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