University of Rochester

University Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs

Regulations and University Policies Concerning Graduate Study

Covering graduate study across all University schools, these *Regulations and University Policies Concerning Graduate Study* serve as an important resource for understanding academic responsibilities, degree requirements, and the policies that support a successful graduate experience.

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Graduate Degrees Offered at the University

Overview

The University offers the doctor of philosophy degree (PhD) and administers the award of this degree centrally in the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Education. The University also offers the degrees doctor of education, doctor of business administration, doctor of medicine, doctor of musical arts, and doctor of nursing practice, which are administered by the respective schools. Requirements for them can be obtained from the respective school that grants the degree: the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development for the degree doctor of education (EdD); the William E. Simon Graduate School of Business Administration for the degree doctor of business administration (DBA); the School of Medicine and Dentistry for the degree doctor of medicine; Eastman School of Music for the degree doctor of musical arts, and the School of Nursing for the degree doctor of nursing practice.

The master's degree is offered in arts, sciences, music, engineering, nursing, business administraton, accountancy, and education. Information on master's degrees other than MA and MS can be found as follows: for the master of business administration and master of science in accountancy through the William E. Simon Graduate School of Business Administration. For the master of music through the Eastman School of Music, for the master of public health through the Department of Community and Preventive Medicine in the School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Administration of Graduate Education

Overview

As authorized by the Board of Trustees in a Charter for Administration of Graduate Education, the provost assigns responsibility for the administration of all postbaccalaureate work within each school to the dean of that school, who may delegate it to an associate dean of graduate education or to another appropriate official. (In these Regulations, the term “associate dean” is used to refer to the official overseeing graduate education in a school, regardless of title.) Policies for graduate work within each school are determined by the respective faculties and their administrative officers in accordance with the provisions in these regulations.

The University grants the doctor of philosophy degree and administers the award of this degree centrally in the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. The general requirements for the PhD are set at the University level, as described later in this bulletin. The Council on Graduate Education recommends to the provost for transmission to the Board of Trustees all candidates for the doctor of philosophy degree.

Schools and interdisciplinary programs offer approved PhD programs under University policies described in this bulletin. More specific requirements for degree programs may be set by individual schools and departments.

General requirements for the MA and MS degrees are set at the University level and described in this bulletin. General requirements for other master’s degrees and advanced certificates and specific requirements for all master’s degree programs are set by individual schools.

The administration of work for master’s degrees and for doctorates other than the PhD is vested in the associate dean of graduate education and the Committee on Graduate Education or equivalent in each school. Each school recommends its candidates for graduate degrees other than the PhD to the provost for transmission to the Board of Trustees. If a candidate for one of these degrees has taken work in more than one school in the University, the recommendation for award of the degree originates in the school responsible for the student’s major department or program.

University Policies for All Graduate Programs

Admission

Admission to graduate education is granted to graduates of accredited colleges/universities, technical schools, and music schools who present satisfactory evidence of ability to pursue graduate study. Additional admission requirements are set by certain schools of the University. These are stated separately in the general announcements of each school in the Official Bulletin of Graduate Education.

An applicant's quali#cations are examined by the relevant department/program of major interest and by the associate dean of graduate education in the appropriate school to determine whether previous training and ability promise success in work for advanced degrees. Individual programs or departments, with the approval of their associate deans for graduate education, may limit the number of graduate students to be admitted, determine the credit hours of prerequisite study, stipulate language requirements, or set other special admission requirements.

Admission to a graduate degree program at the University of Rochester is for that program alone. Admission to any other program requires a completely new admissions application.

In certain cases, applicants who do not meet all the requirements for admission may be admitted conditionally. Their standing is reviewed after the #rst term of study to decide on their continuation in graduate work. In rare, exceptional cases, a student without a bachelor's degree may be admitted to a graduate program because of demonstrated high academic competence; such students are considered graduate students.

Special students have satisfactory undergraduate records except that they lack prerequisite courses for the intended area of graduate study. Such prerequisites must be completed within a year, and a student will not be continued as a special student beyond this time. Enrollment as a special student does not guarantee subsequent admission and matriculation with full graduate-student status.

Probationary admission may be granted to a student whose credentials indicate only marginal preparation for graduate work, on approval of the associate dean of graduate education in the appropriate school and the department of major interest. Such a student can be admitted to full standing upon completing, at the discretion of the department, from 12 to 24 semester hours of graduate credit with all grades of at least B. If the student receives any grade lower than B, enrollment in graduate education is subject to termination. (For School of Nursing, see *Student Handbook* relating to probation policies.)

A person wishing to take a graduate course or courses not leading to a degree may register as a nonmatriculated student. Approval of the associate dean is required for the Eastman School of Music, approval of the director of PhD programs for PhD courses in the School of Nursing. In the Simon School, approval of the associate dean is required for courses other than the four basic core courses. Subsequent evaluation of such work for inclusion in a graduate program is subject to the limitations on transfer credit stated in the sections that follow.

All full-time and part-time students taking 6 or more credit hours need to comply with University and New York State immunization requirements. Please see the University Health Service website for specific requirements, health history form, and immunization requirement link.

Rescinding an Offer

The University of Rochester reserves the right to rescind an#offer#of admission, even after an applicant accepts but prior to attending the University, under certain circumstances, including:

- New information comes to light that might have resulted in a different decision at the time of review, including with respect to satisfactory completion of coursework currently underway or degrees in progress.
- The applicant has made a misrepresentation to the University.

- The University learns that an applicant has engaged in behavior that indicates a serious lack of judgment, integrity, or alignment with University values, and/or would violate University policies.

The University further reserves the right to require admitted students to provide additional information and/or authorization for the release of information about any of the above, and to place a hold on registration during the investigation into any such matter.

Acceptance of Departmental Financial Assistance

The University of Rochester, as a member of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, subscribes to the following statement, which has been adopted by most of the leading graduate schools in North America, and interprets it as applying to master's and doctoral students in programs with a fall start date:

"Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

"Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances, in which a student accepts an offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer."

Enrollment

Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress

Graduate satisfactory academic progress at the University is evaluated in accordance with federal regulations and the University's Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

The University's Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress policy for the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, the School of Arts & Sciences, the Simon Business School, the School of Nursing & Health Sciences, and the Warner School of Education & Human Development can be found in full on the Financial Aid Policies page.

School of Medicine & Dentistry graduate students, see the Financial Assistance section of the School of Medicine & Dentistry's Graduate Student Handbook.

Eastman School of Music graduate students, see Graduate Academic Policy 05.06.

Master's Student Tuition Aid Matching Policy

The educational mission of the University of Rochester is to foster an interdisciplinary educational experience for our graduate student learners as desired. In support of this, all schools are expected to provide tuition aid to matriculated master's students taking courses included in their formal program of study outside of their home school, per the aid rate*^ set by the student's home school, up to 100%.

It is expected that each school will fund all aid at the start of the semester for their school's students regardless of the school in which the student takes courses.

* This policy applies to percent-based aid only and not to flat-rate aid.

^ The percent-based aid rate applies regardless of the cost of tuition in the individual schools. Thus, students will be responsible for each individual school's tuition expense minus the percent-based aid rate assigned by the student's home school.

Graduate Degree Program Transfer Credit Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the conditions and limitations under which graduate-level coursework, completed both internally and externally, may be accepted for transfer credit into graduate programs. Its primary purpose is to ensure academic rigor and consistency by establishing clear guidelines for credit eligibility, maximum transfer allowances, and required approval processes. This policy does not apply to combined/ accelerated degree program (bachelor's + master's) transfer credits.

Definitions

Advanced certificate: A credential issued for completion of a small, concentrated set of graduate-level coursework around a particular subdiscipline or subdomain of knowledge. The number of courses is typically fewer than a program of study associated with a master's or doctoral degree. Advanced certificates are stand-alone programs that students matriculate into directly. For this reason, they must be approved by the New York State Education Department. Advanced certificates do not require a minimum number of credits to complete.

Conferral: The process of posting an educational credential to transcript, indicating that all requirements are completed and verified by University Officers.

Doctoral degree (PhD): A graduate degree level that recognizes completion of a program of study including coursework and a dissertation (or equivalent) demonstrating highly advanced proficiency in an academic discipline. Doctoral degree programs must be approved by the New York State Education Department to be offered and awarded. Doctoral Degrees require 90 credits to complete.

Doctoral professional practice degree (EdD, DNP, DMA, DBA): A doctoral degree that recognizes completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. Doctoral professional practice degrees require a master's degree prior to matriculation.

En passant degree: A master's degree awarded while completing requirements for a doctoral degree.

External transfer credit (graduate): Academic credit at the graduate level earned at a graduate school outside the University of Rochester, specifically from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or an equivalently recognized institution abroad. This credit can be applied to a matriculated graduate record to fulfill degree or advanced certificate requirements.

Internal transfer credit (graduate): Academic credit earned at the University of Rochester at the graduate level by students who were not yet officially enrolled in a graduate degree program. This credit can be applied to a matriculated graduate record to fulfill degree or advanced certificate requirements.

Joint degree: A singular degree awarded by the University and one or more accredited institutions that have jointly-registered a program with the New York State Education Department. Institutions share responsibility for the admission of students, and students must be admitted to both/all institutions. The name of both (or all) institutions is on the degree.

Master's degree (MA, MBA, MS, MM, MMAT, MPH): A graduate degree level that recognizes completion of a program of study that requires at least 30 credits. Master's degree programs must be approved by the New York State Education Department to be offered and awarded.

Matriculation: Official enrollment in a degree program, marked by acceptance of the offer of admission and completion of all registration requirements.

Pass/fail course: No-grade course in which pass or credit, or no-pass is given; generally, this course is not considered in the computation off student's grade-point average and, generally, it is ineligible for transfer credit unless specifically approved.

Program of study: Collection of courses for which an educational institution may award a degree or certificate, once it is completed.

Regionally accredited (or equivalently recognized) institution: A college or university that has earned institutional accreditation from one of the U.S. regional accrediting bodies—or a comparable body abroad —that establishes criteria for judging the quality of training, educational programs and education offered by educational institutions. An institution's accredited status governs in a large measure the acceptability of its credits by other institutions.

Transfer credit: Academic credit awarded by the University for graduate-level courses successfully completed externally at another institution or internally

at the University of Rochester, subject to the limits and approval processes contained in this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to faculty, staff, and students.

Policy Details

Graduate-level coursework completed prior to starting a graduate degree program may be considered for transfer credit, subject to the conditions and restrictions outlined in this policy. This policy establishes the framework for accepting both internal transfer credit and external transfer credit to ensure academic rigor and consistency across graduate degree programs.

A. Eligibility for Transfer Credit

1. **General conditions:** Transfer Credit may be accepted toward degree requirements provided that the courses meet the following criteria:
    a. *Alignment with program of study*: The courses must align with the student's proposed program of study.
    b. *Completion timeline*: The courses must have been completed within ten years prior to matriculation.
    c. *Minimum grade*: A grade of B or higher must have been achieved in each graduate course to be transferred.
    d. *Pass/fail coursework*: Coursework completed on a pass/fail basis is generally not eligible for transfer credit, unless specifically approved by both the program director/department chair and the associate dean of graduate education at the relevant school.
2. **Acceptable institutions:** Transfer credit may originate from:
    a. A regionally accredited institution’s graduate school in the United States (for external transfer credit).
    b. An equivalently recognized institution abroad (for external transfer credit).
    c. The University of Rochester (for internal transfer credit).

B. Transfer Credit Limits

1. **Residency requirement:** The program of study for each student must include at least 60 percent of the degree hours taken at the University of Rochester as a matriculated student in their current graduate degree program.
2. **Maximum transfer credits**: No more than 40 percent of degree credits can be transferred into a program. Maximum transfer credit is as follows:
    a. *Doctoral degree*: No more than 30 credits can be transferred.
    b. *Doctoral professional practice degree*: No more than 36 credits can be transferred.
    c. *Master’s degree*:
        i. Programs requiring 30-39 credits: No more than 12 credits can be transferred.
        ii. Programs requiring 40-49 credits: No more than 16 credits can be transferred.
        iii. Programs requiring 50 or more credits: No more than 20 credits can be transferred.
3. **En passant master’s (master’s to doctorate, also known as master's along the way (MALW))**: Doctoral degree programs are allowed to confer a master's degree to students who meet appropriate milestones during their doctoral progression that fulfill the requirements of a master’s degree. All credits earned up to the conferral of the master’s degree will transfer into the doctoral program.
4. **Advanced certificate to master’s or doctoral program**: All credits for an advanced certificate must be transferable towards a graduate degree program within the University.
5. **Undergraduate courses:** Undergraduate courses cannot count towards completion of a graduate degree.

C. School-Level Discretion

The number and type of credit hours acceptable as transfer credit for coursework previously taken at the University of Rochester or another university is determined at the school level. School-level decisions and policies on accepting transfer credit can be stricter than the parameters outlined in this policy.

D. Exceptions

1. Schools wishing to exceed the transfer credit limit outlined in section II.B will need to obtain approval from the Office of the Provost.
2. Schools wishing to consider transfer credit for courses completed more than ten years prior to matriculation will need to obtain approval from the Office of the Provost.

E. Exclusions

1. This policy does not apply to joint degree programs approved by the Office of the Provost that are offered with another university.
2. This policy does not apply to combined/ accelerated degree program (bachelor's + master's) transfer credits.

F. Academic Records

Transcripts and score reports from other institutions that are submitted to the University of Rochester for admission or transfer credit consideration are kept in the student's academic file are the property of the University of Rochester and, as such, are subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Combined Degree Programs (Bachelor's + Master's) Credit Transfer Policy

Rationale/Purpose of the Policy

Combined degree programs are established to provide motivated and academically-accomplished students with an efficient and streamlined path to earn both a bachelor's and a master's degree at the University of Rochester (the "University") within a condensed timeframe. This policy is specific to combined/ accelerated degree programs. It outlines the conditions and limitations under which graduate-level coursework, completed internally at the University, may be accepted for transfer credit into graduate programs and double-counted across academic programs. Its primary purpose is to ensure academic rigor and consistency by establishing clear guidelines for credit eligibility, maximum transfer allowances, and required approval processes.

Definitions

4+0 ("More in Four") Program: A type of combined degree program in which students complete two academic programs at different degree levels (typically, bachelor's and master's) on an accelerated schedule. Master's programs that might be completed in two to three semesters are completed in one or two semesters through a combination of early graduation and the articulation of joint credit across the academic programs.

4+1 Program: A type of combined degree program in which students complete two academic programs at different degree levels (typically, bachelor's and master's), potentially through using joint credit as part of an accelerated schedule. Master's programs that might be completed in two to four semesters are completed in one academic year.

Combined Degree Program: A type of degree program in which students are admitted to pursue two academic programs of different degree levels. Students may be admitted into both programs at the same time or may enter after matriculating into the first program (the latter sometimes referred to as accelerated programs). Students are awarded the degree when the degree requirements for that specific academic program are met (i.e., the educational credential for each degree is given at different times). This type of program may or may not be completed in an accelerated timeframe.

Conferral: The process of posting an educational credential to transcript, indicating that all requirements are completed and verified by University Officers.

Credit Hours: This term is defined and further explained in the University Credit Hour Policy. All programs must follow the University Credit Hour Policy.

Internal Articulation Agreement: A formal partnership within or between schools/divisions at the University that allows students to pursue academic programs across distinct degree programs, potentially leading to collaborative degrees, accelerated pathways, or enhanced educational experiences.

Internal Transfer Credit (Graduate): Graduate-level academic credit earned at the University by students who were not yet officially enrolled in a graduate degree program. This credit can be applied to a matriculated graduate record to fulfill degree or advanced certificate requirements.

Joint Credit: Academic credit awarded by the University for graduate-level courses successfully completed internally that are double-counted across academic programs participating in a combined degree program, subject to policy limits and approval processes.

Master's Degree (MA, MBA, MS, MM, MMAT, MPH): A graduate degree level that recognizes completion of a program of study that requires at least 30 credits. Master's degree programs must be approved by the NYS Department of Education to be offered and awarded.

Matriculation: Official enrollment in a degree program, marked by acceptance of the offer of admission and completion of all registration requirements.

Pass/Fail Course: No-grade course in which pass or credit, or no-pass is given; generally, this course is not considered in the computation of a student's grade-point average and, generally, it is ineligible for transfer credit unless specifically approved.

Program of Study: Collection of courses for which an educational institution may award a degree or certificate, once it is completed.

Scope/Compliance

This policy applies to faculty, staff, and students.

Policy Details

Graduate-level coursework completed as part of a Combined Degree Program may be considered for credits towards the completion of both the undergraduate and graduate program requirements, subject to the conditions and restrictions outlined in this policy. All approved Internal Transfer Credit and Joint Credit must be recorded and administered in the University's official student system of record.

1. The number and type of Credit Hours and grades acceptable as Internal Transfer Credit for work previously taken at the University is determined at the school level. School-level decisions and policies can be stricter than the parameters outlined in this document.
2. Students seeking to transfer credits must adhere to program-specific guidelines detailed in the approved Internal Articulation Agreement and follow the transfer approval process for the specific graduate program.

A. Eligibility for Combined Degree Program Transfer Credit

1. **General Conditions**: Internal Transfer Credit may be accepted toward Master's Degree requirements provided that the courses meet the following criteria:
    a. **Alignment with Program of Study**: The courses must align with the student's proposed Combined Degree Program of Study.
    b. **Completion timeline**: The courses must have been completed within the time frame stipulated by program-specific guidelines detailed in the approved Internal Articulation Agreement.
    c. **Minimum grade**: A grade of C or higher must have been achieved in each graduate course completed at the University to be transferred.
    d. **Grade recognition for double-counted credits**: For courses with Joint Credit across academic programs, the original grades will be transferred and applied toward the requirements of the receiving Master's Degree.
    e. **Transfer Credit Fees**: No fees will be charged for Internal Transfer Credit in Combined Degree Programs.
    f. **Pass/Fail Coursework**: Coursework completed on a pass/fail basis is generally not eligible for Internal Transfer Credit, unless specifically approved by both the program director/department chair and the associate dean of graduate education at the relevant school.
2. **Acceptable Institutions:** Transfer credit in Combined Degree Programs may only originate from the University of Rochester (Internal Transfer Credit).

B. Transfer and Joint Credit Limits

1. **4+1 Program**: **Residency Requirement**: The Program of Study for each student must include

at least 60 percent of the degree credits taken as a matriculated student in the Master's Degree program. **Maximum Internal Transfer Credits**: No more than 40 percent of degree credits can be transferred into a Master's Degree program and double-counted across academic programs. Maximum Internal Transfer and Joint Credits are as follows:

a. Master's Programs requiring 30-39 credits: No more than 12 credits can be transferred and double-counted across academic programs.

b. Master's Programs requiring 40-49 credits: No more than 16 credits can be transferred and double-counted across academic programs.

c. Master's Programs requiring 50 or more credits: No more than 20 credits can be transferred and double-counted across academic programs.

d. Internal Transfer Credits do not need to be double-counted across academic programs.

2. **4+0 ("More in Four") Program**: **Residency Requirement**: The Program of Study for each student must include at least 50 percent of the degree credits taken as a matriculated student in the Master's Degree program. **Maximum Internal Transfer Credits**: No more than 50 percent of degree credits can be transferred into a Master's Degree program and double-counted across academic programs. Maximum Internal Transfer and Joint Credits are as follows:

a. All Master's Programs requiring 30-39 credits: A minimum of 12 credits must be transferred and double-counted across academic programs to preserve full-time undergraduate student status.

b. Master's Programs requiring 40 or more credits: A minimum of 12 credits must be transferred and double-counted across academic programs to preserve full-time undergraduate student status. No more than 20 credits may be transferred and double-counted.

c. Internal Transfer credits above 12, up to 50 percent of the Master's Degree total credit requirement (not to exceed 20 credits), do not need to be double-counted across academic programs.

3. **Undergraduate Courses**: Undergraduate courses cannot count towards completion of a graduate degree.

C. Exceptions

1. Schools desiring an exception to the Transfer and Joint Credit Limits outlined in section III.B will need to obtain approval from the Office of the Provost.

Advanced Certificate Program Credit Transfer Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the conditions and limitations under which graduate-level coursework, completed both internally and externally, may be accepted for transfer credit into advanced certificate programs at the University of Rochester. Its primary purpose is to ensure academic rigor and consistency by establishing clear guidelines for credit eligibility, maximum transfer allowances, and required approval processes. This policy does not apply to certificates of advanced achievement. This policy does also not apply to graduate degree program transfer credits or combined/ accelerated degree program (bachelor's + master's) transfer credits, which are governed by separate policies.

Definitions

Advanced certificate (advanced diploma in Eastman School of Music): A credential issued for completion of a small, concentrated set of graduate-level coursework around a particular subdiscipline or subdomain of knowledge. The number of courses is typically fewer than a program of study associated with a master's or doctoral degree. Advanced certificates are stand-alone programs that students matriculate into directly. For this reason, they must be approved by the New York State Education Department. Advanced certificates do not require a minimum number of credits to complete.

Certificate of advanced achievement: Earned through graduate level coursework leading to a credential other than a degree. It is only available to students matriculated in a graduate degree program at the

University of Rochester. It is distinct from an advanced certificate, which is approved through the New York State Education Department and is open to any student.

Conferral: The process of posting an educational credential to transcript, indicating that all requirements are completed and verified by University officers.

Doctoral degree (PhD): A graduate degree level that recognizes completion of a program of study including coursework and a dissertation (or equivalent) demonstrating highly advanced proficiency in an academic discipline. Doctoral degree programs must be approved by the New York State Education Department to be offered and awarded. Doctoral degrees require at least 90 credits to complete.

Doctoral professional practice degree (EdD, DNP, DMA, DBA): A doctoral degree that recognizes completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. Doctoral professional practice degrees require a master's degree prior to matriculation.

External transfer credit (graduate): Academic credit at the graduate level earned at a graduate school outside the University of Rochester, specifically from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or an equivalently recognized institution abroad. This credit can be applied to a matriculated graduate record to fulfill degree or advanced certificate requirements.

Internal transfer credit (graduate): Academic credit earned at the University of Rochester at the graduate level by students who were not yet officially enrolled in a graduate degree program. This credit can be applied to a matriculated graduate record to fulfill degree or advanced certificate requirements.

Master's degree (MA, MBA, MS, MM, MMAT, MPH): A graduate degree level that recognizes completion of a program of study that requires at least 30 credits. Master's degree programs must be approved by the New York State Education Department to be offered and awarded.

Matriculation: Official enrollment in a degree or certificate program, marked by acceptance of the offer of admission and completion of all registration requirements.

Pass/fail course: No-grade course in which pass or credit, or no-pass is given; generally, this course is not considered in the computation off student's grade-point average and, generally, it is ineligible for transfer credit unless specifically approved.

Program of study: Collection of courses for which an educational institution may award a degree or certificate, once it is completed.

Regionally accredited (or equivalently recognized) institution: A college or university that has earned institutional accreditation from one of the U.S. regional accrediting bodies—or a comparable body abroad —that establishes criteria for judging the quality of training, educational programs and education offered by educational institutions. An institution's accredited status governs in a large measure the acceptability of its credits by other institutions.

Transfer credit: Academic credit awarded by the University for graduate-level courses successfully completed externally at another institution or internally at the University of Rochester, subject to the limits and approval processes contained in this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to faculty, staff, and students.

Policy Details

Graduate-level coursework completed prior to starting an Advanced Certificate program may be considered for transfer credit, subject to the conditions and restrictions outlined in this policy. This policy establishes the framework for accepting both Internal transfer credit and external transfer credit to ensure academic rigor and consistency across advanced certificate programs. All credits earned as part of an advanced certificate must be transferable towards a graduate degree program within the University.

A. Eligibility for Transfer Credit

1. **General conditions:** Transfer credit may be accepted toward advanced certificate requirements provided that the courses meet the following criteria:
    a. *Alignment with program of study*: The courses must align with the student's proposed advanced certificate program of study.
    b. *Completion timeline*: The courses must have been completed within ten years prior to matriculation.
    c. *Minimum grade*: A grade of B or higher must have been achieved in each graduate course to be transferred.

d. *Pass/fail coursework*: Coursework completed on a pass/fail basis is generally not eligible for transfer credit, unless specifically approved by both the program director/department chair and the associate dean of graduate education at the relevant school.

2. **Acceptable institutions:** Transfer credit may originate from:

   a. A regionally accredited institution's graduate school in the United States (for external transfer credit).

   b. An equivalently recognized institution abroad (for external transfer credit).

   c. The University of Rochester (for internal transfer credit).

B. Transfer Credit Limits

1. **Residency requirement:** The program of study for each student must include at least 60 percent of the advanced certificate credit hours taken at the University of Rochester as a matriculated student in their current advanced certificate program.
2. **Maximum transfer credits**: No more than 40 percent of the total credits required for the advanced certificate—and in no case more than 12 credits—may be transferred into the program.
3. **Course substitutions:** Course substitutions within any advanced certificate should be handled as transfer credit and are subject to the limits outlined in this section.
4. **En passant advanced certificates:** Students in a doctoral, doctoral professional practice, or master's degree program cannot complete its requirements and belatedly receive an advanced certificate based on the credits they earned during completion of their graduate degree program. Coursework from such programs is subject to the limits outlined in this section. Students who are unable to complete the degree program in which they matriculated may petition to receive an advanced certificate, as appropriate, based on the credits earned.
5. **Undergraduate courses:** Undergraduate courses cannot count towards completion of an advanced certificate.

C. School-Level Discretion

The number and type of credit hours acceptable as transfer credit for coursework previously taken at the University of Rochester or another university is determined at the school level. School-level decisions and policies on accepting transfer credit can be stricter than the parameters outlined in this policy.

D. Exceptions

1. Schools wishing to exceed the transfer credit limit outlined in section II.B will need to obtain approval from the Office of the Provost.
2. Schools wishing to consider transfer credit for courses completed more than ten years prior to matriculation will need to obtain approval from the Office of the Provost.

E. Exclusions

1. This policy does not apply to joint degree programs approved by the Office of the Provost that are offered with another university.
2. This policy does not apply to graduate degree program transfer credits or combined/accelerated degree program (bachelor's + master's) transfer credits.

F. Academic Records

Transcripts and score reports from other institutions that are submitted to the University of Rochester for admission or transfer credit consideration are kept in the student's academic file are the property of the University of Rochester and, as such, are subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Registration

A matriculated graduate student is one who has been admitted to a graduate degree program and has completed initial registration in that program. Once matriculated, a graduate student must maintain continuous enrollment by registering each academic year semester and paying required fees until all requirements for the degree are completed. Auditing a

course does not fulfill this requirement. Requirement for summer registration varies by program.

Registration must be completed within two weeks after the beginning of a semester for all courses that carry credit. Late registration may carry an additional charge.

Courses Eligible for Inclusion in Graduate Programs

Courses must be designated as graduate courses if they are to be counted toward a graduate degree. Courses that are cross-listed should have different designations for those enrolled as graduate students, and the syllabus must specify the advanced work to be completed by graduate-level enrollees.

Dropped Courses

This section applies to all schools except Simon Business School. A regular semester course may be dropped at any time through the sixth week of classes, provided the student obtains the approval of his or her faculty advisor and the instructor(s), notifies the graduate registrar on the proper form, and the change does not alter the student's time status. No record of such actions appears on the official transcript.

Following the start of the seventh week of classes, a drop notification (or a change from credit to audit) sent to the graduate registrar must bear the signatures of the faculty advisor, course instructor(s), and associate dean of graduate education. Such late drops will be recorded on the official transcript and identified by the grade W. At the option of the course instructor, a grade of E may also be attached.

In exceptional circumstances, the associate dean of graduate education may approve dropping a course without record after the start of the seventh week of classes. Review of the circumstances is initiated by an appropriate written petition.

Dropping credit hours after the seventh week of a semester or retroactive after the conclusion of the semester is not permitted if the change affects the student's time status (full-time status changes to part-time status) for that particular semester.

No academic credit is granted for courses in progress at the time a student withdraws from the University, except by explicit approval of the associate dean acting upon a written petition.

Audited Courses

Audit of a course related to a degree program is permitted for full-time and part-time graduate students when approved by the student's faculty advisor, the course instructor(s), and the associate dean of graduate education. There is a fee for this. The audited course will appear on the student's transcript provided the student attends throughout the course. Students who wish later to receive credit for such a course may do so by (1) changing the registration in the office of the graduate registrar prior to the end of the sixth full week of classes in a given semester and (2) paying the required tuition for the course.

Full-Time Status

A full-time graduate student is defined as a student who registers for at least 9 hours of credit for the semester.

Change of time status (i.e., full time to part time) requires approval from the associate dean, except for the Warner School of Education and the School of Nursing.

Residency

A student is defined as being in residence at the University of Rochester if they are registered and engaging with the University (laboratories, consultations with faculty members, or course attendance) with sufficient frequency and regularity to establish this status clearly. Engagement does not necessitate physical presence on campus but can reflect distance learning. Some period of residence at this University is required for all advanced degrees. Students should be aware that schools, departments, or programs may have more stringent requirements regarding residency.

Summer Residency Status

Requirements for registration during summer sessions vary across graduate programs. Any student who has been classified as full time during the preceding academic year and is registered for the summer is considered full time during the summer regardless of summer credit load. Students in residence but not registered for summer credit may register for "990: doctoral summer in residence" or "890: master's summer in residence" and will not be subject to summer tuition charges.

Study in Absentia or Special Status

In certain circumstances it may be desirable for a matriculated graduate student to engage in full-time or part-time study or research for a limited period of time at a location away from campus while registered for graduate credit or dissertation status at the University of Rochester. All such requests must be made in writing. Advance approval by the associate dean of graduate studies may be required.

Credit Hour Policy

All University of Rochester degree and certificate programs are approved by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The University of Rochester's credit hour calculations for degree and certificate programs follow NYSED guidelines—which are based on the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *credit hour*.

See the University's credit hour policy and compliance page for a more frequently updated description of credit hour policy.

The faculty in each school is responsible for all aspects of the curriculum and degree program requirements. Each school has a faculty curriculum committee that reviews proposed new and revised courses and degree programs, including the credit hours associated with each.

Credit Hour Definition

All courses and degree programs at the University of Rochester must comply with credit hour policies of the New York State Commissioner of Education Regulations (NYSED) and the United States Department of Education definition of credit hour.

Grades

Grades for graduate students are reported through one of two systems. One is A (excellent), A–, B+, B (good), B–, C (poor), and E (failure). The other is S (satisfactory) and E (failure). (See the bulletin of the Eastman School of Music for the grading system in effect for that school.)

The grade S may not be used for any student in a course section in which the other students are graded on the A, A–, B+, B, B–, C, E scale (except independent study, research and internship courses).

Minimum grades for courses or research work carrying graduate credit are C or S. C is, however, considered to be a substandard grade and will have raised the question of the adequacy of the student's academic performance. In those circumstances the student's record must be reviewed by the associate dean of graduate studies (in the School of Nursing, the Student Affairs Committee) in consultation with the student and the program director. Individual schools may have established higher minimum standards.

The following grades are also assigned to courses: I (incomplete) and W (withdrawal).

Courses or research for which a student has registered, and which are graded I (incomplete) must be completed within the time period stated by the professor. It is the responsibility of the student to complete the work; the professor may replace the grade of incomplete with E (failure) or with a passing grade at any time. Retroactive dropping of credit hours after the conclusion of a semester is not permitted if the change affects the student's time status (full-time status changes to part-time status) for that particular semester.

X-time is defined as neither full time nor part time but is used to maintain a student's place in their graduate program so that they will not be considered by the University as withdrawn. Under X-time registration categories (see also 995/895 under Continuing Registration, below), students are not expected to be doing active work toward the degree.

Leaves of Absence

Please be reminded to refer to the university's Leave of Absence policy, as it applies to all students at the University. Understanding this policy is essential for managing your academic responsibilities effectively. To read the policy, visit the University Leave of Absence and University Withdrawal web page.

Continuing Registration in Master's Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation Phase

All students must maintain continuous enrollment. If enrollment has been allowed to lapse, students must pay

the appropriate fees for unregistered semesters in order to complete the degree.

Master's or doctoral students who have completed all credit requirements but not yet completed the final thesis or dissertation may register, with the approval of the advisor and the associate dean of graduate education, for one of the categories below.

Thesis/Dissertation Status

A student transitions to the thesis/dissertation status when the school or program formally determines that the student's primary academic activity is focused on completion of the thesis or dissertation. This determination by the school or program may occur even if the student remains enrolled in additional coursework or research credits required by the degree program or approved by the school. Authority for establishing the criteria and timing of this transition resides with the individual school or program, consistent with its academic requirements, degree milestones, and governing policies.

When credit enrollment alone does not fully represent the student's academic activity, thesis/dissertation equivalent status (full-time equivalent, half-time equivalent, or part-time equivalent) is determined based on the student's level of academic engagement and progress toward completion of degree requirements. Equivalent status reflects engagement in activities such as research, scholarly or creative work, writing, data collection or analysis, preparation of the thesis or dissertation, completion of required milestones, defense preparation, or other activities directly related to degree completion. Equivalent status is not determined by employment hours, assistantship responsibilities, or other work obligations unrelated to completion of degree requirements.

Students registered in a thesis/dissertation equivalent status are assessed applicable tuition and fees consistent with University policies and their registration status. Additional coursework or research credit enrollment, when required by the program or approved by the school, does not by itself alter a student's thesis/dissertation status.

Students should note that registration in a half-time or part-time thesis/dissertation equivalent status combined with additional credit-bearing coursework may affect the student's overall enrollment status and the application of University policies, fees, benefits, or other requirements associated with full-time enrollments

Definitions

1. **Thesis/dissertation status:**
   The academic status of a student whose primary academic activity is focused on completion of the thesis or dissertation, as determined by the student's school or program.
2. **Thesis/dissertation equivalent status:**
   The enrollment status assigned when a student's credit enrollment does not fully represent their academic engagement in thesis/dissertation completion. Equivalent status may be full-time, half-time, or part-time and is based on the student's level of academic engagement and progress toward completion of degree requirements.

Related Policies and Resources

Thesis/dissertation status may intersect with other University policies, requirements, and services. The resources below provide additional information about areas that may be affected by thesis/dissertation status. Students may visit the websites below for more information or contact the appropriate office directly with questions about their individual circumstances.

- **Tuition and fees:** University Bursar website
- **Financial aid:** University Financial Aid website
- **Health insurance:** University Health Service website
- **International students:** International Services Office website

Full-Time Thesis/Dissertation Equivalent Status

Students in full-time thesis/dissertation equivalent status are engaged in academic activities at a level comparable to full-time study. Full-time engagement may include sustained research, scholarly or creative work, writing, data collection or analysis, preparation of the thesis or dissertation, completion of required academic milestones, defense preparation, or other activities directly related to completion of degree requirements.

Requirement: Students must demonstrate full-time engagement in academic activities through approved on-campus registration or approved in absentia study in the United States or abroad, as permitted by program requirements.

Responsibility for monitoring and assessing academic progress toward degree completion rests with the student's designated academic advisor, defined as the faculty advisor for doctoral students and the program or academic advisor for master's students, as assigned by the program.

Full-time planning charts (pdf): https://www.rochester.edu/graduate-education/regulations-guide/assets/pdf/grad-planning-chart_fulltime.pdf

Half-Time Thesis/Dissertation Equivalent Status

Students in half-time thesis/dissertation equivalent status are engaged in academic activity at a level equivalent to at least half-time study. Half-time engagement may include ongoing research, scholarly or creative work, writing, data collection or analysis, preparation of the thesis or dissertation, completion of required academic milestones, defense preparation, or other activities directly related to advancement toward degree completion.

Requirement: Students must demonstrate half-time engagement through approved registration that reflects a reduced but substantial level of academic activity, including thesis/dissertation research or other program-approved activities, through on-campus registration or approved in absentia study in the United States or abroad, as permitted by program requirements.

Responsibility for monitoring and assessing academic progress toward degree completion rests with the student's designated academic advisor, defined as the faculty advisor for doctoral students and the program or academic advisor for master's students, as assigned by the program.

Half-time planning charts (pdf): https://www.rochester.edu/graduate-education/regulations-guide/assets/pdf/grad-planning-chart_halftime.pdf

Part-Time Thesis/Dissertation Equivalent Status

Students in part-time thesis/dissertation equivalent status are engaged in academic activity at a level equivalent to at least part-time study. Part-time engagement may include limited research, scholarly or creative work, writing, data collection or analysis, preparation of the thesis or dissertation, completion of required academic milestones, or other activities directly related to degree completion.

Requirement: Students must demonstrate part-time engagement through approved registration that reflects a limited level of academic activity, including thesis/dissertation research or other program-approved activities, through on-campus registration or approved in absentia study in the United States or abroad, as permitted by program requirements.

Responsibility for monitoring and assessing academic progress toward degree completion rests with the student's designated academic advisor, defined as the faculty advisor for doctoral students and the program or academic advisor for master's students, as assigned by the program.

Part-time planning charts (pdf): https://www.rochester.edu/graduate-education/regulations-guide/assets/pdf/grad-planning-chart_parttime.pdf

Refund of the Semester Fee in the Final Semester

The refund schedule below applies to all but Simon Business School students, who should consult program handbooks. If the final corrected copy of the dissertation has been submitted and all degree requirements have been met midway through a semester, the student is eligible for a refund of the current fee for continuing enrollment according to the following schedule:

- 75% during weeks 1–4 of the semester
- 50% during weeks 5–8 of the semester
- 25% during weeks 9–11 of the semester

Completion of all degree requirements includes completion of all required credits and courses, successful defense of master’s or doctoral thesis when required, approval of completed major revisions when required, upload of corrected PhD thesis to ProQuest, UR Graduate Education acceptance of that upload, and completion of required forms and surveys. The form for a refund is available from the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Education for PhD students and from the office of the associate dean of graduate education

for master's students. There are no refunds of health fees or health insurance premiums.

Conferral of Degrees

Degrees are conferred by the Board of Trustees at its regular meetings (August, October, December, March, and May).

Policies Concerning the PhD Degree

Administration of PhD Degree Programs

The degree Doctor of Philosophy is awarded by the University of Rochester primarily for completion of scholarly work, research, or outstanding creative work satisfactorily described in a dissertation. It is assumed that recipients of this degree are well versed in the subject matter and research techniques of a specific discipline and have demonstrated breadth of interest and originality of outlook that indicate promise of success in future research and teaching.

University Administration of PhD Program

Each school of the University has a Committee on Graduate Education or the equivalent, consisting of representatives of departments and programs offering graduate degrees. The duties of these committees include reviewing the administrative practices of the departments/programs and the school with respect to requirements and training for the PhD and advising the associate dean of graduate education about the work toward the PhD degree.

The University has a Council on Graduate Education composed of:

- Representatives of departments and programs in the University authorized to offer the PhD degree;
- The deans or associate deans for graduate education of each school or officer whose duties most closely correspond to this role;
- The provost of the University;
- The University dean of graduate education, who serves as chair.

The principal functions of the council are:

- To decide on the basis of quality considerations which departments shall be authorized to give work toward the PhD degree and to authorize or restrict, as necessary, the different PhD programs.
- To scrutinize the policies, standards, and facilities for work for the degree Doctor of Philosophy throughout the University to ensure a minimum quality standard is met and to make reports on the findings and recommendations to the provost and president. In performance of this function, the council may engage scholars from other universities.
- Upon nominations by the faculties or other authorized agencies in the several schools, to recommend to the provost for transmission to the Board of Trustees the candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

A Steering Committee of the Council, composed of the University dean of graduate education and the dean or associate dean of graduate education (or equivalent) of each school, advises the council in the performance of its functions, exchanges information, and adjusts procedures in the schools to enable administrative uniformity as needed.

The vice provost and University dean of graduate education is appointed by the trustees on recommendation of the provost and president. The vice provost and University dean of graduate education

- Is the University spokesperson in matters of graduate education
- Presides at meetings of the council and the steering committee
- May serve ex officio as a member of the committee established in any school for the conduct of the MA, the MS, or the PhD degree
- Appoints (upon the advice of each associate dean of graduate education) all committees for the final oral examination for the PhD degree
- The University dean of graduate education or a delegate presides at all such examinations as chair

Established Interdisciplinary PhD Programs

For an established formalized interdisciplinary program (e.g., visual and cultural studies, neuroscience, materials science), a standing committee of faculty with formal affiliation to that program acts as a “department” and supervises the program requirements for its students.

Admission to PhD Programs

Policies on admission to graduate programs described earlier in these regulations apply to PhD applicants. In addition, the following policies apply.

Financial Awards

Many students are able to pursue graduate education by receiving financial aid from the University. Students should also apply for fellowships granted by private foundations, the federal government (e.g., the National Science Foundation), and by various state organizations.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students to inform the Financial Aid Office of aid they receive from non-University sources.

Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships

The University awards a large number of fellowships, assistantships, and scholarships to help graduate students meet the cost of education. Whether the funds for these awards come ultimately from individuals, corporations, foundations, government agencies, or the University itself, the amount and nature of the awards are decided by officers of the University.

Awards are made for various periods of time, and all awards are contingent upon satisfactory academic progress. Awards may be terminated at any time if academic performance is unsatisfactory. For those fellowships awarded directly to students from non-University sources, such as foundations or government agencies, the term of the grant is up to the donor. Nevertheless, holders of non-University fellowships may be terminated from a degree program during the term of the award if they do not maintain satisfactory academic standing.

Graduate fellowships are intended to further the recipients’ education, and recipients are expected to devote full time to their studies and to any required teaching, research, or training.

PhD Funded at Admission (PFAA)

PhD Funded at Admission (PFAA) is an internal classification for PhD students who, at admission, accepted a funding package that includes full tuition support and a stipend. PFAA status applies during periods of full-time enrollment in the PhD program. During these periods, full tuition support continues regardless of changes in stipend funding. If a student transitions to part-time enrollment or takes an approved leave of absence, PFAA status is suspended. If a student is approved by the associate dean of graduate education in the appropriate school (or the associate dean's designee) to return to full-time enrollment, PFAA status is reinstated with tuition support resuming at that time. PFAA applies only during full-time enrollment and is not applied retroactively to prior enrollment periods. This classification is used for administrative and reporting purposes and does not itself define or guarantee stipend level or duration.

Graduate Stipends

The University of Rochester establishes and regularly reviews a university-wide minimum stipend for all full-time PhD students receiving full tuition remission and institutional funding during the period covered by their offer letters.

Faculty Eligibility to Enroll in PhD Programs

No person holding a full-time appointment as assistant professor or higher at the University of Rochester may be awarded an earned degree of Doctor of Philosophy from this University. An exception to this rule may occur only if the faculty member’s appointment is in a department other than the one in which the degree is earned and only if that appointment is warranted by the completion of a separate Doctor of Philosophy or other appropriate graduate degree. Faculty members holding the rank of instructor and non-faculty full-time employees of the University may pursue studies leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy only by special permission of the appropriate school’s Committee on Graduate Education.

Full-Time Residency Requirement

A minimum of one year (two consecutive semesters, excluding summers) in residence while enrolled as a full-time student is required. Doctoral Dissertation ("999") may not be used to meet the one-year residency requirement. Further requirements may be completed by full-time residence either during the academic year or during the summer. Departmental/program requirements, however, may necessitate continuous residence until work for the degree is completed.

Part-Time Study

Ordinarily, graduate students may pursue work leading to the degree Doctor of Philosophy only if they are full-time students.

Permission to pursue a part-time plan of study is at the option of the department/program, subject to the approval of the Committee on Graduate Education of that school. Part-time plans of study are subject to the following restrictions:

1. *A minimum of two years (four consecutive semesters) in residence while enrolled as a part-time student is required,*
2. The minimum registration will be two courses, each carrying at least three credit hours per calendar year (however, departments/programs may establish a higher minimum registration requirement), and
3. A student receiving grades lower than B (or S) in more than one-quarter of the courses for a given academic year may not be permitted to continue in the part-time program. *Students should be aware that schools, departments, or programs may have more stringent requirements regarding minimum grade expectations.*

Program of Study

At least 90 credit hours of study beyond the bachelor's degree are required.

A tentative program of study leading to the degree Doctor of Philosophy must be prepared by the student in consultation with his or her advisor. This should be done before admission to candidacy for doctoral studies. This program must include the following:

- A list of those courses for which the student must receive graduate credit. Other courses deemed desirable but not essential need not be listed.
- The specific foreign language(s), if any, in which the student must show competence (see below).
- The dissertation title, if known, or area of study in which the dissertation is expected to be written.
- Name of the research director.

The program of study must be approved by the department chair/program director or a designated representative and then transmitted to the associate dean of graduate education for approval. Changes in a student's program are made by the same procedure.

The program of study will constitute the formal requirements that must be met by the student before completion of work for the degree.

Foreign Language Requirements

Subject to the approval of the appropriate Committee on Graduate Education, each department/program may designate its foreign language requirements for the PhD degree and specify the method of testing. Specific language requirements may be set for individual students by the department/program, subject to review by the associate dean of graduate education. Each student should consult with his or her advisor concerning language requirements.

The basic language requirement, If any, must be met before the candidate may be permitted to take the qualifying examination.

Time Limit for Degrees

All work for the doctoral degree, including the final oral examination, must be completed within seven years of full-time equivalent study from date of initial registration, except that a student who enters with a master's degree or its equivalent for which the full 30 credit hours is accepted in the doctoral program must complete all work within six years from date of initial registration. Schools may have more stringent requirements.

Students who for good reasons have been unable to complete a program within the above stated limits may, upon recommendation of the faculty advisor and the department chair/program director, petition the associate dean (in the School of Nursing, the PhD subcommittee) for an extension of time. Such extensions, if granted, will be of limited duration and must be reapproved at least annually. Requests for extensions beyond ten (10) years must be approved by the University dean of graduate education.

PhD Student Parental Accommodation Policy

The PhD Student Parental Accommodation Policy provides parental accommodations specifically to support the academic progress and responsibilities of eligible, full-time PhD students immediately following birth or adoption of a child. During this period of parental accommodation, students remain enrolled full-time and retain all associated benefits; this period is not considered a leave of absence and does not affect enrollment status. The accommodation temporarily adjusts academic, research, and teaching responsibilities to support a smooth transition into and from parental responsibilities. Students should refer to the full policy for eligibility criteria and further details. The terms of the full policy control parental accommodations for PhD students.

PhD Dissertation

Pre-Dissertation

Qualifying Examination

All PhD students must take a Qualifying Examination (QE) to demonstrate they are prepared to advance to candidacy, undertake independent research, and begin the dissertation. All PhD programs administer a qualifying examination as part of the PhD program requirements. The qualifying examination may be either written, oral, or both, at the discretion of the department/program, and must be passed at least six months before the dissertation oral defense is taken. The appropriate associate dean appoints the committee to conduct a qualifying examination which consists of at least three full-time faculty (four for the School of Medicine and Dentistry). A vote to pass the candidate must be approved by a majority of the designated members of the committee. The votes of all committee members are recorded. The office of the associate dean must be notified at least two weeks before a qualifying examination is to be held, and passage or failure must be reported within one month after the examination. After a failure, a second qualifying examination may be taken if in accordance with program or school policy. A third examination may be taken only upon the recommendation of the appropriate Committee on Graduate Education and with the approval of the associate dean or equivalent. In the School of Nursing and the School of Medicine and Dentistry, a third examination is not given.

Admission to Candidacy

Attaining candidacy status signifies a doctoral student's attainment of a level of proficiency within a discipline that enables the generation of an original research contribution in their field. The certification by the associate dean of a school, following the successful completion of the qualifying examination, officially designates the student as a candidate for the PhD degree. At the request of the candidate, the University dean of graduate education is authorized to issue a certificate validating this significant academic milestone.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

The pivotal role of the dissertation advisory committee lies in guiding the candidate through the intricate process of preparing the dissertation for the final oral defense. Central to its purpose is the facilitation of the dissertation project's development and the critical evaluation of the dissertation's acceptability in fulfilling the stringent requirements for the doctoral degree. Committee members collectively shoulder the responsibility of ensuring the candidate produces scholarship of the highest caliber. This involves advising the student on research conduct, meticulously reviewing drafts of the dissertation, and offering insightful suggestions for potential enhancements. The constitution of the dissertation committee is carefully designed to provide both independent evaluation and expert guidance on the dissertation.

Formation of the dissertation advisory committee occurs at least six months prior to the scheduled oral defense. This lead time is strategically allotted to facilitate comprehensive discussions on the dissertation,

ensuring a thorough and collaborative preparation process.

In this document, a ‘program’ refers to the graduate faculty capable of advising on a dissertation within a specific academic subject of the PhD degree. In certain instances, the term “program” is used interchangeably with “department,” particularly in cases where the department exclusively houses a single PhD program, but for interdisciplinary programs and departments that house more than one PhD program, it is more complex. In interdisciplinary degree programs with faculty from multiple departments, the school hosting the program defines ‘internal’ and ‘external’ for the final oral examination committee. In departments that house more than one PhD program, the school hosting the program defines ‘internal’ and ‘external’ for the final oral examination committee.

Dissertation

The submission of a dissertation stands as an imperative requirement for the conferral of the PhD degree. A dissertation is a formal document or scholarly product wherein a candidate meticulously presents their original research contribution. While the content of the dissertation adheres to the scholarly standards of the specific discipline and is guided by the dissertation committee, the candidate assumes a primary role in conducting the research and authoring the dissertation. The final phases of the doctoral degree completion process fall under the purview of the University Office of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. These phases encompass the preparation of the dissertation for oral defense, the actual conduct of the oral defense, and the subsequent submission of the final copy of the dissertation.

Policy on Generative A.I. in the Dissertation

Students intending to utilize generative AI tools in their dissertation, thesis, capstone project or culminating experience must consistently obtain and formally document unambiguous approval for the intended uses in advance from their supervisor(s) and supervisory committee.

Innovative uses of generative AI, such as predictive text and image generation, can enhance scholarly activities and research integrity, while graduate students and faculty uphold high academic standards. Therefore, the utilization of generative AI tools in the process of doctoral dissertation and master’s thesis research and writing, master’s capstone projects, or culminating experiences must always occur with full transparency. This includes providing a description of any employment of generative AI in the research or writing process, along with appropriate citation. Students are required to include a disclaimer in their dissertation, such as: ‘Generative AI was used for XYZ [listing tasks such as writing text, generating code for graphs, etc.].

If generative AI is utilized, it also becomes the student’s responsibility to ensure that any sources potentially utilized by the AI, without citation, are properly cited within the student’s work.

Unauthorized or unacknowledged use of generative AI tools for scholarly graduate work at the University of Rochester may be considered an offence under the Academic Integrity Policy (see section in these Regulations and University Policies Concerning Graduate Studies) and the University Policy on Misconduct in Scholarship and Research.

Note: Schools may have more stringent guidelines.

Warning: Commercial products (i.e. ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini) bears the risk of the data being considered public domain and generated material can’t be copyrighted without transformative human input.

See also https://www.rochester.edu/provost/gen-ai-education/

Dissertation Oral Defense

The oral defense of the dissertation represents the institutional commitment to rigorously assess a candidate’s scholarly contributions and ascertain their fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD degree. This pivotal event marks the culmination of a candidate’s doctoral studies, serving as the paramount intellectual encounter wherein discerning individuals dedicate meticulous attention to the candidate’s ideas and/or body of work.

The appointment of the Dissertation Oral Defense Committee is sanctioned by the University Dean of Graduate Education, guided by the counsel of the relevant Associate Dean of Graduate Education. Typically, this committee comprises the members of the original Dissertation Advisory Committee that oversaw the candidate’s thesis research.

The constitution of the Dissertation Oral Defense Committee necessitates the inclusion of the following

individuals; each vested with the authority to cast a vote during the dissertation oral defense.

The constitution of the Dissertation Oral Defense Committee adheres to the following criteria, ensuring a comprehensive and impartial evaluation.

Voting Membership Limit

The committee may have a maximum of five members with voting rights. However, additional members, without voting privileges, are permitted to participate in the proceedings. Please see notes below regarding co-advisors.

Internal Faculty Members

A minimum of two faculty members internal to the program at the University of Rochester. One of which is the advisor. If the student has two advisors, they will both serve as internal members of the committee, regardless of appointment.

External Faculty Member

At least one faculty member external to the program, hailing from either the University of Rochester or another accredited university.

Chair of the Dissertation Oral Defense

A faculty member from the University of Rochester, external to the program, and without a significant scholarly relationship with the candidate or other committee members, will preside as the chair during the dissertation oral defense. The chair is considered neutral party and is neither an internal nor external member of the committee.

Ratio of Internal to External Members

The ratio of external to internal committee members with voting privileges should not exceed 50 percent. This stipulation ensures that either an equivalent number or a majority of committee members are internal to the program or department.

Based on the criteria above, there are three options for voting committee composition.

- Two internal members, one of which is the advisor, and one external member and the chair – 4 voting members.
- Two internal members, one of which is the advisor, and two external members and –e chair – 5 voting members.
- Three internal members, one of which is the advisor, and one external member and the chair – 5 voting members.

For co-advised students:

- Two co-advisors (both internal), one external member, and the chair – 4 voting members.
- Two co-advisors (both internal), one additional internal member, one external member, and the chair – 5 voting members.
- Two co-advisors (both internal), two external members, and the chair – 5 voting members.
- Two co-advisors (both internal) one additional internal member, two external members, and the chair – 6 voting members.

To view an illustration of these committees, we have developed a committee matrix: https://www.rochester.edu/graduate-education/phd-students/phd-completion-process/committee-matrix/.

These guidelines have been established to guarantee a judicious and balanced assessment of the candidate's work during the dissertation oral defense.

In the context of dissertation advisory or oral defense committees, the term "faculty" pertains to individuals holding an earned doctorate and occupying a full-time, tenured or tenure-eligible position at the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor within an accredited university. University of Rochester faculty members, encompassing instructional, clinical, emeritus, and research roles, may seek inclusion on the petition-approved roster of faculty eligible to participate in PhD dissertation committees by petitioning* the University Dean of Graduate Education (Link to petition: https://forms.office.com/r/b2SK8MGZBQ).

Some petitions happen infrequently and do not have a documented practice in place. Therefore, an email petition is required. The email petition should include relevant information to the request. Other petitions, because of their frequency, have a formalized process, by which a form needs to be completed with very specific questions that need to be answered. Those petitions which have a process defined are noted in this document with an asterisk (*).

Key points regarding the composition and roles of the committee include:

The pivotal role of overseeing the final oral examination committee is entrusted to the University Dean of Graduate Education or a designated representative, who assumes the position of chair. The chair's responsibility encompasses the vigilant promotion of fairness and rigor throughout the defense proceedings. Distanced from affiliations with the advisor's and student's working group, program, the chair's impartial stance minimizes pre-existing judgments on the candidate's work and mitigates administrative influence in the defense process. Notably, the chair holds voting membership status within the final oral examination committee. This role is ineligible for petitions.

The primary dissertation advisor must be a tenured or tenure-eligible faculty member at the University of Rochester, holding the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor. Irrespective of their primary appointment, the dissertation advisor is always an internal member. However, they are ineligible to serve as the chairperson of the final oral defense or as the external member of the oral defense committee for their advisee.

If there is a co-advisor, The dissertation co-advisor must be a tenured or tenure-eligible faculty member, holding the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor. Irrespective of their primary appointment, the dissertation advisor is always an internal member. However, they are ineligible to serve as the chairperson of the final oral defense or as the external member of the oral defense committee.

Sixth Member for Co-Advised Students

When a student has formally appointed co-advisors, both individuals count toward the required committee membership. In these cases, the committee may include six members, with one co-advisor effectively serving as the sixth. This structure supports disciplinary breadth and meets representation requirements (e.g., external department or area of expertise). No special approval is required; the full committee, including both co-advisors, should be documented on the standard committee composition form.

The committee's internal members play a vital role in guaranteeing the thoroughness and adherence of the candidate's dissertation defense to program requirements. These members, who have in-depth knowledge of doctoral-level training, research, and scholarship in the candidate's research area, must hold their primary appointment in the University program offering the PhD program or be core University faculty designated for an interdisciplinary PhD program. However, it's important to note that the advisor/co-advisor policy takes precedence over this general policy.

The external member is required to have expertise in the candidate's research field, enabling them to comprehend, critique, and contribute to the dissertation's quality and significance. This member may not hold their primary appointment in the University program offering the PhD. Candidates are encouraged to include an external member from outside the University of Rochester. Such individuals must petition* to be on the committee during the registration of the oral defense (Link to petition: https://forms.office.com/r/NWnFURXUUx).

Continuation of Service for Departing Faculty

Faculty members who leave a program, or the University, may serve as internal members on a PhD dissertation committee for up to 36 months from their date of departure. If the program wishes a faculty member departing from the university to continue serving as an **internal committee member**, the program should retain the individual in an appropriate affiliated status (e.g., adjunct or temporary academic appointment) and provide a modest stipend or compensation consistent with institutional policy.

To serve during this period, all the following are required:

- The faculty member served on the student's qualifying exam committee or dissertation advisory committee before leaving the program.
- The program director approves the faculty member as an internal committee member.
- The faculty member meets any additional requirements set by the school.
- The faculty member has a written agreement on file with the program at the time of departure. This agreement must be included in the dissertation approval process.

Objective Evaluation and Professional Relationships

To ensure an unbiased assessment of the dissertation, committee members are prohibited from having intimate or close family relationships with each other. Exceptions may be considered only when a documented COI Management plan exists to manage professional relationships, safeguarding the interests of all parties involved. This document is filed at the time of creation of the online record and will be reviewed by the University Graduate Education Office. See the sample COI Management Plan Document for an example.

Additional Members for Enhanced Quality and Rigor

Beyond the mandatory four members, additional individuals whose inclusion significantly contributes to the quality and rigor of the dissertation research and oral defense are permissible. These members, possessing a doctorate, are not obligated to hold a faculty position, either within the University or elsewhere. Approval for external committee members that are also external to the University must be sought through a petition* to the University Dean of Graduate Education before scheduling the dissertation oral defense. The first of these members will participate with voting privileges, while any subsequent additional members will serve without a vote (link to petition).

Nomination of the Chair for the Final Oral Examination

In the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Hajim School of Engineering, Medicine and Dentistry, and the Eastman School of Music, the chair is not allowed to hold a primary faculty appointment within the PhD program. In the Schools of Nursing, Warner, and Simon, the chair may be a faculty member within the school but must operate outside the defined area of specialty for both the candidate and the advisor.

The senior official overseeing graduate education within each school is tasked with identifying a chair for every PhD oral defense within that school. The selection process, determined by the school, ensures a school specific approach to chair appointments. Some schools have instituted a policy whereby the selection of the chair occurs either at the program level or at the level of the defending student, with approval flowing from the program, through the school, and subsequently to the University. Please check with your program to verify the process for selecting the chair.

Subsequent to the appointment, the selected individual, the candidate, and other committee members are duly notified. The candidate bears the responsibility of furnishing the chair and all committee members with copies of the dissertation identical to the version submitted for registration, to be utilized during the oral defense.

Registering the PhD Dissertation for the Final Oral Examination

To initiate the final oral examination process, the PhD candidate must establish a comprehensive record within the University's online PhD processing system. This record includes details such as the planned defense date and time, committee members, and other pertinent information and if applicable COI Management Plan and non-standard committee members approvals. Simultaneously, all relevant documents, including the dissertation, must be uploaded to this record. Subsequently, online approvals for the dissertation defense are obtained from all inside and outside committee members, the program director, and the school's graduate office. This crucial step must be completed at least five business days before the defense date, allowing for the requisite final approval from the University Graduate Education office. Review the provided website for guidance on school dissertation timelines and always consult your program to ascertain any supplementary timelines.

Dissertation Defense Scheduling

Final approval from the University Graduate Education office signifies the formal registration of the dissertation for defense. This approval can be granted on any business day, with the exception of the week between Christmas and New Year's Day and a designated period in late April, as specified in the PhD calendar distributed to all graduate education officials across schools.

In the event of necessary formatting changes, the office staff in the respective school and University Graduate Education will indicate these changes on a version of the dissertation added to the student's online PhD defense record.

The final oral examination cannot be conducted until at least five business days have passed since

the dissertation's registration in the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Education. It is the student's responsibility to align their plans accordingly, and deadlines can be confirmed with the office of the school's associate dean of graduate education.

In preparation for the registration process, the candidate must distribute copies of the dissertation to all members of the final examination committee at least two weeks before initiating the online registration. Committee members retain the right to decline approval if they have not had at least two weeks for review. Additionally, a copy of the same version must be provided to the appointed dissertation chair. Once the dissertation is registered, no further changes can be distributed to committee members until after the final oral examination, or the examination will be canceled.

Procedures for Final Oral Examination (PhD Dissertation Defense)

The final oral examination occurs following the completion of all other degree requirements, but not sooner than six months after the qualifying examination. This examination, covering the dissertation subject and the related field, places emphasis on recent and significant developments in the field. Its purpose is to assess the proposal of a substantial thesis in the dissertation and evaluate the candidate's ability to defend it with appropriate and effective arguments, supported by relevant and convincing evidence.

The presentation and defense of the dissertation serves as the pinnacle of the PhD degree. The final oral examination is not just a judgment on a single scholarly work but implicitly reflects on the overall quality of the candidate's graduate education. Given its broader significance, the committee must ensure the successful defense of a substantial thesis.

A unanimous vote of approval from the final oral examining committee is required. In the case of a single dissenting vote, the matter will be presented to the University Council on Graduate Education for a decision. A candidate failing the final examination is granted one repeat examination unless a majority vote from the examining committee recommends against it. Regulations for committee structure, timing of registration before defense, and other aspects for a repeat examination mirror those applied to the initial examination.

For candidates passing their defense with no/minor revisions, the revisions must be completed within three months from the defense date. If the defense requires major revisions, these must be completed within six months from the defense date. Delays beyond these time limits necessitate a proposed timeline for completion, which must be reviewed and approved by the University Dean of Graduate Education. Note: schools may have more stringent deadlines.

Remote Defense Policy

At the discretion of the faculty member responsible for the administration of a PhD program, and with the unanimous agreement of all committee members and the student, oral defense examinations may be conducted either in person or online via high-quality electronic audio and video conferencing. All members of the oral defense committee are expected to participate synchronously. Committee members may participate either live or remotely. If the defense is conducted remotely, instructions for accessing online exams must be made available to all members of the oral defense committee via the PhD Completion system. Therefore, online provisions for the defense must be set at the time of the registration of the PhD Dissertation for the Final Oral Examination.

If held in person, exams must take place on the Eastman School of Music Campus, Medical Center/ Middle Campus, Mount Hope Campus, River Campus, South Campus, or at a satellite campus location (including the Memorial Art Gallery).

Post-Defense

Submission of Final Dissertation

After successful completion of the final oral examination, the candidate must complete all required final revisions, including formatting changes as indicated by the University graduate education office staff. If the defense committee mandates revisions, the individual designated on the final PhD Oral Examination Report must approve them before submission to the University graduate education office. For major revisions, the University Graduate Education office will ensure that the defense committee's requirements are met by contacting the designated person identified by the committee. The candidate must upload the final, approved dissertation copy to the UMI/ProQuest website and notify the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education upon completion. If the

school or program requires paper copies, the candidate must provide them.

Each PhD candidate must also submit a completed authorization form for including the dissertation in UR Research, the University's digital research repository. The student will receive instructions and the authorization form via email on the next business day after the final oral examination.

The PhD oral defense committee determines whether a candidate passes with no/minor revisions, passes with major revisions, or fails. Candidates who pass with no or minor revisions must complete them within three months of the defense date, while those with major revisions must finish them within six months. The University does not permit delays beyond these limits unless the University Dean of Graduate Education approves a formal request for an extended completion timeline. Note: Schools may enforce stricter deadlines.

Clinical psychology students completing a year-long internship in their final year follow an alternative timeline for submitting their dissertation to ProQuest. However, they must still meet the submission deadlines to remain eligible for their desired degree conferral date. This policy aligns with peer clinical psychology PhD programs.

Dissertation Embargo Policy

The University of Rochester adheres to open access publishing principles, digitally archiving the completed dissertations of all PhD graduate students. The university archives these dissertations, allowing access via UR Research and has partnered with ProQuest for wider dissemination. Students retain ownership of the copyright for their work.

Students have the option to request an embargo on access to the full text of the dissertation through UR Research at the time of submission to the Office of University Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. An embargo on full access allows users to view the title, program, URL, and the date when the full text will become available.

At the time of submission, students may choose an initial embargo period of up to two years. Up to two renewals of the embargo period may be granted at the discretion of the Office of University Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. The total embargo period, including approved renewals, will not exceed six years from the date of submission. Requests for extension must be directed to UnivGradEducation@UR.Rochester.edu.

For those wishing to extend the embargo on their dissertation in ProQuest, contact ProQuest directly. Extensions will be subject to ProQuest's then-current policy and procedures.

Policies Concerning the MA and MS Degrees

Administration of MA and MS Degrees

The master's degree is awarded in arts, sciences, music, engineering, nursing, business, and education. Certain policies for MA and MS degree programs are common across programs and are detailed in this document. All administration of work for master's degrees and recommendation of candidates for these degrees is vested in the associate dean of graduate education and the Committee on Graduate Education in each school.

Program of Study

Each full-time master's student must submit a proposed program of study to the associate dean of graduate education before the end of the second term. Each part-time master's student must submit a proposed program of study upon the completion of 9 or 12 hours of graduate credit or as determined by the school.

The program of study, to be formulated with the assistance of the faculty advisor and approved by the associate dean, is expected to form a consistent plan of work pursued with a definite aim. Courses in another department closely related to but outside the student's major field of interest should not ordinarily exceed 12 hours of credit, and the candidate must have had thorough undergraduate preparation for such work.

Two plans of study are available to students working for most MA and MS degrees; the principal difference between them is that under one plan (formerly known as *Plan A*) a thesis is required, while under the other (formerly *Plan B*) a thesis is not required, but in most departments a comprehensive examination must be passed or completion of an appropriate special project is required.

Students may not switch from one type of program to the other without written approval from the associate dean of graduate education.

A minimum of 30 semester hours of correlated work of graduate character is required, together with such other study as may be necessary to complete the student's preparation in the chosen field and bring it to the required qualitative level. Minimum requirements are determined by the department/program concerned, with the approval of the associate dean of graduate education.

Part-Time Study

Students admitted to master's degree programs on a part-time basis must follow continuous programs of study. The associate dean of graduate education may disapprove a part-time program if the nature of the proposed study makes such a program inadvisable.

Time Limit for MS or MA Degree

A candidate must complete all the requirements for the master's degree within five years (seven years at the Simon School) from the time of initial registration for graduate study and must maintain continuous enrollment for each term after matriculation. Except in the School of Nursing, the five-year maximum period will be reduced at the rate of one term for each unit of three hours taken prior to matriculation at this University and applied toward the requirements for the master's degree.

Students who for good reason have been unable to complete a program within five years may, upon recommendation by the faculty advisor and department chair, petition the associate dean of graduate education for an extension of time. Such extension, if granted, will be of limited duration.

Requirements for Thesis-based Masters

A thesis-based masters (formerly Plan A) requires the writing of a thesis based on independent research and the passing of an oral examination on the thesis.

Program of Study for Thesis-based Masters (formerly Plan A)

A thesis is required in each program for the master of arts or master of science degree under the thesis-based plan (formerly Plan A). The thesis and the research upon which it is based represent a minimum of 6 and ordinarily a maximum of 12 credit hours in reading or research. In certain cases, and with the prior approval of the associate dean of graduate education, the credit for thesis research may exceed 12 hours.

Preparation of MS or MA Thesis

The thesis must show independent work based in part upon original material. It must present evidence that the candidate possesses ability to plan study over a prolonged period and to present in an orderly fashion the results of this study. The thesis should display the student's thorough acquaintance with the literature of a limited field.

"A Manual for Graduate Students: Formatting the Dissertation" is also used to prepare master's theses. Copies of the booklet are available from the office of the associate dean of graduate education or on the University's website.

Registration of MS or MA Thesis

The thesis must be registered with the office of the associate dean of graduate education and copies given to the members of the examining committee at least one week prior to the oral examination (two weeks in the School of Medicine and Dentistry). The final examination must be held prior to the date set by the associate dean of graduate education.

Submission of Copies

The school or program may require printed and/or electronic copies of the final thesis as a condition of completion of the degree program.

Final Oral Examination for MS or MA under Thesis Option

Each candidate must pass a final oral examination before a committee of at least three members of the faculty appointed by the associate dean of graduate education (four for the School of Medicine and Dentistry). One member will be from a department other than that in which the student has done the major portion of the work. No candidate may appear for the final examination until permission is received from the faculty advisor to proceed. The examination will not be given until at least a week has elapsed after registration of the thesis. The final examination may be preceded by other examinations, oral or written, as designated by the department/program or school concerned.

Re-Examination

A student who fails the final oral examination may request re-examination not less than four months later. No student will be allowed to take the examination a third time without a recommendation from the department/program in which the major work was done and the approval of the Committee on Graduate Education of the school.

Requirements for Comprehensive Examination or Appropriate Special Project Masters

Program of Study for Comprehensive Examination or Appropriate Special Project (formerly Plan B)

The degrees master of arts and master of science based on a comprehensive examination or appropriate special project (formerly called *Plan B*) are awarded for successful completion of at least 30 hours of graduate credit, or more if required in the student's program of study. At least 18 hours of the coursework must be in the student's principal department, except for interdisciplinary programs which have been approved by the relevant school's Committee on Graduate Education. Individual schools may set higher requirements.

If the department requires a course of directed individual study leading to the writing of a master's essay, this course is in addition to the minimum requirement of courses numbered 400 or over. It may carry up to four hours of credit.

Ordinarily, research credit is not part of this type of master's program, but, with the approval of the associate dean of graduate education, up to six hours

of research credit may be granted. Total credit for research, reading, and the master's essay may not exceed six hours.

Directed Study for the Master's Essay

The master's essay, required by some departments/programs, must present evidence of the student's ability to present a well-organized report on a topic of significance in the field. The writing of this essay is under the supervision of one member of the student's principal department/program and must be approved by one additional member designated by the chair of the department or by the program director for interdisciplinary programs.

Comprehensive Examination

Most programs of study of this type (formerly referred to as Plan B), require a comprehensive examination in the field of specialization. It may be written, oral, or both and is conducted by at least two faculty members.

Students failing the general examination may be allowed to take another examination during the following semester but not later than one year after the original examination. More than one repetition of the examination is not permitted.

The University as a Safe and Inclusive Community

Standards of Student Conduct

The University of Rochester is dedicated to providing educational opportunities for its students and to transmitting and advancing knowledge. The tradition of the University as a sanctuary of academic freedom and a center of informed discussion is an honored one. It is committed to the protection of intellectual freedoms and rights: of professors to teach; of scholars to study; of students to learn; and of all to express their views.

The University of Rochester is pluralistic and values diversity. Members of the community must respect the rights of the individuals and diverse groups that constitute the University. It is essential that the University remain supportive of democratic and lawful procedure, dedicated to a rational approach to resolving disagreement, and free from discrimination, violence, threats, and intimidation.

Students are expected to abide by the rules of the University and to conduct themselves in accordance with accepted standards of good citizenship, honesty, and propriety and with proper regard for the rights of others. Students must also obey federal, state, and local laws as would any good citizen. Furthermore, their responsibilities as students, scholars, researchers, and in many cases teachers and emerging professionals, often make special demands for the highest ethical standards.

The maintenance of harmonious community standards requires that behavior that interferes with or threatens the welfare of others or the University community be prevented. Ignorance of these standards will not be considered a valid excuse or defense. Student participation in any unlawful or other potentially serious violations of University policy may lead to suspension or expulsion from the University.

All University of Rochester students, both undergraduate and graduate, are responsible to uphold the Standards of Student Conduct. The standards, including statements of principles and specific policies for harassment and discrimination, drugs and alcohol, weapons, the hearing process for nonacademic conduct violations, elements of nonacademic conduct records that may be preserved in the student record, and many other important policies, are found online in the Standards of Student Conduct PDF.

Professional Standards of Conduct Policy

Schools at the University may develop and implement policies on professional standards of conduct for graduate students. These policies on professional standards of conduct should be informed and guided by both the norms of the applicable disciplines and expectations of professional fields represented at the various schools. In addition to any policies on professional standards of conduct for graduate students that a school may have, graduate students at the University are also subject to other University policies relating to conduct, including the Standards of Student Conduct: Processes and Policies (pdf), the Regulations and University Policies Concerning Graduate Study, the University of Rochester Code of Conduct, the policy on Responsible Conduct of Research, and the Policy on Research Misconduct. These policies are not intended to be mutually exclusive, and graduate students at the University could be subject to policies, procedures, and discipline under multiple policies for the same conduct.

An Inclusive Community

The University of Rochester envisions itself as a community that welcomes, encourages, and supports individuals who desire to contribute to and benefit from the institution's missions of teaching, research, patient care, performance, and community service. In a pluralistic culture of faculty, staff, and trainees, members of the University's community come from different geographical areas and represent differences in ethnicities, religious beliefs, values, and points of view; they may be physically different, have different intellectual interests, or have different abilities. The success of the University of Rochester depends on an environment that fosters vigorous thought and intellectual creativity, one in which diverse ideas can be expressed and discussed by all in its community. To

fulfill its missions and prepare future leaders to succeed in an equally wide-ranging environment, the University actively seeks to recruit and include diverse individuals in all aspects of the institution's operations.

The University has committed to building a Culture of Respect and has articulated the Vision and Values by which the community works together. Creating a welcoming environment for individuals of all backgrounds, traditions, abilities, and gender expressions is a top priority. Graduate students are encouraged to use the resources and participate in the opportunities listed at the site above to make the University of Rochester ever better as a community.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of Rochester does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, domestic violence victim status, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, military/veteran status, national origin, race, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship status, or any other status protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates.

The University complies with all federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination (including sexual harassment and violence based on sex) in the University's educational programs and activities, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and sex-based complaints should be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Questions about compliance with Section 504 can be addressed to the University's Disability Compliance Director.

Questions regarding the application of Title IX and Section 504 can also be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at its New York office at (646) 428-3900 or its national headquarters at (800) 421-3481; TTY: (800)-877-8339, or www.ed.gov/ocr/.

Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment

The University Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any status protected by law (see nondiscrimination statement, above) as well as retaliation against any person who complains or opposes perceived unlawful discrimination or harassment, including those who participate in an investigation or a proceeding involving a complaint of unlawful discrimination or harassment. See the University's Policy against Discrimination and Harassment (employees), Policy 106. For complaints about conduct by students, see the Standards of Student Conduct (pdf).

Faculty Intimate Relationships Policy

The UR Faculty Handbook includes the policy below approved in May 2018, governing relationships between University faculty and other members of the University community, including their graduate or undergraduate students:

Freedom of thought and expression and the opportunity for all members of the University community to pursue knowledge unencumbered are the foundation of the academic enterprise. The development of intimate relationships may, in some cases, compromise the academic relationships that are fundamental to the intellectual and professional development of members of the University. The faculty member–student academic relationship is of special concern in this context given the innate power imbalance between faculty and students; however, such power imbalances also may exist among faculty members. The purpose of this policy is to protect the rights and interests of all members of the University community by avoiding the potential for real or perceived coercion, favoritism, bias, or exploitation that may be created by intimate relationships among members of the University community.

To provide clarity regarding the intentions and purposes of this policy, the following definitions are employed:

- Student refers to all full-time, part-time, visiting, or prospective undergraduate or graduate students

and all postgraduate trainees, research associates, residents, and fellows.

- For the purposes of this policy Faculty refers to tenure-track, instructional, adjunct, research, and clinical faculty members of all ranks. (Other individuals [e.g.: students, post-doctoral fellows, and other trainees] who exercise academic authority over students should see their respective handbooks for related policies.)
- Intimate relationships refer to non-familial sexual, dating, and/or romantic relationships. Note: unwanted advances or other inappropriate behaviors may be considered sexual harassment, which falls under HR Policy 106.
- The exercise of academic authority includes the following activities (on or off campus): teaching courses, (i.e., having primary or shared responsibility for the conduct of a course but not, for example, simply delivering occasional guest lectures); grading or otherwise evaluating student work; advising on formal projects such as a thesis or other research; serving as an external examiner or member of a thesis committee; participating in decisions regarding student funding or resource allocation; performing clinical supervision; and making recommendations or otherwise influencing decisions regarding admissions, employment, tenure and promotions, or the awarding of grants, fellowships, or other recognitions. Generally, it is assumed that faculty exercise academic authority over all students in their department or program. However, there are circumstances and academic structures within the University where the assumption of academic authority may not be fitting, for example, in cases of some secondary faculty appointments or informal program affiliations, or in the distributed departments and programs in the School of Medicine and Dentistry. In such cases, it is left to the department chair and cognizant dean to define appropriate domains of academic authority; however, if there is uncertainty on the part of the student or faculty member academic authority should be assumed or clarification about the existence of academic authority should be sought from/determined by the department chair and cognizant dean.

Any questions regarding the above definitions, as well as other aspects of this policy, should be directed to the University Intercessor or the appropriate department chair or dean.

The Policy

III. C. i. Faculty are prohibited from entering into intimate relationships with undergraduate students of the University.

III. C. ii. Faculty are prohibited from entering into intimate relationships with any member of the University community over whom they exercise academic authority as defined above.

III. C. iii. Faculty are prohibited from accepting academic authority (as defined above) over any member of the University community with whom they currently share an intimate relationship, or with whom they have shared such a relationship in the past.

Violations

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary actions, which can include, but are not limited to, written warnings, loss of privileges, mandatory training or counseling, probation, suspension, demotion (including revocation of tenure), expulsion, and termination of employment. Disciplinary actions will be enforced at the appropriate administrative level ranging from department chair to the Office of the Provost.

Exceptions

In cases in which a mutually consensual relationship develops, exceptions to this policy may be granted, but must be managed carefully by agreement of both parties in the relationship, the chair(s)/dean(s) of the faculty member and other party, and the University Office of Counsel. A written management plan outlining measures to ensure the integrity of the academic interaction and to protect the interests of all parties must be filed with the cognizant dean and reviewed annually. The University Intercessor is available for guidance in the creation of such a plan.

Policy on Graduate Students' Relationships with Students Over Whom They Hold Academic Authority

Intimate Partner Relationships

Purpose

The purpose of the present policy statement is to outline prohibitions and management of situations when graduate students in past or present relationships with other students hold academic authority over those students, and to provide examples and potential penalties specific to graduate students in roles of academic authority. This policy does not apply to postdoctoral fellows/trainees or undergraduate students who hold academic authority.

This policy is intended to prevent bias in academic treatment or grading due to a current or past relationship. Bias can take the forms of favoritism, as when a graduate student in a teaching assistant or research supervisor role grades their relationship partner's work unfairly favorably, or negative prejudice, as when a graduate student in a teaching assistant or research supervisor role grades a former relationship partner's work unfairly harshly.

Coercion or exploitation, when a graduate student makes a positive evaluation contingent on sexual concessions by the student being evaluated, is a form of sexual misconduct and is not the subject of this policy. Please see policies on student sexual harassment.

Definitions

Intimate relationships. This policy uses the same definition as the Faculty Intimate Relationships Policy in the Faculty Handbook and refers to sexual, dating, and/or romantic relationships.

Relationship partner. The term relationship partner is used in this policy to indicate an individual with whom a graduate student is in a current or past intimate partner relationship, regardless of duration or exclusivity of the relationship.

Academic authority held by graduate students is defined as the following activities (on or off campus): teaching or serving as teaching assistant in courses or performing clinical supervision when the graduate student has formal assigned responsibility for grading or otherwise evaluating a relationship partner's work. It applies whether the academic authority role is paid or unpaid and whether the role is independent, such as when serving as a course instructor, or delegated by faculty, such as when serving as a teaching assistant. It applies whether the subject of the authority is a graduate or undergraduate student, and whether either party holds only the student role or is also a member of the University of Rochester faculty or staff.

The following are not considered academic authority: participating in class discussions or informal group discussions of a relationship partner's work when grading is not involved, giving guest lectures in a course in which a relationship partner is enrolled, serving as one of several TAs in a course when someone else has responsibility for grading of the relationship partner, or otherwise being in the vicinity of a relationship partner in academic settings without having influence over their academic success.

The policy applies when there is a real or perceived risk of bias in grading or evaluation due to an intimate relationship involving a graduate student and another student. When the likelihood of perceived bias or the presence or direction of academic authority is unclear, a faculty supervisor, graduate program director, dean, or another academic leader in the school should be consulted to clarify whether the present policy applies.

Policy on Intimate Relationships When Graduate Students Hold Academic Authority

Graduate students with academic authority are prohibited from entering into new intimate relationships with undergraduate students over whom they hold academic authority.

Graduate students with academic authority are prohibited from entering into new intimate relationships with graduate students over whom they hold academic authority unless a management plan is approved or the academic authority ends.

Graduate students are prohibited from accepting new academic authority over current or past undergraduate or graduate student relationship partners. If reassignment of either of the relationship partners is not feasible, a management plan must be in place.

Consequences of Violations

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary actions against the relationship partner holding

academic authority. Actions can include, but are not limited to, written warnings, mandatory training or counseling, termination of TA and instructor assignments and loss of related income, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion in accordance with the relevant code of graduate student conduct. Disciplinary actions will be enforced at the appropriate administrative level, ranging from graduate program director to graduate dean.

Management Plans

A written management plan must be agreed to by both parties in the relationship and approved by the head of the relevant graduate programs in the school of the graduate student holding academic authority: graduate dean or senior associate dean of the school (ASE, SMD, ESM, Warner); in the Simon School, the PhD faculty director (PhD students) or dean of students (master's students); or in the SON, the associate dean for education and student affairs (master's students) or PhD programs director (PhD students). The University intercessors are available for guidance in the creation of such a plan. It should outline measures to insure the integrity of the academic interaction and to protect the interests of all parties. The plan must be filed with the approving official indicated above and reviewed annually.

Immediate Family Members

Graduate students are prohibited from accepting academic authority over an immediate family member (parent, spouse or committed partner, sibling, or child) unless a management plan is in place. The plan must be approved by both family members and the appropriate approving official in the school of the graduate student holding academic authority, as indicated above.

Sexual Misconduct and Assault

Harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct reporting options and resources for students and faculty are posted on the sexual misconduct and title IX resources page. The site lists both confidential and private sources of support and includes a guide for help deciding whom to contact. In general, offenses by and against students are covered by Title IX. Offenses by faculty (against students or faculty) are covered by UR Policy 106. In either situation, the Sexual Misconduct and Title IX office can provide guidance and discuss options.

Disability Accommodation

The University of Rochester is committed to providing equal educational and employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. Further, the University is committed to maintaining an inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities. See the Office of Disability Resources website for more information.

Students' Academic Grievances

This policy applies to graduate students at the University of Rochester and (a) defines an Academic Grievance, (b) establishes that each school has its own process and complete decision rights for evaluating Academic Grievances, and (c) provides a general discussion of what these processes typically entail.

An academic grievance is a complaint in writing by an individual student about an academic decision by a faculty member in the role of advisor, instructor, or formally identified mentor or program leader that directly and adversely affects that student in his or her academic capacity.

Academic grievances concern faculty decisions related to a student's performance and opportunity for progress in his or her academic program, such as course access, grades, evaluations, program dismissal, teaching and research expectations, professional development opportunities, examinations, dissertation, and limits on time to degree. Grievances are limited to perceived unfairness in an individual student's academic environment or progress. The student with a grievance must aim to demonstrate that the student has been treated unfairly in comparison with student peers or the grading criteria or conditions for enrollment or pursuit of the degree were applied inequitably.

Academic grievances do not include an individual's or group's dissatisfaction or disagreement with a policy or approach that is applied in a uniform manner. Students who wish to state a position about an academic policy or have nonacademic complaints about a faculty member's conduct should express these concerns to

the Graduate Program Director or another graduate education official within the school.

If discrimination or sexual harassment by a faculty member has occurred, please see resources and reporting mechanisms described in these Regulations. At any point, for any issue, a student may consult the school ombudspersons or University intercessors.

Each school has a written procedure for student-initiated grievances and retains the authority to make final decisions about them. The following is a summary of a typical process and does not supersede processes established by the school: The first step generally is to discuss the issue with the involved faculty. If this does not produce a satisfactory outcome, procedures generally indicate that the complaint should be made in writing to that faculty member and include the factual history of the issue from the student's perspective. The faculty member should respond in writing. If the response is unsatisfactory to the student, he or she should follow the process outlined in the relevant school's policies, which may include submitting all correspondence and a statement of actions taken and why they are viewed as unsatisfactory to the graduate program director or other designated official for a decision. If that person's judgment is viewed as unsatisfactory, the student may pursue the issue at the next designated level of school official, until a level is reached where the official's decision is final, typically the dean of the school. All actions should be documented in writing, and each actor should retain copies until the grievance is resolved.

Jurisdiction and Responsibility for Academic and Nonacademic Misconduct

Overview

Determining whether an incident constitutes academic or nonacademic misconduct is not always straightforward. The fundamental measure for deciding whether an incident is academic or nonacademic is whether the student was acting in a scholarly or professional capacity. When the incident involves a student acting in their role as a student, teaching assistant, or expert in their discipline, then it is an academic matter. When the incident involves a student acting as an individual independent of these academic roles, then the matter is nonacademic.

Complaints against graduate students should be forwarded to the appropriate associate dean of graduate education within that student's school. The associate dean of graduate education or designee determines whether the complaint should be treated as an academic or a nonacademic incident. In cross-school cases, in which a student takes a course at another school that does not house their primary program of study, academic misconduct incidents will be brought to the associate dean of graduate education in the school that offers the course and to the associate dean of graduate education of the student's home school; the two graduate deans will coordinate regarding processing of the complaint. If mediation is needed, it will be provided by the University Dean of Graduate Education. In cross-school cases, any appeal will be handled by the dean of the student's home school.

Nonacademic incidents will be referred to the University conduct system. Please see the "Standards of Student Conduct" section. For more information, see University of Rochester Standards of Student Conduct: Processes and Policies (pdf).

Academic misconduct incidents shall be reviewed by the procedures elaborated upon below in "Academic Integrity Policy" and its subsections.

Note that if alleged academic misconduct involves **sponsored research**, threatens the integrity of the scientific method, or compromises the creation of new knowledge, the incident will be referred to the relevant University body handling scientific or research misconduct and will follow procedures as specified by Office of the Vice President for Research - Integrity and Compliance - Policy on Research Misconduct.

The available hearing procedures are not intended to be mutually exclusive; it is possible that a student could be subject to both academic and nonacademic discipline for the same misconduct.

Academic Misconduct

Academic Integrity Policy

Integrity of academic work is a central value at the University of Rochester. Upholding academic integrity is a responsibility of all members of the university community, including graduate students. Due to disciplinary norms and practices, there may be differences in how schools carry out academic integrity process. Any school process must adhere to the parameters laid out in this policy. In the event of a conflict between this policy and an individual school's policy, this policy applies. The University of Rochester considers academic integrity to be a central responsibility of all students. Suspected infractions of University policies will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Academic misconduct can be comprised in various ways, such as through plagiarism, unauthorized aids, falsification, fabrication, collaboration in misconduct, denying others access to information or material, unauthorized recording, distribution/ publication of course-related materials, or misuse of credentials. This policy also applies to misconduct by students that occur outside the University when those actions significantly affect University operations or clearly harm its reputation, as determined through established procedures.

The following are prohibited by this policy:

1. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is a pervasive form of academic misconduct. This is the use, whether deliberate or unintentional, of an idea or phrase from another source without proper acknowledgment of that source. The risk of plagiarism can be avoided in written work by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper itself, the source of any other major or unique idea which the student could not or did not arrive at on their own. Sources must be given regardless of whether the material is quoted directly or paraphrased. Another form of plagiarism is copying or obtaining information from another student. Submission of written work, such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which has been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent, is also plagiarism. In brief, any act that represents someone else's work as one's own is an academically dishonest act.
2. **Unauthorized aid.** Receiving using, giving, or having access to unauthorized aid. For example, obtaining an examination prior to its administration or using unauthorized technology, notes, study aids, or course material during an examination. Other examples of having or giving unauthorized aid include looking at other students' work; attempting to communicate with other students during evaluations where that is not permitted; and interfering with another student's academic work.
3. **Fabrication and falsification.** Fabrication or falsification of information, citations, text, or data is academic misconduct. Any misrepresentation of credentials or status at the University or fraud, forgery, falsifying documents, records, or identification cards, and fabricating or altering research data are forms of academic misconduct.
4. **Unauthorized assistance.** Assisting another in an act of academic misconduct prohibited by this policy is itself an act of academic misconduct. Examples are giving unauthorized aid by allowing other students to look at one's work when collaboration is prohibited; unauthorized editing of another student's work; providing information, material, or assistance to another person in a form that is likely to be used in violation of course, departmental, or institutional academic integrity policies; failing to take reasonable measures to protect one's work from copying by others.
5. **Denying others access to information or material.** Any act that hinders use of or access to library or course materials for others – such as removal of pages from books, journals, or reserve materials; hiding or removing library materials; removing library items without formally checking them out; refusing to return reserve readings to libraries – constitutes academic misconduct.

6. **Unauthorized use of course material.** Recording, distributing, or publishing course or course-related materials when not explicitly permitted by the course instructor is academic misconduct. Examples of this type of academic misconduct include publishing, distributing, or selling any course materials that the instructor has developed without explicit permission of the instructor; recording lectures or laboratory activities without explicit instruction of instructor; disrespecting copyright protection for materials made available for instructional purposes.
7. **Misuse of authentication.** Unauthorized use of identification, physical, electronic, or otherwise, including username and password credentials, when done for the purpose of academic gain constitutes academic misconduct. Examples include allowing unauthorized access to Blackboard or other password-protected sites; sharing personal University account information (URID, email, etc.).

Any attempt to complete an act of academic misconduct is also a violation of this policy. An attempt is defined as taking a substantial step towards completing an act of academic misconduct with an intent to do so. In addition, schools may define additional conduct that falls under their respective academic misconduct policies.

A student remains responsible for the integrity of academic work submitted to the University as part of the requirements for the completion of a degree (or any other coursework taken at the University) even after the work is accepted, the degree is granted, or the student is no longer matriculated at the University of Rochester.

Ignorance of these standards is not considered a valid excuse or defense.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students have the right to be presented with the evidence against them and respond to that evidence in an initial meeting and if a case goes to panel.

A student may choose to submit an appeal once to the Dean of the School if at least one of the following applies:

1. Procedural error (if the error is substantive enough to alter the decision);
2. Excessive or inappropriate sanctions are applied;
3. New information is revealed that was not available at the time of the hearing and this information is sufficient to alter the decision.

A student may submit an appeal within seven business days of receiving the decision. If no appeal is received, the decision and sanction take effect.

Records of Academic Misconduct

All academic integrity records are considered academic records. They must be filed and retained as dictated by the Retention of University Records Policy. These records are also subject to FERPA.

- XF or XE course grades will be noted on the transcript as due to academic misconduct.
- Suspension will be noted on the transcript as due to academic misconduct during the period of suspension.
- Expulsion will be noted permanently on the transcript as due to academic misconduct.

Academic Misconduct Process

Overview

Each school will have a written policy on academic misconduct on file with the school's graduate dean or designee (school official who oversees graduate education). Each school will have a designated panel to review the charge of academic misconduct. A school's written policy may call for graduate student representation on the panel.

All events, documents related to suspected misconduct, and statements from involved parties should be thoroughly and accurately documented, with careful attention to maintaining confidentiality and upholding the integrity of the investigative process. Schools may develop forms for this purpose.

As stated above, academic misconduct matters shall be reviewed by the appropriate associate dean or designee. Reports of potential misconduct will either:

1. Be dismissed;
2. Reach administrative resolution (described below); or
3. Be sent to the school's panel, as elaborated upon below.

Some academic misconduct incidents may reach administrative resolution facilitated by the school's graduate dean or designee. Administrative resolution is limited to first violations in which the student(s) alleged to have committed the violation, the student victims if any, and the faculty member(s) reporting the incident agree on the events that occurred, the nature and seriousness of the misconduct, and the proposed sanction. Documentation is submitted to the graduate dean or designee, who may approve the proposed sanction and communicate this to the parties involved or may opt to refer the case to the panel. In either case, they will communicate this to the parties involved. In handling cases through administrative resolution without panel involvement, graduate deans or designees must ensure that the student admitted responsibility without coercion and that the proposed sanction is appropriate to the violation and comparable to other penalties for similar violations. Expulsion is not an appropriate sanction in cases of administrative resolution.

Outline of Steps for Academic Misconduct Process

Step 1: Reporting the Incident

- The instructor records evidence of possible misconduct according to school procedure and reports the incident to graduate dean or designee.

Step 2: Review by Graduate Dean or Designee

- The graduate dean or designee receives the report of potential academic misconduct, reviews the material, and/or meets with those involved.

Possible Outcomes:

A. Case Dismissed

- If, after reviewing all relevant information, the graduate dean or designee determines that academic misconduct did not occur, the case is dismissed.

B. Administrative Resolution

- Schools may allow administrative resolution by the graduate dean or designee for first violations if the student alleged, students impacted, and reporting faculty agree on the facts of the incident and the proposed sanction.
- The decision and sanction are not final until approved by the graduate dean or designee.
- The graduate dean or designee maintains records of all incidents resolved in this manner.

Step 3: Determination of Academic Misconduct

- The graduate dean or designee determines if the matter should be treated as academic misconduct and does not qualify for administrative resolution.

Special Cases:

- If the alleged academic misconduct involves sponsored research, threatens the integrity of the scientific method, or compromises the creation of new knowledge, the incident will be referred to the relevant University body handling scientific or research misconduct.
- These cases will follow procedures as specified by the Policy on Research Misconduct under the Office of the Vice President for Research - Integrity and Compliance.

Step 4: Conduct Panel Hearing

- Charges are referred to the conduct panel in the student's school.
- The panel conducts a hearing, makes findings, presents supporting documents, and provides a recommendation.

Step 5: Decision and Sanction

- The graduate dean or designee issues the decision and sanction to the student.

Possible Outcomes:

A. Decision Accepted

- The student accepts the decision.

B. Appeal Process

- The student may appeal the decision to the Dean of the School within seven days of receiving the decision.

Appeal Outcomes:

A. Decision Modified

- The Dean of the School modifies the decision.

B. Decision Upheld

- The Dean of the School upholds the decision.