

## **Policy, Procedures and Minimum Standards for Graduate Programs**

*Passed by IU South Bend Academic Senate March 23, 2007*

These policies and standards for graduate programs are meant to provide guidance for IU South Bend graduate programs as they create and/or revise their own policies and standards. Graduate programs may create policies and standards which exceed the guidelines, but may not create guidelines that do not meet minimum established standards. For example, a program may decide to require that their graduate students must maintain a grade point of 3.2 during their graduate work even though the guidelines indicate a grade point average of 3.0.

Programs that do not or cannot comply with these guidelines will provide a rationale for their replacement policy during program/accreditation reviews.

### **Goals for Graduate Student Learning**

1. Students will acquire the ability to read critically, evaluate, and apply research and other scholarship to problems in their chosen area of study/practice.
2. Students will acquire the ability to actively engage in scholarship as defined by their graduate program.
3. Students will acquire the ability to analyze problems and issues within their area of study or practice.
4. Students will acquire depth of content that is intellectually demanding and/or intended to build specialized professional skills.
5. Students will acquire the communication skills necessary for effective participation in their chosen area of study or professional practice.
6. Students will acquire the technological expertise expected by their chosen area of study or professional practice.
7. Students will learn the ethical principles governing scholarship and professional practice as appropriate to their chosen area of study/practice.
8. Students will receive orientation to the field of study/professional practice, mentoring, and a variety of formal and informal opportunities to interact with faculty and other experts in the field.

## **Admissions**

To be admitted, applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and have a GPA of 3.0 achieved during the final 50% of degree credits taken during an appropriate undergraduate program, or demonstrate that they have the background and skills necessary for success in graduate study. For example, a program may require that students have a GRE writing score that indicates graduate competence in writing.

## **Academic Policies**

1. Each student will be assigned an advisor who will consult with the student on the Study Plan, monitor progress toward degree, and provide advice/mentoring as appropriate.
2. Students will complete a Study Plan in consultation with their advisor. This plan will outline transfer credits, professional experience credits (if appropriate) and the plan of study for the degree. This study plan will be signed by the advisor and the graduate program director and be placed in the student file. The Study Plan should be updated as appropriate.
3. Students must complete their program within 7 years of first registration. The appropriate graduate program director and/or dean may grant exceptions for students who can demonstrate serious effort toward degree completion and serious extenuating circumstances.
4. Students must maintain their candidacy by registering each Fall and Spring semester. Students who do not register within a particular semester will be considered to have Inactive Status. Students may return to active status by registering. Programs may require students to be subject to any curriculum, policies and standards that were created or revised during their absence.
5. Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average. A student whose GPA drops below 3.0 must restore his/her GPA to 3.0 within 9 credit hours. If the GPA is not restored within the required time period, the student will be dismissed from the program. Terms for readmission are determined by each program.
6. Transfer of credit: In programs of 34 credit hours or fewer, students may transfer from another accredited university a maximum of 9 credit hours. In programs consisting of 35 or more credit hours, students may transfer from another accredited university a maximum of 12 credit hours under the following conditions:

- a) the credit is fully acceptable to the transferring institution in satisfaction of its own advanced degree requirements
  - b) the credit is applicable to the student's program of study for an advanced degree at IU South Bend.
  - c) the student received a grade of B or better for the credit
  - d) the student received the credit within 6 years prior to the transfer
  - e) the transfer of credit occurs at the time of admission to the program of study and becomes part of the student's study plan OR the student received permission from an IU South Bend graduate program to take a transfer course at another accredited university and it becomes part of the Study Plan.
7. A student may retake a course only once for each course and for a total of two courses in a degree program. The retake grade will be used in computing the GPA, regardless of whether it is higher or lower than the original grade.
  8. Incomplete grades: Students may, at the discretion of the course professor, be granted a grade of Incomplete when verifiable personal emergencies warrant. The faculty member will complete the Incomplete Grade Form detailing the work required to receive a letter grade. The student has the responsibility of completing the work within one calendar year from the date of grade recording or, if required by the instructor, in a shorter time period. If, after one year, the Incomplete remains on the record, it will be designated as F for record keeping and entered into the student's GPA. In exceptional circumstances, the academic program head may authorize an adjustment to this period.
  9. Graduate students should earn their course credits in courses numbered 500 and above. In recognition that in some instances a student is better served by including (an) undergraduate course(s) in his/her program, this will be allowed in specific instances, on signature of the graduate program director and the dean or equivalent of the appropriate college. Because of special circumstances unique to the graduate Music Program, it is exempted from this policy.
  10. Students who already hold a master's degree and who wish to receive a master's degree of a different type must complete all requirements for the degree. Students who wish to receive a master's degree identical to one they have already been granted will be required to allow 7 years to elapse from the date the initial degree was granted.

11. A student may not apply a course credit toward two different master's degrees, nor apply a course credit toward both an undergraduate and master's degree.

### **Graduation**

1. Students will demonstrate that they have met all the requirements for graduation set by their programs.
2. Students will have achieved a minimum of a 3.0 GPA.

### **Program Structure**

1. Each program will contain a minimum of 30 hours of credit.
2. In some professional programs, students may be provided with credit for professional experience not to exceed 15% of the total credit hours required by the graduate program in question. Programs granting such professional experience credits must establish policies to govern the granting of such credits. IU graduate programs (SPEA and Social Work) that are administered by IU rather than IU South Bend may have a different policy in this area.
3. Thesis/project credit hours should not exceed 6 credit hours granted over two consecutive Fall and Spring semesters. Students who do not complete the thesis within this time period must maintain their candidacy by registering for one graduate thesis extended credit hour each Fall and/or Spring semester until the thesis/project is completed.
4. Each program should provide a student handbook which outlines policies and procedures, expectations for faculty, students, learning outcomes, and assessments, and any other information important for students.
5. Where feasible, programs should be advised by an advisory committee comprised of faculty, students and other stakeholders such as employers.

### **Assessment**

1. Each program will establish measurable learning outcomes that are aligned with the general Goals for Graduate Student Learning.
2. Each program will collect data demonstrating that graduates have achieved the specific program learning outcomes established for that program.
3. Each program will document that the program operates in accord with the policies, procedures and minimal standards for graduate programs.

4. Each program will conduct course evaluations and use these to improve the course and/or program.
5. Each program will conduct exit satisfaction/feedback surveys or make use of exit satisfaction/feedback survey data provided by the Graduate Studies Office.
6. Each program will conduct surveys of alumni and/or employers of graduates in the case of professional programs at least every 5 years or make use of such data as provided by the Graduate Studies Office.
7. Each program will undergo external program evaluation every seven years or as directed by an accrediting body. The program evaluation should address the guidelines listed in the document "Policy, Procedures and Minimum Standards for Graduate Programs."

## **Faculty**

Faculty who teach graduate level courses and/or who supervise graduate student theses/projects should possess a terminal degree in the discipline in which they are teaching, OR a graduate degree and demonstrated specialty knowledge in the specific content of courses they teach. Graduate faculty should be active scholars and/or researchers, and/or professional practitioners as determined by their programs.