

# GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

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The policies cited below reflect Graduate School guidelines as of summer 2009. Readers are encouraged to contact the Graduate School or to visit the Web site at [http://www.graduate.umaryland.edu/grad\\_policies/grad\\_policies.html](http://www.graduate.umaryland.edu/grad_policies/grad_policies.html) to ensure compliance with the latest policy text.

## Appeal of Academic Dismissal

An appeal of academic dismissal must be submitted to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School in writing within 10 working days of the student's receipt of the notice of dismissal. The letter of appeal should include (a) the basis for the appeal; (b) a summary of discussions, if any, between the student and representatives of the student's program such as the student's mentor and the student's graduate program director (GPD); and (c) outcome or remedy proposed by the student. The letter may include additional relevant evidence or information.

The dean of the Graduate School will inform the GPD of the appeal by transmitting the student's letter of appeal within five working days of receipt of the appeal.

**Grounds.** The following are grounds for appeal: 1) Incorrect calculation of grade point average; 2) Misapplication of standards for academic performance and satisfactory progress by the graduate program of the Graduate School; 3) Differential application of standards for academic performance and satisfactory progress for the student appealing compared to other similar students.

**Disposition.** The dean of the Graduate School may: 1) act on the appeal; 2) appoint a designee to collect additional information for the dean of the Graduate School; or 3) constitute a three-person ad hoc review committee from the Graduate Council Grievance Committee (GCGC). The purpose of the ad hoc committee is to provide an opinion and recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School regarding the appeal.

The dean of the Graduate School will inform the student and the GPD in writing of the method of disposition of the appeal. If a dean's designee is appointed, the student and the GPD will be informed of the name and contact information for the dean's designee. If a GCGC ad hoc committee is constituted, the approved guidelines will be followed.

The dean of the Graduate School's decision with respect to a student's appeal shall be final. The student and the GPD will be informed in writing of the dean's decision.

*(Approved and adopted by the Graduate Council, Oct. 19, 1995; revised Nov. 25, 2003; revised May 31, 2005.)*

## Policy for Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading

### A. Purpose

These guidelines describe how allegations of arbitrary or capricious grading are handled in course work in the University of Maryland Baltimore Graduate School. Arbitrary or capricious means (a) the assignment of a course grade to a student on some basis other than performance in the course, (b) the assignment of a course grade to a student by unreasonable application of standards different from the standards that were applied to other students in that course, or (c) the assignment of a course grade by a substantial and unreasonable departure from the instructor's initially articulated standards.

These procedures apply only to grades assigned in coursework. Qualifying and comprehensive examinations and defense of theses or dissertations during the progression toward the master's or doctor's degree are to be handled under the academic progression policy.

### B. Procedure

1. If a student alleges that a grade has been given in an arbitrary or capricious manner, the student must first discuss the situation with the faculty member responsible for the course within 10 business days of receiving the grade. The student should also contact the department chair or graduate program director if the issue is not resolved within 20 business days of receiving the grade.

2. If a student remains dissatisfied after the discussions required by paragraph 1, the student may file an allegation of arbitrary and capricious grading with the dean of the Graduate School. Allegations should be made in writing in the form of a letter to the dean of the Graduate School within 30 business days of the student's receipt of the grade. Either the student or the instructor may request an extension. An allegation should include (a) the course, program, and semester in which the grade was awarded; (b) the basis for the allegation; (c) the date the student was advised of the grade challenged; and (d) a summary and the dates of any conversations held pursuant to these procedures.
3. The dean of the Graduate School or designee shall review each allegation of arbitrary and capricious grading and shall dismiss the allegation if (a) the student has submitted the same, or substantially the same, complaint through any other formal grievance procedure; (b) the allegation does not allege actions that would constitute arbitrary and capricious grading as defined in these procedural guidelines; (c) the allegation was not filed with the dean of the Graduate School within 30 days of the student's notice of the grade; or (d) the student has not conferred with the instructor and either the graduate program director or department chair of the program offering the course prior to filing the allegation. The dean of the Graduate School or designee shall notify the student in writing within one week of receiving the allegation of the disposition of the allegation.
4. If an allegation is not dismissed, the dean will forward a copy of the allegation to the faculty member who assigned the grade in question and to the graduate program director or the department chair, as appropriate. The faculty member involved will have two weeks from receipt of the allegation to submit a written response to the dean of the Graduate School.
5. The dean of the Graduate School or designee shall submit the allegation of the student and the response of the faculty member to a Grade Hearing Committee (GHC) consisting of three members (two faculty and one student) appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. The GHC may decide to hear statements from the student and the faculty member or it may deliberate on the basis of written materials. GHC review may be waived with the consent of the student and the faculty member, in which case the dean of the Graduate School or designee will review the matter and make a determination. If the matter is considered by the GHC, following deliberations, the committee will give its conclusions and recommendations in writing to the dean of the Graduate School or designee. If the GHC finds arbitrary or capricious grading did occur, its report should

include recommendations for action, specifying who they recommend be responsible for those remedy actions.

6. The dean of the Graduate School or designee will receive the GHC recommendation and make a decision. The decision will be forwarded in writing to the student, the faculty member, and the program director within two weeks of receiving the GHC recommendation or within two weeks of the waiver of GHC review.

### C. Appeals

1. The student, the faculty member or the program director may appeal to the dean of the Graduate School for reconsideration of the decision by submitting an appeal in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School in writing within 10 days of receipt of a decision.
2. The dean of the Graduate School's decision with respect to an appeal shall be final. The dean will endeavor to make a decision on the appeal within 10 days after its receipt. The dean's decision will be communicated in writing to the student, the faculty member, and the program director.

*(Approved by the Graduate Council, Jan. 18, 1995; revised by a University of Maryland, Baltimore committee, February 1995; approved in revised form by the Graduate Council, April 20, 1995; May 2009.)*

## Student Academic Misconduct

The present policy on 'student academic misconduct' is under review. The current policy is posted at [http://www.graduate.umaryland.edu/grad\\_policies/grad\\_policies.html](http://www.graduate.umaryland.edu/grad_policies/grad_policies.html)

## Policy on Academic Performance and Satisfactory Progress in University of Maryland, Baltimore Master of Science Programs

**Purpose.** Satisfactory academic performance and progress within the University of Maryland, Baltimore's (UMB) Master of Science (MS) programs is a responsibility shared by the Graduate School, the graduate programs, and students. This policy specifies the elements of satisfactory academic performance and progress for students in UMB programs required by the Graduate School. MS programs with additional criteria and requirements approved by the Graduate School are covered under this policy. Students should review all graduate program handbooks and standards.

Failure to satisfy the Graduate School's standards of satisfactory academic performance and progress subjects a student to possible academic dismissal, as does non-adherence to program-specific policies and requirements.

**Elements of Satisfactory Academic Performance and Progress.** Satisfactory performance and progress is demonstrated by adherence to the following Graduate School standards:

- All graduate students must maintain a minimum, cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The Graduate School reviews students' academic performances each semester and session. Failure to maintain the minimum GPA requirement may result in academic dismissal.
- Once admitted to a graduate program, each student has the obligation to continue a course of study and must register every semester in the academic year (fall and spring semesters) unless on an approved leave of absence (LOA). Failure to comply with the requirement to register every semester will be taken as evidence that the student has terminated his or her program and admission status in the Graduate School.
- Any student admitted provisionally will be granted full graduate status when the provisions have been satisfied. Provisionally admitted students who fail to meet the terms of their admission may be dismissed.
- The entire course of study undertaken for the MS degree must form a unified, coherent program approved by the student's advisor and the Graduate School.
- Students must satisfactorily complete coursework and the required curriculum in a timely fashion. All requirements for the MS degree must be completed within five years after admission. The period of an approved LOA is included within the five-year time period.
- Students must adhere to the appropriate thesis or non-thesis guidelines outlined by the Graduate School and the program.
- Students in a MS program with clinical or experimental requirements are expected to meet the requirements, standards, and expectations of those experiences.
- Students are expected to meet the highest standards of integrity; the success of the entire academic enterprise depends on their doing so. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or abetting the academic dishonesty of another will result in sanction and may lead to academic dismissal.

**Procedure.** If a student fails to meet Graduate School standards of satisfactory academic performance and progress, the student shall be given written notice of dismissal by the Graduate School. The notice will include the reason for the dismissal. A copy of the notice will be provided to the student's graduate program director (GPD). Notice of dismissal will be mailed to the student's current address of record as noted on file with the UMB Registrar. Notice is deemed received by the student within 10 calendar days from the date of the notice. Each student is expected to notify the Graduate School and the graduate program of changes in address and check for correspondence at his or her address of record in a timely fashion. (Effective July 1, 2005)

## **Policy on Academic Performance and Satisfactory Progress in University of Maryland Baltimore PhD Programs**

**Purpose:** Satisfactory academic performance and progress within the University of Maryland Baltimore's doctor of philosophy (PhD) programs is a shared responsibility of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Graduate School (UMBGS), the doctoral programs, and graduate students. This policy specifies the elements of satisfactory academic performance and progress for students in UMBGS PhD programs.

### **UMBGS Standards**

- After admission to a doctoral program, each student must continue a course of study and must register fall and spring semesters unless on an approved leave of absence. Failure to comply with the requirement to register every semester will be taken as evidence that the student has terminated his or her program and admission status in the Graduate School.
- Students accepted provisionally will have provisional admission status removed only after all provisions have been satisfied and the student has fulfilled all other UMBGS and doctoral program requirements for non-provisional admission. This determination will be made by the graduate program director and the UMBGS academic coordinator.
- Graduate students must maintain a minimum, cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- UMBGS does not impose a uniform protocol for preliminary, qualifying, or comprehensive examinations. Admission to candidacy occurs after fulfilling doctoral program requirements.
- Students must establish and maintain a professional relationship with a faculty research advisor. The advisor must hold Regular membership in the graduate faculty

with the appropriate knowledge and expertise to serve as research advisor.

- Students must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research by developing, presenting, and defending an original dissertation on a topic approved by the doctoral program. Evidence of completion of this requirement is submission of the committee approved dissertation to the Graduate School.
- UMBGS requires that students take and pass a doctoral examination of the dissertation comprised of an open presentation and a formal examination. The formal examination can only be attempted twice. A failure on the second attempt means the PhD degree is forfeited.
- Students must be admitted to candidacy within five academic years of the first term of enrollment in the doctoral program and at least two full sequential semesters or sessions (spring, summer or fall) before graduation. All degree requirements, including the final examination of the dissertation, must be completed within four years of admission to candidacy and no more than nine years after admission into the doctoral program.
- Students are expected to meet the highest standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, cheating, and other acts of academic dishonesty, or abetting the academic dishonesty of another will result in sanctions and may lead to academic dismissal.

### Doctoral Program Standards

Students must meet all doctoral program requirements for satisfactory academic performance and progress as well as UMBGS requirements. Students are advised to be familiar with all handbooks, requirements, and standards of their doctoral program.

- Doctoral programs may have requirements that are in addition to the UMBGS standards listed above. Examples of additional graduate program requirements are laboratory rotations, journal clubs, presentation of papers/abstracts, and publication(s).
- Doctoral programs may have more stringent standards than the UMBGS. Examples of more stringent standards are higher than 3.0 minimum GPA required by the UMBGS, advancement to candidacy within four years instead of five, and program completion within seven instead of nine years.

The student is expected to meet the most stringent standard for each requirement, whether it is a standard of the UMBGS or the doctoral program.

Failure to meet any of the UMBGS and doctoral program standards of academic performance and progress subjects a student to automatic academic probation and the possibility of dismissal.

### Placement on Academic Probation or Dismissal

If a student does not meet the UMBGS and the doctoral program's standards of satisfactory academic performance or progress, then the student will automatically be placed on probation or dismissed. Written notice of this action will be provided by the Graduate School, including the reason for the action. A copy of the notice will be provided to the student's doctoral program director. Notice will be mailed to the student's current address of record as noted on file with the UMB registrar. Notice is deemed received by the student within 10 calendar days from the date of the notice. Each student is expected to notify the registrar, UMBGS and the doctoral program of changes in address and check for correspondence at his or her address of record in a timely fashion.

For information on UMBGS policy and procedures for appeal of probation or academic dismissal see [http://graduate.umaryland.edu/grad\\_policies/appeal.html](http://graduate.umaryland.edu/grad_policies/appeal.html).  
(Effective March 31, 2006)

### Ombuds-Committee

The purpose of the Graduate School Ombuds-Committee (GSOC) is to provide mediation services when disagreements or differences of opinion arise between a graduate student and his or her advisor or graduate program that (a) cannot be successfully resolved at the program level, (b) are serious enough in nature to jeopardize the student's ability to complete his or her training, and (c) do not relate to issues that fall under other policies.\* The GSOC will consist of three experienced faculty members appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School for a period of two years.\*\*

**Rationale:** It is recognized that disagreements between students and their advisors occur during training. In most cases, such problems can and should be worked out by the student, the advisor, and the program, possibly with the assistance of the student's dissertation committee. If this is not possible, however, the situation should be brought to the attention of the dean or the dean's designee, who will, in turn, inform the GSOC. The GSOC will then assist the student, advisor, and program to develop a strategy to resolve the situation. The GSOC will provide all parties an opportunity for full consideration of their positions and ensure that all relevant Graduate School rules and guidelines are followed.

### Procedures

1. The student must first inform the director of his or her graduate program that a serious problem exists. It is the director's responsibility to review the situation and to attempt to resolve it according to the rules and guidelines of the program and any Graduate School rules or guidelines that are applicable.

2. In the event that the advisor is also the program director, the program should select another faculty member or form a committee of faculty members from within the program to mediate the problem.

3. If efforts at the program level fail to resolve the situation, or if the program fails to act, the student may then contact the Dean or the dean's designee. The student should present the problem to the dean or the dean's designee in writing, describing the situation in detail, and outlining what was done at the program level to attempt to resolve it.

4. The Dean or the Dean's Designee will provide the student's information to the GSOC. The GSOC will request information, also to be submitted in writing, from the program director, stating the program's position and describing the efforts that were made to resolve the situation. The advisor may also provide input at this time, but such input must be submitted through the program director.

5. The GSOC will review all relevant material provided by the student and program director. The GSOC may request additional information and meet with the parties who are involved. Upon completion of its review, the GSOC will make recommendations for resolution of the situation in writing to the student, the advisor, the program, and the dean or the dean's designee.

6. The final decision as to the appropriate resolution of all cases will rest with the Dean of the Graduate School.

7. If a GSOC member has been involved in a matter before it reaches the GSOC, the member will not participate in the deliberations. The Dean or the dean's designee will name one alternate member to the GSOC for the matter.

\*Note, for example, that instances of alleged arbitrary and capricious grading, sexual harassment, student academic misconduct, and other misconduct are dealt with under other Graduate School policies or University policies.

\*\*Initially, the three faculty members will be appointed to staggered terms, as follows: one to a term of one year and two to a term of two years. This will provide for overlapping terms in subsequent years.

## Graduate Council Grievance Committee Guidelines

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### Appeal of Academic Dismissal and Academic Misconduct

#### Process

This is a formal hearing for academic cases that have not been resolved at the department level. Following the hearing, which takes place as set forth under "Format," below, the Graduate Council Grievance Committee (GCGC) will deliberate in closed session and will recommend a decision and action to the dean of the Graduate School. The hearing is chaired by a member of the GCGC. The committee is staffed by the non-voting administrative assistant of the dean of the Graduate School who will record the hearing for archival purposes only.

#### Format

- a. Chair's introduction, summary of issues and process overview.
- b. Department representative's presentation of issues (15 minutes maximum).
- c. Student presentation of issues (15 minutes maximum).
- d. Optional: Presentation by witnesses (limited to three per side and a maximum of 15 minutes per side).
- e. Questions by committee members.
- f. All presenters and witnesses are excused.
- g. Deliberations by committee members.
- h. Written recommendation to the associate dean or dean of the Graduate School [within 15 calendar days, unless extended by the associate dean or dean of the Graduate School, with notice of the extension given to all parties (the grievant(s) and the department) in writing].

#### Preparation

All materials that the grievance committee are to review must be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks (14 days) in advance of the hearing, at which time such materials will be distributed to all parties to the grievance and to the members of the GCGC. Thereafter, to the extent that any of the parties wish to have additional materials considered by members of the committee, such materials must be received by the Graduate School no later than one week (seven days) in advance of the scheduled date of the hearing, at which time all such additional written materials will be distributed to the parties as well as to the members of the GCGC. The Graduate School will pay for reasonable

reproduction costs, but the cost of reproducing voluminous packets, i.e., those exceeding 50 pages, will be charged to the submitting party (the student or the department).

The proceedings will be recorded for archival purposes only.

If witnesses are to be called by either side, their names must be received by the Graduate School, in writing, at least one week (seven days) in advance of the hearing.

Presentation of the issues should be concise and relevant. Obviously, the case is complex or it would not have reached this stage. The points of dispute or ambiguity may be summarized or illustrated by anecdote. Experience suggests that the best approach is to minimize formalized presentations and allow the committee members maximum time for questions.

### **Attorneys**

An attorney is neither necessary nor recommended. The GCGC described herein operates as part of an academic hearing, not a judicial proceeding. However, if the student elects to have counsel present, the University's attorney must also be afforded an opportunity to attend. Accordingly, the student must notify the Graduate School, in writing, at least two weeks (14 days) prior to the hearing if he/she intends to use an attorney. Once a lawyer has contacted the Graduate School on behalf of a student, all contact, both written and oral, must be with approval of the Office of General Counsel.

The lawyer(s)' presence at the hearing does not change the proceedings. The lawyer(s) will not be able to examine witnesses, ask questions or otherwise take part in the proceedings, except in an unobtrusive manner, in an advisory capacity to their clients.

## **University Policies**

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USM/UMB policies and procedures can be viewed in full at <http://cf.umaryland.edu/hrpolicies/>

## **UMB Notice of Nondiscrimination**

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The University of Maryland, Baltimore does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran's status, or age in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to handle or coordinate inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

For inquiries regarding staff or faculty at UMB:

Ms. Sheila Greenwood  
Manager of Diversity/EEO/Affirmative Action  
Human Resource Services  
University of Maryland, Baltimore  
620 W. Lexington Street, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-706-7302  
[sgreenwood@af.umaryland.edu](mailto:sgreenwood@af.umaryland.edu)

For inquiries regarding students at UMB:

Dr. Roger J. Ward  
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
Office of Academic Affairs  
University of Maryland, Baltimore  
621 W. Lombard Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-706-2477  
[rward005@umaryland.edu](mailto:rward005@umaryland.edu)

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, The Wanamaker Building, Suite 515, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, PA 19107, or call 1-800-421-3481.