

ADMINISTRATION AND POLICIES GOVERNING GRADUATE STUDY

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Each graduate student is personally responsible for completing all requirements established for his or her degree by the University, the Graduate School, and his/her department. It is the student's responsibility to inform himself or herself of these requirements. A student's advisor may not assume these responsibilities and may not substitute, waive, or exempt the student from any established requirement or academic standard. The University reserves the right to modify requirements at any time.

Although the University encourages the widest amount of student responsibility, with a minimum of administrative regulation, it expects each student to maintain appropriate standards in his or her academic and personal life. The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who does not meet the standards acceptable to the University.

THE ACADEMIC YEAR

The academic year is divided into two semesters. The first begins in late August and ends before the Christmas holidays; the second begins in mid-January and ends in May.

There is a one week midsemester holiday in the fall, a short Thanksgiving recess, a winter vacation of approximately a month between semesters. There is a week midsemester holiday and a short Easter recess in the spring.

SUMMER AND SPECIAL SESSIONS

The annual Summer Session includes a three-week pre-session and two five-week terms. There are also two special terms for graduate courses in business and the online programs in security analysis and portfolio management, and negotiation and dispute resolution. These offer significant opportunities to students who wish to accelerate their studies and satisfy degree requirements or other interests, to teachers who wish to obtain credit for state certificates and/or for professional improvement, etc. A variety of short workshops and institutes on topics of current interest are part of each summer's offerings.

Students may register in one, two, or all three of the basic components of the Summer Session: The Pre-Session, Term 1, and Term 2. The student may earn three credits in the Pre-Session and up to six semester hours of credit in each of the two five-week terms. Master of Business Administration, Master of Security Analysis and Portfolio Management, and Information Technology Management students may register for six credit hours during each of the two special sessions (Term 1B and Term 2B) designed for their programs.

There are also special seven- and eight-week terms for the online programs in security analysis and portfolio management, and negotiation and dispute resolution.

UNIT OF INSTRUCTION

The semester hour is the unit of instruction used for computing the amount of work required for graduation. One semester hour is equivalent to one 50-minute period of recitation or lecture per week for one semester. Two or three 50-minute periods of laboratory ordinarily are considered equal to one period of recitation or lecture.

COURSE LEVELS

The arrangement and numbering of course offerings according to levels, from introductory and fundamental to advanced, is explained in the introduction to the section on Courses of Instruction. Under the numbering system, lower-division courses are numbered from 100 to 299; upper division from 300 to 499; advanced upper division courses in which student may enroll and receive graduate credit 500-599; and graduate from 600 to 999.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Graduate students are expected to attend all lectures and laboratory sessions, except as excused by the instructor. In cases of obvious disinterest, as indicated by absences without reason, the student is subject to dismissal from a course by the Dean at any time during the term.

ACADEMIC LOAD

A student who is registered for eight or more semester hours in a semester, or six or more hours over all summer terms is classified a full-time student. Twelve credit hours per semester (or six credit hours per summer term) is considered a maximal academic load for a full-time graduate student engaged in study for an advanced degree. Teaching and research fellowship holders are permitted eight to 12 semester hours of credit during semesters in which fellowship obligations are incurred. Students who are engaged in full-time work (within or without the University) should not undertake study for more than six semester hours of credit during their full-time employment. A student who is registered for less than eight semester hours in a semester or less than six hours over two summer terms is classified a part-time student. A student who is registered for three semester hours during a semester is classified as a half-time student.

RESIDENCE

Only students pursuing a master's degree in basic sciences areas requiring substantial laboratory time will be required to pursue full-time study in residence for a minimum of one academic year. Exceptions require approval of the Graduate Dean. Students pursuing other master's degrees may complete all course work on a part-time basis. A minimum of 24 credit hours must be completed in attendance at Creighton University. All work for the master's degree must be completed within six calendar years from the date of credit for the first graduate course in the program. Prerequisite courses taken at the beginning of a planned program do not count in the time determination. Students may, under extraordinary circumstances, petition the Graduate Dean for an extension. If a program is prolonged, courses taken at the beginning of the period may not be counted toward the required credits for the degree.

Doctoral students in the basic sciences areas must complete at least 60 credit hours of full-time course work in residence at Creighton University. Doctoral degree course work must be completed within eight calendar years from the date of credit for the first graduate course in the program.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

A graduate student's degree program needs to be undertaken primarily at the direction of Creighton's faculty. Credit earned with grades "A" or "B" at other accredited graduate institutions may be considered for transfer at the time a student's plan of study is constructed. The acceptance of credit offered for transfer will be determined by the Graduate Dean upon recommendation of the program director. Ordinarily, no more than six transfer credits will be applicable toward a master's degree, nor will more than thirty transfer credits offered by the recipient of a master's degree from another institution be applicable to doctoral studies at Creighton. Prerequisite undergraduate courses will be accepted in the plan of study (but not count as degree credit) provided they are taken from fully-accredited undergraduate colleges. Allowance of credit toward a graduate degree for courses taken as a Special Student (nondegree status) in the Graduate School may not exceed nine semester hours, except in the case of hours earned in pre-approved certificate programs.

THE DEGREE PROGRAM PLAN OF STUDY

The student must consult with his or her graduate faculty advisor to prepare a degree program Plan of Study within the first 12 semester hours of residence for a master's degree, and within the first year of doctoral study. The advisor and the student together will draw up a Plan of Study to be endorsed by the program director, major advisor or research advisory committee. The Plan of Study for doctoral students will be forwarded to the Graduate Dean. The Plan of Study for master's students should be maintained in the departmental files. The program should list the following:

1. Courses required for removal of undergraduate deficiencies;
2. Courses taken prior to submitting the Plan of Study that apply to the minimum credit requirement;
3. Courses required by the degree program;
4. Elective courses (or course options) that may be taken in application to the minimum credit requirement;
5. Courses taken outside the degree program.

The Plan of Study serves as a record for the Graduate Office, the program director, the advisor, and the degree candidate for monitoring progress in the degree program. The Plan of Study may be revised only upon approval of the advisor, and/or research advisory committee, and the graduate program director. Master's degree programs must be completed within six years; Ph.D. programs must be completed within eight years.

Policy Statement on Readings and Independent Study Courses

Readings and independent study courses represent an important method for instruction of graduate students who wish to pursue special interests in their degree programs. Ordinarily, not more than two such courses (6 semester hours) should be included in a 30-semester-hour program, since student interaction and student thesis research should occupy the major program commitment. Prior to authorization of Readings and/or Independent Study credit, program directors will require a written summary of what work will be undertaken, identification of the specific resources to be used, the frequency of meetings between the student and his/her instructor, and the method of assigning quality evaluation to the project. A copy of the summary should be given to the student and the original should be maintained in the student's departmental file until final review to certify degree requirements. This policy is intended to assure graduate-level instruction for the students, and to better define the responsibilities of students and their mentors for completion of graduate readings and independent study projects that are assigned degree credit. A copy of each contract will be kept in the student's file.

THESIS, DISSERTATION AND PROJECT STUDIES

Master's candidates register for thesis Course 799 and doctoral students register for Dissertation 899 in any term in which they are engaged in formal research in connection with, or other formal preparation of, the thesis or dissertation. Normally, the master's thesis requirements can be met within two semesters. Master's candidates may in unusual circumstances with the permission of the Dean register for six hours of Thesis 799 in a single semester. Normally, however, the student will register for only one three-hour thesis course in a semester.

Because thesis, dissertation, and project studies often do not fit into a convenient timetable for completion, options for extended deadlines are provided. The student may sign up for multiple semesters of thesis or dissertation courses. Letter grades are expected to reflect the quality of the student's work and the quality or adequacy of their progress toward completion. The advisor or the student will notify the Graduate Dean of the date, time and room for the public defense. When the student has successfully defended his or her thesis/dissertation, the advisor will forward a notice signed by all committee members to the Graduate Dean with an explanation of the outcome of the defense. The final letter grade for the thesis or dissertation course will be reported by the student's advisor after acceptance of the completed manuscript.

Detailed specifications for preparing the thesis or dissertation and for scheduling the defense may be had from the chair of the department or found on the Graduate School website under "Current Students." A preliminary copy of the thesis or dissertation should be submitted to the advisor at least two months before the date on which the degree is to be conferred. The thesis or dissertation in its final form must be approved and accepted by the advisor and the advisory committee at least 2 weeks before the degree is conferred. The student must submit an electronic copy of his/her thesis or dissertation to UMI/ProQuest, who will in turn provide a digital copy to the Health Sciences Library for permanent storage. No student will be permitted to seek publication of thesis or dissertation material without consent of his or her advisor. Violations of this regulation will lead to appropriate disciplinary action by the Dean.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The following guidelines represent sound educational practices that are appropriate to most graduate programs. Graduate Programs and their faculty manifest their disciplinary traditions and expectations differently. Such specific expectations may take precedence over the more general guidelines offered below.

1. Instructors are expected to explain to their students the grading policies, including the evaluation weights for performance expectations to determine the final grade in each course, during the first week of instruction.
2. Final grades assigned to graduate students should be based on demonstrations of competence by the student, which may include tests, examinations, papers, projects, recitations, experiments, skill development, etc.
3. Instructors should be expected to provide students with formative assessment of learning on an ongoing basis.
4. Students should be informed in a timely manner of their scores on exams, papers, projects, etc.
6. Final grades in courses should include evaluation of the student's capacity to organize and communicate (in written and/or oral form) the principal concepts and/or applications of the course content.

GRADING SYSTEM

A student's scholarship rating in each course is determined by the combined results of examinations and class (and laboratory) work as explained above. This rating is reported by the instructor in accordance with the grading system shown below. Grade reports are issued by the Registrar.

- A Indicates not only outstanding achievement but also an unusual degree of intellectual initiative
- B Indicates attainment above the average, satisfactory for 500-level courses
- C Indicates satisfactory but minimum quality work in courses at or above the 500-level
- F Indicates failure — no credit
- AF Indicates failure for excessive absences
- WF Indicates failure because of unauthorized withdrawal
- I Indicates work incomplete
- X Indicates absence from final examination
- AU Indicates audited course only — no credit
- SA Indicates work satisfactory
- UN Indicates work unsatisfactory — no credit
- W Indicates official withdrawal from a course — no credit

SA and UN are used to report progress or performance in several instances, e.g., when a course carries no credit, or when laboratory or skills development are a primary focus of the course. Use of SA/UN instead of regular grading in any other course is not permitted. Credit earned with SA (Satisfactory) may be counted toward graduation but does not affect the student's GPA; however, UN (Unsatisfactory) functions as a failure in computing the grade-point average. An I is given at the end of the term if the work is incomplete but progressing satisfactorily.

Pass/No Pass Option

The Pass/NoPass (P/NP) grading option is available for students in good academic standing for selected courses at Creighton. A limit of nine (9) Pass/No Pass hours will be permitted the eligible student. With this option the instructor of record is not informed which students have registered "P/NP." The instructor's letter grade assignment will be changed to the appropriate "P" or "NP" designation when final grades are processed. A "C" is the lowest possible passing grade. The "P" or "NP" grade does not affect the student's grade-point average. Students may not register "P/NP" for prerequisite, required, and supporting courses in their major area of study.

Incomplete and Absence from Final Examination

The "I" and "X" are marks used, as explained below, to reflect a student's irregular status at the time final end-of-term grade reports are due.

I (incomplete). A student who has failed to fulfill all requirements of a course may petition the instructor before the close of the term to assign an end-of-term mark of I indicating incomplete performance. An I may be awarded to graduate students only for reasons of illness, unavoidable travel breaks in the program, or for incomplete work on a thesis or dissertation. An I (incomplete) will not be granted to a student who has been excessively absent during the term or who has simply failed to complete the work of the course before the close of the term without an exceptionally good reason.

Students must submit a Completion of Course Agreement Form for an Incomplete to be assigned. This form indicates the work to be completed and the deadline for completion. Both the student and professor must endorse the form.

The responsibility for completing all course work rests with the student. The maximum time limit for clearing an incomplete, except in thesis or dissertation, is one year from the start of the course. If the incomplete is not cleared within this limit, it becomes a permanent I; and the student must reregister for and satisfactorily complete the course if credit is desired.

The I does not affect the grade-point average. However, should a student have more than one-third of his credits for a single registration period outstanding as Incomplete he will not be permitted to reregister for additional graduate credit until the incompletes are cleared.

An X is given to a student who missed the regularly scheduled final examination, and the X functions as a failure until it is cleared. If the reason for absence is acceptable to the Dean, an examination must be taken as soon as possible but not later than one month from the date of the regular final examination. A permanent grade is recorded after the final examination is taken. If the examination is not taken as specified or if the reason for absence was not acceptable, the student receives F in the course.

A student who receives an "I" in a course that is a prerequisite for another course will not be permitted to enroll in the subsequent course.

A student who is both incomplete and absent from the final examination will receive both an "I" and "X" (IX), which will function as a failure until cleared as specified above.

When an "I" or "X" (original entry) is cleared and a final grade, either passing or failing, is assigned, the final grade is entered on the student's permanent academic record beside the "I" or "X" and the "I" or "X" is bracketed by parentheses. Hence, these marks remain permanently on the student's record.

GRADE REPORTS

Grade reports are made available to students at the end of each term (semester or summer) via the web. Access to the system may be gained by accessing Banner Self Service (Registrar's home page) and entering the student's ID number (typically the student's NetID) and the student's PIN.

QUALITY REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that students in the Graduate School will do a higher quality of work than those in the undergraduate schools. Since no degree is conferred in consequence of mere time fulfillment or credits gained, the student must show performance of a superior quality.

A minimum grade of "B" is required to earn graduate credit in 500-series (advanced undergraduate) courses; in courses numbered 600 and above, open exclusively to graduate students, the minimum satisfactory grade is "C." It does not follow, however, that minimum satisfactory grades will qualify for a degree. Graduate degrees will not be awarded to students who do not possess an overall average of "B" in the graduate program. Furthermore, graduate students are allowed to incur "C" grades in no more than six semester hours. "C+" or "B+" grades are not applicable to rating graduate students in courses being taken for graduate credit (500-series and above.)

The ability to express oneself in idiomatic and grammatically correct English will be regarded as a determining factor in assigning grades, and no one will be allowed to pursue a graduate program unless he or she consistently demonstrates this ability.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A graduate student who has been in good standing, but whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 at the end of any term is placed on academic probation. A student who fails to remove the probationary status by regaining a cumulative 3.0 GPA within one semester of full-time enrollment or its equivalent (8 credit hours) will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

Any student who accumulates more than six credit hours of "C" grade, or any one grade less than "C," in courses in his or her graduate program is also disqualified from the Graduate School and will be dismissed from the program.

DISCIPLINE

The primary purpose of discipline is educational in nature and is aimed at the development of responsible student conduct.

The University has the right and duty to protect its educational purpose through setting and maintaining standards and regulations considered essential to its purpose. The *Student Handbook* describes disciplinary procedures and penalties, which may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROGRAM (LOAP)

A Leave of Absence is a planned interruption in a student's formal education. A graduate student may request a Leave of Absence for medical necessity, financial hardship, or other reasons as deemed acceptable by his/her major advisor (if applicable) and the graduate program director. A leave of absence is not intended for students who wish to temporarily attend another college or university.

In order to be eligible for a Leave of Absence, a graduate student must have completed one semester of graduate study at Creighton University and be in good academic standing. A leave of absence may not exceed one calendar year.

Students requesting a Leave of Absence should complete a Leave of Absence Request Form and submit it to their major advisor and/or graduate program director. Upon endorsement by the major advisor and/or program director, the form will be sent to the Graduate School for approval by the Dean, and then filed.

Following the leave of absence, a request for reinstatement or re-entry to the graduate program should be submitted in a timely manner. The student's advisor or program director will consider the request for re-entry and work with the student to develop a plan of study.

If a leave of absence is granted to a doctoral student in candidacy, the time limitation of completing all other requirements within four years after passing the qualifying examination shall be extended by the same time as the length of the leave.

Students are not eligible for financial support (including fellowships or assistantships) during the leave of absence. Resumption of financial support is not guaranteed upon re-entry to the graduate program.

The principal advantage of LOAP is that it offers a student the opportunity to leave college temporarily with the assurance that he/she will be able to return and resume his/her studies with a minimum of administrative difficulty. Because the leave is initially approved by the College and officially recognized as a leave of absence, the student is able to be away from the College and still maintain a close tie with it.

Students in this program are considered "on leave" by the University and will not be classified as enrolled students; however, they will be eligible for services of the Career Planning and Placement Center and limited use of library facilities.

APPEALS AND PETITIONS

Grade Appeals

The instructor has jurisdiction in determining grades; however, the student has the right to appeal a final course grade that the student believes to be arbitrary or capricious. "Arbitrary or capricious" is defined as "the assignment of a final course grade through means that are erratic, irregular, or inconsistent with grading policies published in the course syllabus and/or inexplicably different from those applied to other students enrolled in the same course." The appeal process will involve the following steps (the issue may be resolved at any level):

1. The student confers with the instructor involved.
2. The student and instructor (preferably together) confer with the chair of the department or program director.
3. When the foregoing steps do not resolve the issue, the student may initiate a formal written appeal to the Dean. Normally, the Dean will forward such appeal to the appropriate committee for its review and recommendation. A formal appeal should not be entered upon lightly by a student, or lightly dismissed by an instructor. A formal written grade appeal may be made no later than the sixth week of the following semester. Under ordinary circumstances, the Graduate Board does not hear appeals of a passing grade.
4. For grade appeal issues brought before the Graduate Board, the specific charge to the Board regarding a grade appeal is to assess whether the mechanisms utilized by the faculty member to determine the grade in question were applied consistently and fairly to all students enrolled in the course, and, if not, to identify specifically which evaluation mechanisms were arbitrarily or capriciously applied. The Board will not attempt to determine the grade to be received by the student. The Board's decision will be reached by a simple majority vote.

Dismissal Appeals

A student has the right to appeal a dismissal from the Graduate School by filing a petition for reinstatement within 10 working days of the date of the written notice of dismissal from the Graduate School. A petition for reinstatement should be submitted in writing to the Dean and indicate the reasons the student feels s/he should be reinstated. A letter of support from the student's major advisor, graduate program director, or other faculty member must also be submitted to the Graduate Dean. Issues of dismissal and reinstatement are heard by the Graduate Board. A dismissed student appealing for reinstatement has the right to attend classes and exercise the privileges of all other graduate students pending the outcome of the appeal, except in cases where there are reasons related to the physical or emotional welfare of the student or others, or reasons involving the safety of persons or property. The decision of student status will be made by the Dean, upon recommendation of the Graduate Board.

In cases of academic misconduct, if a serious penalty (i.e. expulsion from the University, suspension, or a request for withdrawal) is imposed by the Dean, the student has the right to appeal to the University President, following the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. If a student is reinstated into the Graduate School and subsequently dismissed again, the student does not have the right to request reinstatement.

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY ON ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Rationale

All universities are concerned with the cultivation of specialized knowledge and the development of technical skills, and by introducing graduate and post-doctoral students to these disciplinary arts, they preserve, transmit and refine the current body of knowledge and lay claim to their definitions of academic excellence. While research contributing to the advancement of a particular form of intellectual inquiry marks the completion of traditional graduate plans, the end goal of the plan lies in the achievement of certain ways of thinking.

Achievement of graduate educational goals lies in development of analytical independence and conceptual self-consciousness; in the stimulation of creative imagination and critical abilities; in adoption of disciplined thinking and commitment to personal honesty, intellectual integrity, analytical consideration of competing claims, and respect for the contributions of others to a common intellectual enterprise. Creighton University has a reputation for developing people of high professional competence; our best graduates combine professional excellence with a healthy capacity to see technical problems in their larger contexts, and to combine imagination, intellect and action into forming a Christian wisdom that extends beyond mere convention.

Policy on Academic Honesty

In keeping with its mission, the University seeks to prepare its students to be knowledgeable, forthright, and honest. It expects and requires academic honesty from all members of the University community. Academic honesty includes adherence to guidelines established by the University, its Colleges and Schools and their faculties, its libraries, and the computer center.

“Academic or academic-related misconduct” includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized collaboration or use of external information during examinations; plagiarizing or representing another’s ideas as one’s own; furnishing false academic information to the university; falsely obtaining, distributing, using or receiving test materials; falsifying academic records; falsifying clinical reports or otherwise endangering the well-being of patients involved in the teaching process; misusing academic resources; defacing or tampering with library materials; obtaining or gaining unauthorized access to examinations or academic research material; soliciting or offering unauthorized academic information or materials; improperly altering or inducing another to improperly alter any academic record; or engaging in any conduct which is intended or reasonably likely to confer upon one’s self or another an unfair advantage or unfair benefit respecting an academic matter.

Further information regarding academic or academic-related misconduct, and disciplinary procedures and sanctions regarding such misconduct, may be obtained by consulting the current edition of the *Creighton University Handbook for Students*. However, students are advised that expulsion from the University is one of the sanctions which may be imposed for academic or academic-related misconduct.

The University reserves the right to modify, deviate from, or make exceptions to the foregoing or to the *Handbook for Students* at any time, and to apply any such modification, or make any such deviation or exception applicable to any student without regard to date of admission application or enrollment.

STUDENT PROGRESS

All master's students completing a program under Plan A (thesis) and doctoral students are required to complete the necessary forms to track their progress toward degree completion. These include a Plan of Study, Committee Evaluation, Progress Report, Advancement to Candidacy, and a Degree Checklist. These forms may be obtained from the graduate program director, or on the Graduate School website.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY FOR AN ADVANCED DEGREE

Admission to the Graduate School does not imply admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. In order to be advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree a student must have previously been admitted to the Graduate School, have completed approximately half the number of hours in the degree program, and passed the comprehensive examination. For the master's degree, however, the comprehensive examination can be used either to advance students to candidacy for the Ph.D. or, to measure terminal learning outcomes at or near the completion of the program of study.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Each program requiring a written comprehensive examination determines the content of that examination and administers the examination. The student is provided an opportunity to demonstrate general knowledge of the discipline and to give evidence of analytical abilities. The comprehensive examination represents the culmination of intensive formal study and serves to demonstrate proficiency required for the cultivation of the habit of inquiry and/or learning outcomes specified for a specific program. The student should consult with his or her advisor and the faculty throughout the formal study in determining what preparation will be expected.

The comprehensive examination will be scheduled upon recommendation of the student's advisor and program director; ordinarily, the completion of the course work required in the Plan of Study should be anticipated in the semester during which the examination is to be taken. The student is advanced to candidacy upon passing the comprehensive examination.

The program director (or department chair) will notify the Dean of the Graduate School whether the student has passed or failed the comprehensive examination. A candidate who has failed the comprehensive examination will be permitted to take it only one more time, but only after a one-semester study period has been completed. Failure of the comprehensive examination disqualifies the student for the thesis examination or dissertation defense and/or graduation.

THESIS EXAMINATION OR DISSERTATION DEFENSE

A degree candidate who has or will have satisfactorily completed the minimum credit Plan of Study, the comprehensive examination, and the draft of his or her thesis or dissertation will be permitted to undertake an oral defense of the thesis or dissertation. The thesis or dissertation committee will have conferred with the candidate and had a suitable copy of the manuscript in their hands at least 30 days prior to the oral examination and defense.

The master's degree candidate's committee will be chaired by the student's major advisor and will include at least two other faculty members qualified in the student's major discipline.