

**Handbook**  
**for**  
**Graduate**  
**Coordinators**

**University of Northern Iowa**  
**Graduate College**

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**Introduction**[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Thank you for serving as a Graduate Coordinator. It is through your hard work and dedication that successful graduate education at UNI is made possible. This handbook is intended to help you administer your program by addressing some of the more frequent concerns, questions, and problems in implementing the policies of UNI and the Graduate College.

This handbook is *not* intended to replace official policies and procedures of the University or Graduate College. The full policies are available in the UNI catalog and on the University and Graduate College websites. Where relevant, links are provided in this handbook to appropriate policies.

Please note that the Graduate Dean or Associate Dean of the Graduate College must approve any and all exceptions to policy ahead of time. Usually these exceptions can be addressed through the student request system.

Since graduate education at UNI is administered in a decentralized fashion, good communication between programs and the Graduate College is all the more necessary. The Graduate College will periodically send information to coordinators, and will hold meetings with coordinators, to make them aware of upcoming events, opportunities for graduate students, and any changes or clarifications to Graduate College or university policy.

It is important for graduate coordinators to pass along information from the Graduate College to faculty who are advising graduate students, and/or who are serving as thesis/dissertation chairs. Since Graduate College approval is required for all exceptions to policy, advisors should get in touch with graduate coordinators and the Graduate College early.

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Complete information *for prospective students* on the graduate admissions process and requirements is available here: [www.grad.uni.edu/admission](http://www.grad.uni.edu/admission).

Although the Graduate College ultimately reviews and approves all admissions decisions, responsibility for determining eligibility for admission rests primarily with the academic departments. This section covers how a student submits materials, how applicants are tracked, and how departments/programs review materials, record an admission recommendation, and communicate the decision to applicants.

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The link for the online application for graduate admission is located at <http://uni.edu/admissions/apply>. A printable paper admission form can also be found at the same site. Once a student submits an online graduate application, a program-specific application To-Do List will be created that lets the student know what supporting materials are required for their specific program. The student may attach application materials (personal statements, resumes, etc) to the online application. All application materials not attached to the form are to be sent to the Office of Admissions at [AdmissionsProcessing@uni.edu](mailto:AdmissionsProcessing@uni.edu) by the student or letter of recommendation writer. Paper documents may be mailed to admissions unless otherwise specified by the department/program. When Admissions receives an item, it will scan or upload it into the OnBase imaging system (see below), and mark it off the To-Do list, so the student knows it has been received. Anyone in the department with access to the Student Services Ctr (Student) screen in SIS will also be able to see the To-Do list. If you receive any application materials in the department, please send them over to Admissions as soon as possible so the student has the clearest picture of the completion status of the application.

Students whose first language is not English must submit either a TOEFL or IELTS score. **A TOEFL score of at least 550 (paper) / 79 (internet), or an IELTS score of at least 6.5 is required for *unconditional admission and eligibility to enroll in graduate courses*.** Some graduate programs may require higher test scores; no program may admit a student unconditionally with a lower score.

**To be eligible to be considered for *provisional/conditional admission in any graduate status*, a TOEFL score of at least 453 (paper) / 46 (internet), or an IELTS score of at least 5.5 is required.** A student with a score below this is not admissible for graduate study in degree or non-degree status. Such a student can be admitted to CIEP, but will be required to obtain a score of at least 453/46/5.5 before any graduate admission can be approved.

**A student admitted provisionally for low TOEFL/IELTS must achieve a score on the TOEFL or IELTS that meets the standards for *unconditional admission within three semesters of undergraduate enrollment at UNI*.** This may be done in two ways: 1) By achieving a score of at least 550 (paper)/79 internet on the TOEFL or of at least 6.5 on the IELTS or 2) By successfully complete The Culture and Intensive English Program (CIEP) with at least a B (3.0) in all level 7 CIEP courses. The institutional TOEFL (offered 3 times per year) may be used to meet this requirement. If the provisionally/conditionally admitted student fails to obtain the score necessary for unconditional admission in three semesters, the admission to graduate study is void.

The requirement to submit a TOEFL or IELTS score may be waived only by the Graduate College through a direct request from a graduate program (not from a prospective student). A typical circumstance in which a waiver may be granted is that the student has completed a bachelor's or graduate degree at an accredited English-speaking institution. No waiver will be approved without evidence of English proficiency.

If your program decides to admit a student who has not submitted a required test score (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS), you cannot require them to take it after admission. The tests are an application requirement—they cannot be a graduation requirement.

The Graduate Council recommends that individual programs should be allowed to evaluate international applicants with three-year degrees on a case-by-case basis. As a result, individual programs should review these applications and they have the discretion to admit or deny students with such degrees.

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Admissions will scan all documents/correspondence into the OnBase imaging system and these documents will be available to departments/programs (to individuals specified by the department/program) electronically through the Unity client (installed on specific computers) or a web-based application. The web application works in Firefox ESR 24 or 31, with 38 coming (ESR = Extended Support Release), Internet Explorer and Safari browsers, but not in Chrome. It is possible to print the materials from the imaging system.

*Admission Recommendation Form:*

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The electronic Graduate Admission Recommendation Form is used, in OnBase to record the department's/program's decision on an applicant. There are three possible recommendations a department can make for an applicant to the Graduate College: Unconditional Admission, Provisional Admission, or Denied. The Graduate College will never change a denial to an admission. The only circumstances in which an admission would be changed to a denial is if the applicant does not have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, or if the TOEFL score is too low for conditional admission. Occasionally, a department mistakenly recommends unconditional admission when the student is not eligible for it. In those cases, the Graduate College will change unconditional admission to provisional admission.

When completing the electronic Graduate Admission Recommendation Form, be sure to indicate on the form the undergraduate and previous graduate GPAs, and for international students the TOEFL/IELTS score, or that a waiver has been approved by Graduate College. If the student is international but the first language is English, indicate that on the form.

A denial of admission does not require a justification on the form, although you should provide it to the student in the letter they are sent. If your program does not have space or faculty resources for all qualified applicants, that is sufficient reason for denial of the least qualified applicants.

Admission is either unconditional or provisional. Unconditional admission is available *only* to applicants with an undergraduate cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 or a prior graduate GPA of at least 3.00 on 8 or more credits, and with the appropriate minimum TOEFL or IELTS score if a waiver of the requirement to submit a score has not been approved. If these criteria are not met, admission must be provisional. Even if the minimum criteria *are* met, you can choose to make the admission provisional. For provisional admission, be sure to list all provisions of admission (GPA on \_\_ program hours, prerequisite courses or required additional program courses, must complete CIEP with at least a 3.0 in all three level 7 classes or retake TOEFL or IELTS and achieve 550/79/6.5 in three semesters—required if the TOEFL or IELTS score does not meet the minimum for unconditional admission, etc.) For all admissions (unconditional or provisional) be sure to list any courses taken in non-degree graduate status (including graduate credit as a senior) that are NOT accepted toward the degree. *As a general rule, if it's not on the form or is not a*

*catalog degree requirement, the student is not held to it, regardless of what you may say in the admission letter to the student.*

The one exception to the statement above is that you do not need to indicate on the Admission Recommendation Form that the admission is provisional on completion of the Bachelor's (or Master's) degree, although you can (and should) say it in the letter. A transcript showing the bachelor's degree (or Master's degree) completed is actually a requirement for the student to complete their admission. A student cannot be a graduate student in a degree program without a completed bachelor's degree (except for students in the Integrated MAcc program) and cannot be a doctoral student without a completed Master's degree. *Students who have not provided the required transcript by the end of the second week of classes may be removed from the courses they are not eligible to be in.*

Once you submit the form, it will go to the proper records analyst in Admissions (depending on whether the student is U.S. or international) for a check of the information and whether the application file is complete (especially whether the bachelor's degree has already been awarded or not). After Admissions checks it, it will go to the Graduate College for approval, then back to Admissions for processing the admission decision into the SIS.

*Letter to the Student:*

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Denial letters can be sent to applicants when the Admission Recommendation Form is started in OnBase workflow. **Admission letters should not be sent until after the Graduate College review/approval** in case unconditional admission was accidentally recommended even though the student is not eligible for it. *After the admission is finalized*, the department should send/email the student an admission letter that includes

- Information about the requirements of the program the student needs to meet (including information about any provisions of admission or waivers of course requirements),
- Information about the Online Orientation available on the Graduate College website at [www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-orientation](http://www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-orientation),
- The date of the Graduate Student Orientation, if the student is a fall admit
- Information about who to contact for advising on course selection, and
- Other information about the department.

***Do not offer a student an assistantship or Graduate College tuition scholarship in the admission letter or tell them they've been recommended or awarded any of this support. These offers must come from the Graduate College. Please see the Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Scholarships section in this handbook for information about what you can and can't tell a student about financial support in the admission letter.***

*Admission Acceptance/Reply:*

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Admissions will not matriculate a student so s/he can register unless they have received information that the student definitely plans to enroll. You should ask the student to indicate in some way whether they accept your offer of admission and intend to enroll at UNI, and then communicate their reply to the appropriate admissions record analyst, even if the student says they're not coming here. A form you can use for this is available from the Graduate College if your program does not have its own form. The Graduate College is interested in gathering data about why admitted students decide not to attend UNI. If you hear from an admitted student that

they aren't coming here, please ask them why, and then please communicate that to the record analyst so they can enter the reason in the SIS when they close out the application.

### **Program of Study / Advisement Report / Academic Requirements Report**

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Once a student is admitted to a degree program and the basic admission file is complete (application, transcript showing required degree, fee), an Advisement Report (formerly Program of Study) based on the program's catalog requirements will be created automatically. It will be available for viewing through MyUNiverse by the student, the student's advisor, and the program coordinator (along with other appropriate staff and administrators, such as the Registrar's Office and the Graduate College). For the student, it is called Academic Requirements.

Catalog requirements of the student's program will be listed, and when the student registers for one of these required courses, it should automatically appear in the appropriate place on the student's Advisement Report. ***If the program has electives that require advisor approval, a student request has to be filed in order for a course to apply to the degree as an elective, unless wildcards have been authorized by the department.*** The student must be registered in the course before submitting the request. Please be sure to have students file the necessary requests to have these courses added to the Advisement Report in time for the requests to be processed before any deadlines (such as those for graduation). While it is no longer necessary for a student's courses to show applying to the degree for a graduate assistantship to be paid, you may wish to require this of your students anyway, so that you have an accurate picture of their progress toward degree.

One important area to check on the Advisement Report is "Courses Not Used for Current Major." Any courses/credits that are in this section are not applying to the degree, although they may still apply to the Plan GPA. Courses can be "split"—for instance a 3 credit course can have 1 or 2 credits applying to the degree and the other credits in Courses Not Used. Courses can also be split among degree requirements. By graduate policy, if any credits of a course apply to the degree, all credits for that course factor into the Plan GPA.

Another important area to check on the Advisement Report is "Graduate Limits." This section highlights courses the student has taken that are subject to credit limits or time limits (in the case of recency). The Recency limit is an "action line"—it will prevent courses that are out of recency from applying to the degree. The other limits are "view lines"—they display courses that are subject to those limits (such as courses with "C range" grades, courses opted for credit/no-credit, Guided Independent Study courses, workshops, transfer courses, etc.) This section always displays a summary of the limits, but will only display details for the limits that have courses. For instance, if the student has a course with a "C range" grade and nothing else that is pulled in by any other limits, then only the "C GRADES" limit will display anything that shows course information.

The Graduate College website has a brochure: Navigating My UNiVerse for Graduate Students that includes information on viewing the advisement report and creating student requests at <http://www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-orientation/myuniverse>

## Student Requests

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The student request system for graduate students is online, available through **MyUNiVerse, My Page** tab in the Student Center pagelet, below the link for Student Center. Graduate students click on the **Student Request (Grad Stdts)** link, and follow instructions to write, submit, and review the approval status of all student requests. Graduate students *must* file requests via the online system; paper requests are not acceptable and will not be processed by the Graduate College or Registrar's office.

There are many student request types, designated by a letter. It's important that students choose the correct request type. Here's the list:

- A – Change Registration: Add course or change course credits after the deadline for the current term
- B – Change Registration: Add course or change course credits after the end of the term
- C – Change Registration: Drop course from current or future term
- D – Change Registration: Drop course after the end of the term
- E – Change Registration: Change course section after the deadline for the current term
- F – Substitute for required course in the degree
- G – Exception to Policy: Extension of 7-year time limit for degree completion/Waiver of recency
- I – Change Registration: Change course to/from ungraded credit after the deadline
- J – Change Registration: Change course to/from audit after the deadline
- K – Exception to Policy: Register for an overload
- L – Withdrawal from UNI after the deadline with 'W' for all courses
- M – Declaring electives for the degree
- N – Change to Thesis or Non-thesis option (Master's or Specialist degree)
- P – Graduate transfer course credit approval
- Q – Request registration in an undergraduate course
- Z – Other

Once a student files an online request, it goes to the student's advisor for review, and the advisor gets an email notification with a link to the student request system. *The graduate coordinator also gets an email notification at the time of request submission, mainly for informational purposes. (The request will not appear in your list of pending requests until the advisor approves, but you can search on the request number or the student name to find the request.)* If you would like to enter the student request system manually, you can log in to MyUNiVerse and look in your Advisor Center for the link labeled Student Request Admin (Grad). If the request is approved by the advisor, the request then moves to the graduate coordinator for review. A graduate coordinator who is not also the advisor will get two notifications for each request. If approved at the graduate coordinator level, the next step depends on the request type. Requests of type F, M, N, and P bypass the Graduate College approval level and are automatically

forwarded to the Registrar's Office. A statement appears in the comment box on the Associate Dean line in the request "System forwarded to Registrar's Office." All other types go to the Associate Dean of the Graduate College for final approval. The student receives an email notification as each person takes action, and also when the request is processed in the Registrar's Office or when the Registrar's Office marks the request "Cannot Process" because there is a problem with the request and it needs to be submitted again. The Registrar's Office will consult the Associate Dean in the Graduate College if there is a question about a request. Besides the email notifications, students may view their requests to see where they are in the process. Please note that it may take a few days after the request reaches the Registrar's Office for the change to appear on the student's Advisement Report.

Advisors and graduate coordinators should use the "comments" section of the request to make clarifications or corrections as necessary. However, graduate coordinators and advisors are urged to remind their students to be as clear and thorough as possible when making requests. This will help avoid delays.

If a request sits at the advisor or coordinator level for 7 days, it will automatically be forwarded to the next level, but it will not be automatically approved. Please do not let student requests sit for longer than a week. A proxy may be designated on the "Requests Pending Approval" screen. Please designate a proxy if you will be unable to process student requests for longer than one week to prevent them from "timing out" and moving to the next level. **To assign a proxy approval:** On the Requests Pending Approval page, at the top left side of the page is a link "Manage my Proxy Approval." You can add, edit, or delete proxy approvers from that page. Required information to enter a proxy is the proxy approver's University ID and a start date. End date is optional, and can be left open. Anyone (faculty, department heads, staff) with a University ID can be listed as a proxy. Many graduate coordinators designate the graduate secretary as a proxy so that the secretary has access to view requests submitted by a student. Whether the secretary actually enters any action is left to the department to decide.

The exception to the use of the online request system is the ability for graduate coordinators to make blanket requests by email. This can only be used if a large cohort of students has a uniform situation and request. To make a blanket request, send an email to the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs, cc to the appropriate person in the Registrar's Office, with the subject line "Blanket request for \_\_\_\_" and include the following information: a clear statement of the request and a justification or explanation of why the request is necessary. Attach to the email a list of students' names and student numbers to whom the request applies. The Registrar's Office prefers to have the list of student names separate from the request itself, so that the request can be added to each student's file without including other students' information in the file. If blanket requests are repeatedly made regarding the same issue, a change in the degree requirements should be put through curriculum. Blanket requests should not be used for a single student or even just a few students. The online request system should be used in those cases.

[Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Scholarships](#)

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Graduate Assistantships and Graduate College Tuition Scholarships are available to qualified students who are working toward a graduate degree at the University of Northern Iowa. They may only be held by full-time students who are in residence during the time of their appointment. Policies for Graduate Assistantships can be found in the Graduate Assistantship Handbook on the Graduate College's website: [www.grad.uni.edu/assistantships](http://www.grad.uni.edu/assistantships).

### *Common Issues*

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Master's and Specialist students are eligible for up to four semesters of support per degree. Students are eligible for funding for up to two UNI Master's degrees, at the discretion of the second program or the non-academic department of the assistantship. Doctoral students are eligible for up to six semesters of support.

Offers letters for ALL assistantships (regardless of funding source) and for Graduate College Tuition Scholarships must come from the Graduate College. **DO NOT tell a student in their admission letter that they have been awarded an assistantship or Grad College scholarship or recommended for either of these.** At most, you can tell them that recommendations have been forwarded to the Graduate College, which makes official offers. Students must reply to email(s) from the Graduate College to accept or decline offer(s). Please note that no services can be required of a student in exchange for a scholarship. Payment for services must be processed through Payroll.

Advisors and Graduate Coordinators should ensure that their students are in compliance with the requirements no later than August 1 for the Fall semester and again by January 2 for the Spring semester. These are the criteria that must be met:

- (1) The student must have the bachelor's degree and official transcripts must be received by Admissions. Please note that a summer BA graduate may have difficulty meeting this requirement in order to start a GA at the beginning of the fall semester.
- (2) The student is registered for at least 9 graduate credit hours each semester of assistantship. It is no longer required that these credits show applying to the degree, although the expectation is that they eventually will. No additional semesters of support will be awarded for students who fail to meet degree requirements within their allotted semesters of support.
- (3) The student has a Plan GPA of 3.00 or above. New graduate students need an undergraduate GPA of 3.00 or above, or a graduate GPA of 3.00 or above on at least 8 graduate credits;
- (4) The student must accept the offer of support from the Graduate College. Acceptance of Fall support does not imply acceptance of Spring support. Acceptance of an assistantship does not imply acceptance of a scholarship. All offers are sent by separate emails—they must be responded to separately.
- (5) New grad assistants must provide documentation of eligibility to work in the U.S. (new hire paperwork) to Human Resources no later than 3 days after the start of their appointment, and preferably before it starts. See [www.uni.edu/hrs/newemployees/getting-started](http://www.uni.edu/hrs/newemployees/getting-started) for details and forms.

It is especially important for advisors and graduate coordinators to help new graduate students to ensure they have met the requirements for their assistantships or scholarships by the deadline dates. ***Failure by a student to meet the criteria by the beginning of the semester will result in***

*delayed payment and/or a pro-rated reduction in their assistantship salary.* Please use the Graduate College link for Assistantships ([www.grad.uni.edu/assistantships](http://www.grad.uni.edu/assistantships)) to find the requirements that Graduate Assistants must meet each semester in order to be paid on time.

#### *Performance Evaluations of Graduate Assistants*

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A position description for the Graduate Assistantship must be on your website and a paper copy should be made available to the GA at the start of the assignment. The GA supervisor must meet with the GA and go over the specific duties/expectation of the GA assignment in the first week of the semester. The GA and the GA supervisor will both be required to fill out an electronic evaluation near the end of the semester. See the Graduate Assistantship Handbook, available at [www.grad.uni.edu/assistantships](http://www.grad.uni.edu/assistantships), for more details.

#### *Termination of a Graduate Assistant*

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This is a drastic step, similar to firing an employee. An offer of assistantship that is made and accepted is a binding agreement. Termination requires written documentation of evaluation of the GA that the GA has had appropriate time to respond to. It also requires written documentation of non-performance of duties or very poor performance. The GA must be given the opportunity to respond in writing. All documentation must be provided to the Graduate Dean before termination could be approved.

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The Graduate College adheres to the standard policies and procedures of the University. These are available here: <http://www.uni.edu/policies>. In particular, everyone should be familiar with the content of the following policies:

13.02 Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy [www.uni.edu/policies/1302](http://www.uni.edu/policies/1302)

13.03 Equal Opportunity & Non-Discrimination Statement [www.uni.edu/policies/1303](http://www.uni.edu/policies/1303)

13.13 Policy on Research Misconduct [www.uni.edu/policies/1313](http://www.uni.edu/policies/1313)

3.01 Student Academic Ethics Policy [www.uni.edu/policies/301](http://www.uni.edu/policies/301)

12.01 Student Academic Grievance [www.uni.edu/policies/1201](http://www.uni.edu/policies/1201)

Some particular policies and procedures of note for graduate education are highlighted here as they are unique to graduate education at UNI.

#### *Academic Discipline (Probation and Suspension)*

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Probation and suspension for degree students is evaluated on the basis of attempted degree hours and Plan GPA. Please note that any course on the advisement report with a mark (A though F, W, I, RC, CR, NC) or for which the term and dates of the course has passed, even if there is no mark, will count as attempted degree hours.

Students who have attempted 9-17 hours toward the degree and have a Plan GPA less than 3.00 are placed on Academic Probation. Students on Academic Probation lose any Graduate Assistantship or Graduate College Tuition Scholarship they may have. Students on Probation who fail to raise their Plan GPA to at least 3.00 in the next 8 credits of enrollment are placed on Academic Suspension. If the Plan GPA is so low as to make it mathematically impossible to raise the Plan GPA to 3.00 or better with the next 8-9 credits, the student may be suspended even if fewer than 18 hours toward the degree has been attempted.

Students who have attempted at least 18 hours toward the degree and have a Plan GPA less than 3.00 are immediately suspended. Suspended students may not enroll in any graduate coursework for one full calendar year and lose any Graduate Assistantship or Graduate College Tuition Scholarship they may have. It is possible to go from good standing to suspended with one semester. A semester of probation is not guaranteed. The main purpose of suspension is not punitive. Rather, it is to prevent the students from spending additional money on a degree they are not on track to earn. Also, it is forced time for them to evaluate their goals and capabilities, and to improve their undergraduate background if necessary.

After one full calendar year, if a suspended student wants to take graduate classes again, s/he must meet with the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs and submit an Application for Readmission to Graduate Program. This application is only available in the Graduate College office after consultation with the Associate Dean (it is not online—the online form is for undergrads only), and suspended students must demonstrate to their advisor, program coordinator, department head, and the Graduate Dean that there is a reasonable expectation of future academic success. Students returning from suspension who do not raise their Plan GPA to at least 3.00 in the 8 credits enrolled after readmission are permanently suspended from the graduate program, at least, and possibly from graduate study at UNI. Note that it might be mathematically impossible for students to raise their Plan GPA to at least 3.00 in 8-9 credits; such students are unlikely to be readmitted.

International students who are placed on probation or suspension frequently have problems with remaining in the country, since their visas typically require them to be full time students in good standing or have assistantships/scholarships. Please contact the International Students and Scholars Office for additional information.

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No more than six semester hours of “C” credit (C+, C, C-) may be applied toward a student’s degree. If the six semester hour limit is exceeded, the student must repeat at least one of the courses or drop it off the advisement report if it is an elective. Although a student may request to take 3 credits of opted ungraded credit (credit/no-credit) for the degree, credit/no-credit will not be used to circumvent the maximum 6 credits of “C” grades. Course grades below C- are not satisfactory and these courses will not satisfy degree requirements.

Graduate student GPAs are calculated differently from undergraduate GPAs. For graduate students, the original grade for any repeated graduate course will be included in calculating the

student's Plan GPA as well as in the overall cumulative GPA. *Note that this is different from the way GPA is calculated for undergraduate students.*

Students may only receive credit for one attempt at a non-repeatable course. There are no exceptions to this now, as there may have been in the past. It is particularly important to be watchful of what grad students register for if they were undergraduates at UNI. Graduate students cannot take a 5000-level class (old 100g) if they took the class as an undergraduate (3000 or 4000 or 100g). Be particularly careful when the undergrad courses were the old course numbers—take the time to look up the new course numbers that correspond so that the student can avoid taking those. The exception is if the course description allows repeating for credit, but watch the total number of credits. The SIS does not catch “cross career” repeats (i.e. from undergraduate to graduate). These are caught by the Registrar's Office at graduation, however, and can create last-minute problems for graduation.

Grades of “Incomplete” reported in the Fall semester must be completed by June 1 of the next calendar year. Work reported Incomplete in the Spring semester or Summer sessions must be completed by January 1 of the next calendar year. Students should not register again for a course they have Incomplete in. If course work is not completed and a new grade is not reported, the Incomplete is automatically entered as an “F” on the student's record. Courses that continue beyond the normal ending date of the semester or session should be reported as “RC” (Research Continued) rather than Incomplete. Once the course is complete, the instructor must replace the “RC” with the appropriate grade.

Note that students occasionally find themselves on academic probation or academic suspension as a result of having Incompletes automatically lapse to “Fs.” Program coordinators and advisors should make sure students are aware of the consequences of allowing an Incomplete to lapse to an F, including possible suspension and/or loss of financial support.

*Recency Deadlines*

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Graduate students normally have 7 years (10 years for the Ed.D.) from their initial semester of admission to a graduate degree program to complete their degree, but this time frame can be shorter if courses taken prior to admission are applied to the degree. The first course applied to the degree starts the 7-year (10-year for Ed.D.) recency period. Coursework that falls outside the recency limit will not be applied to graduation requirements automatically. Extensions to the 7-year time limit are occasionally granted (via student request) to current students who are making progress toward graduation, but typically only for a short period of time (an extra semester or two) and due to some unforeseeable circumstance (such as illness, family emergency, etc.). The department has the right of first refusal on any waiver of recency/extension requests. The Graduate College will not overrule the department if they don't want to allow the student an extension. The Graduate College has the right of last refusal—even if the department supports the student being allowed to finish, the Graduate College can deny it, or can require the student to take additional courses.

Extensions are typically granted only once. Students who have not been continuously enrolled or who are hoping to return after a long absence will generally not be granted exceptions to the

recency deadlines without additional coursework. Note that any exception to recency deadlines must ultimately be approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Academic Affairs. Since that is the case, please contact the Associate Dean prior to advising the student. The recency policy provides guidelines on the amount of coursework that must be brought into recency, depending on how far the student is past their original deadline and other circumstances. The Associate Dean will tell the department/program the number of credits that must be brought into recency in order for a waiver to be approved for other courses. The program advisor or coordinator is responsible for determining the actual courses the student will take. A request for waiver of recency must include a plan for degree completion, including as many details on courses that will be taken in what semesters, who the committee will be, when comps will be taken (if applicable), and the deadline by which the student must graduate. The goal is to be sure everyone (student, program, Grad College) is on the same page about how this student will finish the degree.

Please be aware that if a student started a graduate program before 2006, if they request and are granted a waiver of recency to complete the degree program, they would have to be switched to a 2006 (or more recent) version of the curriculum.

### *Academic Grievances*

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Academic grievances for all students are handled through Section 12.01 of the policies and procedures. See <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1201>. Every effort should be made by the student, faculty, department head, and facilitators to resolve disputes informally, but the student should not be dissuaded from filing a grievance if they feel it's necessary.

### *Non-Academic Discipline*

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Departments may establish additional requirements (e.g. ethical/professional standards) for students above and beyond existing university policies and procedures. Violation of these might result in a student being placed on nonacademic probation or may result in the dismissal from a graduate program.

If a department has such requirements, they must be in writing, and every reasonable effort must be made to inform students of their existence. These requirements must be disseminated to students upon their admission to graduate study in the program. These requirements must also be on file in the Graduate College.

Procedures for placing a student on nonacademic probation or dismissal are found in the catalog in the "Graduate Information" section, [catalog.uni.edu/generalinformation/graduateinformation/](http://catalog.uni.edu/generalinformation/graduateinformation/).

### *Other Regulations*

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1. **Maximum academic load.** The maximum graduate student load during each semester is 15 hours. The maximum graduate student load is 12 hours for the entire summer, and

is 9 hours during an eight-week summer session. The maximum load for shorter sessions is 6 hours for a 4-week or 6-week session. Overloads must be requested with a student request type K.

2. **Level of courses.** Graduate students normally take courses only at the 5000, 6000, or 7000 (for doctoral courses) level, and these are the only courses for which graduate credit may be earned. A graduate student may request to take undergraduate courses, numbered 0000-4999, for undergraduate credit only—request type Q is used for this. Such courses do not carry graduate credit and cannot be applied to a graduate degree under any circumstances. The Registrar's Office will enroll students in undergraduate courses approved on a type Q student request, and these courses will go on an undergraduate transcript and will not count in the graduate GPA. See the section "Students taking both graduate and undergraduate courses in the same term" in this handbook for information about tuition and financial aid.

3. **Transfer credits.** Graduate transfer courses must meet eligibility criteria established by the Graduate Council *before the department advises a student on the applicability of courses to the degree*. Please do not tell a student that a course they have taken elsewhere, or a course they want to take elsewhere, will transfer. You can tell them that IF it's eligible for transfer, you will approve it for the degree. Please note that professional development courses or classes taken through an Area Education Agency *will not* transfer and *will not* count on a graduate student's degree. Transfer courses from the University of Iowa or Iowa State University will not be approved for use on a student's degree until an official transcript is received by the Office of Admissions. Transfer courses from other institutions will not be approved for use on a student's degree until a Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form and a transcript are received by the Office of Admissions. The Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form can be found on the Graduate College website at [grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/gradtransfer.pdf](http://grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/gradtransfer.pdf) or in the [Forms Repository](#). Since it is possible that credits will not transfer as a result of information on the Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form, *it is a good idea for the student to complete the form prior to taking the class*, if possible. Note that since the Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form requires the other institution to supply information, there may be some delay in completing the form. After the transcript and Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form, if needed, are evaluated by Admissions, they will send a copy of both to the department. If the course is eligible for transfer, then the student can submit a student request type P to transfer the course and apply it to the degree in a particular way. The department indicates its approval to use the course on the degree on the student request. Transfer courses *will not* be used to satisfy the 6000-level or 6000/7000-level hour requirements, regardless of the level of the course at the institution where it was taken. No more than one-third of the minimum number of hours required by a master's program may be transfer credits. Specialist and Doctoral programs have their own transfer maximums. Courses not needed to meet degree requirements will not be transferred. There are stricter limits on courses that have been applied to another graduate degree. Consult the UNI Catalog or the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs.

4. **Continuous Registration.** Graduate students who have registered for all of the coursework for their degree but have not met all of the graduation requirements (e.g. comprehensive exams, thesis, recitals, etc.) must be continuously registered until the degree is complete. Graduate programs are responsible for identifying and registering all students at this stage in the course xxxx 629C, Continuous Registration each fall and spring until they graduate. They will be assessed a \$50 fee or in xxxx 7300 Postcomprehensive Registration (for doctoral students who have passed comps) a \$70 fee. Continuous enrollment ensures that students and their advisors can access their university records, that students receive important emails from university offices, that students can use the campus computer network (any computer lab or wifi), and that students can use the library and its services through graduation.

Please note that graduate students who don't have any courses to register for, but haven't completed the rest of the degree requirements, *must* be continuously registered (course xxxx 629C) if they are to remain in on-campus housing. General information on housing is available here: [www.uni.edu/dor/housing/apartment-suite](http://www.uni.edu/dor/housing/apartment-suite).

### *Students Taking Both Graduate and Undergraduate Courses in the Same Term*

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There are four situations in which students may be taking both undergraduate and graduate courses in the same term. See the UNI catalog for a complete explanation of all these situations. Here are the most common ones you'll run across:

- Graduate degree student taking an undergraduate course (for any reason): Registration in the undergraduate course must be requested on a type Q request in the online system. Graduate tuition is charged for the entire registration, to a maximum of full-time tuition for the student's residence classification. The student must be enrolled at least half-time in graduate coursework to be eligible for federal financial aid (loans).
- Undergraduate senior (in the first bachelor's degree) wanting to take a course for graduate credit: This must be requested on an undergraduate student request form, preferably before the start of the course, and definitely before the course is half-over. Retroactive graduate credit after the term is over is rarely approved. No course can apply to both an undergraduate and graduate degree, and a course taken for graduate credit will be excluded from applying to the bachelor's degree, so graduate credit will only be approved after the undergraduate record analyst verifies that the course is not needed for the bachelor's degree in any way. The graduate course(s) will go on a non-degree graduate transcript. Graduate tuition is charged for the graduate credit, but the maximum tuition that may be charged for the entire registration will be full-time graduate tuition for the student's residence classification. The student must be enrolled at least half-time in undergraduate coursework to be eligible for federal financial aid (loans), which will be at the undergraduate level, even if the student ends up paying full-time graduate tuition because of the combination of credits they are taking.
- Students who are simultaneously degree-seeking graduate students and are pursuing a second bachelor's degree or teacher licensure: See the Graduate Information section of the UNI Catalog for details ([catalog.uni.edu/generalinformation/graduateinformation/](http://catalog.uni.edu/generalinformation/graduateinformation/)).

This is a complicated situation for tuition and financial aid depending on the student's enrollment in any given term.

Questions about policies and procedures for graduate education may be directed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs in the Graduate College (273-2748). The graduate record analyst(s) in the Registrar's Office is/are also very helpful in sorting out issues regarding the advisement report and progress toward graduation. Call the Registrar's Office general number (273-2241) and ask for a graduate record analyst.

## Comprehensive Exams

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If your program requires students to pass a comprehensive exam or meet some other comprehensive requirement, there is a communication protocol that needs to be followed, to ensure that the program, the Graduate College and the student are all equally aware of the student's status with respect to the comprehensive exam.

1. Rubina Chowdhury will send out an email near the beginning of each term, requesting information about the students who will be taking comps that term and the date of the exam. Please respond to that email as soon as your slate of comp takers is known.
2. After the student takes the comp (or the final comp if it's in multiple parts) and the exam is graded, the student must be notified of the result, *with copies of all communications sent to Rubina Chowdhury in the Graduate College*.
  - a. **When the student passed the entire comp**, the student may be notified by email only or whatever the department's protocol is (cc to Rubina Chowdhury), and the GF-3 form (Report of Comprehensive Exam Approval) must also be sent to the Graduate College and the Registrar's Office. This form is what the Registrar's Office needs in order to adjust the advisement report to show the comprehensive exam is satisfied.
  - b. **If the student didn't pass but is allowed another attempt or a rewrite**, the student may be notified by email only or whatever the department's protocol is (cc to Rubina Chowdhury), and *the student must be asked to Reply All to the email to indicate they received the message*, so that the Graduate College is informed that the student received the email.
  - c. **If the student didn't pass and is not allowed another attempt (final fail)**, the department must inform the student by email, and by postal letter is also recommended, (cc of both to Rubina Chowdhury). The communication must indicate that the student will not be able to earn the degree.
3. The Graduate College will not send confirming communication to the students who pass. The confirmation will come on the Academic Requirements report. The Graduate College will also not send confirming communication to the student in the case where they didn't pass, but are allowed another attempt, as long as a Reply All is received from the student indicating the department's message was received. In the case that the student didn't pass and is not allowed another attempt, the communication from the Graduate College to the student will be sent by certified mail, and the Graduate College will notify the Registrar's Office to permanently discontinue the student from the

program. Such a student is not suspended—they can still apply for admission in non-degree graduate status or apply to another graduate program.

### **Culminating Paper/Project**

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Every graduate degree has some sort of culminating document required—a thesis, dissertation, research paper, internship report, project report, portfolio, etc. If your program is one that can be taken on either the thesis option or the non-thesis option, a default option has been selected by the program for the purposes of generating the advisement report, because without a specified option a student cannot see all the degree requirements. If a student wishes to pursue the other option, they just need to submit a student request of type N.

**Non-thesis culminating documents** Non thesis students must complete at least one substantial written report documenting research, a project or an internship, as specified by the student's graduate program. This document must be supervised by at least one regular member of the graduate faculty, approved by the department and permanently filed with the departmental office. They are *not* submitted to the Graduate College. The department/program sets the deadline for submission for each term. This deadline should be early enough in the semester to allow time for the readers to review the document and for any necessary changes to be made prior to graduation checkout, which begins the day after grades are due from the faculty. *The department reports the approval of the non-thesis paper to the Graduate College and the Registrar's Office on the GF-4 form (Report of Non-Thesis Paper Approval).*

**Students who are completing a thesis or dissertation** must submit a committee approval form (available at [www.grad.uni.edu/thesis-dissertation/thesis-forms](http://www.grad.uni.edu/thesis-dissertation/thesis-forms)) as soon as work on the thesis or dissertation begins. (Thesis committees must be composed of at least three regular members of the graduate faculty. Dissertation committees vary by degree program) The student will submit their final, defended, committee-approved document to the Graduate College. *The Graduate College reports the approval of the thesis or dissertation to the Registrar's Office* once all submission requirements, including final corrections, have been met and the library permission form has been filed.

Registration note: For degrees that can be taken on both the thesis and non-thesis option, *please do not allow students on the thesis option to register for more than 3 hours of 6299 until the thesis is near completion or the advisor is sure the student is going to complete a thesis.* No more than 3 credits of 6299 can be taken for a non-thesis degree, and if a student changes from the thesis option to the non-thesis option late in their program and has too many credits of 6299 registered for, it is difficult to change the registration later. If this restriction creates problems for the student, contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs for suggestions.

### **Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines**

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The *Thesis and Dissertation Manual* is available from the Graduate College website in Word format: See [www.grad.uni.edu/thesis-dissertation](http://www.grad.uni.edu/thesis-dissertation). Having the manual in Word format is handy for students because they can copy and paste the sample front pages into their own document to make formatting those easy!

Please note that the style rules in the Thesis and Dissertation Manual take precedence over any other departmental or professional style manual. Each program has designated a style manual or manuals that students must use, and these are listed in the Graduate College's manual.

Students should take advantage of the "Timely Tips" compiled by the thesis and dissertation reviewer: [www.grad.uni.edu/thesis-dissertation/timely-tips-thesis-reviewer](http://www.grad.uni.edu/thesis-dissertation/timely-tips-thesis-reviewer).

Sometime during the semester in which the student intends to graduate, *and no later than eight weeks before graduation*, the student must have a preview meeting with the Thesis and Dissertation Reviewer to review the style and format of their thesis or dissertation. Prior to the start of each semester, the Reviewer will request a list of prospective thesis/dissertation writers from each department. Only students expected to graduate within the next semester or two should be included on this list. Information regarding the thesis preview will be sent to the students, and they will be asked to contact the Reviewer by email or phone when they are ready to schedule their preview. Failure to provide the names and current contact information to the Graduate College may result in students missing the deadline for scheduling their preview. A thesis or dissertation will not be accepted if the student has not had a preview. Previews can be conducted by email if the student is not in the area.

Each year, the Graduate College posts a list of important dates for graduate students who are completing a thesis or dissertation. This list includes when the preview must be completed, and when the completed, *defended, and approved* thesis or dissertation is due in the Graduate College office. See [www.grad.uni.edu/important-dates](http://www.grad.uni.edu/important-dates).

*Please note that these deadlines are not flexible and that failure to adhere to them will result in a delayed graduation date.*

Reminder: Students on a non-thesis program do not schedule a preview meeting, and non-thesis papers are not submitted to the Graduate College. The guidelines and deadlines for non-thesis papers are set by the department.

**Graduation / Degree Conferral / Commencement**

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During the term that a student expects to complete the final degree requirements, the student will need to apply for graduation (degree conferral) within Student Center. The university will not award a degree without an application for graduation, even if all requirements have been met.

#### *Deadlines and Fees:*

Each term there are two deadlines:

- *An early deadline to avoid a late application fee.* This deadline is always the same calendar date: April 1 for spring, July 1 for summer, November 10 for fall.
- *The final deadline for each term is the last day of the term, i.e., the Friday of Finals Week in a regular semester, and the last day of the July session for summer.* Applications submitted after that date for the term just past will be denied.

Thesis and Dissertation students should wait to apply for graduation until after they have submitted their document to the Graduate College, assuming that the thesis or dissertation is the last thing they need to do. They will always be able to apply before the deadline to avoid a late application fee. Non-thesis students may have a more difficult time knowing by the early deadline whether they will meet all the requirements in a particular term. They have a choice—they can either apply before the early deadline and take the chance of having to apply again for the next term if they don't complete the requirements, or they can wait to apply until closer to the end of the term, when they are sure they will be completing the requirements (e.g., that their paper will be approved or that they will pass comps). As of this writing, it is less expensive in fees to apply late than to apply twice.

For students wanting to make sure everything is all set for graduation, there are Graduation Checklists on the Graduate College website at [www.grad.uni.edu/graduation-checklists](http://www.grad.uni.edu/graduation-checklists).

### *Participation in Commencement*

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Graduate students are eligible to participate in commencement in the term their final degree requirements will be completed (not just their course requirements) or the next later term.

***Summer Graduation - Master's and Specialist Degree Students:*** Students who will complete their degree requirements in summer are eligible to participate in spring commencement, if they apply by April 1 for summer graduation (degree conferral), and complete the Commencement Reply Form on the Registrar's site indicating their intention to participate in May commencement. Students who will complete their degree requirements in summer and who apply after April 1 for summer graduation (degree conferral) are only eligible to participate in fall commencement.

***Summer Graduation - Doctoral Degree Students:*** Students who complete their degree requirements in summer may *only* participate in spring commencement if they 1) applied for summer graduation by April 1, and complete the Commencement Reply Form on the Registrar's site indicating their intention to participate in May commencement, and; 2) have completed all degree requirements, including defense and final submission of the dissertation to the Graduate College, one week prior to spring commencement. All other summer doctoral candidates may only participate in fall commencement even if they receive a summer degree.

Please note: *A student finishing in the summer does not have to apply for spring graduation in order to participate in May commencement.*

### **The Graduate Faculty**

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Per the Graduate Faculty Constitution, “the primary function of the Graduate Faculty is to provide educational experiences and set policy associated with graduate programs at the University.” Membership of, and admission to, the Graduate Faculty is defined in the Graduate Faculty Constitution, available at [www.grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/graduate\\_faculty\\_constitution.pdf](http://www.grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/graduate_faculty_constitution.pdf).

It is important for graduate coordinators and department heads to remember that only members of the graduate faculty may teach courses for graduate credit. Visiting professors and adjunct instructors may temporarily join the Graduate Faculty as Associate Members. Associate members of the Graduate Faculty are not allowed to serve as a regular member of a thesis, research paper, or dissertation committee. They can, however, serve as an additional committee member. Programs and Departments must make these nominations and forward them to the Graduate Dean for approval *at least one week prior to the start of the semester*. Regular members (tenured or tenure-track faculty) should be nominated upon their start date.

The nomination form for regular members is here:  
[grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/gfnom2-05\\_fillable.pdf](http://grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/gfnom2-05_fillable.pdf).

The nomination form for associate members is here:  
[grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/associategraduatefacultystatus.pdf](http://grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/associategraduatefacultystatus.pdf)

A full list of all regular members of the Graduate Faculty is available on the Graduate College website: [www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-faculty-list](http://www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-faculty-list).

The Chair of the Graduate Faculty is elected for a one-year term from the membership of the Graduate Faculty. The Chair calls the official meeting(s) of the Graduate Faculty (traditionally, one meeting in the Spring semester) and coordinates other special initiatives, such as the Brown Bag Lecture Series.

The Graduate Council is the decision-making body of the Graduate Faculty. Elections to the Graduate Council are made according to the procedures specified in the Graduate Faculty Constitution ([www.grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/graduate\\_faculty\\_constitution.pdf](http://www.grad.uni.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/graduate_faculty_constitution.pdf)). Information about the Graduate Council is available from the Graduate College website under Faculty & Staff | Graduate Council.

The Graduate College Curriculum Committee (GCCC) reports to the Graduate Council, and is in charge of reviewing and approving curriculum proposals that influence or change graduate programs. Information on the GCCC is available from the Graduate College website: [www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-college-curriculum-committee-gccc](http://www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-college-curriculum-committee-gccc).

## **Graduate Student Life**

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The Director of Graduate Student Life has numerous responsibilities, including graduate student orientation, planning professional development activities, marketing/recruiting, and reviewing resumes and CVs. Please encourage new graduate students to attend the New Graduate Student Orientation, held during the first week of each fall semester, even if they earned their undergraduate degree from UNI, as the policies and procedures for graduate studies are significantly different. Students also will learn about library resources available to them, and collect information on a variety of resources and offices on campus.

The Graduate College publishes the *UNI Grad Student News*, which is the graduate student newsletter, published approximately monthly. The *UNI Grad Student News* contains news about

graduate student professional activities, upcoming events and professional development opportunities, profiles of alumni, graduate faculty, and current students, etc. The *UNI Grad Student News* is sent out by email and is also available here: [www.grad.uni.edu/uni-grad-student-news](http://www.grad.uni.edu/uni-grad-student-news).

Finally, the Director of Graduate Student Life coordinates the annual events Thinking About Graduate School (TAGS) and the Graduate Student Symposium. Information on the Symposium is available at: [www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-student-symposium](http://www.grad.uni.edu/graduate-student-symposium)

## **The Graduate College**

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Information about the Graduate College Dean and staff is available from the website: [www.grad.uni.edu/staff](http://www.grad.uni.edu/staff).

Questions about academic policies and academic discipline should be directed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs—call the Graduate College Office 3-2748 to be connected.

Information on awards for students and faculty is available from the website: [www.grad.uni.edu/internal-awards-recognition](http://www.grad.uni.edu/internal-awards-recognition).

Please check the Graduate College homepage [www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu) regularly for news and announcements regarding graduate education at UNI, as well as the Graduate College calendar of events and deadlines.