

Florida A&M University

Graduate Policies and Procedures

Each graduate program has a different mission, and some programs may have requirements in addition to or different from those in the Graduate School. The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), the Juris Doctorate (JD), and the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) programs have different criteria. Please refer to the respective section of the University catalog for the details.

Generally:

A. Degree-seeking students

A degree-seeking student is a student, who has been admitted formally to a master's or doctoral program.

B. Non-degree seeking students

Students are classified as non-degree seeking students if they have not been formally admitted into a graduate degree program. Non-degree seeking graduate students are limited to earning 12 credit hours. Any student, who attempts to exceed the 12 credit hour limit without being accepted into a degree seeking program at the University, will be placed on a registration hold. The hold can only be cleared upon producing evidence of admission to a degree seeking program. However, any hours taken over the 12 hour limit may not be counted toward degree matriculation. Courses taken as a non-degree seeking student may be used to fulfill degree program requirements, with the approval of the appropriate academic unit.

C. Transfer Credit

At the discretion of the appropriate academic unit, a maximum of six (6) semester hours for the master's level and twelve (12) semester hours for the doctoral level of graduate coursework taken prior to the term of admission into a graduate program may be accepted by the University at the master's and doctoral levels, respectively, from another accredited graduate school in the United States, provided that the transfer credits are not counted toward a previously earned degree, the grades are "B" or better, and the subjects are acceptable to the department or program concerned, as a part of the student's graduate program.

Transfer credits that are not counted toward a previously earned degree within Florida A&M University is limited to twelve semester hours, except when the credit hour requirement for the graduate program exceeds the University-wide minimum requirement of thirty-six (36). In this case, additional transfer credit up to a maximum of fourteen semester hours may be allowed to the extent of the additional required hours by the program. The University does not accept experiential learning for transfer credit.

A Transfer Credit form must be completed by the student and approvals must be obtained from the program, and the college/school, and then by the Graduate Dean, no later than the end of the second semester that the student is in the program.

D. Graduate GPA

- (i) Upon admission into each degree or certificate program, a graduate GPA will be calculated based on the graduate courses taken at Florida A&M University (FAMU). The University requires

that students maintain a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher, in order to maintain regular graduate status, receive financial assistance, and to qualify for graduation.

(ii) A graduate GPA will be calculated for non-degree students, based on the graduate courses they take at FAMU while in the non-degree status. Non-degree seeking students whose graduate GPA falls below a 3.0, will not be allowed to continue taking more graduate courses.

(iii) The graduate GPA does not carry forward from one academic program to another.

(iv) If a graduate student is considering applying to a different graduate degree program, the student may apply to have the student's graduate grade point average (GPA) reset. If the request is approved by the Graduate Dean, then the Graduate Dean will request the Registrar to reset the GPA. The Registrar will annotate the student's permanent academic record to indicate that the GPA has been reset. However, all course work and grades will remain on the record, ensuring a true and accurate academic history.

The resetting of the GPA may be effected only once during a student's graduate academic career and it is not available for degrees already earned.

E. The minimum grade requirements for all graduate programs and degrees, except for the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), the Juris Doctorate (JD), and the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) programs. Students should refer to the program requirements related to their respective degree program.

1. Minimum grade requirements

a. Only a grade of "B" or higher is acceptable for required courses in a graduate program. A student must repeat a required course if the student earns a grade lower than a "B".

b. Exceeding six semester hours or obtaining two courses with unsatisfactory grades ("C", "D", "F", or "U") in courses or in comprehensive or qualifying examinations is grounds for dismissal from a program for all degree-seeking and non-degree seeking students.

A course in which a student has received an unsatisfactory grade may be repeated only once. The course must carry the same course prefix, number, and description and may be taught at Florida A&M University (FAMU) or at Florida State University (FSU), under the FAMU-FSU cooperative program. Both grades will be used in computing the student's graduate GPA.

If the same course is neither available at FAMU, nor at FSU at the time the student needs to repeat the course, then a substitute course may be approved as a transfer course by the student's advisor and taken from any institution within the State University System (SUS). Please note that this transfer credit will not be factored into the FAMU graduate GPA.

2. Probation and Dismissal Policies and Procedures

a. Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student will automatically be placed on probation, if the student's graduate cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. Any student on academic probation can only remain on probation for a maximum of nine semester hours (usually one semester) of letter-graded coursework. Documentation of the Academic Probation status will be imprinted on the student's university

transcript by the Registrar at the beginning of the term in which the sanction is given, and this will serve as the official notification of probation to the student.

If a student is placed on probation, then the student will continue on probation until the student has completed nine (9) credit hours (usually one semester), after which the student's status will be reviewed. If the student's graduate cumulative GPA is above a 3.0, the student will be taken off probation. If the student's graduate cumulative GPA is below a 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the academic program.

A student, who is on Academic Probation, will be required to meet with the program director or the student's advisor, prior to the start of the following term, to review the student's educational plan in order to increase the student's chance of success in the program. Modifications of the plan may be made, as necessary, so that the student and the director will know exactly what conditions are required for the continued enrollment of the student in the program. Both the student and the program advisor/director should sign the plan.

After dismissal from one degree program, a student always has the option to apply to another degree program, and this option requires a completely new application. Previously dismissed students, who are accepted into new academic programs, will have a new graduate GPA.

A graduate student whose cumulative GPA is less than 2.0 will be immediately dismissed from the degree program and will not be permitted to enroll in graduate courses, unless the student has been admitted into another graduate program or admitted as a non-degree student.

b. Appeal of Dismissal from an Academic Program

Within the next semester following the dismissal, a student may appeal a dismissal decision to the College's or School's Graduate Committee. During this time, the student will not be allowed to take any coursework related to the program.

i. If the College or School believes that the student has a high probability of succeeding, then the graduate program in which the student is enrolled may petition the Graduate Dean for a one semester extension. If the review and approval by the Graduate Dean occurs prior to the end of the drop/add registration period of the semester following the dismissal, then the student may be allowed to enroll that semester if the appeal is approved.

ii. If after reinstatement, the student fails to earn a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or better at the end of the semester following the readmission or in any subsequent semester, then the student will be issued a final dismissal from his or her program without any opportunity for further appeal for retention.

iii. Students, with a graduate GPA less than 3.0, who are seeking readmission into a new academic program, may be admitted under restricted conditions that are prescribed by the new department.

iv. Dismissed students will not be allowed to enroll in graduate courses unless they have been admitted to another graduate program, or allowed to enroll as non-degree seeking students taking classes with permission from the new program.

With approval from the new graduate degree program, the student may transfer credits from courses with satisfactory grades ("B" grade or higher) into the new program, in accordance with the Transfer Credit policy stated previously in Section C above.

3. Grade Appeal Policy and Procedures

It is imperative that the academic grievances of graduate students be processed in an expeditious manner. A student may appeal the assigned grade using the form found at the link http://www.famu.edu/graduatestudies/Grievance%20Settlement%20Form_VT_042514.pdf in the following manner:

- a. All appeals regarding grade assignments must be made on an individual basis.
- b. A student must follow the formal grade appeal process, as outlined in the student's college or school. If the student's appeal is unsuccessful in the school or college, then the student may follow the grade appeal process, as outlined by the Graduate Studies at <http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?graduatestudies&StudentGrievanceProcedure> to appeal the decision of the school or college to the Graduate Council.
- c. Decisions of all appeals at each stage of the appeal process should be made within thirty working days of the grade variance from established policy.
- d. A simple majority vote of the Graduate Council members present shall be required to make a grade exception.
- e. A grade appeal may be made in writing by the student by outlining the facts and justifications for the appeal.
- f. Normally, the student will be notified of the Graduate Council's decision, within thirty days of the receipt of the appeal.
- g. If the student disagrees with the decision of the Graduate Council, the student may appeal the decision to the Provost, who shall make the final decision.

4. Specific grading policies of schools, colleges or programs

- a. Individual schools or colleges may establish program specific grading policies. These grading policies must first be approved by a simple majority vote of the Graduate Committee in the individual school, college, or program, prior to the approval of the Graduate Council and before they are established.
- b. A simple majority by the Graduate Council members, who are present, is required for the approval of more restrictive grading policies.

5. Non Academic Complaint Policy and Procedure

It is the goal of Graduate Studies and Research to provide students with an expeditious, fair, equitable, and consistent procedure for resolving their grievances. These grievance procedures are meant to guide the student through the process. Students should make every effort to resolve the issues informally before filing a complaint or seeking redress beyond the Academic Unit in which the alleged offense has occurred.

- The student shall submit his or her grievance package, in writing, within 30 days or 10 days into the next semester. The grievance packet should be stamped by the graduate coordinator or academic dean of the college to indicate the date and time the grievance was initiated.
- The complaint process can start or stop at any level. However, the graduate coordinator should act as the facilitator.
- If the professor and graduate coordinator cannot find a satisfactory solution, then the matter will be forwarded to the graduate committee or graduate faculty within the college.
- The graduate committee, consisting of graduate faculty, will forward a report indicating its decision to the dean of the college.
- If the dean is not able to resolve the matter, the issue is forwarded to the graduate council committee in an effort to resolve the issue.
- The graduate council sub-committee should submit a report to the Graduate Studies and Research dean.
- The Graduate Studies and Research dean will review all of the documents provided on the issue and make a decision.
- If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Graduate Studies and Research dean, then the student may refer the matter to the provost for a decision.
- The provost shall review the student's grievance and make the final decision. • A written recommendation is required at each step.
- The student, professor, the graduate coordinator, the dean of the college and the Graduate Studies and Research dean should be provided with copies of the written recommendation at each step.

Time Frame

It is imperative that graduate student complaints be handled in an expeditious manner from the initial filing date.

6. Grades and Financial Assistance/Funding

Eligibility Requirements

- a. Each graduate student, who receives any form of financial aid, must maintain the GPA stipulated above while carrying a full graduate load of credit hours. Only full-time, regularly admitted graduate students in good academic standing (cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or better) qualify for Financial Assistance (assistantships, fellowships, and/or tuition waivers). Graduate student funding is time-limited and subject to the availability of funds. These work assignments for these students will be determined by their respective departmental supervisors or designees. Departments may make priority funding decisions based on GPAs, standardized test scores, and/or related experience. Any full-time degree seeking graduate student, whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, will be placed on probation. While on probation, such a fulltime student may be eligible for financial assistance (other than financial aid) for a maximum of one semester after being placed on probation.
- b. It is the responsibility of each graduate program director or student advisor of the respective school or college, to monitor each graduate student's credit hour load, grades, grade point

average (GPA), and overall progress toward the degree. This director/advisor must report promptly to the graduate dean all actions, or recommended actions that should be taken for any student, who violates or is in default of the above policies and standards.

c. A full-time graduate credit load consists of a minimum of nine (9) hours in the fall and spring semesters and six (6) hours during the summer. A reduced load may be approved as a full-time load by the Graduate School for the summer semester or for students, who are completing their theses or dissertations, and who are being supported by the school or college.

d. Any graduate student, who fails to maintain the minimum credit hour load required, must be immediately removed from financial assistance with prompt documentary notice by the program director to the graduate dean. e. Students, who have incomplete or "I" grades, may be eligible for financial assistance (other than financial aid) for a maximum of one semester.

7. Incomplete Grades

A grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned by the instructor when a student is unable to complete a course due to extenuating circumstances, and when all requirements can be completed in a short time following the end of the term. The student is responsible for arranging with the instructor for the completion of the requirements of the course.

8. Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment in at least one credit hour in their respective academic programs and until all degree requirements have been completed. Students are required to enroll in at least one credit hour during the last semester in which they expect to graduate.

Students, who are not in attendance during two consecutive semesters (exclusive of the summer semester), must re-apply for readmission to the university.

9. Re-admission

To request re-admission, a student must complete a re-admission application, which must be supported by the chair of the major department, the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Dean of the school or college offering the academic program, and then approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. There is no guarantee that the student will be re-admitted. The re-admission applications of students with permanent university holds will not be processed. This policy does not apply to students, who have been called for military duty. In this case, the student would be required to submit a copy of the military orders and complete the process, as outlined by the Registrar's office.

10. Time Limitation for Completion of Degrees

A student is allowed a maximum time period of five (5) years to complete a master's degree, and a maximum time period of seven (7) years to complete a Ph.D. degree from the date of admission. Students exceeding these time limits may be required to initiate new courses of study.

It should be noted that the normal time for completing a master's degree is approximately two years from the bachelor's degree, and approximately four years for the Ph.D. degree from the master's degree, depending on discipline. Funding for students will be based on these projections.