

## **Graduate School Policy on Admission, Continuation, and Dismissal**

### **I. POLICY ON ADMISSION**

Applicants for admission to the UWM Graduate School must have the following:

1. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, or its equivalent as determined by the UWM Center for International Education, completed before the first term of enrollment in the Graduate School.

Students applying to an approved Accelerated Graduate Degree are exempt from this requirement. (See Faculty Document 3225R1 for admission to an Accelerated Graduate Degree Program.

2. Proficiency in the English language (see Faculty Document 3078R3).

3. A positive recommendation for admission by the program to which the student is applying.

4. A cumulative undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale, or an equivalent measure on a grading system that does not use a 4.0 scale. The cumulative GPA posted on the applicant's unofficial transcript from their accredited institution will be accepted as the cumulative GPA for admission. An official transcript will be required if the student is admitted.

Those whose undergraduate GPA is below 2.75 must provide evidence of ability to succeed in graduate study through at least one of the following:

a. GPA of at least 3.0 during the last two years of the baccalaureate program (calculated on a minimum of 48 credits).

b. Completion of six or more credits of program-approved post-baccalaureate courses. These courses must be at the advanced undergraduate or graduate level, taken within the last five years with a grade of B or better (B- not acceptable).

c. Submission of official score reports from the Graduate Record Examination or the Graduate Management Admission Test that indicate competencies in areas related to the proposed graduate program. To be considered official, these scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to UWM, and must be received prior to admission.

d. Scores on tests developed by the proposed graduate program that demonstrate potential for success in that program. These scores must be submitted prior to admission.

e. Evidence of professional certification or licensure in a relevant area as determined by the proposed program and the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.

f. A graduate degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA

Prospective students should consult with the graduate program representative to determine which type of evidence is appropriate and sufficient for a given program. Completion of additional coursework and/or submission of test scores, or other types of evidence of ability is a requirement to be considered for admission, but is not a guarantee of admission.

The Graduate School will perform a manual cumulative GPA calculation at the request of the applicant or graduate program if they feel this may improve their GPA for purposes of admission. This manual calculation includes all undergraduate coursework, including credits transferred in from other institutions and any repeat attempts. The applicant will be required to submit unofficial transcripts from all undergraduate institutions attended.

## II. POLICY ON CONTINUATION

### 1. Continuation

Any student's continuation in the Graduate School is at the discretion of the Graduate School, the student's graduate program unit, graduate representative, and/or the major professor. The Graduate School minimum graduation GPA requirement is a 3.0 (4.0 basis) or better in all work taken toward the degree.

### 2. Academic Warning

A graduate student will receive an academic warning if their semester GPA falls below 3.0.

### 3. Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue

If the graduate student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the student must petition (Request for Exception, RFE) and receive the graduate program's positive recommendation and approval of the Graduate Dean (or designee) prior to registering for any further classes.

If a student's semester GPA and cumulative GPA are both below 3.0, the Graduate Dean's approval will take precedence over an Academic Warning.

## III. POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

The graduate program may recommend that a graduate student be academically dismissed for reasons of poor academic performance, lack of progress toward degree, or failure to meet Graduate School or program requirements (see below). In all cases, the Dean of the Graduate School makes the final decision regarding academic dismissal.

Recommendation for dismissal may be initiated for, **but is not limited to**, the following:

- A cumulative graduate GPA below 3.0.
- Failing the doctoral preliminary examination.
- Failing the dissertation defense.
- Failing to have the doctoral dissertation within the time period specified for deferral status (reverts to failed dissertation defense).
- Failing to successfully defend the doctoral dissertation upon a second attempt within the specified time period.
- Exceeding the time limit for degree completion. Accumulating U grades in thesis or dissertation courses.

### Notification of Recommendation for Academic Dismissal

1. For dismissals initiated by a graduate program: The process starts with a letter of recommendation from the program to the student, that is copied to the Dean of the Graduate School. This letter must:

- a) describe the reasons for such recommendation along with any supporting documentation,

- b) inform the student of their right to appeal this decision, including directing the student to the relevant appeal procedure and/or process.

2. The Graduate School, in consultation with the graduate program, may also initiate a dismissal. This dismissal is communicated via a letter to the student that must:

- a) describe the reasons for the dismissal along with any supporting documentation,
- b) inform the student of their right to appeal this decision, including directing the student to the relevant appeal procedure and/or process.

### **Appeal Process for Academic Dismissal**

A student who disagrees with a recommendation for dismissal may initiate an appeal. The three step process resembles the standard academic appeals process, beginning with the student's program at step one, continuing to the Graduate Scholastic Appeals Committee at step two, and culminating in a final appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School at step three.

Appeals of an academic dismissal are separate from any underlying academic appeals such as a grade appeal and do not extend the deadline for such underlying appeals.

An appeal of an academic dismissal must follow this sequence:

#### **Step One**

Within 30 working days of the dismissal recommendation, the student appeals to the program. This appeal must be made in writing and should contain substantiating reasons for reversing the recommendation. If the decision is negative, the program must provide the student with a written statement of the reason for the adverse decision.

#### **Step Two**

If the Step One decision is not in the student's favor, the student may, within 10 working days of receiving the decision, appeal to the Graduate Scholastic Appeals Committee. The appeal must be made in writing and should contain substantiating reasons for the appeal, a request for a specific remedy, and a rationale for the remedy sought. If a Step Two committee member was involved in making the dismissal recommendation or reviewing the Step One appeal, he or she must not participate in Step Two. The student will receive written notification of the outcome of the Step Two appeal.

#### **Step Three**

If the Step Two decision is negative, the student may, within 10 working days of receiving the decision, appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School. The appeal must be made in writing and should contain the reason for the appeal, substantial evidence in support of the appeal, and the solution sought, as guided by the appeal request form on the Graduate School website. This appeal should then be filed with the Graduate School following the directions on the Graduate School website.

The Dean of the Graduate School (or designee) is responsible for reviewing the academic appeal for procedural fairness and maintaining and protecting the rights of both the graduate faculty and graduate students.

The Step Two decision will be subject to reversal if the Dean of the Graduate School finds any of the following:

- The program or department did not follow proper procedures.
- The student did not have a fair hearing.
- There is evidence of unprofessional conduct on the part of the faculty that materially affected the academic decision.

The Dean's decision in the Step Three appeal will be conveyed in writing to the student, program, and school/college.

### **Duties**

The Dean (or designee) contacts the appropriate department or program and requests all pertinent documentation regarding the appeal. For this reason, departments and programs and the Graduate Scholastic Appeals Committee are urged to:

Notify students in writing about department or program appeal procedures and the scheduled meeting of the appeal body.

Maintain complete minutes of the committee meetings.

Inform the student in writing of the outcome of the appeal.