

SECTION 2: GRADUATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Graduate Committee. A Graduate Committee elected by the graduate faculty and approved by the President has general supervisory authority over the graduate program and is responsible for recommending policy relative to the program. The Director of Graduate Studies serves as chair of the Graduate Committee.

Functions of the Graduate Committee include:

1. The general supervision of matters pertaining to the graduate program and the formulation of policy for the program.
2. The formulation of the aims and objectives of the graduate program and the design and content of the graduate curricula.
3. The evaluation of proposed requirements for programs submitted by the respective academic schools.
4. The formulation of policies for admission to, and retention in, the graduate program.
5. The formulation of criteria and the approval of faculty membership on the graduate faculty.
6. The formulation of policies to provide quality control of courses, faculty, and physical resources relative to the graduate program.
7. The provision of systematic and periodic opportunities for graduate students and the graduate faculty to evaluate the graduate program and to make recommendations for its further development.
8. The responsibility for formulation and recommendation of policy on expanding and up-grading present programs, discontinuance of programs, introduction of new programs, or limitation on enrollment in graduate programs; the responsibility for graduate program long-range planning.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Application for Admission. An official application for admission to graduate study must be submitted to the graduate office prior to enrollment in graduate courses. Additionally, students who have not previously attended Northwestern must apply for university admission through the Registry Office. A \$15 application fee is required of first-time students applying for university admission. Official transcripts (not photocopies) from all colleges/universities previously attended (undergraduate and graduate) must accompany applications. Application forms are available in the graduate office and online. **For assessment purposes, all students are required to have a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) aptitude test OR Miller Analogies Test (MAT) on file with the graduate office before enrollment in the tenth semester hour of coursework.** GRE or MAT scores to be used to meet admission criteria are valid only if the test was taken within five years of the date of application.

Applications are processed by the Director of Graduate Studies. Unusual cases will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee.

Standards for Admission. Admission to the graduate program will be granted to students who hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and who meet any ONE of the following standards:

1. A minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.75 (on a 4.0 point scale).

2. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 in the last sixty semester hours of undergraduate work (both undergraduate and graduate hours may be used in calculating the GPA to meet admission standards; however, any graduate hours used for admission purposes cannot be counted toward a master's degree.
3. A score that places the individual at the 25th percentile on two of the three areas (verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing) of the GRE or at the 25th percentile on the MAT.
4. If a student has already completed a master's degree from another accredited institution, the student may be unconditionally admitted to the program at Northwestern upon providing an official copy of a transcript stating the degree.

Conditional Admission. Conditional admission may be granted to applicants who do not meet the requirements for regular admission to the graduate program but who satisfy the following conditions: (1) possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 **OR** a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours attempted; (2) have the recommendation of the dean of the proposed related areas of study; and (3) have the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. The recommendation shall state the rationale for the conditional admission and stipulate what additional academic work, if any, must be completed before work is taken to meet requirements for the graduate degree.

Removal of Conditional Status. To be removed from conditional status, the student must have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 (B) after the first sixteen hours of graduate work. If that requirement is not met, the student shall be removed from the degree program.

Senior Students in the Graduate Program. A senior student who is enrolled in enough course work to complete the requirements for a baccalaureate degree but who is not enrolled for a full load of courses may enroll in graduate courses to increase his/her load to a maximum of sixteen semester hours in a regular semester or nine semester hours in an eight-week summer session. The student must submit an application for graduate study and must meet unconditional admission standard 1 (see **Standards for Admission**, this page). There is a one-semester limit for seniors to enroll in graduate courses; they must complete all requirements for the undergraduate degree and be fully admitted to the graduate program in order to continue work towards a master's degree.

Special Student Status. A student who wishes to take courses for graduate credit but does not wish to work toward a master's degree may apply as a special student. To qualify, the student must hold a baccalaureate degree and meet the grade point requirements for conditional admission to the graduate program. A maximum of nine credit hours taken as a special student may count toward a master's degree program if approved by the student's graduate advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Admission to Candidacy. Admission to graduate study does not carry with it admission to candidacy for a degree. The student must apply on forms available from the graduate office or online. Application for admission to candidacy must be made following the completion of at least sixteen semester hours of acceptable work toward the master's degree and no later than nine weeks prior to

graduation. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (B) is required for admission to candidacy. An approved plan of study must be on file in the graduate office before admission to candidacy can be granted.

Fee Waivers. Non-resident students wishing to apply for waiver of out-of-state fees must meet the criteria for unconditional admission to the graduate program. Application for the fee waiver eligibility must be processed each semester in the registrar's office.

CREDIT-HOUR REGULATIONS

Level of Courses. All work used to fulfill requirements for the Master of Education or Master of Counseling Psychology degree shall be selected from courses numbered 3000 and above (see list of approved courses on pages 37-38). At least sixteen semester hours of 5000-level courses must be completed. Only 3000 and 4000 level courses identified in the class schedule with a G may be taken for graduate credit. Graduate students should experience a more rigorous academic requirement than that which is expected of undergraduate students in the same class. A minimum grade of B must be earned in all courses of 3000 or 4000 level which are applied toward the graduate degree program (see **Grade Point Requirements**, pages 7-8).

Incomplete. A grade of I is given only when conditions justify extension of time for a student to complete the course. Any grade of I not removed within one calendar year becomes a permanent incomplete on the student's transcript. *Grades of I must be removed prior to taking the written comprehensive examination or submitting the graduate portfolio.*

Transfer Credit. A maximum of nine hours of graduate credit earned at accredited institutions of higher education may be transferred, provided the work forms an appropriate part of the student's program and is approved by the student's advisory committee. To meet requirements for the Master of Education, a minimum of thirty-two hours of graduate credit must be completed. The Master of Counseling Psychology degree requires a minimum of forty-five graduate credit hours.

Residency Requirement. A minimum of twenty-three semester hours, including the final eight hours, must be earned in residence at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. The remainder of the candidate's program (nine hours maximum) may be earned at other accredited institutions. These hours, or any part thereof, may be applied to the program only if, in the judgment of the student's graduate advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Studies, they contribute to the student's overall program.

Continuing Education Credit. Continuing education credits from an approved institution will be evaluated for possible graduate credit when the request is submitted with an official transcript. Inquiries should be directed to the graduate office.

Correspondence Credit. Correspondence credit is not acceptable at the graduate level and may not be applied toward a degree program.

Individual Study, Readings, Seminar, and Short Course Credit. A maximum of six credit hours in any combination of Individual Study (5170), Seminar (5180), Readings (5190), and/or Short Courses (5300) will be applicable toward a master's degree program.

Prerequisites. Some courses may have prerequisites. The student should consult the course descriptions (see Section 6, Graduate Courses) or consult with the appropriate department or division chair.

TIME LIMIT

A master's degree program must be completed within six calendar years. If a student has not completed the graduate degree in the six-year limit, the student must then meet with his/her advisory committee and file a new plan of study reflecting current program requirements. In some cases, the student may be asked to re-apply for admission to graduate study. If course(s) exceed the six-year limit, the student may re-take the course(s) or validate the course(s) following procedures listed below.

COURSE VALIDATION

Credit in courses older than six years (at the time of the degree completion) will be awarded only after competency in the area has been demonstrated by examination. The examination will be prepared and evaluated by the faculty member currently responsible for teaching the course.

For a written validation:

1. The graduate office will notify the student, the advisory committee chair, and the instructor of the course of the need for the exam.
2. The instructor will provide the exam to the graduate office to be administered.
3. The exam will be returned to the instructor for scoring.
4. The instructor will return the results and the exam to the graduate office to be filed in the student's folder.

For an oral validation:

1. The graduate office will notify the student, the advisory committee chair, and the instructor of the course of the need for the exam.
2. The instructor will administer the oral exam.
3. The instructor will provide results and a detailed synopsis of the exam to the graduate office to be filed in the student's folder.

For a performance validation:

1. The graduate office will notify the student, the advisory committee chair, and the instructor of the course of the need for the exam.
2. The instructor will administer the performance exam.
3. The instructor will provide results and a copy of the performance (cassette, video, CD, VDV, or other appropriate media) to the graduate office to be filed in the student's folder.

Credit from other institutions which exceeds the six-year limit will not be validated.

STUDY LOAD LIMITS

The maximum study load for a full-time graduate student during a sixteen-week semester is twelve hours. For an eight-week summer term the maximum load is nine hours.

GRADE POINT REQUIREMENTS

A student in good standing shall maintain a grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the graduate program. If the grade-point average falls below 3.0, the student must have the deficiency corrected by the completion of the next nine hours of coursework. Those students admitted conditionally must have corrected any grade-point

deficiencies during their next enrollment of nine graduate hours.

A grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required for graduation and no grade lower than C (B in 3000 and 4000 level courses) will be credited toward a master's degree.

UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Responsibility for attending class rests with the student. Attendance in class is expected. Each instructional staff member will determine his/her attendance policy. The staff member may require between 75 and 90 percent attendance for credit in a course.

GRADUATE PLAN OF STUDY

STEP ONE: Advisory Committee. An advisory committee, consisting of three members from the graduate faculty, is formed for each student pursuing a graduate degree *as soon as possible after the student's application for graduate study and prior to enrollment in the tenth hour of coursework.*

The members of the committee are selected by the student, contingent upon their willingness to serve and the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. The chair of the advisory committee must be a full member of the graduate faculty. The advisory committee is responsible to assist the student in developing the plan of study and to administer the written comprehensive examination (and the oral follow-up exam) or to evaluate the graduate portfolio, whichever is appropriate to the student's degree (see page 9 for details).

STEP TWO: Plan of Study. A report of the plan for the student's graduate program formulated by the student and his/her advisory committee must be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies *prior to enrollment in the student's seventeenth hour of coursework.* Students completing graduate work prior to approval of the plan of study should not expect all such course work to apply toward requirements for the master's degree. *The plan of study requires original signatures of advisory committee members.*

Revisions to Plan of Study. The plan of study may be revised as the student progresses, but all changes must have the approval of the student's advisory committee. The revised plan of study must be filed with the Graduate Office by the end of the enrollment period of the semester in which the student is to graduate.

THESIS OPTION

Where appropriate the student may elect to substitute a research thesis (Thesis 5333) for three hours of coursework on the master's degree.

GUIDELINES FOR THESIS PREPARATION

1. The chair of the student's graduate advisory committee will serve as thesis advisor.
2. The student and thesis advisor will explore topics for potential research and develop a proposal based on the topic selected for research. The proposal will be submitted to the advisory committee for approval. Upon approval of the proposal, the student will work directly with the thesis advisor in developing the research approach and methodology.
3. When a final draft of the thesis is completed to the satisfaction of the thesis advisor and student, four copies of the thesis, unbound and in separate manila envelopes, should be submitted to the gradu-

ate office. One copy will be reviewed by the graduate office for format compliance. The other copies will be reviewed by the student's committee members for any additional changes to be made prior to submitting a final copy. Graduate office and committee recommendations will be presented to the student for incorporation into the final copy. The student will meet with the advisory committee for a defense of the thesis.

4. The student is responsible for securing committee members' signatures on three final copies of the thesis. All final copies must have **original signatures** of committee members.
5. The final copies of the thesis should be on 20 lb. bond paper and should be submitted in separate manila envelopes according to the following deadlines:

Fall Semester	November 1
Spring Semester	April 1
Summer Semester	July 1
6. After final copies of the thesis have been checked by the graduate office and any necessary corrections have been made by the student, the graduate office will provide written notification to the registrar indicating completion of the thesis. The final thesis grade will then be assigned by the thesis advisor.
7. Copying and binding fees must be submitted with the final copies of the thesis. NWOSU Printing Services copying fees are ten cents per page (twenty cents per double-sided page) and a binding fee of \$3.00 per bound volume. Copies should be submitted in a self-addressed manila envelope appropriate for mailing. A minimum of four weeks should be allowed for copying and binding.

SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE

A student desiring a second master's degree will be permitted to apply a maximum of twelve hours of appropriate coursework toward requirements for a second master's degree, subject to the approval of the advisory committee. All coursework in the approved plan of study must meet the six-year time limit, according to university policy.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREES

Candidates who expect to complete degree requirements must file an application for the degree and submit the \$15 application fee to the graduate office by October 15 for December graduation, by February 1 for May graduation, or by March 1 for July graduation.

CONFERRING OF MASTER'S DEGREES

Candidates who have fulfilled all requirements for the master's degree are recommended by the Director of Graduate Studies to the President of the University for the conferring of their degrees. Attendance at commencement is expected.

Degrees will be conferred at regular convocations. Master's degree candidates who apply for graduation in the fall will participate in the December commencement ceremony; candidates who apply for graduation in the spring will participate in the May commencement ceremony. Candidates may participate in the May commencement ceremony if a degree check indicates they can complete coursework for the degree by the end of the following summer session.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

For ALL M.C.P students and for those M.Ed. students who applied for graduate study prior to January 1, 2003:

Comprehensive examinations will be administered to graduate students who (1) have either completed all coursework or are currently enrolled in final coursework, not exceeding nine hours in a regular semester or six hours in a summer term and (2) have removed all grades of "Incomplete" from their plan of study. The exams will be administered each semester based on the following schedule:

October 7, 2004*	October 6, 2005*
March 3, 2005*	March 2, 2006*
June 16, 2005*	June 15, 2006*

Students eligible to take the comprehensive exams should process application material in the graduate office at least four weeks prior to the exam date.

The student will be responsible for submitting the appropriate application form to the graduate office by the prescribed deadline for administration of the exam.

The comprehensive examination will be comprised of the following:

Master of Education candidates:

(A) Core Courses. The student will select three of five essay questions to answer (or an appropriate equivalent of objective questions as determined by the student's advisory committee).

(B) Specialty Courses and Electives. The student will select three of five essay questions to answer (or an appropriate equivalent of objective questions as determined by the student's advisory committee).

The exam is a pass-fail exam, based on a minimum seventy-five percent for a passing grade on each question. The oral follow-up exam will be scheduled based on the following criteria:

Pass all six questions - General oral follow-up.

Pass five of six questions - Oral follow-up with focus in the area of weakness.

Pass fewer than five questions - Retake the entire examination, no earlier than the next scheduled examination date.

If the student does not pass five of six questions, the student should meet with his/her advisory committee to determine the course of remediation needed (perhaps further coursework or directed study). A second unsuccessful attempt will result in another meeting and further remediation. If a third attempt is unsuccessful the student will be dismissed from the graduate program with no degree awarded.

A consensus approval vote of the student's advisory committee is required for passing the oral follow-up examination.

Master of Counseling Psychology candidates:

Effective June 1, 2004, MCP candidates will complete a 200-item comprehensive multiple-choice exam.

The exam is a pass-fail exam, based on a minimum seventy percent overall OR a minimum seventy percent on seven of ten sections of the exam.

All students will be notified within two weeks regarding comprehensive examination results.

*Confirm date, time, and location by calling the graduate office at (580) 327-8410. **Paperwork must be submitted by the published deadline, at least four weeks prior to the date of the exam, in order to take the examinations.**

Note: The comprehensive examination will not be given to M.Ed. candidates beyond January 1, 2009.

GRADUATE PORTFOLIO

For those M.Ed. students who applied for graduate study after January 1, 2003:

In lieu of the written comprehensive and oral follow-up examinations, the student will submit and defend a graduate portfolio, following procedures outlined in the *Portfolio Handbook for Advanced Programs* (available online). To be eligible to submit the portfolio, students must (1) have completed all coursework or be currently enrolled in final coursework, not exceeding nine hours in a regular semester or six hours in a summer term and (2) have removed all grades of "Incomplete" from their plan of study.

The graduate portfolio requires three checkpoints, specifically Milestone 1, at the conclusion of the tenth hour of graduate work; Milestone 2, at the conclusion of the seventeenth hour of graduate work; and Milestone 3 at the conclusion of the degree program.

The graduate portfolio and the application for its defense (Milestone 3) must be submitted to the graduate office no later than November 1, April 1, or July 1 in the semester in which the student expects to graduate. The student's advisory committee will have at least two weeks to review the portfolio, make any final recommendations for its improvement, and return it to the student. A consensus approval vote of the student's advisory committee is required for passing the portfolio requirement.

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Procedure...	To Be Completed...	Initiate Through...	Approved By...
1. Admission or readmission to the university*	Prior to enrollment	Registry office	Registry office
2. Admission to graduate study*	Prior to enrollment	Graduate office	Graduate office
3. GRE or MAT test	ASAP, before enrolling in 10th hour	Graduate office	Graduate office
4. MCP students: degree area application	ASAP, before enrolling in 10th hour	Coordinator of Counseling	MCP screening
5. Select graduate advisory committee	ASAP, before enrolling in 10th hour	Graduate office; Advisory committee	Graduate office
6. Portfolio Milestone 1**	Upon completion of 10 hours	Advisory committee	Advisory committee
7. Submit plan of study	ASAP, before enrolling in 17th hour	Graduate office; Advisory committee	Advisory committee; Graduate office
8. Apply for candidacy	After completing 16 hours and at least 9 weeks prior to graduation	Graduate office	Graduate office
9. Portfolio Milestone 2**	Upon completion of 17 hours	Advisory committee	Advisory committee
10. Thesis option: submit thesis	Prior to comprehensive examination or portfolio	Advisory committee	Graduate office
11. Degree application \$15	At least 9 weeks prior to graduation	Graduate office	Graduate office
12. Schedule written comprehensive exam and oral follow-up**	At least 4 weeks before exam	Graduate office	Advisory committee; Graduate office
13. Oral follow-up**	No earlier than 2 weeks after written exam, but before final exam week	Graduate office	Advisory committee
14. Submit portfolio**	By Nov. 1, April 1, or July 1	Graduate office	Graduate office; Advisory committee
15. Portfolio Milestone 3**	No earlier than 2 weeks after submitting, but before final exam week	Graduate office; Advisory committee	Advisory committee
16. Exit interview	Immediately after oral exam or portfolio defense	Graduate office	Graduate office

* Admission form must be accompanied by *official transcripts* reflecting all college/university credit attempted. Students who have completed undergraduate degree requirements at NWOSU do NOT need to submit a transcript from Northwestern.

** MEd students who applied for graduate study *before January 1, 2003*, are required to pass the written comprehensive examination and the oral follow-up exam; those who applied for graduate study *after January 1, 2003*, are required to submit and successfully defend a graduate portfolio, developed and approved at Milestones 1, 2, and 3. *All students, regardless of their degree plan, must have (1) completed all course work OR be enrolled in the final 9 hours in a regular semester or the final 3 hours in a summer semester and (2) have successfully removed all grades of "Incomplete" from their transcripts before being allowed to take the written comprehensive exam OR to submit the graduate portfolio.*