

## SECTION 2: GRADUATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

**Graduate Committee.** The Graduate Committee has general supervisory authority over the graduate program and is responsible for recommending policy relative to the program. The committee membership includes the Associate Vice President for Academics and the Dean of Faculty, the Associate Dean of the School of Education, the Chair of the Psychology Department, the Director of Teacher Education, one at-large representative from the School of Arts and Sciences, one at-large representative from the American Studies program, one at-large representative of the future Doctor of Nursing Practice program, one student representative from the Master of Education program, one student representative from Master of Counseling Psychology program, and one student representative from the Master of Arts in American Studies program. The Associate Dean 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. These application forms can be found under the "Forms and Plans of Study" tab on the Graduate Studies webpage ([www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies](http://www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies)). Official transcripts (not photocopies) from all colleges/universities previously attended (undergraduate and graduate) must accompany applications. Applicants holding teaching certificates or licenses must submit copies of their current teaching certification; until such copies are received, the student will be limited to a maximum enrollment of nine hours of graduate courses. **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 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 Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Unusual cases will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee.

**Unconditional 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.

\*Students with prior graduate work (transfer students or NWSU students applying for readmission) must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all graduate courses in order to be admitted unconditionally.

**Conditional Admission.** Conditional admission may be granted to applicants who do not meet the requirements for unconditional admission to the graduate program but who satisfy the following standards:

1. *First-time graduate students (with no prior graduate work):* Possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale) **OR** a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours attempted;
2. *Transfer graduate students or NWSU graduate students applying for readmission:*
  - (a.) Possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale) **OR** a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours of undergraduate or graduate work attempted (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 applied toward a master's degree).
  - (b.) Possess a cumulative graduate grade-point average less than 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

All students who are admitted conditionally must have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 (B) after the first sixteen hours of graduate work following their admission to the graduate program. If the GPA requirement is not met, the student shall be removed from the degree program.

Graduate students who are admitted conditionally are not eligible to receive Federal Financial Aid. Questions about financial aid should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid.

**Restrictions.** The Graduate Studies Office requires students enrolled in the M.A. in American Studies program and in the M.Ed. in Adult Education Management and Administration and Non-Certificate options to have twelve credit hours of undergraduate work in their area of specialization. For those who do not, extra coursework will be required to provide an appropriate background for their graduate content area.

**Senior Undergraduate Students in the Graduate Program.** Senior students may be admitted to the graduate program by meeting the following standards:

1. Be enrolled in the final hours required to complete a baccalaureate degree.
2. Submit an application for graduate study.
3. Possess a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale) [Unconditional Admission Standard 1].
4. Be enrolled in a maximum of sixteen semester hours of combined undergraduate and graduate course work during the fall or spring semester, or a maximum of nine hours in a summer term (including interim courses).

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.

**Non-Degree Seeking Student.** Students who wish to take courses for graduate credit but who do not wish to work toward a master's degree must meet the following standards:

1. Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
2. Possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale) OR a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours of undergraduate work attempted (both undergraduate and graduate hours may be used in calculating the GPA to meet admission standards).

If a student admitted as prescribed should decide to pursue a master's degree, all admission standards established for the degree program must be met before the student will be allowed enrollment beyond nine hours. Any graduate hours used for admission purposes cannot be applied toward a master's degree.

Note: Students seeking certification are not considered "non-degree seeking students." For more details on the certification process, see section 6.

**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 after the completion of sixteen semester hours and before completion of 20 hours of acceptable work toward the master's degree. 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.

### 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.

Graduate students taking the written comprehensive examination OR submitting the graduate portfolio for Milestone 3 evaluation must have completed all coursework OR be enrolled in final coursework not exceeding nine hours in a regular semester or six hours in a summer term. (See requirements on page 9).

### RETENTION AND ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student in good standing shall maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the graduate program. A grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required for graduation; no grade lower than C will be credited toward a master's degree. Students whose grade-point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and must have the deficiency corrected by the completion of the next nine hours of coursework. Students who do not achieve the grade-point average at the completion of those nine hours will be dismissed from the graduate program.

### 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 STUDENT APPEAL PROCESS

The Graduate Committee is the general supervisory body for the graduate program. Graduate students may appeal to the committee for consideration of matters affecting their degree program. The committee meets regularly during the fall and spring semesters; it does not meet during the summer term.

To be placed on the agenda for a committee meeting, the student may submit a letter of appeal to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (via email, campus mail, or U.S. mail) stating his or her request, providing as much information as is pertinent to the case. He/She may also request one or more members of his/her graduate advisory committee to submit letters of support of the request. The student and advisory committee members are welcome to attend the meeting when the case is presented and may address the committee or answer any questions that committee members may have.

Following the meeting, the student and the advisory committee members will be informed of the decision reached by the Graduate Committee, whose decision is final.

### COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any student may file a formal complaint if he/she believes that he/she has not been treated appropriately by a student, faculty member, administrator, or staff member. The complaint should be addressed to the supervisor of that particular department or office. It is the responsibility of the appropriate supervisor to respond to the complaint. A form is available on the Northwestern website for filing a formal complaint. Formal complaints that have been addressed to the President, the Vice President for Academics, the Vice President for Administration, the Associate Vice President for Academics and Dean of Faculty, the Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, or the Associate Dean of Education and Behavioral Sciences will be filed in the Office of Assessment and will be available for review by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association. In accordance with privacy policies, the identity of individuals will be protected.

### CREDIT-HOUR REGULATIONS

**Level of Courses.** All work used to fulfill requirements for the Master of Arts in American Studies, the Master of Education, or the Master of Counseling Psychology degrees shall be selected from graduate courses, which are listed by department in Section 7. Subsequently, graduate students should enroll in 5000-level courses to receive graduate credit. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are registered in the graduate section of split-level courses since graduate

students should experience a more rigorous academic requirement than what is expected of undergraduate students. Also note that courses taken at the undergraduate level may not be repeated for credit toward the master's degree.

**Full-Time Student Status.** A student is considered full-time at the graduate level by enrolling in (and completing) a minimum of nine hours in a fall or spring semester or a minimum of five hours in a summer term.

**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 for the Milestone 3 defense.*

**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 degree, a minimum of thirty-two hours of graduate credit must be completed. The Master of Counseling Psychology degree requires a minimum of forty-eight graduate credit hours. All accepted transfer hours are counted as part of the student's graduate grade-point average.

**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 Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, they contribute to the student's overall program. **Exception:** students in the Adult Education Management and Administration program may transfer the final 18 hours of discipline-specific courses if the courses are listed on an approved plan of study.

**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.

**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 7, 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. The validation process is initiated through the Office of Graduate Studies.

### 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 to score.
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, DVD, or other appropriate media) to the graduate office to be filed in the student's folder.

**Only NWOSU courses can be validated past the six-year limit. Credit from other institutions which exceeds the six-year limit cannot be validated.**

## ARRANGED CLASSES

The following guidelines have been adopted by NWOSU concerning arranged class:

1. Any course taught by arrangement must be approved by the instructor, department head (where applicable), and the dean of the appropriate school.
2. Only courses required for the degree or certification program will be considered for arrangement.
3. Only courses which have not been scheduled in the current year or for which there is a scheduling conflict may be considered for arrangement.
4. The student must be a senior or graduate student needing the class for graduation or certification within the current academic year.
5. Only students who have an overall GPA of at least 3.0 will be considered for an arranged class.
6. Regular teacher education block courses will not be offered for arrangement.
7. No course being repeated may be taken by arrangement.
8. Any instructor offering a course through arrangement must submit to the appropriate dean a written plan (including reason for request, course content, and student requirements) for approval.
9. Students may appeal to the Academic Affairs committee in the event of a special situation not covered by preceding guidelines.

## GRADUATE PLAN OF STUDY

**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. This process is discussed in EDUC 5010/Graduate Study Seminar, which students should enroll in during their first semester of graduate work.*

For students enrolled in the Master of Arts in American Studies Program and in the Master of Counseling Psychology Program, members of the advisory committee are selected by the student, contingent upon faculty members' willingness to serve and upon the approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. For students enrolled in all Master of Education options, committee members will be assigned by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies with the approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. The chair of advisory committees must be a full member of the graduate faculty. Adjunct instructors are not allowed to serve. The 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 (and the Milestone 3 defense), whichever is appropriate to the student's degree. **All American Studies, MCP, and M.Ed. students must form their advisory committees and schedule an appointment with its members during the first semester of graduate work. Graduate students must be aware that some faculty members are not employed during the summer. Students should take this into consideration when putting together their graduate advisory committees and when scheduling their portfolio or thesis defenses.**

**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 Associate Dean of Graduate Studies *during the student's first semester of coursework.* Students are encouraged to take the required core courses early in their plan of study, to the extent possible. 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. *All information included on the plan of study form must be typed (no handwritten plan of study forms will be accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies). The plan of study form also requires original signatures of advisory committee members.*

**Revisions to Plan of Study.** When a student deviates from the plan of study, **he/she must submit a new plan of study form to the Office of Graduate Studies (EC #103).** It is the student's responsibility to inform members of the advisory committee of the changes being made, to obtain their signatures, and to submit the new form to the Office of Graduate Studies. Hence, 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

Students enrolled in the M.A. in American Studies program, the Master of Counseling Psychology program; the M.Ed. in Adult Education Management and Administration option, or the M.Ed. Non-Certificate option may take from three-to-six semester hours of thesis credit (Thesis 5330) as part of their field-specific subjects, related area of study, or electives if they choose to undertake a research project (thesis) as part of their graduate work. Students interested in this option must visit either the Graduate Studies website at [www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies](http://www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies) or the Office of Graduate Studies (FA #212)

to receive the booklet "Guidelines for Thesis Preparation and Submission," a list of the "Policies and Procedures for a Master's Degree with a Thesis," and the appropriate forms. These materials discuss, in detail, the specific requirements for thesis preparation and submission.

## 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 at the master's or doctoral level toward requirements for a second master's degree, subject to the approval of the graduate advisory committee. All coursework in the approved plan of study must meet the six-year time limit, according to university policy. Exception: Students enrolled in the M.Ed. Adult Education Management and Administration option may transfer eighteen hours of coursework from a previous master's or doctoral degree as program-specific electives courses, subject to the approval of the graduate advisory committee as long as these courses fall within the six-year time limit. If an appeal is made concerning this policy, it needs to be taken before the Graduate Committee.

## APPLICATION FOR DEGREES

Candidates who expect to complete degree requirements must file an application for the degree and submit the \$25 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 Associate Dean of Graduate Studies to the President of the University for the conferring of their degrees. Attendance at commencement is expected but is not required.

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 will participate in the May commencement ceremony if a degree check indicates they will complete coursework for the degree by the end of the following summer session.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

### Master of Arts in American Studies & Master of Counseling Psychology

**For American Studies and M.C.P. candidates only.** 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 MCP comprehensive exam dates will be scheduled between the Psychology department and individual graduate students.** The American Studies exams will be administered each semester based on the following schedule:\*

October 6, 2016	October 5, 2017	October 4, 2018
March 9, 2017	March 1, 2018	March 7, 2019
June 8, 2017	June 14, 2018	June 13, 2019

American Studies 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.

Candidates sitting for the American Studies comprehensive examination will complete a multi-question essay exam about the core and elective courses that the candidate has taken. Specific questions will be composed by members of the candidate's graduate advisory committee in consultation with the candidate. The exams will then be graded with a consensus vote of pass-fail by the advisory committee. Candidates must also orally defend their exam answers at a later scheduled date after the exam was taken.

Candidates sitting for the MCP comprehensive examination will complete a multi-question essay exam. The exam is pass-fail, graded with a consensus vote of the advisory committee and/or psychology department faculty. Candidates must also orally defend their exam answers at a later scheduled date after the exam was taken.

If the student does not pass the exam and the oral defense, he/she 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.

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.***

### **Master of Education**

***For M.Ed. candidates only.*** In lieu of the written comprehensive and oral follow-up examinations, the student will submit and defend a graduate portfolio within the web-based ALCA system, as outlined in the course syllabus for EDUC 5010 Graduate Study Seminar.

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 ALCA portfolio requires three checkpoints: Milestone 1 during the semester of the tenth hour of graduate work; Milestone 2 during the semester of the twentieth hour of graduate work; and Milestone 3 at the conclusion of the degree program.

Only one assessment per semester is permitted; therefore, students should allow at least three semesters for the development and final assessment of the graduate portfolio. **Failure to complete an assessment by the stated deadline will result in a hold on further enrollment in the graduate program until such time as the assessment is completed and on file in the Office of Graduate Studies.**

The application for the ALCA portfolio defense (Milestone 3) must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than November 15, April 15, or July 15 in the semester in which the student expects to graduate. The student's advisory committee will have at least one month to review the portfolio, to make any final recommendations for its improvement, and to return the recommendations to the student. A consensus approval vote of the student's advisory committee is required for passing the portfolio requirement.

All students enrolled in an M.Ed. program should obtain the "Portfolio Handbook for Advanced Programs" by visiting either the Graduate Studies website at [www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies](http://www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies) or the Office of Graduate Studies (FA #212). This handbook discusses, in detail, the guidelines, policies, and procedures for submitting materials to the portfolio in the Live-Text edu-solutions system.

## **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

NWOSU expects all graduate students to have fundamental computer skills that include a working knowledge of such programs as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint as well as other electronic platforms utilized by the university. If a graduate student exhibits such a deficiency, s/he will be required to enroll in CMSC 1103/Microcomputer Applications at the undergraduate level either before or concurrent with his/her first semester of graduate work.