



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Serving Kentuckians Since 1906

Graduate Education and Research
Office of the Dean and Associate
Vice President for Research
graduateschool@eku.edu

CPO 5-A, Jones 414
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, Kentucky 40475-3102
(859) 622-1744
FAX: (859) 622-2975

January 24, 2007

To: Dr. Aaron Thompson
Associate Vice President for University Programs

From: Dr. Jerry Pogatshnik
Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President for Research

Re: Proposed Additions/Revisions to Graduate School Policy and Procedures

I've attached three recommendations for Additions/Revisions to current Graduate School Policies and Procedures for review by the Council on Academic Affairs. The three recommendations are:

Policy Revision: Seven-Year Time Limit for Master's Degree Programs

The proposed revision recognizes that the length of some of our graduate programs extends well beyond the typical 30-36 hours required for most master's degrees. The revision extends the time limit to 10 years for programs greater than 40 hours to allow sufficient time for students in these programs to complete their degrees without the need to resort to requests for waivers.

Policy Addition: Academic Bankruptcy of Graduate Course Work

The proposed policy permits graduate students who may have encountered academic difficulties at some point in their graduate careers to be allowed to pursue graduate degrees in other programs while remaining in good academic standing. The proposed policy mirrors that of our current policy for undergraduates. Coursework and grades for courses meeting the requirements stated under the policy would remain on the student's transcript but could be excluded from the calculation of the overall graduate GPA.

Suspension of Procedure: Graduate Candidacy

The Graduate School seeks to suspend the process of application for graduate candidacy. The current process is burdensome on graduate advisors and Graduate School staff and is of little benefit to students. The recommendation to suspend the process is supported by the vast majority of Graduate Program Coordinators as well as by the Graduate Council.

Details of the revisions/additions are attached. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

cc: Dr. David May
Dr. Rodney Piercey



Policy Revision: Seven-Year Time Limit on Master's Degree Programs

(Additions are underlined – deletions are indicated by ~~strikethroughs~~)

Policy

Time Requirements

For master's degree programs of 40 or fewer hours, a graduate student is expected to complete requirements for the master's degree no later than seven years after beginning course work. For master's degree programs of 41 or more hours, a graduate student is expected to complete requirements for the master's degree no later than ten years after beginning coursework. The minimum time interval required for completion of a graduate degree is two semesters of full-time study.

~~The Graduate Council in recognition of the importance of assisting and safeguarding the student's right to due process will consider requests for waiver of the above stated requirement upon the recommendation of the student's advisor, the department chair, the college dean, and the Dean of Graduate Education and Research.~~

Rationale:

The current policy was designed to address time limits of "standard" master's degree programs. ECU offers a few master's degree programs where the credit hour requirements are significantly above the typical 30-36 hours required for most master's degrees. The revision recognizes the limitations of the current policy, particularly for part-time students, and should reduce the need for term waivers for students in these programs.

Policy Addition: Academic Bankruptcy of Graduate Work

Policy – (Passed by Graduate Council on November 7, 2006)

Academic bankruptcy allows graduate students who have been in a different graduate program from their current graduate program at ECU to void a portion of the work attempted during one or more semesters of the prior enrollment(s). ECU offers this option because it recognizes that some students fail to perform satisfactorily due to factors that interfere with their academic performance.

To qualify for bankruptcy, a graduate student must meet the following conditions:

- (a) The student must be enrolled in a different graduate program than the one in which he or she was enrolled during the semester of the work to be bankrupted.
- (b) The student must have been out of the previously enrolled program for a period of at least five consecutive years after attempting the work to be bankrupted.
- (c) The student must state, in writing, his or her intention to declare bankruptcy to the Graduate School. The student will also specify which semesters are being requested for bankruptcy. Students may request to bankrupt any or all semesters of their prior work, but all work from a given semester will be bankrupted if the student requests to bankrupt that semester and if the request is approved.
- (d) The student may not have previously declared bankruptcy of ECU work.

If bankruptcy is granted, the bankrupted work will remain on the transcript but it will not be counted in the student's GPA and will not count toward degree requirements. Students admitted to a new degree program under this policy will only be admitted with probationary status and must meet the requirements for probationary admission in order to maintain enrollment in the new graduate program.

Rationale:

The current academic bankruptcy policy applies only to undergraduate students. This policy extends to graduate students the same opportunity. (The basis for the above text was taken from the *Undergraduate Catalog 2006-07*, Page 43, and has been revised to meet Graduate criteria.)

Procedure Revision: Suspension of Application for Graduate Candidacy

The Graduate School requests that the process for application to candidacy for graduate students be suspended. The current process requires students to be admitted to candidacy before registration in any of the last 12 hours of a degree program. Students may not apply for candidacy and graduation within the same term. At doctoral granting institutions, candidacy is typically a process where the program grants consideration to move on to the doctoral level from the master's degree. At master's granting institutions, the value added by the candidacy process is not as clear and many master's granting institutions do not have a candidacy process. The current process adds considerable administrative burden to the Graduate School staff and Graduate Program Coordinators. Although there is some value in the process of a mid-program assessment, we believe that this can be handled more appropriately at the program level.

In Fall 2006, the Graduate School conducted a survey of all Graduate Program Coordinators to assess the attitudes of the program in retaining this process. The responses from the programs were overwhelmingly in favor of eliminating the process. The Graduate Council discussed the utility of the candidacy process and the Council concurred with the consensus of the Graduate Program Coordinators and recommended that the process be discontinued.

Implementation of this change will reduce the administrative burden on the Graduate School staff and graduate advisors, and produce fewer obstacles to students in the graduation process. The Graduate School requests approval by the Council on Academic Affairs to discontinue the process of graduate candidacy.