

November 16, 2015

ALL SCHOOL DEANS AND ASSOCIATE DEANS OF GRADUATE AFFAIRS**Re: Academic Disqualification Policy for UC Irvine Graduate Students**

Graduate Council approved revisions to the 2011 Academic Disqualification Policy at the November 12, 2015 meeting. We sought the advice and consultation from Graduate Division, Campus Counsel, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, as well as all the School Associate Deans for Graduate Affairs. Much of the feedback was incorporated and it is the Council's sincere belief that this policy is stronger because of the expertise that was offered. Graduate Council hopes that these revisions better serve the Schools and students in helping them navigate a difficult situation. We thank all parties involved for the time and energy spent collaborating on this campus policy. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at dbrownst@uci.edu or the Graduate Council Analyst, Adriana Collins, at ajcollin@uci.edu.

On behalf of the Graduate Council,



David Brownstone, Chair

- C: Francis Leslie, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Division
Ruth Quinnan, Director of Admissions and Academic Affairs, Graduate Division
Katherine Triglia, Graduate Programs Manager, Graduate Division
J. Michael Chennault, University Ombudsman, Director of Campus Mediation Program
Kyhm Penfil, Campus Counsel
Kirsten Quanbeck, Associate Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion & Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Alan Terricciano, 2015-16 Chair, Academic Senate
Natalie Schonfeld, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Adriana Collins, Graduate Council Analyst, Academic Senate
Leora Fellus, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, School of Education
Sarah Kahl, Analyst to the Associate Deans, School of Business
Jean Bennett, Director of Graduate Student Services, School of Engineering
Amy Fujitani, Director of Graduate Student Services, School of Humanities
Kris Bolcer, Director of Student Services, School of Information and Computer Sciences
John Sommerhauser, Director of Graduate Student Services, School of Social Sciences
Amy Kim, Director of Student Affairs, School of the Arts
Jennie Craig, Director of Graduate Student Services, School of Social Ecology
Sifat Reazi, Associated Graduate Student representative for Graduate Council
Jake Yocham, Associated Graduate Student representative for Graduate Council
Aaron Friedman, Associated Graduate Student representative for Graduate Council

Academic Disqualification Policy

Section I. Definitions

A. Disqualification vs. Dismissal

Disqualification means that, for one or more of the academic reasons listed below, a student is no longer eligible to continue graduate study in his/her graduate program at the University of California, Irvine. The term “**dismissal**” should not be confused with “**disqualification**.” Dismissal is an administrative action resulting in removal from graduate study based on behavior or conduct. Authority to terminate student status as a result of disciplinary proceedings rests with the Dean of Students.

- A. “**Graduate Dean**” means the Dean of the Graduate Division at the University of California, Irvine.
- B. “**Graduate Advisor**” means the graduate student’s faculty advisor.
- C. “**Associate Dean**” – means the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the student’s degree granting School
- D. “**Academic Conditional Status**” –Prior language also used was ‘Academic Probation.’

Section II. Academic Disqualification

A. General Policy.

1. **Recommendation for Disqualification.** If a graduate student’s Graduate Advisor determines that a graduate student is making unsatisfactory academic progress as determined by any of the factors noted in this section, the Graduate Advisor shall consult with the appropriate faculty and administrators for that degree granting unit (e.g. Associate Dean, Chair, Thesis Advisor, etc.) before drafting a letter to notify the graduate student in writing that he or she has been recommended for academic disqualification. The letter will be vetted and approved at the School level by the Associate Dean and sent to the student. A copy of the letter will then be sent to the Graduate Dean.
2. **Disqualification by Graduate Dean.** After consultation with the graduate student’s academic unit faculty, the Graduate Dean may disqualify a graduate student because of unsatisfactory academic progress as determined by any of the factors noted in this section. Should the Graduate Dean determine that disqualification is warranted under this section, the Graduate Dean shall notify the graduate student in writing of the disqualification determination.

- 3. Withdrawal by Mutual Agreement.** In those cases in which the graduate student and the academic unit mutually agree to the termination status, either to end graduate study with a Master's Degree or to simply withdraw from graduate study, then the academic unit and/or graduate student may independently notify the other of this mutual agreement. In all such cases, the department shall provide the Graduate Division a copy of the mutual agreement to terminate. The department shall direct that notice to the Enrolled Student Affairs Officer at 120 Aldrich Hall.
- 4. Grounds for Placement on Academic Conditional Status**

 - a. Events Triggering Automatic Placement on Academic Conditional Status.** The following events result in a graduate student's automatic placement on Academic Conditional Status:

 - i.** A graduate student's grade point average for any term is less than 3.0, calculated on all of the letter graded upper division and graduate courses completed while registered as a graduate student at the University of California.
 - ii.** A graduate student's cumulative grade point average is less than 3.0, calculated on all of the letter graded upper division and graduate courses completed while registered as a graduate student at the University of California.
 - iii.** A graduate student earns a grade of B- or less in a course.
 - iv.** A graduate student accumulates a combination of more than eight units of "I," "U" and/or "F" grades in total.
 - b. Events that May Lead to Academic Conditional Status at the Discretion of the Associate Dean :**

 - i.** Graduate students with this status will be notified by the appropriate faculty and administrators for their degree granting unit (e.g. Associate Dean, Graduate Advisor, Thesis Advisor, and/or Chair, etc.) that they are not making satisfactory progress in their research or coursework (e.g. failing a comprehensive/prelim exam, not advancing to candidacy, not passing a language requirement, or other program requirements).
 - ii.** Graduate students who are beyond the maximum time to degree for their respective program.
- 5. Procedure for Notifying Graduate Students of Placement on Academic Conditional Status.** When graduate students are placed on Academic Conditional Status, the Associate Dean of their School shall send each graduate student a letter informing the student that he/she is on Academic Conditional Status and indicating the requirements for returning to good academic standing and a specific timeline for doing so. Details of what is required will be specific to the program and the individual student's progress.

6. Grounds for Disqualification

- a. **Automatic Disqualification from Further Registration.** A graduate student is automatically disqualified from further registration if, at the end of any term, the graduate student's grade point average for that term is less than 2.0.
- b. **When Academic Conditional Status Leads to Disqualification from Further Registration.** A graduate student who has been placed on Academic Conditional Status is subject to disqualification if any one or more of the following events occur:
 - i. A graduate student has completed two consecutive terms on Academic Conditional Status; for instances where the condition of returning to satisfactory academic progress is to repeat, or take for the first time, a course that is offered during a time that exceeds two consecutive terms, exceptions may be made and notified to the Graduate Dean
 - ii. During a graduate student's term on Academic Conditional Status, the graduate student fails to improve his/her grade point average as stipulated in the Associate Dean's warning letter.
 - iii. If after one term on Academic Conditional Status because of an excessive number of units of combined "I," "U" and/or "F" grades, the graduate student fails to make up the required number of such units stipulated in the Associate Dean's warning letter or accumulates further units of "I," "U" and/or "F" grades, disqualification will result.
- c. **Disqualification from Further Registration upon Recommendation of the Associate Dean.**
 - i. **General Rule.** The Graduate Advisor may also recommend to the Associate Dean and appropriate faculty and administrators for that degree granting unit (e.g. Chair, Thesis Advisor, etc.) the disqualification of a graduate student who is not making satisfactory progress toward the degree objective even if the graduate student's grade point average is above 3.0.
 - ii. **Grounds for Recommending Disqualification based on Unsatisfactory Progress.** Unsatisfactory progress may result from failure of a program's preliminary or comprehensive examination, failure to meet published timelines for completion of the degree, failure to meet deadlines imposed on the individual graduate student, or failure to make adequate progress in research or creative work. Unsatisfactory progress will also result when a Ph.D. student is unable to secure a faculty advisor or if the student's advisor/advisee relationship is terminated and the student is unable to secure a new faculty advisor within a specified period of time.
 - iii. **Notification to Student.** If the Graduate Advisor determines that a graduate student is not making satisfactory progress

toward the degree objective, a letter will be sent to the graduate student informing him/her of the lack of satisfactory progress. This letter will be drafted by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the appropriate faculty and administrators for that degree granting unit (e.g. Chair, Thesis Advisor, etc.) and ultimately approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. The School will provide a copy to the Graduate Dean.

- iv. Opportunity to Cure.** Once the graduate student has received formal written notice, the graduate student should be given at least one quarter, if practicable, to remedy the lack of progress identified in the Graduate Advisor's report. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the graduate student will not have an opportunity to cure if the reason for the disqualification recommendation is one of the following:
1. The graduate student fails a program examination beyond the number of attempts the program allows for
 2. A MAT or Credential student is dismissed from a student-teaching placement.

Section III. Detailed Disqualification and Appeal Procedures

A. Authority. Regulation 904 of the Academic Senate of the University of California reads as follows: "Disqualification of graduate students is at the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate Division concerned." With the advice of the Graduate Council, the Graduate Dean has adopted the following policies and procedures.

B. Procedures for Disqualification

1. **Recommendation for Disqualification by Associate Dean.** If a graduate student's Graduate Advisor determines that a graduate student is making unsatisfactory academic progress as determined by any of the factors noted in Section II of this policy, a letter will be sent to the graduate student informing her/him of the lack of satisfactory progress. This letter will be drafted by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the appropriate faculty and administrators for that degree granting unit (e.g. Chair, Thesis Advisor, etc.) and ultimately approved by the Associate Dean. The School will provide a copy to the Graduate Dean.
2. **Graduate Dean's Notice to Student:** If the Associate Dean recommends in writing to the Graduate Dean that a graduate student be disqualified, the Graduate Dean, the administrative officer with final responsibility for disqualification, will inform the student in writing via an email to the student's UCI email account, of receipt of the recommendation to disqualify.

3. **Graduate Student's Right to Present Case.** As a component of the notice to the student and contained in the same written communication, the graduate student shall have the right to present his or her case to the Graduate Dean in writing within 14 calendar days of the date of the Notice. The notice shall state that the Graduate Dean's review will commence after the 14-day period has elapsed.
4. **The Graduate Dean Review:** After the 14 day period, whether or not the student submits a case in writing to the Graduate Dean, the Graduate Dean will carefully review the graduate student's academic record and all materials related to the student's academic progress, as well as any information that may be provided by the student.
5. **Notification of Decision by Graduate Dean.** Unless there are indications of procedural error or other substantive mitigating factors to explain the student's unsatisfactory record, the Graduate Dean will notify the student in writing of the intent to disqualify.

The Notification of Decision will state that the student has 30 calendar days from the date of the Notification of Decision to appeal the Graduate Dean's decision. If the graduate student does not respond or withdraw from his or her respective graduate program within 30 calendar days of the Graduate Dean's notification of intent to disqualify, the Graduate Dean shall send a final written notice of academic disqualification to the graduate student. There will be a notation placed on the student's transcript stating that the student was academically disqualified. A graduate student who has been disqualified will not be allowed to register in any graduate program at the University of California, Irvine including the original graduate program or any other graduate program, without approval of the academic unit and the Graduate Dean.

6. **Graduate Student's Right to Appeal.** The graduate student shall have the right to appeal his or her case. If the graduate student wishes to appeal the Graduate Dean's decision, the graduate student must request an appeal in writing within the 30 calendar-day period. The student's written appeal must be sent to the Graduate Dean, and the Graduate Dean will forward the appeal to the Graduate Council for review.

Once the graduate student has submitted an appeal, should the graduate student choose to withdraw before a decision is reached, the appeal process stops, and the appeal becomes void. The option to withdraw terminates on the date that the Graduate Dean sends the Final Determination Notice to the graduate student.

7. **Grounds for Considering Graduate Student's Appeal.** Student appeals will be considered only if based upon specific criteria as follows: (1) procedural error; (2) verifiable evidence of personal bias; or (3) judgments based on non-academic

criteria.¹ Disagreements over evaluation of academic quality are not an appropriate basis for an appeal.

- 8. Graduate Student's Status During Appeal Period.** While the appeal is being considered, the student may maintain his or her registration status. Students are also given the option of withdrawing from their program, which results in a "W" on their transcript, rather than a disqualification notation. The option to withdraw terminates on the date that the Graduate Dean sends the Final Determination Notice to the graduate student.

The Graduate Council will assign the case to their subcommittee on academic disqualification which will review the appeal, collect additional material if necessary and make a recommendation to Graduate Council. Graduate Council will then vote on a decision. The recommendation and vote will be conducted with only voting members present as well as the Graduate Council Analyst who serves as the record keeper for the Council minutes. The Graduate Council's decision will be implemented by the Graduate Division Dean who will notify the student and all relevant parties involved. The Graduate Dean shall formally communicate the final decision to the student, and all parties involved, in writing.

- 9. Final Determination Notice.** Upon receipt of the Graduate Council's decision in writing as to the disposition of the case, the Graduate Dean shall formally communicate the final decision to the student in writing. The Graduate Dean's final notice to the student will include: (1) the basis for the decision; (2) its effective date; and (3) the nature of the recommendations of the Graduate Council. For students seeking J.D. or M.D. degrees, the disqualification and appeals process will be according to the written procedures adopted by the Schools of Law and Medicine, respectively.

C. Due Process Requirements. To ensure that a decision to disqualify a graduate student from an academic program is just, the following due process requirements must be met:

- 1.** Departmental and program policies must be clearly stated in writing, and a copy provided to all graduate students in the program upon acceptance into the graduate program or within the first few weeks of the graduate student's first quarter of enrollment in classes.
- 2.** Information on University and campus policies affecting graduate students must be provided to all graduate students in the program. Most of these can be found on the UCI Website and the UCI General Catalogue.

¹ Complaints relating to discrimination on the basis of any protected status by law or UC Policy shall be referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity ("OEOD"), and the matter will be held in abeyance until OEOD has completed its investigation. OEOD shall report its findings to the Graduate Dean.

3. Academic standards must be uniformly applied.
4. Modification of a graduate program's policies undertaken to improve its offerings or to exercise its educational responsibilities must be submitted to the Graduate Council for approval in accordance with Academic Senate policy.
5. Graduate students must be promptly informed of any such modifications as described above, and should be allowed, whenever appropriate and feasible, to complete work under standards in place at the time of their initial enrollment in the program. Academic units should contact the Graduate Division Student Affairs Officer to determine the appropriateness of requiring enrolled graduate students to meet new standards.
6. Grades must accurately reflect a graduate student's performance in each course, including research units.
7. An attempt must be made to discover if a graduate student lacks the academic qualifications to complete a graduate degree program as early as possible in the graduate student's academic career. If a graduate student's physical or mental disability is affecting their degree progress, the graduate student should be referred to the Disability Services Center.
8. The graduate student must be given early written notice of potentially unsatisfactory academic progress and a specific period of time, if practicable, in which to correct all deficiencies. The written notice must also state the outcome should the graduate student fail to correct the deficiencies by the stated deadline(s).

D. Appeal Timeline. The following time requirements apply to the appeals process:

1. **Timeframe for Graduate Student's Appeal of Graduate Dean's Initial Disqualification Decision.** Once a graduate student receives the Notification of Decision from the Graduate Dean, the Graduate Dean shall give the graduate student 30 calendar days from the date of the Notification of Decision to appeal the decision or to withdraw from the graduate program. The graduate student must request an appeal in writing.
2. **Grounds for Appeal.** If the graduate student chooses to appeal within the 30 calendar day period, the graduate student may do so only on the basis of one or more of the following specific criteria: (1) procedural error; (2) verifiable evidence of personal bias; or (3) judgments based on non-academic criteria.
3. **Process for Considering and Resolving Appeal.** If a graduate student submits a timely appeal to the disqualification decision, the Graduate Dean shall forward the appeal file to the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council will assign the case to

their subcommittee on academic disqualification which will review the appeal, collect additional material if necessary and make a recommendation to Graduate Council. Graduate Council will then vote on a decision. The recommendation and vote will be conducted with only voting members present as well as the Graduate Council Analyst who serves as the record keeper for the Council minutes. The Graduate Council's decision will be implemented by the Graduate Division Dean who will notify the student and all relevant parties involved. The Graduate Dean shall formally communicate the final decision to the student, and all parties involved, in writing.

- 4. Content of Final Determination Notice to Graduate Student.** The Graduate Dean shall include the following information in the final disqualification notice to the student: (1) the basis for the decision; (2) its effective date; and (3) the nature of the recommendations of the Graduate Council. For students seeking J.D. or M.D. degrees, the disqualification and appeals process will be according to the written procedures adopted by the Schools of Law and Medicine, respectively.
 - 5. Limits on Graduate Student's Right to Withdraw in Lieu of Disqualification.** Once the graduate student has submitted an appeal, should the graduate student choose to withdraw before a decision is reached, the appeal process stops and the appeal becomes void. The option to withdraw terminates on the date that the Graduate Dean sends the Final Determination Notice to the graduate student.
- E. Procedure if Graduate Student does not Appeal.** If the graduate student does not respond or withdraw from his or her respective graduate program within 30 calendar days of the Graduate Dean's notification of intent to disqualify, the Graduate Dean shall send a final written notice of academic disqualification to the graduate student. There will be a notation placed on the student's transcript stating that the student was academically disqualified. A graduate student who has been disqualified will not be allowed to register in any graduate program at the University of California, Irvine including the original graduate program or any other graduate program, without written approval of the admitting academic unit and the Graduate Dean.