Graduate Degree Policies

Academic Appeals
Students have the right to appeal academic actions. See Academic Dispute Resolution Procedure (http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/academicpoliciesprocesses/academicstandardsregulations/academicrightsofstudents).

Academic Standing

Good Standing
Graduate students are in good standing when they have a UAA cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher and a semester GPA of 3.00 or higher for the most recently completed semester. For those programs with a pass/no pass grading option, a grade of P is considered equivalent to a grade of B (3.00) or higher in graduate courses. Individual departments may establish additional criteria for good standing. Students are presumed to be in good standing during their first semester at UAA. Graduate students in their second year of study and beyond must also have an Annual Report of Student Progress on file with the Graduate School to be considered in good standing. Students in good standing are academically eligible to re-enroll at UAA.

Academic Action
Admitted graduate certificate- and degree-seeking students who fail to earn a UAA semester and/or cumulative GPA of 3.00 will be subject to academic action. Academic action may result in probation, continuing probation or loss of graduate certificate- or degree-seeking status. Individual departments may establish additional criteria for departmental academic action. Failure to meet or maintain these criteria may result in departmental probation or removal from a major program.

Academic Probation
Academic probation is the status assigned to those students not in good academic standing, i.e., whose semester and cumulative GPA falls below 3.00. It also applies to students who fail to undertake continuous registration or fail to make progress toward a graduate degree as indicated by the Annual Report of Student Progress.

Continuing Probation
Continuing probation is the status assigned to those students who begin a semester on probation and during that semester earn a semester GPA of 3.00 or higher without raising their cumulative GPA to 3.00. This status may be continued until the student raises their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or loses their graduate certificate- or degree-seeking status.

Academic Disqualification
Academic disqualification is the status assigned to those students who begin a semester on probation or continuing probation and fail to earn a semester GPA of 3.00, fail to undertake continuous registration or fail to make progress toward a graduate certificate or degree. Those students’ admission status will be changed to non-degree-seeking. Students who have lost graduate certificate- or degree-seeking status may continue to attend UAA as non-degree-seeking students. However, those students do not qualify for financial aid and international students will lose their immigration status. Students must apply for reinstatement to UAA (see Reinstatement to Graduate Degree-Seeking Status on this page).

Additional Master’s Degrees
Students who have received a master’s or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited college or university may earn a UAA master’s degree by completing a minimum of 30 credits, of which 21 must be resident credits not used for any other previous degree. The student must meet all the General University Requirements for Graduate Degrees (http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateprograms/degreerequirements), school or college requirements, and program requirements. Students may apply up to 9 credits required for a particular master’s degree program from a previously earned master’s program. These courses should be listed as transfer courses on the student’s graduate studies plan (GSP), even if taken at UAA. Transferred credit may not include research, project or thesis credit. All other UAA policies governing master’s degrees are applicable to second master’s degrees. If the appropriate credits and other requirements have been earned, two or more degrees may be awarded simultaneously.

Catalog Year for Graduate Degree Programs
Each student’s year of acceptance is established when the student is formally admitted into a certificate or degree program. A student’s year of acceptance is adjusted if the student formally postpones admission, executes a change of major or reapply after formal admission expires (see below).

Students may elect to graduate under the requirements of any catalog in effect during the seven years after formal acceptance to a master’s degree program or 10 years after formal acceptance to a doctoral degree program.

If the requirements for the master's degree are not met within seven years of formal acceptance into the program, or 10 years for a doctoral program, admission expires and the student must reapply for admission.

All credits counted toward a master’s degree, including transfer credit, must be earned within the consecutive seven-year period prior to graduation. All credits counted toward a doctoral degree, including transfer credit, must be earned within the consecutive 10-year period prior to graduation.

Students must meet the enrollment requirements in effect for courses at the time they enroll in each course. These requirements would include all catalog pre- or co-requisites for the course, as well as other registration restrictions at the time the course is taken.

Change of Degree
Graduate students who wish to change degree programs must apply for admission to the new program through the Office of Admissions and pay the appropriate fee. This applies both to changes between colleges and to different degrees within the same school or college (such as a change from the MFA in Creative Writing to the MA in English).

However, this policy does not apply to changes between certificate and degree programs within a given field or college (such as from a Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership to an MEd). Students
will be expected to meet all admission and program requirements of the new major or emphasis area.

**Change of Major or Emphasis Area**

Students who wish to change majors or emphasis areas within the same degree and college should submit a Graduate Change of Major or Emphasis Area Form to the Graduate School for approval. Students will be expected to meet all admission and program requirements of their new major or emphasis area, and must submit a revised official GSP to the Graduate School through their advisor/committee within one semester.

**Concurrent Degrees**

Students may pursue concurrent degrees as long as they have formally applied and been accepted to each program through the Office of Admissions.

Students may be admitted to or complete graduate certificate requirements as they pursue a master’s degree. Coursework used to obtain a graduate certificate, if accepted for inclusion in the GSP, may be used to satisfy requirements for a master’s or doctoral degree.

**Continuous Registration**

Continuous registration is expected every semester as appropriate for the program, from admission through graduation, until all requirements for the degree are completed.

To make continuous progress in a graduate program, students have the following options:

- Register for at least 1 graduate-level credit applicable to their graduate degree, or
- Pay the continuous registration fee to remain active in the graduate program although not registered in any courses. Students are also expected to register or pay the continuous registration fee for the summer if they use university facilities or consult with faculty during the summer. The continuous registration deadline is the same as the deadline for registration for thesis, research and independent study courses, i.e., the end of the ninth week of fall and spring semesters or the end of the seventh week of the summer semester. Failure to undertake continuous registration may result in previously deferred (DF) grades taken for thesis research becoming permanent grades. Students not making continuous progress or not on an approved leave of absence (see Leave of Absence on this page) may be placed on academic probation (see Academic Standing on this page) or, in some cases, removed from graduate degree-seeking status.

**Formal Acceptance to Graduate Degree Programs**

Once all required admission documents have been received by the Office of Admissions, the student’s admission packet is forwarded to the chair or designee of the specific program. The acceptance decision is made by the chair or designee, subject to review and approval by the Graduate School. The Graduate School then informs the Office of Admissions of the decision. The Office of Admissions sends a letter of acceptance directly to the applicant, accompanied by the official certificate of admission from the Graduate School. Acceptance does not establish candidacy in a graduate program (see General University Requirements for Graduate Degrees [http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateprograms/degerequirements] for more information).

**Full-Time/Part-Time Status for Graduate Degree Programs**

A student who has been admitted to a UAA graduate program and is enrolled for 9 or more 600-level credits is classified as full-time. Any graduate-level course in which the student enrolls in any semester and is listed on the approved GSP and is counted toward their degree potentially contributes to full-time status. This includes coursework taken at other universities or abroad (see Transfer Credits on this page).

A graduate student enrolled at UAA for 5 to 8 credits is classified as half-time. Courses at the 400-level will count toward full-time or half-time status if they are listed on the approved GSP. For financial aid purposes, a graduate student enrolled at UAA for fewer than 5 credits is classified as part-time. Audited courses, continuing education units (CEUs) and continuous registration are not included in the computation of a student’s full-time, half-time or part-time status.

**Graduate Advisor**

The chair or designee of the department offering the graduate program, with the approval of the Graduate School, appoints a graduate advisor for each student accepted to the program. The graduate advisor and the departmental chair will normally be from the same program unless prior approval has been made by the Graduate School. Assigned advisors must be certified annually in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and must be registered with the Office of the Registrar. Students are expected to meet with advisors by the end of the first semester, or the equivalent of 9 credits of study, in order to produce an initial GSP.

**Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate assistantships give students financial aid as well as opportunities to acquire valuable experience. They fall under three categories: teaching assistantships, research assistantships and service assistantships. Teaching assistantships involve academic instruction or instructional support activities under the supervision of a faculty member. Yearly FERPA certification is required of all teaching assistants. Research assistantships involve research or research support activities under the supervision of a faculty member. Service assistantships involve service activities such as office duties, library services, residence hall duties, athletic services or other academic or professional assignments. A student may hold two graduate assistantships for which the terms of appointment overlap, only if each of the assistantships is half-time (no more than 10 hours) during the period of overlap. Teaching and service assistants should have FERPA training, and research assistants should have training in responsible conduct of research. Performance reviews may be required by individual programs for any graduate assistants.

Graduate assistantships are available through the programs offering graduate degrees. These programs may set policies governing required duties for these assistantships, and may require organizational meetings.
prior to the beginning of the semester. Fellowships or scholarships may also be granted by graduate programs; these may be governed by specific program rules or policies, including tuition awards. Graduate student assistantship contracts offered by programs are subject to review by the Graduate School. Contract letters must be brought to the Graduate School before the deadline for payment of student tuition and fees.

To be awarded graduate assistantships, students must be in good academic standing, as reflected by an Annual Report of Student Progress on file with the Graduate School (if beyond their second semester of study). Incomplete (I) grades may affect the ability of students to receive tuition awards associated with graduate assistantships. A graduate student with a GPA less than 3.00 for one semester will be allowed to petition to continue as a graduate assistant for the next semester. A maximum one-semester exception will be allowed per student. The petition by the student must be approved by the student’s graduate committee chair, department head, school or college dean, and the Graduate School.

Graduate assistants receive stipends for either a semester or for the academic year. Graduate assistants can be paid for a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session. Students with assistantships must be registered for at least 9 credits during the fall and spring semesters or as attendance is appropriate to their program (audited credits are not eligible). This requirement does not apply to graduate students undertaking fieldwork during the summer semester. Graduate students spending significant time in the field during the fall or spring semester on a research assistantship are only required to enroll in 6 credits. Graduate students in their final semester of study are only required to register for 6 credits for graduate assistantships. For UAA graduate students in collaborative/cooperative graduate programs with other units of the University of Alaska system, payment of tuition scholarships may be governed by specific memoranda of agreement.

Tuition scholarships may be used for tuition only. All fees are the responsibility of the student unless the department or grant makes other arrangements with the UAA Business Office prior to registration. Graduate assistants receive a health insurance benefit paid on their behalf. Graduate students must come to the Graduate School each semester and show a copy of their contract letter to complete the health insurance enrollment process. Students who expect to have teaching, service or research assistantships during an upcoming academic year may have health insurance paid by the relevant department, school or college for the preceding summer period.

Teaching or service assistantships include a tuition scholarship from UAA grants/contracts for no more than 10 credits during each semester if the workload is 15 to 20 hours per week. If the workload is 10 to 14 hours per week, no more than 5 credits will be included. No tuition will be included if the workload is less than 10 hours per week. Research assistantships include a tuition scholarship from UAA grants/contracts for no more than 10 credits during each semester if the workload is 15 to 20 hours per week. If the workload is 10 to 14 hours per week, no more than 5 credits will be included. No tuition will be included if the workload is less than 10 hours per week.

**Graduate Studies Committee**

For graduate programs with a thesis, independent scholarship or research project, the advisor and the student select a graduate studies committee as part of the process to complete the requirements of the graduate degree. Depending on the graduate degree, the committee minimally consists of three or four UAA faculty members, including the committee chair, who shall normally be a full-time faculty member. Committee members must be FERPA certified annually. Committee members and chairs whose status has changed to emeritus faculty may continue to serve on the committee. One faculty committee member may be from a discipline outside the student’s school or college or UAA. Committee members who are not UAA faculty but have appropriate professional credentials may be included with the approval of the graduate advisor, the college dean and the dean of the Graduate School. The committee members must agree to serve and the committee must be approved by the college dean and dean of the Graduate School by submitting the Appointment of Graduate Committee Form. For doctoral degrees, an additional outside examiner is required to attend and evaluate the dissertation defense. For thesis-option students, graduate committees should be selected by the end of the second semester, or the equivalent of 18 credits of study, and should be listed on the initial GSP. Graduate committees should plan to meet at least twice during the academic year.

**Responsibilities of Graduate Advisor/Committee**

The division of responsibility between the graduate advisor and/or graduate committee is determined at the program level. The graduate advisor and/or graduate committee will do the following:

1. Review and approve the graduate student’s program, ensuring that it includes the General University Requirements for Graduate Degrees (http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateprograms/degreerequirements); all courses required for the degree; research culminating in a thesis, independent scholarship or project, if required; a written or oral comprehensive examination; independent scholarship evaluation; thesis/project defense; any special program requirements; and arrangements to remove any deficiencies in the student’s academic background.

2. Monitor the student’s progress, including grades, continuous registration and timely submission of Annual Reports of Student Progress to the Graduate School.

3. Review and approve requests for temporary leaves of absence, which, if approved, will result in the student being placed on inactive status.

4. Review and approve any changes to the student’s program of study.

5. Review and approve the thesis, independent scholarship or research project, including initial proposals, according to procedures established by the individual graduate program. The graduate advisor and/or committee are responsible for ensuring that thesis content, language and formatting follow the requirements in the
UAA Thesis Formatting Handbook (see the Graduate School website (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateschool)) as well as the style manual appropriate to the particular discipline.

6. Administer and assess the qualifying examination, independent scholarship evaluation or thesis/project defense.

**Graduate Studies Plan**

The official graduate studies plan (GSP) formally establishes the specific program requirements which will, upon satisfactory completion, entitle the student to receive a graduate degree. The plan is based upon the catalog requirements for the graduate degree program to which the student has been accepted. All graduate courses and leveling courses taken must be listed on the GSP. An initial GSP, including information on the student’s advisor and graduate committee, should be submitted by the end of the first semester of study. The plan becomes official once it is approved by the dean of the Graduate School or designee and is filed with the Office of the Registrar. Students are expected to complete all requirements listed on their official GSP, as well as all General University Requirements for Graduate Degrees (http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateprograms/degreerequirements). Revised GSPs need to be submitted to the Graduate School through the graduate advisor/committee. A final GSP must be submitted at the time of application for graduation (for doctoral students, the Advancement to Candidacy Form serves as the final GSP). Courses listed on the final GSP reflect catalog requirements in effect during the seven years after formal acceptance to a master’s program or 10 years after formal acceptance to a doctoral program (see Catalog Year on this page). All GSPs are submitted electronically through DegreeWorks, except for interdisciplinary studies programs.

**Leveling Coursework**

The advisory committee may require that students remedy certain deficiencies in their program of study. The committee will determine early in the program both how to remedy the deficiencies and the minimum level of performance required. Graded undergraduate courses taken to remedy a deficiency must receive a grade of B (3.00) or better. Leveling courses will be noted in the DegreeWorks but will not be listed on the final GSP.

**Concentrations**

Individual graduate programs may offer concentrations, options, tracks or emphases within their disciplines. Graduate students who have completed a minimum of 9 unique credits in such a concentration will have this noted on their official transcripts.

**Leave of Absence**

While graduate students are expected to make continuous progress toward completion of their graduate programs, there are instances where continuous registration is not possible. Students who need to temporarily suspend their studies must apply for a leave of absence through their advisor and committee chair. If the leave is approved, the student is placed on inactive status by the Graduate School. Inactive status does not negate the policy which requires that all credits counted toward a master’s degree, including transfer credits, be earned within a consecutive seven-year period prior to graduation, and for all credits counted toward a doctoral degree, including transfer credits, be earned within a consecutive 10-year period prior to graduation. Official leaves of absence are granted by the Graduate School and are normally limited to personal reasons that require suspension of studies. Students on a leave of absence do not have access to the use of university facilities. Students who fail to make continuous progress (see Continuous Registration on this page) or to obtain an approved leave of absence may be removed from graduate degree-seeking status.

**Non-Degree-Seeking Students**

Non-degree-seeking students who wish to register for graduate courses must have the department chair’s or faculty member’s approval. Registration as a non-degree-seeking student implies no commitment by the university to the student’s later admission to a degree program. Up to 9 semester credits of graduate-level coursework may be completed in the student’s graduate program before program matriculation. No more than 9 graduate-level credits may be taken in a student’s graduate degree program as a non-degree-seeking student. Non-degree-seeking students do not qualify for federal or state financial aid benefits, nor do they qualify to receive a Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status.

**Reinstatement to Graduate Degree-Seeking Status**

A graduate student who fails to register for at least one graduate or 400-level credit per semester as listed on their official Graduate Studies Plan (GSP) for two consecutive semesters; voluntarily withdraws from the program; or fails to obtain an approved Leave of Absence will have to apply for Reinstatement before resuming graduate studies. Students seeking re-enrollment in multiple degree programs must file a reinstatement application for each program. Eligibility for Reinstatement is only valid up to six semesters, inclusive of summer semesters, beyond the last semester of attendance. If beyond six semesters, the student must apply for graduate studies with a new Graduate School application to the program.

To be considered for reinstatement, a student must be in good standing (with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher) during their last semester of attendance and pay the fee for reinstatement.

The decision to approve or deny reinstatement into the original degree program is made by the student’s home department. Departments are not obliged to approve reinstatement of students. Decisions may be based on the applicant’s academic status when last enrolled; activities while away from campus; the length of absence; the perceived potential for successful completion of the program; the ability of department to support the student both academically and financially; as well as any other factors or considerations regarded as relevant by the department or program.

International students should contact UAA International Student Services regarding information about F-1 and J-1 federal regulations. Students should allow approximately six weeks for processing before requesting reinstatement to their program.

Reinstatement does not negate the policy that requires that all credits counted toward a master’s degree, including transfer credits, be earned within a consecutive seven year period prior to graduation, and that all
credits counted toward a doctoral degree, including transfer credits, be earned within a consecutive 10 year period prior to graduation.

**Removal from Graduate Degree-Seeking Status**

A graduate student’s academic status may be changed to non-degree-seeking if the requirements to remove provisional admission or probation are not satisfied, or if minimum academic standards are not met.

**Resident Credit**

Resident credit at UAA is defined as credit earned in formal classroom instruction, distance-delivered courses, directed study, independent study or research through any unit of UAA. Credit from a regionally accredited domestic institution or equivalent institution for which there is an approved affiliation or exchange agreement is also considered resident credit.

If a program is delivered collaboratively with UAF or UAS, collaborative program credit from each participating institution is counted toward fulfillment of residency requirements.

**Transfer Credits**

Coursework used to obtain a graduate certificate or a master’s degree may be used to satisfy requirements for a graduate degree at UAA if accepted as part of the official GSP.

Up to 9 semester credits not used toward an undergraduate degree may be transferred to UAA from an accredited institution and counted toward a graduate degree. Up to 9 graduate credits may also be transferred in the case of a second master’s degree, although doctoral degree credits may not be used toward an additional master’s degree unless that degree is in a distinctly different field. Up to 21 previously attained graduate credits may be transferred in the case of a doctoral degree. The Graduate School dean or designee may allow credit earned at other universities within the UA system, excluding thesis credit and credits used toward another degree, to satisfy UAA program requirements, as long as at least 9 credits applicable to the student’s program are earned at UAA after acceptance into that program. Acceptance of transfer credit toward graduate program requirements must be approved by the individual program faculty, college dean and Graduate School.