

# Graduate Degree Policies

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## 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 minimum UAA cumulative GPA of 3.00 and a minimum semester GPA of 3.00 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 minimum grade of B (3.00) 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 minimum 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 minimum semester GPA of 3.00 without raising their cumulative GPA to at least 3.00. This status may be continued until the student raises their cumulative GPA to at least 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 minimum 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 reapply to their UAA graduate program if they wish to return to degree-seeking status.

## Additional Master's Degrees

Students who have received a master's or doctoral degree from an institutionally 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/degree requirements/>), 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 term of admission/catalog year is established when the student is formally admitted into a certificate or degree program. A student's term of admission/catalog year is adjusted if the student formally postpones admission or reapplies after formal admission expires.

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/degree requirements/>) 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 6 credits of study, in order to plan their coursework.

### Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships provide students financial aid and meaningful opportunities to acquire valuable experience. They are available through programs offering graduate degrees in the following specific types: teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and service assistantships. Some research assistantships are referred to as fellowships. Teaching assistantships involve academic instruction or instructional support activities under the supervision of a faculty member. Research assistantships involve research or research support activities under the supervision of a faculty member. Service assistantships involve activities such as office duties, library services, residence hall duties, athletic services, or other academic or professional assignments.

A student must be in good academic standing to be awarded an assistantship (i.e. minimum 3.00 overall GPA). A graduate student with a GPA less than 3.00 for one semester may petition to continue as a graduate assistant with a maximum one-semester exception 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.

Teaching and service assistants must have FERPA training and research assistants must have training in responsible conduct of research. Performance reviews of graduate assistants may be required by individual programs.

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 6 credits during the semesters of their award (audited credits may not be counted toward this minimum).

International graduate students must enroll in at least 9 credits due to SEVIS regulations. Incomplete (I) grades may affect the ability of students to receive tuition awards associated with graduate assistantships.

In addition to a stipend, teaching, research, and service assistantships award a tuition scholarship from the university for no more than 9 credits during each semester if the workload is 15 to 20 hours per week. If the workload is 10 to 14 hours per week, the tuition scholarship will cover no more than 5 credits. No tuition will be included if the workload is less than 10 hours per week. 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 Bursar's Office prior to registration.

Graduate assistants receive a health insurance benefit paid on their behalf by the university. Graduate students must submit a copy of their contract letter to complete their health insurance enrollment process. Students who expect to have teaching, research, or service assistantships during an upcoming academic year may have health insurance paid by the relevant department, school or college for the preceding summer period.

A student may hold two graduate assistantships only if each of the assistantships is half-time (no more than 10 hours) during the period of overlap.

Graduate programs should provide prospective teaching and/or service assistants with notification of positions no later than August 1 for fall positions or December 1 for spring positions. Students are under no obligation to respond to such offers prior to April 30, but any acceptance of a position after April 30 requires the student to obtain a written release from the Graduate School should they desire an assistantship at another university.

## 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 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:

- 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.
- Monitor the student's progress, including grades, continuous registration, and timely submission of Annual Reports of Student Progress to the Graduate School.
- Review and approve requests for temporary leaves of absence, which, if approved, will result in the student being placed on inactive status.
- Review and approve any changes to the student's program of study.
- 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.
- 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 as noted in DegreeWorks. An initial individualized GSP should be submitted by the end of the first semester of study. The plan becomes official once it is approved by the student's advisor. GSPs following catalog requirements do not have to be entered. 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/>). The final individualized GSP must be approved by the Graduate School 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 the initial interdisciplinary studies GSP, which is part of the application process. Once admitted, interdisciplinary students must have their approved GSP entered in DegreeWorks.

### Leveling Coursework

The program may require that students remedy certain deficiencies. The program will determine early in the course of study both how to remedy the deficiencies and the minimum level of performance required. 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 the completion of their graduate programs, there are instances where continuous registration is not possible. Students who need to temporarily suspend their studies must obtain an approved leave of absence. Students on a leave of absence do not have access to the use of university facilities. Students who fail to obtain a leave of absence will be removed from degree-seeking status and must apply for reinstatement (if they are in good standing when they suspend their studies) before resuming graduate studies. Requests for leave should be submitted no later than the add/drop deadline. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

A graduate student may be removed from degree-seeking status if the requirements to remove provisional admission or probation are not satisfied, the student has not been continuously registered for more than two academic years, or if minimum academic standards and continuous progress are not met.

The change in status may be initiated by the Office of the Registrar, the Graduate School, and/or by the student's graduate program.

### 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 minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00) 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 the 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 the 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 an institutionally 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.