

UCF Graduate Council

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GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of October 02, 2008 meeting	
Members Present	Jacque Byers, Jim Moharam, Paul Rompf, Michael Stern, Vicky Zygouris-Coe
Recorder	Rhonda Nelson
Staff Members	Max Poole, Dore Carter
Files	2008-10-02 Minutes Research Hours and Candidacy 

Welcome and introductions. Dr. Jim Moharam, chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes from the September 25 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Review of use of various forms of research hours. Dr. Stern noted that formulating some definitions for the various categories of research hours and independent study would help clarify their use toward degrees. Dore Carter presented two examples of programs of study that had extremely few coursework hours. One of the programs does not specify a maximum number of research hours, although some do. Programs often have an "escape clause" in the graduate catalog that allows virtually any substitution for courses, such as "or any other courses approved by the committee." These clauses prevent having a meaningful set of program requirements. Dr. Poole noted that there is a need for guidance on establishing a core of classes in each program. Dr. Rompf presented a handout of a Registration Agreement Form that they use for enrollment in certain restricted graduate courses. The form includes a list of research and independent study courses, courses that could be termed "non standard-format courses." Dr. Moharam noted that any definitions for these courses should be consistent with State definitions. Dr. Bowdon suggested that dissertation hours (7980) could not be substituted for coursework. She further pointed out that Directed Research hours are used in English for preparation for the candidacy exam. A motion was made to draft language limiting Directed Research hours (7919), similar to the language that currently limits Independent Study hours. Working from a 72 SCH doctoral degree and the 15 SCH minimum requirement for dissertation hours, a general consensus formed around a limit of 21 additional research hours that can be counted toward a doctoral degree, made up of a combination of doctoral research (7919) and directed research (6918). Dr. Jasinski pointed out the need to find out if any programs require more than 21 hours. An amended motion was passed to draft language setting a limit of 21 directed research and doctoral research hours.

Independent study. One suggestion put forward was that independent study (6908) can be substituted for electives, but not for core courses.

Announcements and adjournment. Dr. Moharam adjourned the meeting at 11:30.

Next meeting. The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for October 16, 10:00 a.m., in MH 327.

Master's Program Policies

Course Requirements

The course requirements for a master's degree include lectures, seminars, discussions, independent study, independent research, and thesis research. A minimum of 30 semester hours (combined course work and thesis) is required, although many programs require more. The program of study must include at least 30 credit hours of post-baccalaureate, graduate course work (5000-level or higher), which must be taken as part of an approved graduate program of study. At least half of the program of study must be at the 6000 level. Only graduate-level course work with a grade of "C-" or higher may be used to satisfy degree requirements. For the thesis option, at least 24 semester hours of course work must be earned exclusive of thesis. In no case will the number of thesis hours in excess of the amount required by a program be counted toward degree completion. For the nonthesis option, at least 50 percent of the credits offered for the degree must be in a single field of concentration. A research report, capstone course, comprehensive exam, or other culminating experience is required in a nonthesis option master's program that demonstrates that graduate students have engaged in independent learning. An explanation of how the culminating experience promotes independent learning is required in each program's curricular description.

Independent Study Hours

A maximum of three courses may be taken as independent study, for a total of no more than six semester hours.

Thesis Enrollment Requirement

Master's level students who wish to be considered full-time and who are engaged in thesis or research report-related activity must be enrolled for at least three semester credit hours of thesis (or research report) each semester continuously (including summers) after completion of regular course work and until successful defense and graduation. This requirement does not negate other regulations regarding full-time enrollment or the requirement that all graduate students be enrolled in the term in which they graduate. (See Registration in Term of Graduation in the *Graduate Catalog*.) Students who wish to enroll in part-time hours should consult their adviser.

Doctoral Program Policies

Course Requirements

The course requirements for a doctoral degree will consist of lectures, seminars, discussions, independent research, independent study, and dissertation research. However, because of the advanced nature of doctoral education, seminars and independent study are used frequently to encourage student participation, debate, evaluation, and discussion of diverse ideas and approaches. Student presentations and discussions are a standard instructional technique in doctoral programs, and careful analysis, independent research, and greater understanding and application of ideas is expected. A primary objective of doctoral study is to educate students to a point of excellence in conducting, reporting, and applying scholarly research. Successful students must demonstrate that they are able to conduct and report original independent research that contributes substantially to the discipline in which they study.

Each doctoral program of study will include a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate credit beyond the baccalaureate degree. All course work in a doctoral program must be at 5000 level or higher. At least one-half of the credit hours must be in 6000 -level or 7000-level including the allowed number of research and dissertation hours. For students with waived hours from an earned master's, this amount is at least one-half of the program hours remaining after the waived hours are applied. Only graduate level course work with a grade of "C-" or higher may be used to satisfy degree requirements. A university-wide minimum of at least 15 hours of dissertation credits is required for all doctoral programs, although some programs require a greater number of dissertation hours. In no case will the number of dissertation hours in excess of the amount required by a program be counted toward degree completion. Some programs require considerably more than the minimum of 72 hours because of the nature of the discipline and the standards of the associated profession.

Students admitted with an earned master's degree from a regionally accredited institution or recognized foreign institution may be eligible to have up to 30 hours of their doctoral program waived without a course-by-course review of completed course work; provided the master's degree was earned in the same area of study. In cases where a student's master's degree is in an area that is different from the doctoral program into which he/she is admitted, programs must conduct a course-by-course review and can waive up to 30 hours of selected courses. If there are deficiencies in the student's master's degree program, the student may be required to take additional prerequisite or background courses in addition to the minimum (e.g., 42 hours) required by the university.

Independent Study Hours

No more than 12 total semester hours of independent study (including up to six hours counted toward a master's degree) may be applied to a doctoral program of study.

Directed Research and Doctoral Research Hours

No more than 21 total semester hours of directed research and doctoral research may be applied to a doctoral program of study.

Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy

Students may not be admitted to candidacy until a Doctoral Committee has been appointed, and the Committee has certified that the student has successfully completed the Candidacy Examination and demonstrated the qualifications necessary to successfully complete requirements for the degree. Only after admission to candidacy may a student register for doctoral dissertation hours (XXX 7980). The admission to candidacy will be approved by the graduate college coordinator and forwarded to the UCF College of Graduate Studies for status change. Doctoral students admitted to candidacy are expected to enroll in dissertation hours and to devote full-time effort to conducting their dissertation research and writing the required dissertation document. Students in doctoral candidacy must continuously enroll in at least three hours of dissertation course work (XXX 7980) each semester (including summer) until the dissertation is completed.

Candidacy Examination

The purpose of the Candidacy Examination is for the student to demonstrate knowledge of the field, including theory, bibliography, and research methodology. The examinations must be written and should be based on the student's plan of study and may be a defense of a written dissertation proposal. Written examinations are administered and established on campus by the student's Doctoral Committee in coordination with the college. All written original examination materials will be kept in the student's file in the program.