

Memorandum

TO: Faculty Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Graduate Council

SUBJECT: Revised Graduate Faculty Policy

DATE: February 23, 2012

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The Graduate Council recommends adopting the attached revision to a current policy entitled "University-Wide Qualifications for Participation in Graduate Education (Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars)." The policy revision resolves a number of concerns regarding the current policy.

- Creates a single category of Graduate Faculty, removing the Full and Associate sub-categories. All graduate faculty are eligible to teach graduate courses, serve as members of thesis and dissertation committees, and serve as chairs or co-chairs of master's thesis committees.
- Establishes a separate eligibility of graduate faculty to serve as the chair of a dissertation committee. Bases this eligibility on a set of criteria for scholarly currency. These criteria are established by each graduate program and approved by the department chair/unit director.
- Maintains a requirement for thesis or dissertation committee experience, but in a manner that may be independent of the Chair. For instances in which the Chair has not served on a thesis or dissertation committee that has successfully graduated a student, another member of the committee who has this experience must be designated to serve as a vice chair.

# Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars

Revised Policy: 2/22/2011

See 2011-2012 Graduate Catalog: College of Graduate Studies/Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars  
[http://www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/CollegeOfGraduateStudies.aspx#Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars](http://www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/CollegeOfGraduateStudies.aspx#Graduate_Faculty_and_Graduate_Faculty_Scholars)

## University-Wide Qualifications for Participation in Graduate Education

Graduate education requires the participation of highly competent faculty who are willing to share their specialized skills and knowledge with graduate students. Graduate faculty teach graduate courses, serve as members of thesis and dissertation committees, and serve as faculty advisors for thesis and dissertation students and chairs of thesis and dissertation committees. The following guidelines outline the minimal credentials necessary for faculty to serve the many different roles they play in graduate education. Programs may set higher qualification standards or additional requirements. As the university is committed to encouraging, facilitating, and rewarding interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and cross-disciplinary educational and scholarly activities, service of faculty and staff members in more than one department, school, center/institute, or college is encouraged as a way to further this objective.

Faculty engaged in graduate education must possess either a terminal academic degree in, or closely-related to, the discipline in which they are teaching, or expertise in a field related to the topic of the thesis or dissertation, if serving on a thesis or dissertation committee. Substitution for the terminal degree may be granted with documented relevant exceptional experience and scholarly or creative activity when recommended by the graduate program committee and approved by the department chair/unit director. No graduate student at UCF may teach UCF graduate courses as the instructor of record.

For the appointment of individuals in the process of obtaining a terminal degree, the College of Graduate Studies can certify that all requirements for a degree have been met.

Members of the Graduate Faculty cannot have personal or financial (including employment) arrangements that may pose a conflict of interest with a student on whose thesis or dissertation committee they serve.

This policy has four major sections:

- Section A defines the terms describing the roles played by faculty in graduate education
- Section B establishes the role of the graduate program committees in the process of appointing Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars.
- Section C establishes the roles and qualifications for appointment as Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars.
- Section D establishes procedures for review, renewal and termination of appointments to the Graduate Faculty.
- Section E establishes the responsibilities for the various members of dissertation committees.

## **A.1: Faculty Roles in Graduate Education**

Faculty involved in graduate education comprise members of the Graduate Faculty (Sections C.1-C.2) and Graduate Faculty Scholars (Section C.3). These faculty may be eligible to assume the following roles as part of their involvement in graduate education at UCF:

- Instructor of record for graduate-level courses (graduate teaching)
- Member of a thesis or dissertation committee
- Chair of a thesis or dissertation committee: In the vast majority of cases, the chair is the advisor of the scholarly activities of the student. A chair of a thesis or dissertation committee also oversees all of the administrative functions of the committee. A Graduate Faculty Scholar is not eligible to serve as a chair of a thesis or dissertation committee.
- Co-chair of a thesis or dissertation committee: a co-chair is a member of a thesis or dissertation committee who shares with the chair in the scholarly advisory activities of the student. In cases in which a Graduate Faculty Scholar oversees the day-to-day scholarly activities of the student, the Graduate Faculty Scholar may be appointed as a co-chair of the thesis or dissertation committee.
- Vice-chair of a thesis or dissertation committee: A vice-chair serves as a voice of experience in thesis and dissertation committees. A vice-chair must be appointed to committees in which the chair has no prior experience serving on thesis or dissertation committees. To be appointed as a vice-chair, the committee member must have prior experience serving on at least one thesis or dissertation committee that has successfully graduated a student.

Descriptions of the responsibilities of members and chairs of dissertation committees are detailed in Section E.

## **B.1: Graduate Program Committees**

Each graduate program will be administered by a graduate program committee consisting of faculty members who participate in the program. An active graduate program committee is required for each graduate program in order to provide program oversight and to ensure that the qualifications of contributing individuals are appropriate for participation in graduate education. Graduate program committee members are appointed in accordance with established department/school procedures and the qualifications established in this document.

## **B.2: Qualifications for Serving on Graduate Program Committees**

Tenured, tenure-earning, or ranked faculty who are members of the Graduate Faculty may serve on graduate program committees. The graduate program director will be the chair of the graduate program committee.

## **C.1: The Graduate Faculty**

Tenured, tenure-earning, and ranked faculty on multiyear agreements, and ranked librarians are eligible for appointment to the Graduate Faculty. Appointment to the Graduate Faculty begins

with a nomination by the graduate program committee that is relevant to the graduate education duties of the individual faculty member. The nomination must then be approved by the department chair/unit director for review and appointment by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Qualified graduate faculty members may be eligible to serve in more than one graduate program. Graduate faculty members who are outside of a student's program are eligible to serve as external members of a thesis or dissertation advisory committee.

Special graduate faculty nominations may be made to the Graduate Council at the discretion of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

All graduate faculty are eligible to teach graduate courses, serve as members of thesis and dissertation committees, and serve as chairs or co-chairs of master's thesis committees.

### **C.2: Eligibility Criteria For Service As Chairs of Thesis and Dissertation Committees**

All chairs and co-chairs must be approved by the graduate program committee of the student's program. Graduate program committees may specify additional guidelines for service as a chair or co-chair of thesis or dissertation committees.

**Scholarly currency requirement to serve as a chair of a dissertation committee:** For graduate faculty members to serve as a chair or co-chair of a dissertation committee, they must demonstrate significant current involvement in scholarly research or creative productivity. Scholarship and creative activity are evidenced and recognized through publications, presentations, performances, exhibits, awards and competitions. Other considerations include a continuing fulfillment of professional obligations through, for example, manuscript review, journal editorship, and national advisory and review panels. The criteria for scholarly currency are to be established by each graduate program and approved by the department chair/unit director. The criteria must be submitted to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies prior to nominations for graduate faculty appointments and updated for the reappointment process.

**Required thesis or dissertation committee experience:** Graduate faculty who have not served as a member of a thesis or dissertation committee to completion may serve as the chair of a thesis or dissertation committee, but must have a vice-chair appointed to the committee who has previously served as a member of a thesis or dissertation committee to completion.

### **C.3: Graduate Faculty Scholars**

Other qualified individuals may serve as graduate faculty scholars in graduate faculty roles confined to specific, well-defined graduate faculty assignments. Graduate faculty scholars play important roles in graduate education at UCF, but their status as graduate faculty scholars is distinct from that of members of the Graduate Faculty.

The appointment of graduate faculty scholars begins with a nomination by the graduate program committee that is relevant to the graduate education duties of the individual. The nomination must then be approved by the department chair/unit director for review and appointment by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Graduate faculty scholars may be designated as “Teaching-Only” if their responsibilities will be restricted solely to teaching graduate courses.

Graduate faculty scholars may serve as members of thesis or dissertation committees for the purpose of bringing specific disciplinary knowledge to the committee. In instances deemed appropriate by the graduate program committee, graduate faculty scholars may also serve as co-chairs or vice chairs of thesis and dissertation committees, but may not serve as chairs of these committees. Graduate faculty scholars serving on thesis and dissertation committees, either as members or co-chairs, must have documented evidence of exceptional relevant experience and scholarly or creative productivity, as determined by the graduate program committee.

It is expected that graduate faculty scholars will attend the various committee meetings associated with serving as a member of a thesis or dissertation committee.

### **D.1: Graduate Faculty Reappointments**

Individual qualifications for reappointment as a graduate faculty member will be re-evaluated by the Program Review Committee of the Graduate Council. Reappointment evaluations will be conducted at the time of the periodic university program review, or sooner, as deemed appropriate by the graduate program committee or at the request of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. At that time, individuals must re-submit their current credentials to the Program Review Committee of the Graduate Council if they wish to have their appointment renewed. Qualifications will be based upon accomplishments since the last program review and the criteria established by the nominating graduate program.

### **D.2: Guidelines for a Thesis or Dissertation Committee Member Who Leaves UCF**

A thesis or dissertation committee member who leaves UCF may be eligible to continue serving on the committee as a graduate faculty scholar with the approval of the graduate program committee.

### **D.3: Guidelines for a Thesis or Dissertation Committee Chair Who Leaves UCF**

In the event that a chair of a thesis or dissertation committee leaves the employ of the university:

1. With the approval of the graduate program committee, a chair of a thesis or dissertation committee who leaves UCF may continue to serve as chair and supervise the thesis or dissertation for one calendar year after leaving.
2. If one calendar year has passed since the faculty member left UCF and the advisee has not yet completed the degree requirements, the departed faculty member may continue to serve as co-chair of the thesis or dissertation committee as a graduate faculty scholar, with approval of the graduate program committee; however, a new chair from the student’s department (or college, if a college-wide program) shall be designated.

### **D.4.1: Faculty Emeriti**

Emeritus graduate faculty members may continue to participate in graduate education as a graduate faculty scholar, without the necessity of nomination. With the approval of the graduate program committee, they may continue to serve for a specified period of time as faculty advisors and chairs of thesis and dissertation committees established prior to emeritus status. Emeriti faculty may not chair additional thesis and dissertation committees, but may continue to serve on thesis and dissertation committees as a member or co-chair for as long as they remain active with the institution.

#### **D.4.2: Retired Faculty**

Graduate faculty who retire may continue to play roles in graduate education at UCF if they are nominated by a graduate program committee for appointment as a graduate faculty scholar. In this capacity they may continue service on thesis or dissertation committees as a member or co-chair for a designated period of time, as approved by the graduate program committee.

#### **E.1: Responsibilities of Members of Dissertation Committees**

1. To meet at regular intervals at least once per year to: (i) discuss and approve the proposed dissertation research and the plans for carrying out the research; and (ii) to assess progress towards the dissertation and give the student a yearly letter of evaluation in addition to S/U grades awarded for 7980 courses.
2. To review Turn-It-In.com results from dissertation submittals.
3. To participate in the candidacy and/or dissertation prospectus examination.
4. To participate in the dissertation defense to assure: (i) that the dissertation is acceptable as original research and a contribution to the discipline; and (ii) that it meets the standards of the University.

#### **E.2: Responsibilities of the Chair (and co-Chair) of Dissertation Committees**

1. In cooperation with the program director, to review the program of study, the research, and all other degree requirements by meeting with the student early in the program and immediately after appointment as chair/co-chair.
2. To suggest to the student possible committee members who could serve on the dissertation committee.
3. To establish timelines for the research, set expectations, and evaluate the student progress based upon these.
4. To meet at regular intervals with the student to discuss the proposed dissertation research and the plans for carrying out research.
5. To review in a timely manner all written materials submitted by the student and offer suggested revisions.
6. To meet at least once per year with the student and the dissertation committee to assess progress toward the dissertation and give the student an annual review in addition to the S/U grades awarded for 7980 courses. The chair shall send the annual review to the program director after consultation with the dissertation committee.
7. To coordinate the ongoing efforts of the committee as its chair, and to participate fully in the responsibilities of the committee members as a member of the dissertation committee.

8. To chair the candidacy and/or dissertation prospectus examinations.
9. To be physically present and chair the dissertation defense, ensure its proper conduct as described above, and submit to the program director for the student's records all necessary grades, forms and other materials.
10. In disciplines where funding is essential to the success of the thesis or dissertation work, to acquire funds (and appropriate facilities) sufficient to support the research of the student.

### **E.3: Responsibilities of the External Committee Member of a Dissertation Committee**

1. External committee membership will entail the full responsibilities of other committee membership as specified in section E1 above, including being present at the final defense.
2. External committee members should bring specific disciplinary knowledge or research expertise to the committee.
3. External committee members may be appointed from outside of the university or outside of the college (if the committee is for a college-wide program). The external committee member may not be affiliated in any way with the department of the committee, such as through joint or secondary joint appointments.
4. Graduate faculty scholars are external members.

### **E.4: Dissertation Committee Procedures**

1. The majority of the committee must be physically present for the oral part of the dissertation prospectus examination, which must be conducted on campus, unless: (a) it is for a joint degree program with another university that has an official university approval that specifies a different arrangement; or (b) there is an accepted arrangement that has been approved by the graduate program director.
2. No fewer than four faculty members, including all members of the dissertation committee, shall be in attendance with the student during the dissertation defense, and at least half of the committee must be physically present.
3. Only members of the dissertation committee may sign the dissertation, and a majority must approve of the dissertation.
4. The dissertation defense must be conducted on campus, unless: (a) it is for a joint degree program with another university that has an official university approval that specifies a different arrangement; or (b) there is an accepted arrangement that has been approved by the graduate program director.

### **F.1: Exceptions**

Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Vice Provost and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.