

Minutes
Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies
January 21, 2004
3:00 pm — 4:00 pm
DBHCC, Conference Room F

Present: Dr. Stephen Boyle, Dr. Scott Case, Dr. Don Creamer, Dr. John R. Crunkilton for Dr. Sharron Quisenberry, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. Klaus Elgert, Dr. Jerry Gibson, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Rakesh Kapania, Mr. Greg Lemmond, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Kent Murrmann, Ms. Tina Peterson, Ms. Mary Schaeffer, Dr. Sherri Turner

Absent with Notification: Dr. Ron Daniel, Ms. Laura Fornash, Ms. Meagan Elwood Madden, Dr. John Ney, Ms. Yvette Quintela, Dr. Dvajad Salehi, Dr. Mehdi Setareh, Mr. Terrell Strayhorn

Conference call in: Professor Ron Kagawa

Invited Guests: Dr. Roger Avery Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Angie Webb

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of minutes from December 3, 2003: Approved.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The commission voted to approve the GCC minutes from December 11, 2003.

Graduate Student Appeals: Ms. Margaret Merrill reported that the committee has completed the review of one case and referred it to the graduate dean's office.

Graduate Student Relations: Ms. Margaret Merrill reported that the Rights and Responsibilities document was presented to the Faculty Senate.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): Dr. Scott Case presented the committee's suggested revisions to Requirements for Master's Degrees as described in the graduate catalog. Dr. Case stated that programs always have the option to go beyond the minimum requirements stated in the revised policy. Dr. Avery explained that the revision to the policy for the Second Master's Degree was an effort to allow Virginia Tech master's students seeking a second Virginia Tech master's degree the same transfer of credit options as a master's student coming from another institution. Following discussion, the commission voted to approve the following changes:

Degree Requirements

Requirements for Master's Degrees

Virginia Tech allows for both thesis and non-thesis master's degrees. For each degree type, the student's plan of study must meet the following requirements. These are minimum requirements that individual departments or advisory committees may exceed. Students are encouraged to consult individual departments for particular requirements. A course required for an undergraduate degree in a given area may not be used toward a graduate degree in the same area. Any courses listed on the plan become a part of the requirements for the degree, must be completed with a grade of C- or better, and count toward the minimum GPA of 3.0 for fulfilling degree requirements.

	Minimum Total Graduate Credits	Minimum Graded Graduate Credits	Minimum Research Hours
Thesis	30	20 ¹	6
Non-Thesis	30	24 ²	

¹ A maximum of 12 credits in 4000-level courses (approved for graduate credit) and 6 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses.

² A maximum of 9 credits in 4000-level courses (approved for graduate credit) and 9 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses.

Second Master's Degree

The requirements for a second master's degree are the same as for the first master's degree: an additional 30-54 hours, depending upon the degree sought. A student working on a second master's degree may transfer up to 50% of appropriate courses (see the section entitled 'Transfer Credit').

The commission voted to approve the following revision to the master's students advisory committee policy:

Advisory Committee

Master's students must have an advisory committee of at least three faculty members.
 Doctoral candidates must have an advisory committee of five faculty members.

Dr. Creamer asked the commission to research the usage of the possessive use of the apostrophe in Master's. Dr. DePauw assured the commission that the punctuation rules followed by the Council of Graduate Schools would determine the punctuation used by the commission. Dr. DePauw will report on her findings at a future meeting.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): No report.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Mr. Greg Lemmond stated that the annual report was being prepared. He reviewed some general trends. More details will be available in the annual report. Mr. Lemmond described the process followed by the Graduate Honor System for hearing cases, including assembling panels, scheduling and resolving cases.

University Library Committee (ULC): Dr. Eileen Hitchingham reviewed the university library minutes from November 18 (Minutes <http://www.governance.vt.edu/>). The commission approved the minutes.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

The commission approved the inclusion of the following text in the next edition of the graduate catalog:

University degree requirements for graduate students

For graduate students, the university degree requirements are those identified in the graduate catalog effective for the academic year in which the students were admitted. The departmental requirements are those effective at the time of filing the Plan of Study. If the requirements change during the time the graduate student is enrolled, the graduate student can choose, but is not required, to abide by the "new" requirements. For graduate students on leave status for more than one year, requirements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The commission reviewed the request from the biology department to reduce the course hour requirement for Ph.D. students from 27 hours to 22 hours. The current Virginia Tech requirement is higher than the requirements of seven peer institutions. According to the request authored by Dr. Robin Andrews, advisory committees would retain the capacity to require more than the minimum course work for individual students where circumstances warrant it. Following discussion, the commission decided to invite Dr. Robin Andrews and Dr. Bob Jones to the next meeting to discuss this request.

Announcements: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Ms. Nancy B. Feuerbach, on behalf of

Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School