2018-2019 Graduate Council
Minutes of the Meeting: May 1, 2019

Graduate Council met on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. in 102 Kern Graduate Building. Dr. Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, chaired the meeting. The minutes of the April 10, 2019 meeting were approved.

Communications to Graduate Council
None.

Announcements/Remarks by the Chair – Regina Vasilatos-Younken,
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken announced that there is a discrepancy between the Bylaws of Graduate Council and policy GCAC-101 Graduate Faculty Membership. Currently, the policy lists serving on Graduate Council as a privilege under some categories of Graduate Faculty membership but not all. However, the only restrictions on Graduate Council membership stated in the Bylaws are that the individual must be a member of the Graduate Faculty who has not served more than four consecutive years on Council. Since the Bylaws are superior to policies, any policy statement that conflicts with the Bylaws is null and void. The following statements will be removed from GCAC-101 to clarify that all members of the Graduate Faculty who meet the qualifications stated in the Bylaws are eligible to serve on Graduate Council:

- GCAC-101 1.a.ii. (under Category P): Tenure-Line and Standing Category P members of the Graduate Faculty may also serve on Graduate Council and its committees and subcommittees, and vote on matters submitted to the Graduate Faculty for vote.
- GCAC-101 1.c.ii. (under Category R): May serve on Graduate Council and its committees and subcommittees, and vote on matters submitted to the Graduate Faculty for vote.

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken also announced the creation of a new ad hoc committee, to be appointed over the summer and charged in the upcoming fall semester, that will examine the unique aspects of academic integrity in graduate education and how these might be accommodated if the University moves to a more centralized academic integrity process. Dr. Sarah Ades, Associate Dean for Graduate Student Affairs, will work with this committee which is expected to include faculty, staff, and student representatives from the Committee on Academic Standards, the Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues, the Office of Student Conduct, the Rock Ethics Institute, and others.

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken announced the creation of a second ad hoc committee that will begin development of academic policies for professional doctorates. Dr. Verderame explained that Penn State currently offers four professional doctoral degrees: Doctor of Education (D.Ed.), Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.), Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.), and Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.). When created, most of these degree programs were modeled in part after the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in order to fit within the bounds of existing policy. However, professional doctoral degrees may appropriately differ from the Ph.D. so a distinctive set of policies may be more appropriate for them. This ad hoc committee, which will include representatives from the existing professional doctoral programs, will explore what minimum requirements might be appropriate as standards for all professional doctorates. The results of the committee’s work will be reviewed by the Committee on Academic Standards to be considered for presentation to Graduate Council.

Finally, Dr. Vasilatos-Younken reminded Council that the University Faculty Senate has delegated authority for graduate education to the Graduate Faculty as represented by Graduate Council. The new chair of the Faculty Senate made remarks concerning Graduate Council in the Senate’s last meeting. For
Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council

Committee on Committees and Procedures

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Siela Maximova, Chair of the Committee on Committees and Procedures.

Dr. Maximova reported that three new faculty representatives were elected to begin new two-year terms on the committee: Amy Allen, Susan Loeb, and Bernhard Luscher. Steven Branstetter, Naomi Seidman, and Judith Sierra-Rivera are continuing members of the Committee in 2019–2020, serving the second year of their two-year terms. Alexander Wilson-Heid will be the graduate student representative serving a one-year term.

In accordance with the amendment provisions in the Graduate Council Articles of Authority, Dr. Maximova presented several revisions to the Articles of Authority for the second time along with a motion to approve the revisions. The motion passed.

Committee on Academic Standards

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Doug Stairs, Chair of the Committee on Academic Standards.

Dr. Stairs reported that the committee met earlier in the day and discussed feedback received on the proposed revisions to GCAC-604 Qualifying Examination – Research Doctorate. The discussion resulted in some revisions to clarify the committee’s intent. Dr. Stairs presented an amended version of GCAC-604 and the related FAQs. A motion was made to change the word “results” to “report” in Policy Statement 6 to clarify that both the student and Graduate Enrollment Services should receive the same report including identified deficiencies, required remedial steps, and recommendations for further study, and not simply the examination result. The motion passed. A motion was made to revise Policy Statement 4 to indicate that the Qualifying Examination Committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty, with the majority drawn from the faculty of the program. The motion passed. The motion was made to accept the revisions to policy GCAC-604 as amended. The motion passed.

Dr. Stairs presented revisions to GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs with a motion to approve the revisions. The minor revisions to this policy were proposed to conform with the changes to policy GCAC-604 concerning the timing of the Qualifying Examination. The motion passed.

Committee on Programs and Courses

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Andy Cole, Chair of the Committee on Programs and Courses.

Dr. Cole reported that the committee will meet on May 2 for the final meeting of the academic year. The next Graduate Council Curriculum Report will be published on May 10, 2019.

Committee on Fellowships and Awards

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. David Atwill, Chair of the Committee on Fellowships and Awards.
Dr. Atwill indicated the committee had nothing to report.

**Committee on Graduate Research**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Siela Maximova, Chair of the Committee on Graduate Research.

Dr. Maximova reported that the committee held its final meeting of the academic year on April 23, 2019. The report on barriers to the sustainability and growth of intercollege degree programs was presented to the University Faculty Senate. The Senate supported the joint recommendations from the Graduate Council Committee on Research/Senate Committee on Research, Scholarship and Creative Accomplishment that a University-level task force with representation from the appropriate units be established to identify long-term solutions on issues of funding for and to mitigate the perceived second-class status of these important educational programs. The committee continued to discuss the results of the survey on barriers to and opportunities for inter-campus research collaboration. The committee plans to present a summary of the survey results as well as a statement from Dr. Neil Sharkey to the University Faculty Senate in the next academic year.

**Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Amy Allen, Chair of the Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues.

Dr. Allen reported the committee continued work on developing a survey to be sent to students who stop out of their graduate programs. Over the summer months, Dr. Ades will work to incorporate the revisions recommended by the committee and have the survey reviewed by individuals with expertise in survey design. The committee hopes to finalize the survey at the beginning of the fall semester. The committee also discussed potential topics for next academic year, including assisting Dr. Ades in strategic planning for career and professional services for graduate students and issues focused on international graduate students.

**Subcommittee on Graduate Exhibition**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Elizabeth Hughes, Chair of the Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Committee.

Dr. Hughes reported the committee met and reviewed the survey results from this year’s Graduate Exhibition. Based on the data received, the committee formed some recommendations for next year’s committee to consider while planning the exhibition.

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken informed Council that the Graduate Exhibition had a 33% no-show rate this year for judges, including many faculty members. The Council of Academic Deans suggested that, post-registration but prior to the Exhibition, the committee forward the names of faculty members registered to judge to the dean of the respective college so they could send an email thanking the faculty members for their commitment and service.

**Special Reports**

**Graduate and Professional Student Association**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Claire Kelling of the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA).
Ms. Kelling reported that GPSA held its final meeting of the academic year and funded some events for next year, such as a welcome picnic in the fall, and theatre days. The GPSA also voted to co-sponsor the International Town and Gown Association’s conference, which will be held in State College this year. The new Graduate Council GPSA delegates met. Four of the five delegates will be new to Council. Alexander Wilson-Heid will continue on Council and will serve as the Graduate Council Student Caucus Chair for next year. There are open delegate spots for the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Eberly College of Science, the College of Nursing, and the Smeal College of Business. Faculty members may direct any interested students to contact Ms. Kelling.

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken remarked that many alumni and their families returning to campus for the alumni recognition events held the weekend of the Graduate Exhibition have expressed an interest in more interaction with current students. Dr. Vasilatos-Younken encouraged GPSA members to consider how they might work with the Graduate School to build events with more student interaction and especially family engagement, as an increasing number of Graduate School alumni are returning with family members for whom a more meaningful experience would be valued.

**Unfinished Business**
None.

**New Business**
A motion was made for Council to consider revising policy GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students to update the list of countries from which a student may have received a baccalaureate or graduate degree to be considered exempt from the TOEFL/IELTS requirement. It was suggested that South Africa may be appropriate to add to this list. The motion was seconded. This item will be added to the agenda for the next academic year.

A motion was made for Council to consider revising GCAC-601 Residency Requirement – Research Doctorate so that time in a master’s degree program at the University might be counted toward the residency requirement for a doctoral degree program. The motion was seconded. This item will be added to Council’s agenda for the next academic year.

**Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community**
None.

**Next meeting:**
Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., 102 Kern Graduate Building
GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs

Purpose: This policy describes underlying goal of and the process by which graduate students may apply and be admitted to a dual-title graduate degree program.

Academic Goal: The academic goal of this policy is to define the features of a dual-title graduate degree program.

Scope: This policy applies to all graduate programs and graduate students.

Background

A dual-title graduate degree program is a fully integrated program of study that begins with defining a research problem or culminating experience, as appropriate to the degree, that integrates both the graduate major and dual-title fields early in the program. A dual-title graduate degree program includes the addition of valuable coursework not currently prescribed in an existing graduate degree program (in distinction to an option or a minor).

Policy Statement

1. A graduate dual-title degree is a fully integrated program of study that allows students to define a research problem that combines both the graduate major and dual-title fields.
2. A dual-title graduate degree program must require a minimum of 15 credits for a dual-title doctoral program and 6 credits for a dual-title master’s program.
3. The dual-title area of study cannot exist as a separate (stand-alone) graduate degree program at Penn State. The student's diploma will carry the name of both the graduate major and the dual-title offering. Students may complete only one dual-title in addition to a graduate major program of study within a single degree program.
4. Students must apply and may be admitted to an existing dual-title graduate degree program only after being enrolled in an existing graduate program.
   a. Doctoral students should enroll in a dual-title graduate degree program early in their training, and no later than the end of the fourth semester (not counting summer semesters) of entry into the graduate major program.
   b. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should students be encouraged to take coursework related to or recruited for admission to a dual-title graduate degree program that has not yet been approved by Graduate Council and adopted by the student’s graduate major program by means of a program change proposal submitted to and approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process.

Process

In order for a dual-title graduate degree program to be established, an existing graduate program must have previously agreed to the desirability of adding such a course of study, and will have detailed in writing the rationale and requirements of this course of study via a graduate program
change proposal submitted centrally. Graduate Council must approve any newly constituted dual-title graduate degree program and the addition of the dual-title offering to each graduate program that wishes to offer it.

The new dual-title area of study must be described in a new graduate program proposal, outlining the nature of the dual-title degree, including the array of courses typically taken; expectations for participation by dual-title students (for example, dual-title students may be expected to regularly attend weekly seminars scheduled by the dual-title area of study); and detailing other structural and practical requirements of a dual-title degree. Proposals for new dual-title graduate degree programs also must address the rationale for the creation of the dual-title degree. The proposal must show the advantages to be conferred by the dual-title graduate degree beyond those in existing alternative paths (e.g., graduate minors). A proposal might address such issues as the existence of current and sufficient demand by graduate students for such a program, and the enhanced employment opportunities for dual-title degree graduates. Graduate programs seeking to add (adopt) a new dual-title graduate degree program similarly must show the advantages to be conferred. Proposals for new dual-title graduate degree programs must be accompanied by at least one graduate program change proposal by a graduate major program to adopt the dual-title degree.

Graduate programs participating in a dual-title degree must develop sections in their graduate student handbooks that outline the nature of the dual-title degree; stipulate the array of courses typically taken; and detail other structural and practical requirements of a dual-title degree.

A graduate program wishing to adopt an existing dual-title program must submit a program change proposal to adopt the dual-title degree as described above, and must describe in its graduate student handbook the dual-title offering requirements. The various formal requirements for achieving a dual-title degree should be stated in the graduate program’s student handbook, and care be taken to outline how satisfying these requirements can be rationally connected with satisfying the requirements in the graduate program.

Typically, a provision is made whereby a dual-title degree student at the master's level is relieved of some of the requirements of the graduate degree program, so that a different and substituted set of courses can be pursued. Any such course substitutions must be specified in the graduate program’s student handbook. Since Graduate Council does not specify a minimum number of credits for a doctoral degree program, programs must include language in the proposal and in the student handbook that specifies any courses from the dual-title area of study that are approved as substitutions in the graduate program for post-master's students.

The dual-title representative on the Ph.D. Committee will participate in constructing and grading comprehensive examination questions that cover the dual-title area of study as part of a unified comprehensive examination with the major program administered to the student.

Revision History

Approved by Graduate Council Nov. 20, 2002
Revised by Graduate Council, May 13, 2009
Revised by Graduate Council, Sept. 17, 2014
Revised by Graduate Council, May 1, 2019. Effective date: Fall 2019 (8/12/2019).
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION - RESEARCH DOCTORATE

Contents:
- Purpose
- Academic Goal
- Scope
- Background
- Definitions
- Policy Statement
- Process
- Responsibilities/Guidelines/Best Practices
- Forms
- Further Information
- Cross References/Other Policies

PURPOSE:
To establish the content, form, scheduling, and reporting requirements for the Qualifying Examination.

ACADEMIC GOAL:
The academic goal of the Qualifying Examination is to assess early in the student’s program whether the student is capable of conducting doctoral-level research based on evidence of critical thinking and other skills that the Graduate Faculty of the program view as necessary to a successful researcher in the disciplinary field.

SCOPE:
This policy applies to all students enrolled in programs of study leading to the Ph.D.

BACKGROUND:
Graduate education leading to an advanced research degree (M.A., M.S., or Ph.D.) is fundamentally different from undergraduate education in form and content. Graduate work on an advanced research degree is often solitary and in close collaboration with one or a few faculty members or other research personnel. Research doctorate education in particular is focused on research methodologies and is uniform across disciplines in its characteristics, including but not limited to being hypothesis-driven, and evidence-based, and results in the creation of new knowledge. To ensure adequate progress toward the Ph.D., there are a set of formal assessments at various times in the student’s program; at Penn State the first of these is referred to as the Qualifying Examination.
DEFINITIONS:

Academic Adviser: A Graduate Faculty member assigned to an individual student who provides individualized advice that promotes intellectual discovery and helps guide the student to meet the student’s goals through the successful completion of the degree program.

Dissertation Adviser: Graduate Faculty member principally responsible for day-to-day guidance of the student’s dissertation research and academic and professional development.

Qualifying Examination Committee: A committee drawn from the Graduate Faculty members of the student’s Ph.D. program faculty charged by the Graduate Program head to administer the Qualifying Examination.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The primary purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to provide an early assessment of whether the student has the potential to develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes the program has defined in its formal Learning Objectives, including evidence of critical thinking skills, necessary for a successful researcher in the disciplinary field.
   a. The Qualifying Examination is conducted early in a student’s program to ensure that the considerable investment of time, resources, and effort required by the student has a high likelihood of leading to completion of the Ph.D.
   b. Additionally, the Qualifying Examination may assess if the student is well grounded in the fundamental knowledge of the discipline.

2. Scheduling:
   a. It is the responsibility of the major Graduate Program Head to ensure that the Qualifying Examination is scheduled within the required time limits as defined below.
   b. All students must take the Qualifying Examination within three semesters (not counting the summer semester) of entry into the doctoral program.
      i. Students who have been identified as master’s-along-the-way upon admission into the graduate program may be allowed an extension such that the three semester time limit will begin upon completion of the master’s degree.
      ii. Students pursuing dual-title degrees must take the Qualifying Examination within four semesters (not counting the summer semester) of entry into the doctoral program.
   c. To be eligible to take the Qualifying Examination the student must have:
      i. Earned at least 18 credits in courses eligible to be counted toward the graduate degree (these may be graduate credits earned previously at other recognized institutions from which transfer credits would be accepted) or the equivalent as determined and documented by the program.
      ii. A grade-point average of 3.00 or greater for work done at the University while a graduate student.
      iii. No incomplete or deferred grades.

3. Content:

1 The additional time allowed for dual-title degree students is in recognition of the additional requirements they may need to fulfill.
a. The student’s major program must establish guidelines for the Qualifying Examination that are uniformly applied to all students. These guidelines and evaluation criteria must be presented in the graduate program’s handbook, which must be provided to the student upon matriculation. These guidelines must include:
   i. The timing and the format of the examination
   ii. Clear criteria for evaluation.
   iii. The program’s policy describing the student’s options in case of failure. The policy must include:
       1) If retaking the examination after failure is allowed.
       2) If retaking the examination after failure is permitted whether there is a limit to the number of attempts.
       3) If students who have failed the final attempt will be dismissed from the program or may be allowed to change to the master’s degree.
b. If the student is also enrolled in a dual-title graduate degree program,
   i. the Qualifying Examination requirement shall be satisfied by one of the following:
      1) Ideally, a single Qualifying Examination that incorporates content from both the graduate major program and the dual-title program. The Qualifying Examination Committee must include at least one member of the Graduate Faculty from the dual-title program.
         a) In cases where the timing of the Qualifying Examination in the major area precludes the inclusion of the dual-title area, the dual-title program may choose to examine proficiency in the dual-title area at a later time, but no later than the end of the fourth semester (not counting summer semesters) of entry into the major doctoral program.
         2) Dual-title programs may choose to allow the Qualifying Examination in the major area alone to satisfy the requirements for the dual-title program.
   ii. The means of establishing proficiency in the dual-title area must be defined in the major program proposal adopting the dual-title degree and must be included in the student handbook for each dual-title program.
4. Format of Exam:
   a. Each graduate program will determine the composition of its Qualifying Examination Committee. All members of the Qualifying Examination Committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty, with the majority drawn from the faculty of the program.
   b. The graduate program administering the Qualifying Examination may choose from the following general formats with the specific details being left to the discretion of the program. The exam can be:
      i. a written, oral, or written and oral assessment of a student’s ability to conduct doctoral-level research as determined by the graduate program; or
      ii. an assessment of a thesis submitted in fulfillment of a research master’s degree in the major or a related program.
5. Outcome: At the conclusion of the evaluation, students must be informed of the results in writing. In cases when the Qualifying Examination is not passed, the student must also be notified whether a re-examination is offered or if the student will be terminated from the Ph.D. program. If the student will be terminated from the Ph.D. program, they must also be informed if they will be allowed to change to the master’s degree.
6. Reporting: The same report of all Qualifying Examinations, regardless of the outcome, must be reported to both the student and Graduate Enrollment Services as soon as possible but no later than 30 days following the conclusion of the assessment of the student; this includes both the initial examination, and any subsequent retakes.
   a. The report will include any identified deficiencies as well as any remedial steps the committee recommends or requires the student to undertake. Unresolved deficiencies from other assessments (e.g., English Competence, see GCAC-605) should be included.
   b. Following the examination, the Qualifying Examination Committee should also share any recommendations for further study or preparation, as well as any remedial steps the committee requires the student to undertake with the student’s Academic or Dissertation adviser and Ph.D. Committee (when formed).
   c. While it is common and helpful for a student and the student’s Ph.D. Committee to use the information gathered to further guide the student’s program, such discussions are not part of the examination itself.

**PROCESS:**

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The program is responsible for ensuring that:

1. *Qualifying Examinations are administered fairly to all students.*
   
   Examples (not an exhaustive list):
   
   a. Smaller programs may use the same Qualifying Examination Committee for all eligible students.
   
   b. Larger programs or programs with distinct subdisciplines may use multiple committees, but will undertake measures to ensure that the evaluation criteria are equally applied across all examinations or consistently within each distinct subdiscipline; a description of such measures will be included in the program’s handbook (e.g., the evaluation criteria will be listed in the handbook).

2. *Conflicts of interest in administering the Qualifying Examination must be avoided or effectively managed.*
   
   Examples (not an exhaustive list):
   
   a. For students whose dissertation adviser has already been identified at the time of the Qualifying Examination, the adviser may participate in the examination (if oral) or review the examination (if written) but not be the sole participant in the formal assessment.
   
   b. Graduate programs will undertake measures to ensure that conflicts of interest are managed; a description of such management measures will be included in the program’s handbook.
Policy GCAC-604
Policy Steward:

FORMS:

FURTHER INFORMATION:

CROSS REFERENCES / OTHER POLICIES:

GCAC-601 Residency Requirement – Research Doctorate
GCAC-602 Doctoral Ph.D. Committee Formation, Composition, and Review – Research Doctorate
GCAC-603 Doctoral Ph.D. Committee Responsibilities – Research Doctorate
GCAC-604 Qualifying Examination – Research Doctorate
GCAC-605 English Competence – Research Doctorate
GCAC-606 Comprehensive Examination – Research Doctorate
GCAC-607 Dissertation – Research Doctorate
GCAC-608 Final Oral Examination – Research Doctorate

REVISION HISTORY:
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