

## **II. B. Conduct and Organization of Graduate Studies**

### **1. Organization of Graduate Studies**

The Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) is responsible for the overall administration of graduate programs in Arts and Sciences. The committee is composed of representatives of the departments and programs offering graduate degrees and is chaired by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Each graduate program has a director of Graduate Studies who is responsible for the administration of graduate studies within that program. Inquiries about graduate studies should be directed to the Dean or to the director of the appropriate program.

The By-laws of the Faculty give COGS the authority to "make recommendations to the Faculty regarding policy, and carry out established policy, with respect to admissions, curricula, degree requirements, and academic standards" in all graduate programs. In graduate studies, therefore, COGS plays the role of the Educational Policy Committee, the Degrees Committee, and the Academic Status Committee.

### **2. Basic Responsibilities of Students and Faculty**

Graduate study implies a commitment by the student to achieving a high level of professional development in a particular discipline or group of closely related disciplines. It includes a significant number of advanced courses, usually includes a significant research project, and is usually a full time commitment. Graduate students are expected to be able to work independently with decreasing supervision as they progress toward their degrees, and to know when they need help.

Faculty in programs and departments that offer graduate degrees have an obligation to share the responsibilities and duties that are part of the administration and operation of the graduate program. They should serve as research advisors and members of thesis and dissertation committees, when appropriate; return comments on the work of students in a timely manner; consult with and advise students, even those for whom they are not the official advisor or instructor; and, when requested, write professional recommendations for students who are doing satisfactory work.

### **3. Graduate Credit**

All regular or provisional graduate students admitted to a course numbered 500 or above shall automatically be registered for graduate credit and shall receive graduate credit upon satisfactory completion of the course. This means that the course will be listed on the graduate transcript and will be included in computing the grade point average.

Regular or provisional graduate students, or unclassified (post-baccalaureate) students, may register for graduate credit in courses under the Faculty of Arts and Sciences numbered 400 to 499 provided they obtain the approval of the instructor, the graduate director of the department or program concerned, and the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, prior to registration. Graduate credit will be awarded only upon successful completion of these courses with a grade of "B-" or better.

Qualified undergraduate students may register in courses numbered 500 or above for graduate or undergraduate credit under the conditions described in the Undergraduate Program Catalog.

#### 4. Administration of Graduate Courses

##### a. Administration of Courses Numbered 500-599

Courses numbered 500-599 that are cross-listed with undergraduate courses numbered 400-499 will follow the policy and procedures listed in Section A of this Manual, except that graduate students attending these courses will follow the Add-drop procedures described in paragraphs 4b (ii)-(iv) below . Any 500 level course not cross listed as an undergraduate course will follow the policy and procedures outlined in this section.

##### b. Administration of Courses Numbered 600 and Above

i. Class rolls are distributed by the registrar.

ii. All changes in students' schedules after the last day to add courses (as defined in the calendar) shall be initiated through the student's major department or program committee and shall require the approval of the instructors involved, the chairperson of the department or director of the program, and the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. If the student drops a course or courses before the end of the ninth week of classes but remains registered for other academic work, the course or courses dropped shall be removed from the student's record. If the student drops a course or courses after the end of the ninth week of classes through the last day of classes, but remains registered for other academic work, the grade "W" or "F" shall be awarded by the instructor in the course depending upon whether or not the student was passing at the time the course was dropped.

iii. If the student withdraws from the College before the end of the ninth week of classes, a grade of "W" will appear on the record for each course in progress at the time of withdrawal. After the end of the ninth week of classes through the last day of classes, students who

withdraw from the College shall be awarded a "W" or "F" by the faculty member teaching each course in progress at the time of withdrawal.

iv. Students may not drop a course after the last day of classes. If for medical reasons a student does not complete a course, "WM" will be entered on the record upon approval of the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies with recommendation from the Medical Review Committee (chaired by the Dean of Students).

v. Faculty shall provide a course syllabus or a statement of course requirements to all students at the beginning of the course. The syllabus may be modified as the course progresses, provided the students are given advanced notice of the changes and sufficient opportunity to complete any additional work required.

vi. Faculty are expected to meet all classes. A faculty member may cancel a formal class meeting to allow students to perform other educational activities of equivalent or superior value. If a faculty member must leave the campus for professional reasons, or if an emergency, illness, disability, or anticipated absence should prevent a faculty member from teaching a class, he or she shall notify the department chair and make appropriate provisions consistent with the course syllabus. The College does not cancel classes for religious holidays, but an individual faculty member may cancel or reschedule a class if it conflicts with a day of religious observance in his or her faith. The faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, should determine whether the class should be rescheduled.

vii. Graduate students are expected to attend classes regularly and complete all assignments and examinations.

viii. Examinations are recommended but are not required if, in the judgment of the instructor, alternative ways of evaluating student performance are equivalent or superior. The goal is to evaluate the student in the context of his or her intellectual and professional development. Take-home examinations are permitted. All work to be evaluated, whether by examination or other means, must be completed by the end of the exam period. The College does not permit a student to retake a final examination. Final examinations should be made available for students to read but must be retained by the instructor for at least one semester. If the instructor is not in residence during the semester following the examination, the examination papers must remain available in the department office.

ix. Faculty are required to report course grades to the Registrar in a timely fashion as determined by the Registrar in

consultation with the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. It is the responsibility of each faculty member to make sure that his or her final course grades are delivered to the Registrar's Office. Grade sheets must be delivered in person.

x. In cases where a relevant course is not available, is not offered, or is cancelled, a student may be permitted, following the guidelines established by the faculty of the program and using course numbers approved by COGS, to enroll in an independent study.

## 5. Auditing courses

Any graduate student may informally attend a graduate course with the consent of the instructor. No grade will be given and informal attendance will not be listed on the transcript.

Any graduate student may audit a graduate course with permission of the instructor and the Bursar's Office. Request forms can be obtained from the Registrar's Office. Before beginning the audit, the student and the instructor must agree on what is required for the audit to be successful. The audited course and the grade of "O", for a successful audit, or "U" for an unsuccessful audit, are listed on the student's official transcript.

Graduate students may audit undergraduate courses under the procedures outlined in Paragraph II.A.13. above.

## 6. Student Course Evaluations

Faculty members shall distribute instructor/course evaluations in all sections of all graduate courses, except independent research, thesis and dissertation research, independent study, and department colloquia. Although departments may have specific policies related to the use of instructor/course evaluations, all faculty members must inform their students in advance of the procedures for distributing, collecting, and reviewing their comments. Evaluation forms must be collected and tabulated by someone other than the instructor. Faculty members shall not be present while the students are completing the evaluations and must not see the evaluations before final course grades are submitted. Students are to be informed that their evaluations will not be reviewed prior to submission of the final grades in the course.

## 7. Conduct and supervision of independent research

All research will be conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards of the field (see Secs. III D and E of the Faculty Handbook). Any work

which is not original shall be cited in the format customary to the instructor's or advisor's discipline, and assistance received from student and faculty colleagues should be acknowledged appropriately.

To the extent permitted by the source of the student's funding, faculty shall respect the freedom and independence of graduate students to carry out their own research. The choice of advisor and selection of a thesis or dissertation topic will be by the mutual agreement between the student and the advisor. Advisors have an obligation to provide effective guidance and to encourage their students to conclude their degree work in a reasonable time.

#### 8. Comprehensive Qualifying Examinations

All Ph.D. graduate students must pass a comprehensive qualifying examination prepared by the department's or program's faculty following guidelines and procedures recommended by the department or program and approved by COGS.

Performance on comprehensive qualifying examinations will be judged by a committee of professionals in the field. This Committee will consist of all faculty in the department or program responsible for the degree, or will be appointed by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in accordance with the requirements of individual degrees.

#### 9. Evaluation of student academic progress

The academic progress of each student shall be monitored by a committee following procedures recommended by the program and approved by COGS. This evaluation shall take into consideration the overall progress of the student toward his or her academic or professional goals. The faculty of a program has an obligation to keep students informed of their progress and to give ample warning if students appear unable to complete their programs of study.

The performance of graduate students in courses, on comprehensive qualifying examinations, and in teaching and research, and the acceptability of the thesis or dissertation submitted, must be based on objective, ethical, and professional criteria.

The acceptability of the thesis or dissertation will be judged by a committee of professionals in the field appointed by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in accordance with the requirements of individual degrees.

To continue in a program, a student must make satisfactory progress toward the degree, as defined by COGS and the regulations of the student's department or program. If the faculty of a program determines that satisfactory

progress is not being made, a student may be required to withdraw because of academic deficiency.

## 10. Reporting Grades

### a. Grading system for graduate courses

The grading system for graduate courses as approved by the faculty is described in the Graduate Catalogue.

The grade "G" shall be used when an instructor wishes to defer a grade for one or more semesters pending the completion of an extended project, and is routinely used when a student is engaged in ongoing research.

The grade "I" may be given only when a student has not completed essential course work because of illness or other extenuating circumstances. An "I" automatically becomes an "F" at the end of the next semester if the postponed work has not been completed unless the instructor in writing requests the registrar to extend the "I" for another semester. An "I" may not be extended more than once without the approval of the director of graduate studies and the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.

The grade of "O" is given for a successful audit and "U" for an unsuccessful audit.

### b. Change of grade

To change a grade (other than the "G" or "I") after it has been reported, an instructor must request the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies to authorize the Registrar's Office to make the change. Grade change forms are available through the Registrar's Office. Included in the request should be a brief statement about the grounds for the change. Grade changes based on clerical error (as opposed to reevaluation of student's work) may be made at any time until a student graduates. All other grade changes are regulated by the grade review procedure.

## 11. Grade review

A student who believes that a final course grade has been unfairly assigned may request a review of the grade by the end of the sixth week of the next regular semester following that in which the grade was received. The following procedure will be followed.

\* The student must first confer with the instructor of the course to discuss the grade. The student may wish to ask about such matters as the particular strengths and weaknesses of his or her course work, the general grade scale utilized by the instructor, and the relative ranking of the student's work in the class as a whole.

\* If the student is not satisfied by this discussion he or she may, no later than six weeks after the beginning of the next regular academic semester, present a written statement requesting a further review and giving a full explanation of the reasons for the request. The written statement shall be sent to the instructor, the graduate director, and the chair of the department or program in which the course was taught; if the course is cross listed in two or more departments or programs, the chair of the faculty member's home department will be the one to receive the written statement. If the grade in question was given by the department or program chair, the student will ask the Dean of the Faculty to appoint another faculty member of the department or program to oversee the further review process. Unless the chair decides the student's case is wholly without merit, he or she shall discuss the matter with the instructor and seek to resolve the issue. This part of the review process should be completed within four weeks of receipt of the written statement by the student.

\* If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the above procedure, the chair shall appoint a committee of at least three faculty members. The committee shall collect and review all relevant and available materials supplied by the student, the instructor, or other individuals. Both the student and the instructor have the right to meet with the committee.

\* After reviewing the matter, the committee shall decide if it believes the grade should be changed, and if so, what the proper grade should be. It shall inform the instructor and the student of its conclusions in writing and, if it believes the grade should be changed, recommend that the instructor change the grade accordingly.

\* If the instructor refuses to accept the committee's recommendation and the committee believes that the faculty member is acting inappropriately in assigning the grade, the committee may appeal to the full faculty of the program, and the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies shall be informed. A meeting of all full time W&M faculty associated with the program shall be called, and a two-thirds decision by those present and voting will be final.

12. Procedures for grievances involving graduate students and faculty

Programs may follow their own procedures to address a grievance between a graduate student and a faculty member, provided they have been approved by COGS. If no such procedures have been approved, and the issue does not involve affirmative action, sexual harassment, or the honor code (which are covered by other College policies), or grade review (covered in Paragraph 11 above), the following procedures shall apply:

\* The student and faculty member involved shall first try to resolve the issue amicably. If the matter remains unresolved, either party may report the grievance to the program's graduate director (or ombudsperson if the program has one). If the grievance involves the graduate director or ombudsperson, it shall be reported to the chair of the department, or in the case of multidisciplinary programs, to the director of the program. This report should be made within two weeks of the beginning of the semester following the incident, or the last of several incidents, on which the grievance is based. The graduate director, ombudsperson, or chair will meet with both parties and discuss the matter.

\* If either party is not satisfied with the outcome of this discussion, the matter may be brought to the attention of the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (hereafter in this Section referred to as the Dean), and the Chair will be informed. This step must be initiated within four weeks of the receipt of the initial grievance by the graduate director, ombudsperson, or chair. The Dean shall discuss the grievance with both parties. If an agreement satisfactory to both parties can be reached, the Dean will record the agreement in writing.

\* If no agreement satisfactory to both parties is reached, and the Dean feels the case to be without merit, he or she shall inform the parties and drop the matter. Otherwise, within four weeks following the time the Dean was notified by the graduate director, ombudsperson, or chair, the Dean may report to the Dean of the Faculty, who will decide whether or not to pursue the matter further following College procedures (see the Faculty Handbook).

13. The Honor System

Honor and integrity are essential components of an atmosphere where advanced studies and research can flourish. The College honor system is an essential part of graduate study and is described in the *Student Handbook*. Procedural questions should be addressed to the Office of the Dean of Students.

14. Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows

Teaching Assistants (TAs) are W&M graduate students who assist an instructor by teaching sections or laboratories, grading papers, or in some other capacity. They are not instructors of record responsible for assigning final grades.

Teaching Fellows (TFs) are W&M graduate students who are instructors of record and responsible for assigning final grades. Only students who have passed their comprehensive exams and have met their program's definition of ABDs (all but dissertation) and who are trained and supervised by the program responsible for the course or courses involved may be TFs. All TF training programs must be approved by COGS and the Educational Policy Committee.