

# Graduate School Council Policy Committee

## Charge, Function and Process

### January 2019

#### Overview

The Dean of the Graduate School charges the Graduate School Council **Policy Committee** (“Policy Committee”) with advising the Graduate School Council and the Dean on matters of graduate education policy ([Faculty Code Section 23-45.E](#)). The Graduate School Council is an elected body of Graduate Faculty serving in an advisory capacity to the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. The Council has legislative authority for all matters pertaining to graduate education requiring a vote of elected representatives ([Charter of the Graduate School Council](#)).

The Policy Committee consists of a subset of the Graduate School Council and is chaired by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Planning or designee. The committee includes *ex officio* members as described below.

In general, the Graduate School’s Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Planning leads operational oversight of graduate policies and their interpretation, in close coordination with the Dean of the Graduate School who has authority over Graduate School policies. The Office of Academic Affairs & Planning is responsible for managing workflow and documentation of policy changes and implementation.

#### Policy Committee Role

The Policy Committee advises the full Graduate School Council and the Dean of the Graduate School on matters pertaining to graduate education policy. It considers the need for new graduate policies and revisions to existing policies based on input from the graduate community and the Graduate School, including policies contained in the Graduate School Memoranda. The Policy Committee may also advise on the interpretation and implementation of existing policies, as called upon by the Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Planning. In its deliberations, the Policy Committee considers both the policy needs of the institution as well as the impact that policies have on academic and administrative functions across the institution.

#### Policy Committee Composition

The Policy Committee consists nominally of five members of the Graduate School Council, identified by the Dean, and is chaired by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Planning or designee. *Ex officio* members advise on the impact policies have on academic and administrative functions and will include representation from the following areas: Graduate School Academic Affairs & Planning; Graduate School Graduate Enrollment Management Services; Graduate Program Advisors; and Graduate & Professional Student Senate. Stakeholders relevant to specific policy discussions will be included on an *ad hoc* basis.

#### Process for Policy Considerations

Consideration of new or revised policy may be based on requests from the graduate community or based on a need identified by the Graduate School.

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1. When a possible policy creation, revision, or clarification is identified, the Policy Committee Chair will triage the request with the Dean to determine if the request will be considered, and/or if it constitutes a minor or major change.
2. Minor changes: If the proposed change involves minor updates/edits or procedural/operational changes to an existing policy, the request will be handled by the Dean and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Planning, in consultation with relevant Graduate School staff, with final approval by the Dean. A notification of intent to change the policy will be circulated to Graduate School Staff. If any member of the Graduate School staff deems the change to be a major policy change, he or she can request that the proposed undergo full review by the Policy Committee by notifying the Chair of the Policy Committee.
3. Major changes: If the request involves a major change in policy, possible outcomes of triage with the Dean include referral to the Graduate School Council Policy Committee; change of the policy based on decision by the Dean; decision not to pursue the request, or other. For policy change requests from the graduate community, the following information will help inform the triage assessment:
  - a. Graduate School policy requiring revision, or a description of a proposed new policy;
  - b. Reason for the change / need for new policy;
  - c. Units and individuals impacted by the proposed change;
  - d. Units and individuals with necessary information to assist with revision/addition;
  - e. Requested timeline for revision/addition.
4. If the Dean of the Graduate School determines that a policy request will not be considered, he or she will respond to the requester in writing explaining why the request will not be considered.
5. If a policy request is referred to the Policy Committee by the Dean of the Graduate School, the committee will define a process that is appropriate to the request. The process should assure clarity and transparency, sufficient stakeholder involvement, consultation on best practices at peer institutions, where appropriate, consideration of the relationship between policy and implementation, and an appropriate and efficient timeline.
6. For substantive policy issues, the Policy Committee Chair may identify a Policy Committee member plus a Graduate School staff member to lead consideration of the policy. Their role may include convening a working group or other mechanism to consider the policy, depending on the nature of the change. The Policy Committee member and Graduate School staff member will report to the Policy Committee Chair and will be responsible for documents associated with the policy being considered.
7. The process for any substantive policy considerations will include items such as:
  - a. Feedback from stakeholders, including identifying a list of stakeholders and how they will be involved in the process;
  - b. Consideration of impact of the policy on academic programs; faculty; students; staff, and processes in central administrative units;
  - c. Timeline and impact of implementation, including resource considerations;
  - d. Consideration of national trends in graduate education.

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8. For items referred to the Policy Committee, the committee will ultimately make a recommendation to the Dean regarding next steps, which may include consideration by the full Graduate School Council or other follow-up action. Recommendations for approval will include an implementation plan and timeline.
9. For all major policy changes and new policies, a final draft of the policy will be distributed broadly to the graduate community (GPAs, GPCs, Deans, Directors, Chairs).
10. The Dean of the Graduate School gives final approval of any new policy or policy change.
11. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Planning will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is updated and the implementation plan is completed. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Planning Policy is responsible for publicly posting all policy changes on the Graduate School website, noting all revision dates and archiving the previous policy.