

ACADEMIC ISSUES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Part 2. Policies that either

(a) you already have; or

(b) you might really wish you had

Gordon Emslie

Oklahoma State University

Academic Issues “Unique” to Graduate Students

- Petitions/Appeals/Grievances not related to a course grade
- Advisory Committee issues
- Research Misconduct

Non-Grade Academic Issues

- Pertinent mostly to graduate students
- Includes
 - Comprehensive examinations
 - Preliminary examinations
 - Qualifying examinations
 - Candidacy examinations
 - Thesis/dissertation defenses
 - Thesis/dissertation approvals

Key Concept

- Is the academic action involved governed
 - by a department or departmental committee?

or

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Who handles issue - department or graduate school?

- This distinction must be (formally) made clear to the student!
 - There is likely to be a lack of uniformity in this (e.g., Qualifying Examination committee)
 - **Recommend review of department graduate handbooks**

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Discontinuance from Program

Dismissal due to poor Academic Performance

- Many universities have procedures for dismissal from graduate school (e.g., low graduate GPA)
- Useful to have policy relating to dismissal from a program (e.g., double failure of comprehensive exam,...)
 - Right of student to appeal
 - Since student is still in good academic standing, reversion is:
 - to non-degree status (domestic students)
 - more complicated for international students!

Discontinuance from Program

- What if problem is not directly related to academic performance?
 - Note that advisory committees are (usually) recommended by department head and approved by the graduate dean
 - If department head/chair is unable to form an advisory committee, student cannot continue in program
 - Note that no academic sanction is involved!

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Rescinding a Degree

- Research misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, fabrication, falsification) discovered after degree has been awarded
- Need to allow student appropriate “due process”
- ***This requires that a policy be in place***; the time to develop such a policy is **NOT** when you have a case pending!
- Be prepared for “what’s broken?” challenges and resist them!

Summary

- Strongly recommend that you review documentation (e.g., P&P/Catalog/Handbook) to ensure that you have policies to adequately cover:
 - Appeal of academic issues not related to a course grade
 - Dismissal of a student in good academic standing from a program (but not from graduate study)
 - Rescinding of a degree previously awarded
- Work with
 - Graduate Council/Faculty Senate
 - Deans/Department Heads/Graduate Coordinators
 - Legal Counsel