

University of Cincinnati Graduate College

Graduate Handbook

Welcome from the Graduate College! We invite you to review the Graduate Handbook.

This document is designed as a helpful guide to graduate education at UC. Here is where you will find policies, procedures, and important information for the graduate student lifecycle, from admissions to graduation.

In addition, there may also be requirements that pertain to specific degree programs and colleges. Please visit program and college websites for these specific requirements.

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Introduction

This Graduate Handbook is intended to provide information about university policies that assist faculty, students, and program coordinators in supporting their individual programs of study.

To which educational programs does this *Handbook* pertain? The Graduate College oversees all post-baccalaureate certificates and degrees (master's and doctoral level) EXCEPT the Juris Doctor (in the College of Law), the Doctor of Medicine (in the College of Medicine), and the Doctor of Pharmacy (in the College of Pharmacy).

The University of Cincinnati does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, parental status (including status as a foster parent), sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, military status (past, present, or future), or gender identity and expression in its programs and activities. View [UC's complete Notice of Non-Discrimination](#).

Published 07/25/2025.

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ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS

ADMISSIONS POLICY

For our graduate programs, we welcome applications from students who **hold a bachelor's degree** (or higher) from a college or university accredited by accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV purposes or the international equivalent. It is recommended that applicants **have at least a B average** in undergraduate course work (or otherwise give evidence of promise that is judged satisfactory by the admitting program).

Please see the [Admission Requirements page](#) for more information.

Faculty and Administrators' Eligibility for Graduate Degrees

No holder of an academic administrative title at the University of Cincinnati (equivalent to assistant dean or above) may matriculate or be granted a graduate certificate or degree from the University of Cincinnati.

No graduate degree or certificate from the University of Cincinnati will be granted to any faculty member at the University of Cincinnati (full-time or part-time above rank of instructor) who teaches in the same department, division or school in which the degree is to be granted. This rule also applies to adjunct appointments at any faculty rank and to interdisciplinary degrees when the same college is one of the interdisciplinary colleges.

College deans may petition the Associate Dean of the Graduate College for a waiver of this policy on an individual faculty member's behalf. The written request should describe the teaching responsibilities of the faculty member, indicating whether they are teaching graduate students and a plan for managing potential conflicts of interest.

ADMISSIONS CATEGORIES

Matriculated graduate status is granted to an applicant who has been accepted into a graduate certificate or degree program and has met all admissions criteria. Note that applicants first receive a provisional acceptance, and conversion to matriculated graduate status is dependent upon receipt of an official transcript for U.S. degrees or transcript evaluation for non-U.S. degrees that confirms that the student holds a baccalaureate or higher degree from a college or university. Instructions and deadlines for meeting this requirement are included on [the Transcript Submission Policy web page](#).

Provisional graduate status is granted to applicants who have been accepted into a graduate certificate or degree program, but who have NOT yet met all admissions criteria. As described above, one routine requirement for all students is the submission of an official transcript. However, some students must in addition take undergraduate courses or improve English language proficiency to satisfy prerequisites, and these students may be accepted by the program on a provisional basis that is contingent on satisfying those additional prerequisites. Letters of admission should be read carefully to make sure all requirements tied to provisional status are identified.

Visiting student status allows students to take courses for graduate credit when they have not been admitted into a graduate degree program. These students were previously called "non-matriculated students". Should this visiting student subsequently matriculate into a certificate or

degree program, a maximum of 12 semester hours may be applied to the certificate or degree program. Students are not eligible for tuition or stipend awards allocated by the Graduate College while in visiting graduate status. This policy and other funding policies are further explained in the [Financial Support chapter](#).

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR 4+1 AND AIM PROGRAMS

Application to 4+1 Degree Programs

If an undergraduate student plans to matriculate into a master's degree program upon completion of the bachelor's degree, they can consult with advisors to begin (A) taking graduate-level coursework as an advanced undergraduate student, and (B) focusing on thesis-related, independent research at an earlier date. This advising plan to achieve an articulated path to a master's degree is called a 4+1 program. Students who enter these programs must complete all of the requirements of each respective degree and must apply separately for both degree programs at the appropriate time.

To be eligible for entry to a 4+1 program, students must have junior standing (64 semester credits). In addition, students must meet all College and graduate program admission requirements for the particular program.

4+1 students should note the following:

- 4+1 students who enroll in graduate-level coursework prior to formally matriculating as a graduate student are allowed to apply up to 12 semester graduate-level credits toward the requirements of the master's degree. These credits cannot be used for the bachelor's degree. Students in the 4+1 program will complete the rest of their graduate coursework after formal completion and certification of the bachelor's degree. Students should refer to the section of this handbook containing the general requirements of the master's degree and speak to the directors of the graduate program about specific requirements.
- 4+1 students wishing to matriculate into a master's program **must complete a formal graduate admission application online in their junior or senior year to be admitted to the graduate program and begin the master's degree**. Students should speak to the directors of the graduate program about specific admission and application requirements.

Application to Accelerated Integrated Master's (AIM) Programs

The university has a limited set of programs that allow for a single application and admission to obtain a bachelor's plus master's degree in a single course of study. These programs are tightly structured around co-op experiences and allow undergraduate students to accumulate more than 12 graduate credits prior to transitioning to a matriculated graduate student.

Applicants apply to an AIM program at the time of application to UC as an undergraduate but are still required to formally apply to transition to the graduate portion of their program at a time defined by their AIM program. There is a free and abbreviated application for UC undergraduate students transitioning to the associated master's degree that is part of their AIM program.

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

The university offers the opportunity for students to pursue two complementary graduate degrees simultaneously through structured, official dual degree programs (see below for a complete listing). The advantage of these programs is that they may require fewer credits than completing each degree program separately.

Each program's entrance requirements must be met in addition to university requirements, and the applicant must be accepted by both programs. Below is a listing of the Dual Degree programs:

- Accounting MBA/MS
- Architecture/Business Administration MArch/MBA
- Art Education/Fine Arts MA/MFA
- Business Analytics MBA/MS
- Business Administration/Arts Administration MBA/MA
- Community Planning/Law MCP/JD
- Finance MBA/MS
- Human Resources MBA/MA
- Information Systems MBA/MS
- Marketing MBA/MS
- Law/Women's Studies JD/MA
- Law/Business JD/MBA
- Law/Political Science JD/MA
- Law/Public Administration JD/MPA
- Law/Political Science JD/PhD

Please see the [Multiple Degree Exemptions section](#) for information on the maximum amount of transfer credit that can be applied to the dual degree programs.

CHANGING DEGREE PROGRAMS AT UC

In order to change from one degree program to another within the university, a student must submit a complete application to the new program. **If** the degrees are housed in the same unit, **and** the change is made over consecutive term enrollments, the application fee is waived. If the new degree program is in a different administrative program, the student is responsible for paying the application fee.

Students are always responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the given degree program in which they are matriculated. Please see the [Transfer Credit for Graduate Courses Taken at UC](#) section for information on the amount of graduate credits that can be transferred if a student is changing from one graduate program to another within the university, or if a student is changing from visiting graduate status at the university.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

The University of Cincinnati offers graduate certificate programs. Certificates vary in both credit hours and in how they are configured: for instance, some can be earned only in conjunction with a degree; some require a master's degree as a prerequisite, and some can be earned outside of a degree program. Applicants must [apply for admission to a certificate program](#).

Graduate College general guidelines are as follows:

- Students must hold a baccalaureate degree.
- Certificate programs may enroll degree seeking and non-degree seeking students.
- For students matriculated into a degree program, credit hours earned under a certificate program may count toward a degree in any program if approved by the program director, and if requirements for the certificate and degree are completed the student will be awarded both. Credits earned while matriculated in a certificate program will count as credits matriculated in a degree.
- Students can apply a single course to multiple certificates but only to ONE master's or doctoral degree.
- Students can obtain more than one certificate within the same program prior to attaining their master's degree.
- Students apply for a certificate program just like applying for a degree program, and must pay any relevant application fee.
- Students enrolled only in a graduate certificate program are not eligible for tuition or stipend support with university funds (University Graduate Assistantship/Graduate Scholarship funds).

If a student is interested, the student should contact the appropriate program office to obtain the specific criteria and prerequisites for the desired certificate.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION

UC International Services supports the needs of international students at the University of Cincinnati. The office assists international students in understanding the rules, regulations, and procedures that must be followed during their stay in the United States and provides support services and cultural information to students. UC International Services is located in Suite 7148, One Edwards Center (1-513-556-4278). Information about [admission to the University of Cincinnati for international students is available on their website](#). International students with F-1 visas can only be granted admission as matriculated graduate status in a degree-seeking program. (Most international students with J-1 visas can be granted admission with matriculated graduate status only, with some exceptions.) Students with J-1 visas should inquire with UC International Services to determine the regulations that apply to them. Students with green cards (U.S. resident aliens/permanent residents) are not defined as international students and, therefore, are not governed by the university's international student policies. However, the English proficiency requirement does apply to green card holders (see The English Proficiency Requirement, below).

In instances where an international student holds a degree for which the U.S. equivalent is not known, or if it is determined by the program or the Graduate College that the applicant does not have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, the program must submit a petition for admission without the bachelor's degree, with supporting documentation and rationale, to the Associate Dean of the Graduate College.

All international students are required to carry University of Cincinnati student health insurance unless they qualify for a waiver. Semester insurance fees are automatically assessed each registration period. Please visit the Graduate College website for more information on the [Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Award](#).

English Proficiency Requirement

English proficiency is required of all applicants whose native language is not English. Students can demonstrate proficiency in a number of ways at the graduate level. PLEASE NOTE, many colleges and programs have higher requirements than those listed below. Applicants should contact the programs to which they are applying for details. For more information, please refer to [the English Proficiency Requirement web page](#).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Graduate students may obtain financial support from several sources.

- The University of Cincinnati provides merit-based graduate awards in the form of tuition scholarships (known as the Graduate Scholarships, which may be provided with or without an assistantship), as well as stipend awards (graduate assistantships including teaching and research assistantships), and program-specific scholarships and fellowships.
- Scholarship and fellowship support is also available from a collection of external sponsors at the local, state, national, and international levels. Programs and colleges may have additional sources of support through grants and endowed funds
- Need-based support may be obtained from federal and state sources.

Financial support from each of these sources is described below.

UNIVERSITY MERIT-BASED GRADUATE AWARDS

The University of Cincinnati offers several types of merit-based graduate awards. The most common types – Graduate Scholarships, fellowships, and University Graduate Assistantships – are described below. Most university graduate awards are underwritten by university funds allocated by the Graduate College (“general funds”) to each college, which are then awarded to students by the individual programs. Some awards are competitive and granted by the Graduate College upon recommendation of an individual graduate program.

Not all graduate students are eligible for graduate awards. Graduate awards allocated by the Graduate College are not available to students:

- (1) taking classes as visiting students,
- (2) enrolled only in a graduate certificate program,
- (3) who have not maintained the minimum GPA of 3.000 in their program,
- (4) who are on academic probation, or
- (5) who have exceeded the [174 graduate credit rule](#).

Awards can only be guaranteed for a maximum period of one academic year, and renewal of a university graduate award is not automatic. Awards that are appointed by individual programs are awarded to eligible students at the sole discretion of the program. Programs are not obligated to renew awards, even if previously awarded students met all eligibility requirements.

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS (GS)

The Graduate College funds scholarships that cover all or part of a student's tuition and fees. In most colleges, the scholarship awards supported by the Graduate College are the Graduate Scholarships (GS), *with* and *without* assistantships. The GS *with* assistantship is used to support graduate assistants who are additionally awarded a stipend that requires service in return for stipend support. The GS *without* assistantship is for graduate students who do not receive university stipend support and therefore no service is required in return for the GS award.

The appointing program sends written offers of scholarship awards to students, including information about the amount and duration of the award and the terms of the offer. Students must maintain all of the required eligibility requirements in their offer letter to maintain their tuition scholarship.

Students receiving a tuition scholarship must register for a specified minimum number of graduate credit hours in each semester for which they are receiving support. If an international student is supported by a GS *without* assistantship, they must register for a minimum load of 10 graduate credit hours per semester during the time they receive the GS scholarship. If a domestic student is supported by a GS *without* assistantship, they must register for a minimum load of 1 graduate credit hour per semester during the time they receive the GS scholarship. Students supported by a GS *with* assistantship must register for a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours per semester during the time they receive the GS scholarship. These minimum enrollments in graded courses must be met prior to using scholarship support for any audited courses.

If a student withdraws from a class funded by a tuition scholarship, with the remaining enrolled credit hours totaling less than the minimum required for the award, the award is cancelled immediately and the student is responsible for the tuition balance, based on the date of withdrawal.

Full tuition scholarships cover a maximum of 18 credits per semester. Students registered for more than 18 credits in a semester will be billed tuition and general fees on a per-credit-hour rate for each credit over the 18 credits.

All rules that govern recipients of tuition support pertain to all students, including international students. Other rules and policies that apply specifically to international students are independent of GS regulations. Both sets of regulations must be met. Neither set of regulations negates or takes the place of the other. (See [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#).)

Note: Financial awards that require no service may reduce eligibility for educational loans. Students should notify the Student Financial Aid Office of their tuition support if they apply for aid from that office.

UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

University of Cincinnati fellowships are financial awards that include tuition scholarships and stipends with no associated service requirements. The purpose of a fellowship award is to allow the recipient to concentrate exclusively on their studies; therefore, multiple appointments and/or employment by the University of Cincinnati are not permitted for students receiving fellowships.

The appointing program sends written offers of fellowship awards, including information about the amount and duration of the award; a general description of the academic obligations accepted by the student as part of the award; a reference to sources of information about academic requirements for degree completion; a description of the conditions under which either the student or unit may terminate the award prior to its end-date; and criteria for reappointment.

Students receiving fellowships should check with [Student Financial Aid](#) to be informed about the potential impact on their eligibility for aid. Income received that is not for services rendered (whether it be in the form of a fellowship, grant, or award) will be calculated in whether a student meets the Cost of Attendance for the University of Cincinnati.

Fellowship awardees have an enrollment obligation identical to GS with assistantship/UGA (university graduate assistantship) awardees, and they lose eligibility for the fellowship award if they accumulate more than 174 graduate credit hours. (See [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#)).

For information on university-sponsored fellowships, please see the Graduate College website.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP STIPEND AWARDS

A student awarded a graduate assistantship receives a financial stipend for services rendered in addition to a full or partial tuition scholarship. These stipend funds are called UGA (university graduate assistantship) awards. Graduate assistants are also entitled to a discount at the [University Bookstore](#) and may be eligible for the [Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Award](#).

UGA awardees devote effort to a combined program of formal study and assigned duties of teaching, research or administrative service that is designed to enhance their university education. The stipend received by the graduate assistant is in recognition of these services. Those with teaching duties are teaching assistants (TAs) and those with research duties are research assistants (RAs). During the appointment, the goal is to help a graduate student become a more learned, creative, and professional individual through formal instruction, interaction with faculty, research, and administrative experience. Any such service assignments should be consistent with the student's academic pursuits.

UGA Minimum Stipend Rates, as of July 2025

UGA funds are awarded for designated periods of time by the graduate programs. Graduate Assistants are considered exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements, and they are paid on a salaried basis. Minimum stipends are set by the Dean of the Graduate College.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 minimum for a **non-PhD** University Graduate Assistant of .5 FTE (20 hours/week) will be **\$762.90 bi-weekly**. For University Graduate Assistants with an appointment of less than .5 FTE, a minimum pay rate of **\$19.07 per hour applies**. This rate applies to all master's students and to all non-PhD doctoral students.

The FY2026 minimum for a **PhD** University Graduate Assistant of .5 FTE (20 hours/week) will be **\$1,001.31 bi-weekly**. For PhD Graduate Assistants with an appointment of less than .5 FTE, a minimum pay rate of **\$25.03 per hour** applies.

Important considerations for use of UGA funds are as follows:

- The minimum stipend award is .25 FTE (10 hours/week), maximum is .5 FTE (20 hours/week).
- A Graduate Assistant must gross at least **\$3,051.20/semester** (Fall and Spring) to be eligible for the [Graduate Student Health Insurance \(GSHI\) Award from the Graduate College](#). This corresponds to the minimum pay of a non-PhD GA at .25 FTE (10 hours/week).
- GAs are required to work only during the 16 weeks (15 instructional, 1 exam) of the semester; additional weeks during breaks must be compensated separately by the college.

Position Requirements and Student Criteria

The appointing academic program, college, or area of responsibility determines service requirements of students who hold assistantships. If awarded an assistantship outside their program, graduate assistants' duties are governed by the academic program, college, or the area

of responsibility that made the award. In all cases, the award obligates awardees to no more than 20 hours per week of services, and those services must make a substantive contribution to the student's academic and professional development. Students must be appointed to a position that is consistent with their field of academic study. If the student determines that they cannot meet the requirements of the award, it is imperative that they notify the program to initiate renegotiation or reassignment of the award with correspondingly less support. A student's hours are prorated for weeks with a holiday or school closure and students are not required to be available during break periods unless given additional compensation.

UGA awardees must be registered for 12 graduate credit hours or more, exclusive of audit credits, for each semester they receive the assistantship. University assistantships will be cancelled if the awardee does not meet their enrollment obligation. The exception to this rule is summer semester. See [Summer Employment without Full-time Enrollment](#) section. Students lose eligibility for the UGA stipend funding if they accumulate more than 174 graduate credit hours. (See [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#).)

Assistantship awards are contingent upon student status, satisfactory degree progress, and performance of service as assigned, and can be terminated at any time. Each year the assistantship is in effect, the appointing program, college, or area must notify the awardee in writing of any significant change to the services or conditions of the appointment. Such changes include, but are not limited to:

- the amount and duration of the award
- any tuition and/or fee not paid by the program
- the average expected time per week or per semester of required duties
- description of the duties assigned to the student
- description of the conditions under which either the student or unit may terminate the award prior to its end-date
- criteria for reappointment of the award
- criteria for determining variations in stipend levels where such variations exist
- information on current IRS guidelines, Medicare, and the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS)
- graduate appointment procedures if any of the documents have been modified since the student's initial appointment.

Teaching Assistant Requirements and OEPT

All teaching assistants must be supervised by a faculty member who has the academic credentials and authorization (as defined by the Higher Learning Commission, Ohio Dept. of Higher Education, and the University of Cincinnati) to offer instruction to the students in the class. Supervising faculty must be listed (as supervisor or instructor) in any course/section overseen by a graduate teaching assistant.

Non-native speakers of English who are awarded teaching assistantships at the University of Cincinnati are required to score at least a 3.0 on the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT). The OEPT evaluates the spoken language skills of non-native speakers of English. Students who pass are certified for oral English proficiency and may assume the full range of duties associated with their teaching assistantship.

Students whose oral English proficiency has not been officially certified may not assume instructional responsibilities. However, students who score 26 or above on the speaking section of the TOEFL IBT or students with a score of 50 or above on the Test of Spoken English are

exempt from the OEPT. Students are required to take the test at the beginning of their first term of study. If a score is less than 3.0, students are recommended to take ESL courses before retaking the test. A student is permitted to take the OEPT twice without charge during an academic year.

Graduate Assistant/Fellow Health Insurance Awards

Academic programs are required to notify eligible students with information on the [Graduate Student Health Insurance \(GSHI\) award](#), which can subsidize the cost of [UC Student Health Insurance](#) for qualified students.

Programs must provide graduate assistants/fellows with the GSHI Award application deadline and relevant details on GSHI Award criteria, and must keep records that they have provided this information to their students. Such information can be found at the [Graduate Student Health Insurance Award web page](#).

Multiple Appointments/Employment

Graduate assistantship awardees who are domestic students are limited to 24 total hours of combined service and student hourly work while school is in session. The following policies regarding multiple appointments must be followed:

- Units are responsible for monitoring of hours worked by student employees assigned to their unit; this is especially important for students who hold multiple student appointments.
- The program must closely monitor academic progress.
- The additional appointment must be terminated if a student does not maintain academic progress deemed to be acceptable by the program.

This limit applies only while school is in session. During scheduled breaks only, if students work more than 20 hours or they work more than the prorated salary hours required, they must be compensated at an hourly rate for the extra work. Students can be employed for a maximum of 40 hrs/week during scheduled breaks.

International students are limited to working 20 hours per week while school is in session and are limited to 40 hours per week during scheduled breaks. All International Students must have onboarding conducted by the International Services Office. An international student on F-1 or J-1 immigration status contemplating employment should contact the International Student Services Office at 1-513-556-4278.

Summer Employment Without Full-time Enrollment

For summer semester **only**, students who are not registered for graduate credit hours or are registered for less than 12 credits hours are eligible to be employed by their respective program, usually by performing the duties of their assistantship such as teaching or lab work. In this case, the student will receive a stipend for the work performed. Retirement funds and taxes will be withheld from the student's check.

Questions about options with retirement funds once separated from the university should be directed to [Human Resources](#) and/or [OPERS](#).

No Sick Leave/Vacation for Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistants do not accrue vacation, sick leave or other paid time-off. In the event of illness, a graduate assistant shall notify the GA supervisor as soon as possible on each day of such absence.

Graduate Assistant Parental Leave

A graduate assistant may seek a leave of absence from their assistantship duties for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a minor child. A graduate assistant granted leave under this policy will continue to receive 100% of their assistantship stipend and their existing benefits remain in place (e.g., Graduate Student Health Insurance, enrollment status) for the duration of the leave, if the graduate assistant maintains their eligibility as set forth in this policy.

The length of the leave will be six academic calendar weeks or until the end of the graduate assistant's appointment, whichever comes first. In the case of a Caesarean section, the leave will be eight weeks. The leave cannot be taken intermittently and must be taken in its entirety at one time. In the event two graduate assistants seek leave for the same birth, placement of a newly adopted or fostered child, or initiation of travel to take custody of an adopted or fostered child, their leaves may be taken concurrently or consecutively, but the leave is not transferable from one graduate assistant to another graduate assistant. The number of children does not increase the length of the leave.

The graduate assistant's leave will commence upon the birth, placement of the newly adopted or fostered child in the graduate assistant's home, or initiation of travel by the graduate assistant to take custody of an adopted or fostered child. In the event two graduate assistants seek leave for the same birth, placement of a newly adopted or fostered child, or initiation of travel to take custody of an adopted or fostered child, one graduate assistant may commence their leave at any time up to six weeks and a day following the birth, placement of a newly adopted or fostered child, or initiation of travel to take custody of an adopted or fostered child.

The same appointment status (e.g., stipend, other benefits) shall be available to the graduate assistant following their leave if it would have otherwise been available. Assigned duties may be subject to change.

Eligibility

- A. A graduate assistant may request a leave of absence pursuant to this policy in the event of:
 - a. Birth of a child;
 - b. Legal adoption of a child under the age of 18; or
 - c. Foster care placement of a child under the age of 18 in the student's home, with the student legally identified as a foster parent.
- B. To be eligible to request leave under this policy a graduate assistant must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Must have completed a minimum of 60 consecutive calendar days on any graduate appointment (e.g., graduate assistantships for teaching, research, or programming; work study at the graduate level) at a minimum of 10 hours per week prior to the date that the leave is to commence; and
 - b. Must hold a current graduate assistantship during the semester in which the leave is to take place, for a minimum of 10 hours per week. Multiple graduate

appointments adding up to a minimum of 10 hours per week are also permissible.

- C. Graduate assistant requests for leave under this policy are subject to the approval of their graduate director and department head, each of whom may consider the academic and employment needs of the department and the graduate assistant's academic program when reviewing such a request.
- D. Graduate assistants funded by external agencies are subject to the terms and conditions of the appropriate agency, in addition to the conditions set forth in this policy.
- E. The graduate assistant must be making reasonable progress toward degree and be in good academic standing as determined by the graduate assistant's program director.
- F. The graduate assistant must be enrolled as a full-time student (i.e., at least 12 credit hours), unless a reduced course load has been pre-approved by the graduate assistant's program and the Graduate College.
- G. A graduate assistant may not be granted a leave under this policy within six calendar months of the end date of a previous leave granted under this policy.

Procedure

- A. The graduate assistant must submit the Parental Leave Policy request form to the Graduate College via [GradTracker](#) for approval, along with the following documentation:
 - a. For birth of a child: a note from a medical doctor on letterhead indicating an upcoming delivery.
 - b. For adoption or fostering of a minor child: legal notice of change of placement of the minor child to the student's home.
 - c. Graduate assistants should not submit any personal health information or other documentation that would violate [HIPAA](#).
- B. The request for a leave will subject to the review and approval of an Associate Dean of the Graduate College.
- C. Each graduate assistant seeking leave under this policy is responsible for submitting their own request form (i.e., graduate assistants seeking leave for the same birth, placement of a newly adopted or fostered child, or initiation of travel to take custody of an adopted or fostered child may not submit a single request form).
- D. When possible, the Parental Leave Policy request form should be submitted a month prior to the event to facilitate planning. Emergency leave requests will be considered.

Holidays/UC Closing Policy for Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistants are not hired as essential personnel, and thus cannot be required to work during holidays or official UC closings (such as emergency closings due to severe weather, public emergency, etc.). Required weekly hours will be prorated based on the official holidays or closings during that week.

Graduate Assistants on Jury Duty

All graduate students are encouraged to participate when they are subpoenaed for jury duty. The student must seek their advisor's and program director's permission with the expectation that every effort will be made to accommodate the jury service. If the student's absence from UC will create a hardship to the unit, they should seek a deferral or make arrangements to cover their responsibilities during the absence. Such arrangements must be approved by their program director. Students serving on jury duty will be paid their normal university stipend during the period of service, *with the understanding that any compensation received for jury service must be returned to the university if their assistantship responsibilities remain uncovered. If the student makes arrangements to cover their assistantship commitment for the period in which they serve on jury duty*, and if those arrangements are approved by their program director, they may keep the jury duty compensation in total. The student may also keep any travel reimbursement fees.

Military Duty

A graduate assistant who is a member of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, who is voluntarily or involuntarily ordered to extended U.S. military service, shall be granted time-off without pay. The graduate assistant should provide to the appropriate program official advance written notice of the call for impending training or active duty. Upon completion of military service or if discharged under honorable conditions, and upon prompt re-registration as a student, the graduate assistant shall be returned to the former assistantship in a timely manner, based upon availability.

Due to the temporary nature of graduate assistantships, if the assistantship is eliminated during the student's absence, then no obligation exists.

Strike Policy for Graduate Assistants

In the event of a strike, graduate assistants are expected to fulfill commitments associated with their assistantships. Graduate assistants assigned to teach a course as part of their assistantship agreement are expected to teach the course during a strike. Graduate assistants who choose not to teach can lose their assistantship. If the student's responsibilities are associated with a course taught by a faculty member and the strike results in the course not being taught, which makes it impossible for the student to fulfill their responsibilities, the student would not be held responsible.

Termination

A graduate assistantship may be terminated at any time with or without cause, unless there is an explicit written contract between the student and the university that provides otherwise.

Workers' Compensation

The Ohio Workers' Compensation Law covers graduate assistants, who are paid by payroll and provides medical, income and survivor benefits in the event of accidental injury, occupational disease or death occurring in the course of, and arising from, employment.

Unemployment

Graduate assistants are not entitled to unemployment compensation.

Social Security, Medicare Tax and Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS)

Please see [Exemption from OPERS/Medicare for Student Employees.](#)

174 GRADUATE CREDIT RULE

Students receiving any university award (e.g. UGA stipend, GS tuition scholarship) and students who receive funds from the State of Ohio are governed by the requirements and limitations described in the following paragraphs. Any student who becomes ineligible to receive state subsidy is not eligible to receive general funds financial aid (i.e., a university stipend and/or tuition). Since this policy is due to regulations governing state support of the university, exceptions to the policy are not considered.

Graduate students who have attempted 174 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati are not eligible for a university award for enrollment at or beyond the 174 hours. Hours attempted include hours for which credit has been awarded, as well as withdrawn courses, audited courses, and hours in progress or incomplete (these graduate credit hours include all courses with grades F, I, UW, SP, IP, UP, W, etc.). All graduate hours attempted at the University of Cincinnati, regardless of program or student status, count toward the 174 total.

A student is not eligible for funding beginning with the semester in which said student will reach the 174 attempted hours. For example, if a student has earned 167 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati by the close of summer sessions and registers for (i.e., attempts) 12 credit hours for fall semester, they are ineligible for a university graduate scholarship or fellowship in the fall semester.

If a student earned master's credits at the University of Cincinnati (for either a partial or a full degree), the exact number of these credits are deducted from the 174 credit hour total for which they can receive funding. This is true if the credits are earned at an earlier time and the student returns to the University of Cincinnati to continue graduate education, and it is true regardless of the discipline in which those credits were earned. For example, if a student has earned a master's degree in engineering and then chooses to pursue a master's and a doctoral degree in math, the credits earned to get the engineering degree are deducted from the 174 credit hours for which the student can receive state financial support (e.g., fellowships, assistantships, and scholarships).

Graduate students who have earned a master's degree or other equivalent or higher advanced degree at another institution are not eligible for a university scholarship or fellowship once they have attempted 140 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati. If a student enters the University of Cincinnati with a master's degree from any institution other than the University of Cincinnati, they are credited with 34 graduate credit hours toward the 174 credit hour limit for state funding eligibility. Per Ohio Department of Higher Education policy, Ohio can subsidize up to the remaining 140 credit hours. The 34 credit hours are deducted from the 174, regardless of the discipline and regardless of the graduate level at which the student enters the University of Cincinnati. For example, if a student has earned a master's degree in engineering at The Ohio State University and then chooses to pursue a master's and a doctoral degree in math at UC, the credits they earned to get their engineering degree are deducted from the 174 credit hours for which they can receive state financial support in the math program. Note that professional degrees, like a juris doctorate or medical doctorate, do not count as a master's or higher

equivalent for the purpose of comparative funding. Students who enter graduate education at the University of Cincinnati with a professional degree and no other advanced degrees are still eligible to receive up to the 174 credit hours of funding.

If a student enters the University of Cincinnati with only partial credit toward a degree from another institution, those credits are not deducted from the 174 total—even if the program they enter at the University of Cincinnati agrees to accept transfer of those credits toward the student's degree requirements at the University of Cincinnati. The student can still receive state subsidy for up to 174 credit hours earned at the University of Cincinnati beyond those transferred in.

Note: For the purposes of this policy, a master's degree is one awarded by an American institution or a degree of equivalent value from a foreign institution. Students holding a master's degree from a foreign institution that is the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in the U.S. will have the higher limit (174). The higher limit will not be affected by a student's completion of course work short of a master's degree at another institution.

TAXATION OF CINCINNATI GRADUATE AWARDS

The university maintains a position that all income, from whatever source, is taxable and may be subject to withholding. The IRS maintains final authority on the taxability of all stipends, and in all cases, the university cannot guarantee that any stipend is tax-exempt. The Graduate College will not review an individual award nor provide legal advice to individual students. In addition, students (not the university) are responsible for the withholding information that they submit on their W-4 forms at the time of appointment. Those students who receive a stipend during any academic semester and are not enrolled for at least half time will have Medicare tax and Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS) payments deducted from their checks. If a student is enrolled half time or more, they may apply for an exemption from these fees in their program office. No taxes are withheld from fellowships, but students may still have a tax liability and should consult a tax advisor.

EXEMPTION FROM OPERS FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Employees (including student employees) of Ohio public institutions do not contribute to the federal Social Security system. Student employees' retirement contributions will be directed to the state retirement plan, the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). Student employees (including graduate assistants and hourly student workers) may be eligible to opt out of OPERS participation when first hired by UC as long as certain requirements are met. See the [Student Employees web page on UC's Human Resources site](#) for the OPERS exemption form and for additional information.

EXTERNAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

Tuition scholarship and fellowship funding is provided to graduate students by a wide variety of governmental and private sponsors. UC's [Financial Aid website](#), the [ScholarshipUniverse scholarship search application](#), the [Office of Nationally Competitive Awards](#) and local and university libraries are potential sources of information about these funding opportunities. The [Office of Nationally Competitive Awards](#) provides workshops, application writing assistance and university endorsement (for applicable awards). Students may also visit the [Office of Research](#)

for more information on upcoming grant opportunities, grant writing workshops, and searchable research opportunity databases.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

See the [Student Financial Aid website](#) for more information on federal financial aid (including summer aid). The Graduate College does not regulate or audit any outside fellowships or other outside funding a student may receive. However, it is advised that students with outside funding consult with the Financial Aid Office to see if and how the outside funding may or may not affect other Financial Aid eligibility.

GRADUATE CREDIT AND GRADES

ELIGIBLE CREDITS

Credit towards a graduate degree or certificate can only be earned for those courses in this university that are listed as graduate in the [Schedule of Classes](#) or which have been approved in writing by appropriate program authority for including in the curriculum. Graduate credit towards a degree will only be granted when a course is included in the graduate career category of the student record in Catalyst.

CREDITS REQUIRED TO EARN A GRADUATE DEGREE

Graduate degrees at UC each have a stated number of credit hours that must be completed satisfactorily to earn the degree. As described below, there are multiple opportunities where coursework taken prior to matriculation into a degree program may count towards that credit hour total. In all cases, to earn a degree at UC, at least 67% of the relevant coursework credit must be earned while a matriculated student at the University of Cincinnati.

Students entering in Fall 2019 or later should make application to their program for such (advanced standing or transfer) credit during their first semester at UC to assure their course of study is optimized. For all students matriculating in Fall 2019 and later, such credit will only be granted if a complete and program-approved application for such credit is submitted to the Graduate College by the end of their first year in the program, or prior to their final semester of study, whichever comes first.

This policy introduced in AY19-20 is in effect for all students matriculated in Fall 2019 and later. In prior policies, master's degrees were granted when 50% of graduate credits were completed while matriculated in the graduate program granting the degree, therefore allowing up to 50% of credits to be via advanced standing.

Advanced Standing for Graduate Courses Taken Outside of UC

- a. Programs are permitted to award up to one third of the credits of a UC graduate program through advanced standing (e.g., 10 credits are eligible in a 30 credit hour program or 13 credits in a 40 credit hour program). The relevant number of credits is based on the minimum credits required to earn the advanced degree starting from the minimum degree qualification (usually a baccalaureate degree). Note that for doctoral students the advanced standing credit total will include any use of the ODHE allowance of up to 30 credits for a prior master's degree.
- b. Any graduate course credits, including those earned from previously earned graduate or undergraduate degrees, are eligible as advanced standing credits.
- c. Advanced standing can only be offered for courses (including electives) entered in e-curriculum for the UC program.
- d. Program faculty must evaluate courses for equivalence or comparability prior to granting students Advanced Standing credit for courses taken at another institution, meeting all the following criteria;
 1. Courses taken at a recognized University or College
 2. Courses taken at the graduate level
 3. Requested advanced standing credits must be the lower of the following two choices

- i. Credits originally earned for the course
 - ii. Credits available in the UC course listed in e-curriculum
- 4. For 1:1 course equivalency, one or more of the following criteria must be met when compared to the University of Cincinnati course for which Advanced Standing credit is sought:
 - i. Course was taken in the same field with the same title
 - ii. Course had similar topics
 - iii. Course had similar learning outcomes
 - iv. Course assignment and assessment requirements were similar
 - v. Course readings requirements are similar
- 5. This evaluation process should be documented for each case in which it is applied
- e. The one third rule doesn't apply to dual degrees, sequential master's to doctorate programs, or others with shared content that have received approval from the Graduate College.
- f. Advanced standing credit recommended by program faculty must first be approved by the graduate program director and then submitted for final review by the Graduate College to assure the request complies with the criteria above.

Transfer Credit for Graduate Courses Taken at UC

- a. When leaving one graduate program to join another at UC, all UC graduate credits taken as part of the incomplete program are eligible to use to fulfill requirements in the new program, based on faculty evaluation of the equivalence to courses in the new curriculum and program approval.
- b. When a student enters a graduate program at UC, non-matriculated UC graduate credits are eligible to be used for the program, if the coursework is listed in e-curriculum as part of the curricular requirements. Subject to program approval, students may transfer up to one third of the credits required to earn their UC graduate degree. Programs are permitted to award transfer credit from a prior UC graduate degree if (1) the sum of unique credits to earn both degrees is equal to or greater than the State minimums for each degree type, and (2) the transfer credit courses are part of the curriculum of the new degree program as defined in e-curriculum. Using credit that meets both criteria, up to one third of the credits of the new UC graduate program may be awarded through transfer credit. The relevant number of credits is based on the minimum credits required to earn the advanced degree starting from the minimum degree qualification (usually a baccalaureate degree). Note that for doctoral students the transfer credit total will include any use of the ODHE allowance of up to 30 credits for a prior master's degree.

Course Exemption for Prior Knowledge, Without Credit

Faculty in a program have the option to provide students with an examination to determine if accumulated knowledge is sufficient to be exempted from specific courses in a graduate curriculum (e.g., continuing education courses in some professional fields may provide a background that eliminates the need to take introductory courses). The form and content of that examination is at the discretion of the program. When such exemptions are granted, the student does not earn graduate credit for such knowledge. The credits required to complete their UC graduate degree remain unchanged, and the student will take alternative coursework (approved by the graduate program director) to advance their knowledge.

Multiple Degree Exemptions

- a. If the [graduate faculty](#) from a UC program has participated in designing and/or presenting the curriculum at another institution, shared degree programs between the institutions can deviate from these rules with prior approval of the Graduate College and their college leadership. In no case will a UC degree be awarded if more than 50% of the curriculum is offered by non-UC faculty.
- b. Dual degree programs can combine two UC graduate degrees into a single curriculum if approved by the University. Approved dual degree programs can share up to one-third of the combined credits of the two degrees, but the total count of unique credits to earn both degrees must always be equal to or greater than the State minimums for each degree type.

Enrolling in Non-UC Classes through the Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection

The University of Cincinnati is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection. GC3 classes are those not generally available at the University of Cincinnati but which can be used to satisfy degree requirements. The student must have met all tuition commitments at the University of Cincinnati and must observe all regulations of the host institution. For additional information, participating institutions, and registration instructions, consult the [Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection](#) page of the Registrar's Office website. Approval is at the discretion of the program.

Graduate Credit for Undergraduate Students

Any program may allow juniors or seniors to register for graduate courses for graduate credit before those students have completed the baccalaureate degree. It is recommended, if the program permits such registration, to limit the privilege to students with senior status and a grade point average of at least 3.000 (higher in some programs). This is evidenced by a written request from the student that is signed by an authorized member of the graduate program. Upon approval by the graduate program and the course instructor, graduate credit will be given for the courses. A maximum of 12 semester graduate credits can be earned in this manner. Credit will not be given toward both graduate and undergraduate degrees for the same course.

Graduate Credit Earned in 6000-Level Courses

In fall 2016, all 6000-level courses became graduate only. In the past, 6000-level courses were available for either undergraduate or graduate credit (to earn graduate credit, students selected the graduate level designation (G) in these courses, indicating that additional work was required beyond that required of undergraduates in the course). PLEASE NOTE: with the transition to the new use of course numbers, there will be no change to the graduate (or undergraduate) credits earned previously in the pre-fall-2016 version of these courses.

GRADING

Final Exams

Exams are held during the last week of the semester after classes have ended. For each term's full final examination schedule, consult the [Calendars page](#) of the Registrar's Office website.

Make-up Final Exams

Special policies may govern the taking of missed final exams. Students and faculty members should check the college office or program office for specific details. Every student is responsible for the material presented in their class. **Arrangements for make-up work and tests are determined by the instructor.** Absences incurred by students officially representing the university will be excused, provided that official notification of such absence has been given in advance to the instructor.

Grade Reports

End-of-term final grades may be viewed in the Catalyst student portal immediately following submission of final grades by the instructor. Grade reports include total graduate hours and hours for the current semester. The student's grade report differentiates between "units taken" (course credits the student enrolled in but did not complete successfully or which are still pending a final grade) and "credits passed" (course credits successfully completed with a final grade other than F). These values are posted on the student's transcript as attempted hours and earned hours. A graduate grade point average (GPA) is calculated each semester. Approved transfer credits from other institutions are included in the sum of credits earned, but grades for those credits are not included in the GPA. All graduate work, regardless of the University of Cincinnati college in which the work was done, is accumulated in these tallies. For this reason, if a student record includes UC graduate courses that do not count towards the degree, this GPA may differ from the calculation of GPA in program coursework (a minimum 3.000 program GPA is essential to earn a graduate degree).

The I incomplete grade is awarded as a course grade (without grade point assignment) at the end of a term when a significant portion of course work has been satisfactorily completed, but not all of the required course work has been completed. The incomplete grade is appropriate when the completed course work is of passing quality and the student has had such hardship that completion of the remaining course work within the term timeline would present an additional hardship.

The instructor who assigns the incomplete grade should set a specific date by which the student must complete the remaining course work, recognizing that time must be available for any final evaluation and grade change to be made, prior to the deadline when the grade converts to an F. The deadline is one year to the last day of exams. (Please check the Office of the Registrar's website for the specific date.) The student must work with the instructor to develop an agreement that indicates the date by which the remaining course work is to be completed and submitted to the instructor. The instructor is not obligated to provide the student with a full year to complete the remaining course work. If the remaining course work is completed within the time period agreed upon by the instructor and the student, and that completion occurs within the one year, then the instructor will submit a change of grade online (in Catalyst) based on the quality of the remaining work. If no specific time for completion is set by the instructor, the student has one year (from the end of the term in which the incomplete was assigned) to complete the remaining course work and submit it to the instructor in time for evaluation of the work and a final grade to be approved by the Registrar. If the coursework is not completed within the one-year period (i.e., one year from the end of the term in which the I grade was assigned), the I grade automatically converts to an I/F grade which affects the student's GPA the same as the grade of F.

For the complete graduate grading scale and a definition of all grades, consult the [Grading Scales and Definitions page](#) of the Registrar's Office website.

Grades Assigned to Research Courses That Are Repeated

If students are working on dissertation or thesis research, they should be registered in the appropriate research course (e.g., Individual Dissertation or Individual Master's Thesis), and the course work should be given a final grade each semester. **The use of P/F for such courses is strongly recommended** to avoid undue influence on GPA due to individual grading practices and the large amount of research credit awarded, but it is recognized that some programs will want to use letter grades. "Placeholder" grades such as SP and NG should not be used.

Regardless of the grading scheme selected, it must be consistently applied across an entire program. If a program faculty cannot agree on a single grading scheme, the program must use the P/F choice. Students should be graded for each semester based on their progress and achievements in that semester.

Note: The definition of a "research course" is a course outside of formal class work or instruction that allows a student to be registered as a graduate student while they are working independently on their thesis or dissertation under the guidance of their advisor or dissertation committee. This policy also applies to internships and other multiple semester or series courses.

Pass/Fail Grades

An instructor may request approval for pass/fail grading for an individual student in their class prior to the first day of class. A graduate student can take a course on a pass/fail basis (P or U grade) when approved by their advisor and instructor. An instructor is not required to accept a student on such a basis.

Grade Changes

A change of grade is only appropriate for an I, an NG, an SP/UP, or an error made by the instructor. SP/UP grades must be converted to a final grade by the end of the following semester. Instructors may change an I or NG grade online in Catalyst for approximately one year (the interval extends from the initial grading semester to the last working day of the same term the following year). To request a change of grade for a non-research course for graduate credit after this period, or an F grade any time, the instructor must do an official, paper change of grade form and forward to the Registrar's Office.

Previously recorded grades may not be changed to W or I after the close of the term. Both I and W grades must be awarded while the course and semester are still in progress and cannot be awarded retroactively. W reflects an official withdrawal that took place by the [deadline outlined in the academic calendar](#), and I indicates work remains to be completed and the student did not earn a final grade. **Students cannot withdraw from a class retroactively or be given additional opportunities to seek a different final grade retroactively.** If an F is in a non-required course or the required course has since been retaken for a passing grade, the Program Director at certification may request a waiver of the F grade from the Associate University Dean of the Graduate College.

No Grade Replacements for Graduate Students

Please note, if a graduate student re-registers and re-takes a course, both grades will be included in the student's overall GPA. There are no grade replacements at the graduate level. The process to make a grade change cannot be initiated by a student. The course instructor of record **must** send the form. At no time should a student be in possession of a change of grade

form. Note: that an I/F grade is governed by the same policies that govern the F grade and is weighted into the student's GPA in the same fashion.

MAINTAINING GRADUATE STUDENT STATUS

Maintaining graduate student status signifies that the student is actively engaged in making progress towards their degree and meeting program requirements. Graduate status determines which students may use facilities of the university, may participate in the university governance process and student organizations, and are covered by the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the grievance process. A University of Cincinnati graduate student must hold the equivalent of a baccalaureate or higher degree and must have been accepted for admission into graduate study by the appropriate graduate program.

MINIMUM CREDITS/REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To maintain graduate status at the University of Cincinnati, students must register at UC for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) in an academic year. If the student is registered for at least one graduate credit in the academic year (fall through summer), they will maintain graduate student status for the entire academic year. Credits that are audited or in which a student receives a W, UW or F do not count toward the minimum credit requirement. Any student that does not register in the fall of an academic year and has not registered for the previous two academic years will automatically be exited from their program. A student whose status has thus automatically terminated will no longer be considered a graduate student but may seek reinstatement (see [Reinstatements](#)). Also note that students wishing to use many UC resources, such as university housing, campus laboratories, office space, equipment, campus recreation center, computer labs, etc. may need to be registered. Students should check with specific facilities for their particular requirements.

Dual Degree Programs

In dual degree programs, students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements in one of the two programs (as determined by the program) during the academic year in which they graduate with their dual degrees.

FULL-TIME COURSE LOAD

Students must be registered for 10 or more graduate credits each semester to be considered full-time students, 12 if holding a university sponsored graduate assistantship or fellowship. Audit or undergraduate credits do not count toward full-time status and cannot be supported by a University Graduate Award.

PART-TIME COURSE LOAD

Students who can devote less than full time to graduate study may register for the number of graduate credits judged by their program advisors to represent the appropriate fraction of a full-time load. However, doctoral students must satisfy the Board of Trustees residency requirement, which requires that they have one year of full-time study, which is defined as being enrolled for at least 10 graduate credits in their program in each of two semesters (including summer semester) during a span of three consecutive semesters. Full-time UC employees using their tuition remission benefit to complete a part-time doctoral program may request a waiver of this requirement from the Associate Dean of the Graduate College. (See [Doctoral Degrees Policies and Procedures, Course of Study](#).)

REDUCED COURSE LOAD (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS)

Once an international student has finished all required course work and will no longer be enrolling full time, she/he may choose to enroll with a reduced course load. Visit the [F-1 Students page on the UC International Services website](#), referring to the “Enrolling part-time as a graduate student who has finished all course requirements” section for the link to the form and more information.

MEETING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students who continue on active status in their program without interruption are responsible for meeting all current requirements, including requirements that are revised since the student first entered the program. *Students readmitted into their program are responsible for meeting the program requirements applicable at the time of readmission.*

MINIMUM ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The Graduate College requires that a student must have an aggregate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.000 to obtain a graduate certificate or degree at the University of Cincinnati. The GPA used for this purpose should aggregate graduate-level coursework completed since the student's matriculation into the particular degree program from which the student seeks graduation, and only courses taken that are applicable to the degree/certificate count towards this GPA. Transfer graduate credits may also be accepted at the discretion of the degree program (and within Graduate College limits), and any transfer credit coming from courses taken at the University of Cincinnati will contribute to the GPA certified for graduation. Please note that **programs establish minimum academic standards that may exceed the overall university standards provided above**, so students need to be aware of their program requirements.

Note that there is no grade replacement for graduate students, so any failed graduate courses remain in the student record. However, if a student retakes a failed course and obtains a passing grade, and if the GPA calculated without that original failing grade is above 3.000, then the program can petition the Graduate College for a waiver of the GPA requirement for graduation. Multiple failing grades, or multiple attempts to pass a course, are examples of why a petition may be denied.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, MAINTAINING IMMIGRATION STATUS

The student has responsibility for maintaining their immigration status. Key information on maintaining immigration status on the [F-1 Students page on the UC International Services website](#).

TIME TO DEGREE

Time to Degree and Extensions

The Board of Trustees stipulates that all degree requirements must be completed within a defined span of years starting from the date of matriculation into the degree program, regardless of whether students are full time or part time. This span is 5 years for the master's degree and 9 years for the doctoral degree. Under extenuating circumstances, a program may petition, on

behalf of the student, for extension of the time limit for attaining the degree. Prior to the program petitioning the Graduate College for an extension, the student must communicate with the student's program advisor and/or director to review the student's degree completion to date and form a plan for degree completion. All this information should be included in a petition submitted to the Graduate College, which will review this petition and make a final decision.

Students who have not completed degree requirements by their time-to-degree limit are on inactive status regardless of course registration in each academic year. Such students are required to apply for an extension of their time-to-degree.

Reinstatements

Students who have not been registered for at least one graduate credit hour at UC that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) in an academic year (fall-summer) are considered inactive. Reinstatements are available to students who have been inactive for **less than three academic years**. Students who have not been enrolled for any credits in their graduate program for three or more consecutive academic years are not eligible for reinstatement and must apply for readmission to the university. (See [Readmission](#).) Readmission is processed via the reinstatement petition in Gradtracker. Applications submitted by the student via the admissions system will not be accepted.

To request reinstatement, a program must petition the Graduate College on behalf of the student. Prior to the program petitioning the Graduate College for a reinstatement, the student must communicate with the student's program advisor and/or director to review the student's degree completion to date and form a plan for degree completion. The program coordinator, director or advisor will begin the reinstatement process in Gradtracker. The originator of the petition in Gradtracker will upload documents in one pdf to include degree completion information to date and a written plan for degree completion. The Graduate College will review the packet and if approved the student will also need to approve the petition and fee.

If a student wishes to be reinstated so they can register and take classes, reinstatement petitions must be submitted in Gradtracker prior to the start of the first day of the term to be eligible for reinstatement in that term. Petitions received before the census date (the 15th calendar day of the term), the term may be considered for the current term. Petitions received after the census date will be considered for the following term.

If a student wishes to be reinstated so they can graduate without taking any further classes, petitions for reinstatement (and extensions) must be submitted in Gradtracker no later than 3 weeks prior to graduation for the student to be certified for graduation in that semester. Petitions received after this time will not be approved in time for graduation that same semester. Late petitions will be held through the next processing period and a decision will be granted in time for the next graduation.

A reinstatement fee equal to the current tuition for one graduate credit for each of the unregistered years up to a maximum of 3 years is assessed. The reinstatement fee will be added to the student's bursar account and will become part of the student bill. Reinstatement fees are due 30 days after formal approval unless a payment plan is agreed to with the bursar's office. If the fee is not paid by the due date, service charges may accrue, a block may be placed on future registrations and/or on the release of UC diplomas and official transcripts, and the account may be sent to collections.

Readmission

Graduate students who have been inactive (not enrolled in their program) for **three or more academic years** are not eligible for reinstatement and must apply for readmission to the university. Readmission does not change the student's **original entry date**. Time to degree will be calculated from the student's first entry date. The program may petition the Graduate College on behalf of the student for readmission. Additionally, if the student has exceeded time to degree limits, the program should also petition for an extension with the readmission to specify the term in which the student will graduate.

The readmission process is an opportunity for the program to carefully consider the former student's progress and length of time between the student's inception into the program and completion of remaining requirements. This may result in readmission, readmission with conditions, or denial of readmission.

Prior to the program petitioning for a readmission, the student must communicate with the student's program advisor and/or director to review the student's degree completion to date and form a written plan for completing remaining degree requirements and removing any standing impediments to graduation, including any I/F, F, NG grades and courses required for graduation. This plan should include a timeline that describes the student's progress toward degree completion to date.

The program coordinator, director or advisor will begin the readmission process in Gradtracker and will upload documents in one pdf to include degree completion information to date and a written plan for degree completion. The Graduate College will review the packet and if approved, the student will need to approve the petition and fee as well. Upon approval, the student must pay a readmission fee equivalent to in-state tuition in effect at the time of readmission for three graduate credits.

The student will also be asked to complete, sign, and return the supplemental form for residency requirements to the Registrar's office.

Leaves of Absence

Under special circumstances, graduate students may apply for leave of absence from formal study at the university for a specific period up to one year. Assuming appropriate documentation is provided, the circumstances justifying a leave include but are not limited to personal or family medical conditions, call to active military duty, parental leave, or death in immediate family. The rationale must be documented by the applicant.

An approved leave of absence preserves the student's status in the degree program, and the time off will not be counted against the time limits for awarding degrees. Consequently, registration is not required during the leave period. A leave may be renewed past the first year, for up to a maximum of five years, depending on the individual circumstances. Renewal of a leave is subject to the approval of the program, college, and the Graduate College.

While the Graduate College leave of absence is only necessary for students who will be unable to register for a full academic year, programs may have more strict and specific registration policies and leave of absence policies. Students should also consult their program handbook if there is a legitimate need not to register for any amount of time.

To apply for a leave of absence, a student must complete the [Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) and upload the appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's letter or military orders) through Gradtracker. The program will approve through Gradtracker as well. Once the program has approved the request, the Graduate College will review the petition and if approved, the student and program will receive an email notification through their UC email.

Note: A student on a leave of absence is placed on inactive status and their Catalyst record is discontinued, to be reactivated upon their return. While on inactive status, they will not be eligible for student health insurance and may be unable to use many UC resources. Students with financial aid or student loans should confer with the Financial Aid Office prior to requesting a leave of absence to ascertain the consequences of a leave on their loan status. Students should also be aware that any scholarships or assistantships are not guaranteed to be available when a student returns from a leave of absence.

Withdrawal from Program

Students must notify their program in writing. The program will then submit the "Request to Close CPP Stack (Discontinue)" form in Slate on their behalf on their admissions record.

Dismissal from Program

Students must consult with individual programs concerning dismissal policies. If a program dismisses a student, the program must also submit the "Request to Close CPP Stack (Discontinue)" form in Slate.

MASTER'S DEGREE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COURSE OF STUDY

The course of study for the master's degree is planned with the advisor and is subject to approval by the program graduate committee or its equivalent. It must show a reasonable degree of concentration on interrelated subjects.

Programs will recommend students for degrees only after students have developed and demonstrated the necessary knowledge and skills and have fulfilled all other university requirements. At least once an academic year, the graduate program director or the graduate student's advisor shall inform the student in writing of their academic progress in the master's degree program. An annual Academic Progress Report or some other form of formal evaluation of progress is required throughout each student's program.

Students must take a minimum of one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) per academic year (fall-summer) to maintain active status. If a student does not maintain active status, they may apply for reinstatement within three years or apply for readmission to their program thereafter. There are fees associated with these steps. (See [Maintaining Graduate Student Status](#), [Reinstatements](#) and [Readmission](#).)

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

The University of Cincinnati is on a semester system. Although qualification for the master's degree is not based exclusively upon the completion of a definite number of hours of course work, the satisfactorily completed graduate work must consist of the equivalent of a minimum of one academic year of full-time graduate study consisting of at least 30 graduate semester credit hours, including any thesis or capstone project.

Credits earned in professional law or medicine programs are not applicable to the 30-credit minimum.

CANDIDACY

There is no formal candidacy status for the master's degree. However, some programs do have defense requirements, so each student should confer with their advisor or program director to ascertain the requirements of their specific program.

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE: THESES and CAPSTONES

Every degree requires a culminating experience that is designed to integrate and apply the knowledge and learning gained from the curriculum, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter in the degree. A master's thesis is required by some programs, and a master's capstone project/experience is required in others. Each master's degree student undergoes an individual evaluation process at the end of their program.

Thesis Preparation, Evaluation and Submission Process

Preparation of a thesis demonstrates the student's ability to communicate and to evaluate critically. Information about [preparing an electronic thesis](#) is available on the Graduate College

website. The student should consult with their program office for additional forms required other than what appears on the graduation checklist.

A student must note any relevant deadlines defined by their program, and work with their program leadership to form a thesis committee composed of at least two UC faculty members, at least one of whom must be a member of the [university graduate faculty](#). The thesis committee can guide the student in their exploration of the topic of the master's thesis, and is responsible for final evaluation of the thesis. The student must submit the completed thesis to the thesis committee for critical evaluation, by the deadline required by the program or their thesis committee. Students who have written a thesis are expected by the Graduate College per their program requirements to make a public announcement of their thesis defense, including time, date, and title of the public presentation. The format for thesis evaluation is decided by the academic unit offering the graduate degree.

Faculty with emerit status may remain on the committee if they were members when the proposal was accepted and were full-time tenured, university graduate faculty. A faculty member originally on a student's committee who leaves UC to take an academic position elsewhere may also continue to serve on the student's committee if both the faculty member and the student agree to continue the relationship. However, neither an emerit professor nor a faculty member from another institution may serve as chair of the committee, since they are no longer eligible to be university graduate faculty.

Once a thesis has been approved by their committee, the candidate for the master's degree must submit an electronic thesis by following the current instructions online at the [Graduate College's Graduation page](#). Be careful to adhere to any deadlines for submission, or graduation will be delayed.

Capstone Process

Master's students who are not required to complete a thesis should consult their academic programs about the requirements and procedures for the capstone experience in their programs.

In some programs, the final capstone event may be in the form of a comprehensive exam or research project; in others, the final evaluation may appropriately be a recital, performance, or exhibition. The specific nature of the final evaluation is determined by the academic unit offering the master's degree program, but it must include evaluation by full-time faculty at the University of Cincinnati. If questioned, the appropriateness of a final evaluation will be decided by the University Graduate Council.

GRADUATION

One semester prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduating, the student should:

- confer with their program office staff;
- consult the [Graduate College's website](#) for deadlines, instructions on submitting their electronic thesis;
- visit the [Graduate College's website](#) to determine if they are defined as a thesis or non-thesis student, or consult with their program; and
- talk to advisor about whether an embargo is needed.

Application to Graduate

Students must: (1) complete academic requirements and (2) complete the official online [Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline for the semester in which they expect to graduate.

NOTE: for all graduate students, the application for graduation is started at the [Graduation page](#), and not within Catalyst.

Start an application for graduation early in the semester you plan to graduate. Deadlines posted on the [Graduation Deadlines page](#) are firm and failure to meet them will delay students' graduation until the following semester, when they must then submit a new application for their revised graduation date. A student graduating from a dual degree program must make a formal application for graduation for each program (see details in next section).

All students applying to graduate will be assessed a non-refundable graduation application fee. The fee will be assessed each semester a student applies for graduation. Students who have applied for graduation and learn later they will not be graduating must be removed from the graduation list before they can apply again for any future semesters (**programs must notify the Graduation Program Manager to remove a student**).

When the application for graduation is complete, the student receives an email receipt for payment of the graduation application from the registrar's office. If this receipt is not received, promptly notify your program, as your graduation application may not be completed.

Some PhD programs incorporate a master's degree. Students should contact their program for help in adding this additional degree.

Graduation from Dual Degree Programs

The online [Application to Graduate](#) will allow a student to apply for graduation from both degree programs in an official dual degree program.

Each of the two programs must follow and complete the certification processes and procedures necessary to facilitate a student's graduation from their own program.

In dual degree programs, students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements in one of the two programs (as determined by the program) during the academic year in which they graduate with their dual degrees.

Certification for Graduation (Certify Online)

The finalization and submission of a student's Application to Graduate will activate the process by which the student will be certified for graduation, and the following requirements must be met. The student should confer with their program office one-two weeks after the application period has ended to assure that any problems related to these requirements (reinstatements/ extensions, or grade changes) are resolved in a timely manner and avoid delay of graduation until a subsequent semester.

Specifically, the student's records will be reviewed to verify satisfaction of the following requirements:

- finalization and submission of their online [Graduation Application](#) by the deadline;

- instructor's submission of passing grades for their final semester credits;
- removal of all I grades from their transcript;
- removal of all UP/SP grades from unapproved courses and/or the final semester in the approved courses were taken;
- assignment of letter grades rather than UP/SP grades for courses in the final semester of the student's program;
- removal of previously awarded NG grades and blank grade awards;
- confirmation of satisfactory repetition or waiver of required courses in which an F was originally received;
- confirmation of completion of work and changes of I grades within the one-year limit;
- confirmation that the student was registered for at least one credit in their graduate program in each academic year, including the year of expected graduation;
- confirmation that the student completed degree requirements within the prescribed time-to-degree;
- satisfactory completion of at least 30 graduate credits completed to the satisfaction of the student's program;
- completion of all program requirements for the degree;
- 3.000 GPA has been earned while a matriculated graduate student in the program;
- if a thesis is required, upload the electronic thesis (ETD) with chair approval by the deadline date, which is posted on the [Graduation Deadlines website](#).

Note: The requirements explained here are university requirements. Students must contact their program's office for any additional program-level requirements or deadlines that must be completed prior to graduation.

Please see the [Doctoral Hooding and Master's Recognition Ceremony](#) section for details on the event.

CONTINUING TO A DOCTORAL PROGRAM

For a UC master's student continuing to a doctoral program in the same program area, the student will fill out the application in the [graduate admissions application system](#), and the graduate application fee is waived.

DOCTORAL DEGREE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COURSE OF STUDY

The course of study for the doctoral degree is arranged with each student by their advisor and reviewed by the program's graduate committee or its equivalent. The program should provide a concentration and breadth of study for the student to develop competence in research, scholarship, teaching, and professional performance in general, with knowledge of their chosen specialty in relation to allied branches of learning. A written assessment of performance for each doctoral student is required at the end of their first year; an annual Academic Progress Report or some other form of formal evaluation of progress is required throughout each student's program.

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

The doctoral degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study. Individual program requirements vary, but eligibility for graduation typically requires a minimum of 90 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree. Doctoral students with a prior master's degree may petition their program to allow up to 30 transfer credits from the master's degree towards their doctoral degree. Degree credits must include at least 7 hours in dissertation research. Some program credit requirements may be higher.

The last 30 credits must be completed under the direction of University of Cincinnati [graduate faculty](#). The degree will not be granted solely on the basis of the accumulation of the required number of credits. A program will recommend students for degrees only after they have developed the necessary intellectual maturity and have fulfilled all other requirements of the program and the university.

RESIDENCY AS FULL-TIME STUDENT

Prior to admission to doctoral candidacy, all doctoral students shall complete a residency requirement by enrolling in 10 graduate credit hours (12 if funded by a [Graduate Assistantship](#)) per semester for two out of three consecutive semesters of study (including summer). Part-time students are not exempt from enrollment requirements to achieve residency. However, full-time UC employees using their tuition remission benefit to complete a part-time doctoral program may request a waiver of this requirement from the Associate Dean of the Graduate College.

CANDIDACY, QUALIFYING EXAM

The Graduate College does not currently track time to candidacy, but encourages programs to implement candidacy exams early in their programs to allow the students optimal feedback on their aspirations and research. Doctoral students are required to complete a program certification process according to the program's established standards. The student must have at least a 3.000 grade point average in doctoral coursework and fulfill all other pre-candidacy requirements specified by the doctoral program in which the student is enrolled. Upon completion of these requirements, the student will receive a formal letter from the Graduate College informing the student of admission to candidacy.

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE FACULTY ROLE

In accordance with the university's [Board of Trustees' rule \(50-77-11\)](#) (B) (2), only university graduate faculty are permitted to chair thesis or dissertation committees. The Graduate College appropriately identifies members of the university graduate faculty.

Faculty members are nominated for graduate-faculty status by the program most closely aligned with the academic unit holding their primary academic appointment, and with the approval of their college dean or associate dean in charge of graduate education (from whom the nomination should arrive to the Graduate College). Faculty members holding any type of faculty appointment may be eligible for college-initiated nomination to the graduate faculty, the decision to be made based on an evaluation of the individual curriculum vitae and research and creative profile of the nominee. Criteria for nomination are formulated by individual programs and used by the Graduate College in adjudication.

DISSERTATION

Each PhD and EdD student must produce and defend a dissertation showing high scholarly achievement based on their original research. The student is required to submit an electronic document as evidence of this research. Students in all other doctoral programs should consult their academic programs regarding requirements and procedures for the capstone experience required in their programs.

Dissertation Advisor and Committee

When the student has been admitted into doctoral candidacy and has selected a dissertation subject and dissertation advisor, a dissertation committee should be appointed as soon as possible. The dissertation advisor must be qualified to serve as the chair of the dissertation committee, meaning this faculty member must be a member of the [university graduate faculty](#) and all members of the committee will be appointed by the Graduate College upon recommendation of the program director or director of graduate studies (in consultation with the committee chair and student). Students have the right to request a change in the committee but must do so in consultation with the graduate program director and their program must make the change in GradTracker. Preferably, the dissertation committee will include at least one person from outside the program, who might be faculty from the University of Cincinnati or another institution.

A dissertation committee must be composed of a minimum of three UC faculty members. Members of the university graduate faculty are eligible to serve on all thesis and dissertation committees. In addition, all tenured and tenure-track faculty members may serve on all thesis and dissertation committees (even if they are not members of the university graduate faculty, meaning they may not serve in the chair role and cannot act as primary advisors). Other types of UC faculty members may serve on committees if the appointing unit demonstrates that their expertise is beneficial for the dissertation project. Programs should make such requests to the Graduate College in advance, to be ascertained on a case-by-case basis.

Neither an emerit faculty member nor a faculty member from another institution may serve as the chair of the committee. Emerit faculty may remain on the committee if they were members when the proposal was accepted. A faculty member originally on a student's committee who leaves UC to take an academic position elsewhere may also continue to serve on the student's committee if both the faculty member and the student agree to continue the relationship. If a non-UC faculty member or appropriate professional practitioner has special expertise in a dissertation topic,

such a person may be added to the dissertation committee if they are nominated by the candidate and approved by both the chairperson of the dissertation committee, the director of graduate studies for the academic unit involved and the Graduate College. All such individuals serve as a full voting member of the dissertation committee without compensation from either the university or the candidate and would serve in addition to the minimum number of three qualified full-time UC faculty.

A copy of the completed dissertation must be submitted to each committee member for critical evaluation, with sufficient time for review as determined by the dissertation committee. If it is considered satisfactory with respect to form and content by the committee, a final defense of the dissertation can be scheduled.

Final Defense of Dissertation

Students should check with their program office for the final deadline for their dissertation defense. The student's final defense of the dissertation will be open to the public and all members of the academic community. Students are required to enter details of their dissertation defense, such as time, date, and location, online at the Graduate College website through the Graduation checklist steps. Begin at the [Graduation webpage](#). One can also browse scheduled dissertation defenses by visiting the [Upcoming Dissertation Defenses page](#).

The candidate answers questions posed by members of the committee and other members of the audience following an oral presentation of their dissertation. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee will withdraw, make a decision with regard to the acceptability of the dissertation and its defense, and report its decision to the candidate. At least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the voting members of the dissertation committee (including at least one representative of each major area involved, in the case of interdisciplinary programs) must approve the dissertation.

When the student's dissertation committee chair has approved a defense, the student should assure that they have met all requirements for graduation including those in the graduation information obtained online.

Use of a Moderator

Although an outside moderator is not required, a moderator may be assigned by the Graduate College dean upon the request of the candidate, the chairperson of the dissertation committee, or the person empowered to approve the composition of a dissertation committee (the director of graduate studies for the academic unit involved). Moderators should be members of the [university graduate faculty](#) from outside the academic unit involved. The duties of the moderator are limited to observing the oral defense of the dissertation and reporting in writing to the Graduate College dean on the academic propriety of the proceedings.

Submission of Dissertation

After a dissertation has been approved, the candidate for the doctoral degree must submit their electronic dissertation by following the current instructions found at the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information webpage](#). Students in all other doctoral programs should consult their academic programs for the capstone experience required in their programs. Deadlines are posted at the [Graduation Deadlines page](#).

- All thesis/dissertations must be electronically submitted by the student and approved by the advisor. Students log in via the link available on the [Graduation webpage](#).

- Advisors are sent an email when the student submits for their approval, and the advisor then logs in to review/approve.
- Once approved by the chair, the student is notified by email.
- A Graduate College approval email is sent to the student once reviewed.
- The program is copied on all email correspondence during the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) approval process.

GRADUATION

One semester prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduating, the student should:

1. Confer with their program office staff.
2. Consult the [Graduation page](#) on the Graduate College's website for deadlines, instructions on submitting their electronic dissertation, and doctoral hooding ceremony information.
3. Talk to advisor about whether an embargo is needed.

Application to Graduate

Students must: (1) complete academic requirements and (2) complete the official online [Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline for the semester in which they expect to graduate. Deadlines are firm and failure to meet them will delay students' graduation until the following semester, when they must then submit a new application for their revised graduation date.

All students applying to graduate will be assessed a ***non-refundable graduation application fee***. The fee will be assessed each semester a student applies for graduation.

Dual Degree Programs Graduation

The online [Application to Graduate](#) will allow a student to apply for graduation from both degree programs in a dual degree program. Each of the two programs must follow the certification processes and procedures necessary to facilitate the student's graduation from their own program.

In dual degree programs, students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements in one of the two programs (as determined by the program) during the academic year in which they graduate with dual degrees.

Graduation Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Students must be registered for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) during the academic year in which they graduate from that program. Doctoral students must also complete degree requirements within a nine-year period unless they have an approved extension (see [Maintaining Graduate Student Status, Time to Degree](#)). They should contact their program offices for any additional program requirements or deadlines to be completed prior to graduation.

Certification for Graduation (Certify Online)

Finalization and submission of a student's Application to Graduate will activate the process by which the student will be certified for graduation, and the following requirements have been met.

The student should confer with their program office one-two weeks after the application period has ended to assure that any problems related to these requirements are resolved in a timely manner and avoid delay of graduation until a subsequent semester.

Specifically, the student's records will be reviewed to verify satisfaction of the following requirements:

- finalization and submission of their [online Application to Graduate](#) by the deadline;
- instructor's submission of passing grades for final semester credits;
- removal of all I grades from transcript;
- Removal of previously earned NG grades and blank grade awards - removal of all UP/SP grades from unapproved courses and/or the final semester in which the courses were taken;
- assignment of letter grades rather than UP/SP grades for courses in the final semester of the student's program;
- confirmation of satisfactory repetition or waiver of required courses in which an F was originally received;
- confirmation of completion of work and changes of I grades within the one-year limit;
- confirmation that the student was registered for at least one credit in the graduate program in each academic year, including the year of expected graduation;
- confirmation that the student reached candidacy and has a valid dissertation committee;
- degree requirements completed within prescribed time-to-degree;
- satisfactory completion of sufficient graduate credits. In general, doctoral degrees require at least 7 research credits (many programs have higher requirements), within a total of at least 90 graduate credits for students who do not have a prior master's degree, or require a total of at least 60 credits for students beyond the master's degree. Please note that individual program credit requirements can vary widely.
- completion of all program requirements for the degree;
- 3.000 GPA has been earned while matriculated in the graduate program;
- if a dissertation is required, upload the electronic dissertation (ETD), following the instructions on the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information page](#), for chair approval by the deadline.

Note: The requirements explained here are university requirements. Students must contact their program office for any additional program-level requirements or deadlines that must be completed prior to graduation.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE VERIFICATION FOR UC TRANSCRIPT ENDORSEMENT

In order for students to have their UC transcript endorsed with an earned certificate, students must [apply for graduation](#) and the program must approve the record through certify online just like the master's or doctoral students.

DOCTORAL HOODING AND MASTER'S RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Doctoral and master's students who are graduating or who have graduated during the academic year will receive an invitation from the Dean of the Graduate College to participate in the university's prestigious Doctoral Hooding and Master's Recognition Ceremony held each semester. **Please visit the [commencement ceremony's website](#) for up-to-date details or**

the [**Graduate College's Graduation webpage**](#). This is a joyous occasion in which students celebrate their accomplishment with family and friends as they are recognized by faculty and university leadership. Doctoral participants will be adorned with their hoods during the ceremony, by either their faculty mentor or the dean of their college.

Graduates must confirm their intent to participate by reserving a seat online for the celebratory event and providing current home and email addresses for notification purposes. If you wish to be hooded by your faculty mentor, discuss the date with them to make sure they can attend.

INSTITUTIONAL RULES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

PROGRAM STANDARDS

This Graduate Handbook clarifies minimum university-level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students throughout the University of Cincinnati. Beyond these, each student is also expected to adhere to requirements, policies, and procedures specific to their own degree program and college.

All graduate programs must publish in writing in accessible format the minimum academic standards for each graduate program offered, including the following:

- minimum grade point average, including grades earned in required courses;
- acceptable grade distribution, including grades earned in required courses;
- nature and number of programmatic examinations, such as preliminary or qualifying, and the consequences of failing all or part of each examination;
- specified research requirements;
- a time-related definition of normal progress for all full- and part-time students;
- standards and procedures for the mandatory annual review of academic performance;
- standards and procedures for probation, suspension, and dismissal from the program.

RECORDS PRIVACY, FERPA, AND THE RIGHT TO REVIEW

The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**, is the federal law that governs the release of and access to student education records. FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. For the complete FERPA information, consult the [FERPA and Records Privacy page](#) of the Registrar's Office website.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

View [UC's Notice of Non-Discrimination](#).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense that cannot be tolerated in an academic community. Dishonesty—including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, and/or unauthorized assistance—may result in a failing grade in a course and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be processed pursuant to the university's [Student Code of Conduct](#).

After graduation, alumni remain responsible for the academic integrity of the work they performed while a student at the University of Cincinnati. If evidence of academic dishonesty or research misconduct is revealed after the graduation of a student, the Office of Research, the Graduate College, and the university can examine whether such concerns impact the academic integrity of the degree that was conferred on the student, with consequences including but not limited to degree revocation.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) defines behavior expected of all University of Cincinnati students. **It is each student's responsibility to know and comply with the university's Student Code of Conduct**, and sanctions or penalties are outlined.

Academic behavior considered to be misconduct is defined in the Student Code of Conduct. The code also addresses nonacademic misconduct (such as disturbing the peace, destruction of property, and theft). Disciplinary procedures are explained in a step-by-step manner, and the procedures for appeal of decisions are stated.

In addition to this code, students must adhere to their college's professional code of conduct and honor codes where applicable. Students should contact the office of the dean for their college to inquire about any applicable conduct and honor codes to ensure compliance. Students can be suspended or dismissed from the university for unprofessional behavior.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Furthering of research is a major institutional goal of the University of Cincinnati. Research includes not only intellectual activity and exploration designed to expand knowledge and understanding, but also activities in the creative and performing arts designed to interpret and create. Such activities require responsibilities for the ethical and safe conduct of research. Individuals charged with supervision of research, as well as all individuals directly engaged in it, and collaborators of investigators outside their own units are responsible for the quality of the data generated in their own laboratories as well as the laboratories of their collaborators. Everyone shares responsibility for the physical safety and intellectual property of individuals in the responsible conduct of creative scholarship and research.

RESTRICTED RESEARCH

The right to open exchange of information and opinion in faculty relations with students carries the obligation to avoid comments or violations of confidentiality that would reduce free expression or inquiry by students. Student involvement in industrial proprietary projects should be permitted only when these projects in no way restrict the student's ability to fulfill their degree requirements, which includes the obligation to publish dissertation results.

Faculty members have the right to publish their research findings and the right to protection against retaliation because of displeasure over their conclusions by the public, administration, government, or others. They have the concomitant responsibility to refrain from conducting secret, non-publishable research as part of their university duties.

GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The University of Cincinnati provides an opportunity for the resolution of disputes involving graduate students in a fair and collegial manner. The [Graduate Student Grievance Procedures](#) establish a formal academic process for graduate students to request review and redress of certain complaints arising out of their academic relationships with their programs, their colleges, or the university. The grievance begins with a mediation process and may proceed, if necessary, through the more formal review and decision or appeal processes. In general, however, it is expected that grievances will be resolved by the parties within their programs. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the university [Ombuds Office](#) for possible resolution before

initiating the formal grievance process. Students, faculty and staff should note that Grievance Procedures are not legal protocols. They are, however, effective means by which to resolve conflicts. The Graduate College endorses these procedures and expects all programs and students involved to follow them according to the established guidelines. No outside parties, such as lawyers, ministers, and family members, are allowed to participate in or impose upon the procedures. The Graduate Student Grievance Procedures cannot supplant final sanctions stemming from the University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct process. There is a time limit to filing a grievance: it must be filed within 60-90 business days of the alleged improper mistreatment.

The procedures are applicable to the following types of grievances:

- grievances alleging improper dismissal or suspension from a graduate program, not as a result of the Student Code of Conduct process;
- grievances alleging the improper withholding or termination of financial support of any kind;
- grievances alleging any other improper treatment, either substantive or procedural, of a graduate student by a university employee or university affiliate **except**:
 - allegations of improper evaluation of the quality and/or quantity of academic work, which a student cannot grieve;
 - allegations of unfair recommendation for employment or further graduate study, which a student cannot grieve;
 - allegations of discrimination or harassment that are subject to review by the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).

Published July 25, 2025. This version supersedes all previous versions.