Graduate Education Council (GEC)

Notice of Meeting

Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024
Time: 12:00pm-1:30pm (light lunch available at 11:30am)
Place: Western Interdisciplinary Research Building (WIRB), Room 3000
Zoom: https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/92707500705?pwd=M1ZrSTRxOHJHVGhmbXpWMnFHSmordz09

AGENDA

		Action	Time
1.0	Land Acknowledgement – Ruth Martin		
2.0	Report of the Provost	Information	10
3.0	Vice-Provost Welcome	Information	10
4.0	Report of the Academic Policy Committee		
	4.1 Revisions to the Policy on Program Design - Definitions	Approval	10
	4.2 Revisions to the Policy on 6.0 Program Design – Recognition for Prior Equivalent Work	Approval	10
	4.3 Registration – Transferring between Graduate Degree Levels, Laddering to Another Graduate Degree	Approval	10
5.0	Committee Membership	Information	
6.0	Adjournment		

DISTRIBUTION:

Ex officio:
Kamran Siddiqui
Lorraine Davies
Nica Borradaile
Alan Shepard
Florentine Strzelczyk
(designate: Lily Cho)
Ileana Paul
Kevin Mooney
Immaculate Namukasa
Laura Murray
Anabel Quan-Haase
Zoë Sinel
Lyn Purdy
Tom Drysdale
Miriam Capretz
Liz Webb
Elizabeth Hayden
Waliu Alaka
Meira Machado
WG Pearson
Christy Bressette
Opiyo Oloya
(designate: Michael Godfrey)
Marisa Modeski
Lily Cho
(designate: Lise Laporte)
Penny Pexman

Ex officio non-voting:
Catherine Steeves
(designate: Kelly Hatch)
Aisha Haque
(designate: Stephanie Horsley)
Jeremy Johnston
Heather Wakely
Jovan Groen
Mars Noorani
Mihaela Harmos

Elected/Appointed:
Robert Stainton
Emily Ansari
Marguerite Lengyell
Carrie Anne Marshall
Sarah Smith
Rory Gillis
Dan Hardy
Dan Langohr
Joseph Gilroy
John Paul Minda
Mary Helen McMurran
Julie Byrd
Liliana Alvarez Jaramillo
Melissa Adler
Hubert Pun
Charlie McKenzie
Clare Robinson
Jiandong Ren
Godwin Arku
Sylvia Kontra
Audrey Yardley-Jones
Nancy Inchley
Jennifer Plaskett
Chris Circelli

Observer non-voting:
Daniel Smith
Jamie Seabrook
Ron Wagler
Whitney Barrett

*Regrets noted

ITEM 4.1 – Revisions to the Policy on "Program Design 1. Definitions

ACTION: ☒ APPROVAL ☐ INFORMATION ☐ DISCUSSION

Recommended: That the Graduate Education Council approve and
                               recommend to Senate that effective April 19, 2024, the
                               Policy on Program Design (subsection 1. Definitions) be
                               revised as shown in Item 4.1

BACKGROUND:

Program design is a key component in the development and modification of graduate
programs. As part of this process, SGPS advises programs on the appropriate
categorization of graduate degree requirements as either courses or milestones. The
definitions of course and milestone have been revised to better differentiate them and to
support program design innovation.

Primary Contact: K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Studies

CONSULTATION:
Graduate Education Council -Academic Policy Committee approved - October 10, 2023

ATTACHMENT(S) Program Design – Courses, Milestones and Course Outlines

Program Design	

Policy Category: Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Subject: **Program Design – Courses, Milestones and Course Outlines**

Subsections: Definitions; Course Numbering; Course Outlines

Approving Authority: Senate

Responsible Committee: Senate Committee on Academic Policy

Related Procedures: Procedure for Program Design – Courses, Milestones and Course Outlines

Officer(s) Responsible

for Procedures: *

Related Policies: Graduate Courses; Graduate Course Outlines

Effective Date: **April 19, 2024**

Supersedes:

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1.   **Definitions**

Graduate Course: A graduate course is the study of a particular topic, group of topics or area of specialization within a wider discipline/subject area, normally extending through one term or session, and can be one of the basic building blocks of qualification for a graduate degree, including a ==graduate diploma.== Graduate courses are designed to meet substantive discipline graduate program learning outcomes and normally utilize the student/instructor format. ==Any== ~~G~~==g==rades ~~are can be~~ assigned ~~that~~ ==will== contribute towards the student's ==academic== ==average== ~~academic average progression requirements; grades assess the level of mastery of the topic(s) or areas of specialization~~.

Milestone: A milestone is a learning activity that must be successfully completed in order to fulfill the requirements for the graduate degree. Milestone requirements are designed to meet program learning outcomes. Milestones can require:

- a short-term time commitment over one or two weeks (e.g. research ethics module),

- a medium-term time commitment over one or two terms (e.g. thesis proposal) or

- a more extensive commitment of time that continues over multiple terms (e.g. a seminar series).

Milestones can be completed during a time span that does not necessarily coincide with an academic term. Grades can be assigned to milestones that contribute towards the student's progression requirements but do not contribute to the student's academic average. Common graduate requirements that are catalogued as milestones include but are not limited to: Language Requirements, Comprehensive Examinations (or equivalent), Seminar Series, Major Projects (or equivalent), Thesis ~~Work~~ Components, Thesis (or dissertation).

2.   **Course Numbering**
Graduate courses are numbered from 9000 to 9999.

3.   **Course Outlines**
For information on course outlines refer to the policy on [Course Outlines](#).

In addition to the requirements outlined in the policy on Course Outlines, graduate course outlines must include the following information:

Graduate Course Level Learning Outcomes/Objectives
Provide a list of course learning outcomes/objectives. Course learning outcomes/objectives should align with the graduate program's learning outcomes. Contact your graduate chair/administrator, or SGPS, for a copy of the program learning outcomes. Ideally, students should be able to see how course learning outcomes/objectives are addressed through course requirements, activities and assessments.

Course Timeline and Format
Include an anticipated timeline of the content areas, or topics and/or other learning activities, covered over the course duration, as well as the format (face-to-face, online, hybrid) used to deliver the content. Instructors should make every effort to follow the stated timeline. Normally, instructors cannot change the format of instruction during the course.

Enrollment Restrictions
All course outlines must include one of the following two statements regarding enrollment restrictions:

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in (Insert name of program(s)).

OR

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in (Insert name of program(s)), as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Health/Wellness Services
All course outlines must contain the following statement:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW)
All course outlines must contain the following statement:

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

ITEM 4.2 – Revisions to the Policy on "6.0 Program Design –subsection 6.10"

ACTION: ☒ APPROVAL ☐ INFORMATION ☐ DISCUSSION

Recommended: That the Graduate Education Council approve and
                                           recommend to Senate that effective April 19, 2024, the
                                           Policy on Program Design (subjection 6.10) Credit for Prior
                                           Graduate Work be revised as shown in Item 4.2

BACKGROUND:

In situations where an incoming student has completed coursework in a prior degree or
has other prior non-academic experience that meets program learning outcomes, it is
acceptable for a program to recognize such prior equivalent work. To support programs
in this process, we have revised the regulation previously titled 'credit for prior work' to
reflect current best practices and to improve clarity.

Primary Contact: K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Studies

CONSULTATION:
Graduate Education Council -Academic Policy Committee approved - October 10, 2023

ATTACHMENT(S) Program Design – Course Registration

Program Design

Policy Category: Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Subject: Program Design – Course Registration

Subsections: Adding or Dropping Graduate Courses; Auditing Graduate Courses; Repeated Courses; Incomplete Courses; Adding, Auditing, or Withdrawing from Undergraduate Courses; Recognition for Prior Equivalent Work

Approving Authority: Senate

Responsible Committee: Senate Committee on Academic Policy

Related Procedures: Procedures for Program Design – Course Registrations

Officer(s) Responsible
for Procedures: Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)

Related Policies: *

1. **Adding or Dropping Graduate Courses**
    All courses added or dropped by the student must be approved by the Graduate Chair of the student's program and by the Graduate Chair of the department offering the course (if the course is not from the student's program). Courses may not normally be added and dropped after the specified deadline dates.

    Deadline dates for adding or dropping a course will normally be calculated according to the table below. A course that has been dropped by the last date specified for adding a course shall be expunged from the records. A course that has been dropped after the last date specified for adding a course but before the last date specified for dropping a course without academic penalty shall be recorded as "WDN". A course that has not been dropped in accordance with the above regulations and that has not been completed satisfactorily by the student shall be recorded as "F", failures.

Weight of Course	Last Day to Add	Last Day to Drop
0.5, 1.0, 1.5 or 2.0	One month from the official beginning of the term in which the course begins	Two months from the beginning of term in which the course begins

0.25	10 Business days	50% of the way through the course

2. **Auditing Graduate Courses**

The student must declare an intention to audit a graduate course by the enrolment deadline for the term, using the Graduate Course Audit Form. The student must have the instructor's signed approval to audit the course, as well as approval from the Supervisor (if applicable) and Graduate Chair. An Audit requires regular attendance and any other obligations as stated by the course instructor in the Comments/Expectations section of the Graduate Course Audit Form. If these requirements are not met, the audit will be removed from the student's record at the instructor's request.

After the enrolment deadline, a student may not make a change from auditing a course to taking it for credit, or vice versa, within a given term. A student may, in a subsequent term, enroll in a given course for credit that has previously been audited.

Graduate courses delivered online may not be audited without special permission from the program.

3. **Repeated Courses**

When a course previously completed is repeated, both marks will appear on the official transcript, but only the last mark obtained is used for all academic purposes, even if it is lower than the previously obtained mark.

4. **Incomplete Courses**

When a student does not complete work for a course by the grade submission deadline, a grade of INC appears on the transcript. The INC will be changed to a grade if the work is completed by the grade submission deadline for the term following the one in which the INC was awarded. If a grade is not submitted by this deadline, the INC becomes a Failure.

A numerical grade submitted for an INC grade, or an F grade resulting from an INC, is final. The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will not consider a subsequent revision of either grade except on documented medical or compassionate grounds.

For incomplete courses related to a leave of absence, programs should see section 4.06 and contact SGPS about academic consideration.

5. **Adding, Auditing, or Withdrawing from Undergraduate Courses**

Graduate Students may take undergraduate courses without additional charge only if needed for their degree requirements and with the approval of the Graduate Chair and SGPS . Graduate students taking undergraduate courses must follow the undergraduate regulations, as stipulated in the undergraduate calendar under 'add/drop deadlines'.

. Undergraduate courses, or combined courses in which undergraduate students predominate must be less than one-third of the student's total course requirement for the graduate degree. Graduate students may not take an undergraduate course at a Western-Affiliated University College (with the exception of programs whose home unit is an Affiliated University College).

- Graduate Student Taking Undergraduate Course Form

6. **Recognition Credit for Prior Equivalent Work**

Recognition for prior work acknowledges previously completed academic, and in some cases non-academic, work thereby reducing requirements for an individual student entering a degree program.

Recognition for prior work:

- Is normally granted upon entry into a degree program
- Can be granted based upon academic and non-academic work completed at Western or outside of Western
- Is granted at the discretion of the graduate program at Western

A program may waive one or more degree requirement(s) if it determines that the requirement(s) has been satisfied through prior equivalent academic work Normally this would be done by the beginning of the student's first term.

ITEM 4.3 – Revisions to the Policy on "Registration"

ACTION: ☒ APPROVAL ☐ INFORMATION ☐ DISCUSSION

Recommended: That the Graduate Education Council approve and
                               recommend to Senate that effective April 19, 2024, the
                               Policy on Registration (subsections 4, 5) be revised as
                               shown in Item 4.3

BACKGROUND:

The current regulation about transferring is updated to reflect best practices and to
provide guidance to programs. We have introduced the program design option of
laddering to reflect recent innovations in graduate program development where
particular programs are designed to provide students an opportunity to move from one
into another. The definition of laddering is provided and the parameters are articulated.

Primary Contact: K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Studies

CONSULTATION:
Graduate Education Council -Academic Policy Committee approved - December 12,
2024

ATTACHMENT(S) Registration

Registration

Policy Category: Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Subject: Registration

Subsections: Initial Registration; Registration Requirements; Categories of Registration; Transfer from Master's to Doctoral Degree Status in a Program; Leave of Absence; Student Progress and Withdrawal; Admission After Withdrawal

Approving Authority: Senate

Responsible Committee: Senate Committee on Academic Policy

Related Procedures: Procedure for Registration

**Officer(s) Responsible
for Procedures:**   *

Related Policies: *

Effective Date: April 12, 2024

Supersedes:

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4.   **Transferring between Graduate Degree Levels** ~~**From Master's to Doctoral Degree Status in a Program**~~
~~Programs may allow students to transfer their registration from the Master's to the Doctoral degree within the same program, without completion of the Master's degree. The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) will consider such requests on the recommendation of the student's program.~~

~~Transfers from the Master's to the Doctoral program must take place before the sixth term of Master's registration.~~
Transferring refers to a situation where a student leaves an unfinished degree program and registers in a different degree-level in the same graduate program. Students are normally given recognition for prior work in these instances. Transferring can occur from a lower-level degree program to a higher-level degree program (e.g. GDip to masters or master's to doctoral) or from a higher-level degree program to a lower-level degree

program (doctoral to master's). When transferring, the credential from the former degree program is not granted to the student, as they have not completed all requirements of the former degree program. Transfers must be approved by the graduate program and SGPS.

5. **LADDERING TO ANOTHER GRADUATE DEGREE**
Laddering refers to an established process where a student completes a program and is given recognition for this prior work towards a subsequent degree program via this approved pathway. In the case of laddering, a student has completed the lower-level program and has been awarded the credential (e.g., a student completes a GDip program and is provided credit for prior work in a specific master's program with an approved laddering process). The remaining requirements for the higher-level degree in these cases are also pre-determined. Students must apply for admission to the laddering degree program; admission is not guaranteed.

6. **Leave of Absence**
The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may grant a leave of absence on pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds normally to a maximum of three terms or 12 months, on the recommendation of the Graduate Program.

When approving a leave of absence, programs should contact SGPS about any academic considerations for outstanding coursework.

While on leave, students are expected to be away from normal activities as graduate students (e.g. attending classes, conducting research). However, students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication during this period. Before the end of the approved leave of absence, students notify the Graduate Chair/Director, the Graduate Assistant and, where relevant, the Supervisor(s), to discuss the transition back to their studies. If students are applying for an additional leave of absence, it is important that the program and SGPS be notified as soon as possible.

To ensure that they are optimally supported throughout their degree, students requiring leaves of absence that extend beyond three terms are encouraged to communicate with programs about potential professional, academic or research implications of the extended period away from their studies.

The start and finish of the leave may begin or end at any point in the term; normally the leave will coincide with the start and end of terms. Students are advised to consult with their graduate program to make special arrangements especially if taking courses during this period.

The date for degree completion and funding of the degree program will be extended by the duration of the time taken on leave, i.e. one, two or three terms as appropriate.

a) **Pregnancy and/or Parental**
   Pregnancy/Parental Leave is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of pregnancy, birth or adoption, and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a new child. Either parent may request up to three terms of leave, which must be started within twelve months of the date of birth or custody.

   Provided the student has been a registered full-time graduate student for at least one term and is not receiving additional Tri-Agency benefits, they are entitled to a $1,500 pregnancy and parental bursary per leave.

   During a Pregnancy/Parental leave international students can opt into UHIP for up to 12 months.

b) **Medical**
   Graduate students may apply for a medical leave by providing a Medical Certificate completed by a health care practitioner. During a Medical leave, international students can opt into UHIP for four months in a 12-month leave period. It is possible to extend UHIP for another four months subject to the approval of the insurance provider.

c) **Compassionate**
   Graduate students may apply for a compassionate leave for care and support of a seriously ill family member. This leave is not intended to cover circumstances related to travel, employment or other financial concerns.

d) **Internship**
   Graduate students in programs without an internship requirement who secure an internship through Western's Internship Program may apply for an internship leave.

   Students may apply for a leave of absence by completing an online request via the Graduate Student Web Services Portal. The request is then reviewed by the graduate program. If approved by the program, it is reviewed by SGPS .

   Once on leave, students are not registered with the University nor will they be required to pay tuition and ancillary fees for this period; however, they are entitled to receive/maintain certain benefits as described below.

7. <mark>Withdrawal</mark>
   The Graduate Chair of a program:
   - Must approve the student's plan of study
   - Must ensure the preparation and filing of an annual progress report for each student

Graduate faculty must provide students with timely feedback on courses, examinations, or other requirements.

The program may require students to withdraw if they fail to meet the following standards:
- Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%
- Students must make satisfactory progress towards the degree according to milestones set by the program

Withdrawal from a program can occur in two ways. A student can voluntarily withdraw, following formal notification to the program. Alternatively, the program or SGPS can withdraw a student for failure to meet admission conditions, progression requirements, specified deadlines for completion, or failure to pay fees. Once withdrawn from a program (and SGPS), the person withdrawn is no longer a student and may not attend classes, receive supervision, or have access to any resources of the University.

8.   <mark>Admission After Withdrawal</mark>
Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or who have been withdrawn and wish to complete their program must formally re-apply for admission. Credit for previous work completed must be approved by the program and SGPS.

Students who are withdrawn for non-payment of fees will be considered for admission under the following payment conditions:
- Any student who has withdrawn or has been withdrawn may be required to pay fees for the terms in which registration has lapsed if admitted.
- Payment of all fees owing at the time of withdrawal including all penalty fees incurred as a result of the default
- Prepayment of full fees for the term in which admission is sought
- These payments must be money order, cash, direct debit, or certified cheque

9.   <mark>Time Away From Studies and Vacation Time</mark>
Full-time graduate students in research-based programs are expected to be active in their program for all three terms of the university year, as specified in Section 4.03. While engaging in their program, we recognize that personal time (i.e. time away from studies) is beneficial for student health, well-being and academic achievement. It is acceptable and expected that Supervisors, Supervisory Committee Members and Graduate Chairs will discuss expectations around students' study and research schedules; they will mentor students and support their need for time off and their pursuit of work/life balance. Time away from studies must take into account the impact on timely progression and the impact on research and other responsibilities.

It is expected that students devote a reasonable number of hours each weekday to study and to research. It is acceptable for students to take days off. In making these

time management decisions, it is expected that students will learn to discern when time away from studies supports academic productivity, and when it undermines timely progression.

Graduate Chairs are encouraged to ensure that both student and supervisor needs and expectations are met. **See SGPS Regulation regarding supervisor expectations.**

In addition to the above, students are entitled to be away from their studies and research responsibilities during:
- the closing of the University from late December until early January
- statutory holidays when the University is closed
- religious holidays in accordance with University policy

Graduate students are also entitled to at least two weeks of vacation time from their studies per year.

ITEM 5.0 – Committee Membership

ACTION: ☐APPROVAL ☒INFORMATION ☐ DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND:

Requests for nominations for the committees were brought to the floor and at the September 27, 2023 meeting. The results of the nominations and subsequent elections are listed below.

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE **(MEETS MONTHLY SEPTEMBER TO JUNE)**

Two Graduate Assistants
>   Audrey Yardley-Jones, Graduate Program Assistant
>   Chris Circelli, Manager, Graduate Student Services (FIMS)

Two Graduate Students who represent the diversity of graduate programs
>   Aoife Hawthorne, MA (EDU)
>   Ehsan Ur Rahman Mohammed, PhD (SCI)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE **(MEETS FOUR TIMES A YEAR)**

Three Graduate Students (1 PhD, 1 research Master's, 1 professional program),
>   TBD, Professional Program
>   Desmond Oklikah, PhD (SS)
>   Nasser Kaddoura, MA (EDU-Research Masters)

One Postdoctoral Scholar
>   Manoj Reddy Medapati

One Graduate Assistant
>   Kara Brown, Graduate Coordinator (SS)

Two Graduate Program Chairs
>   Liliana Alvarez, Graduate Chair, School of Occupational Therapy (FHS)
>   Melissa Adler, Graduate Program Chair for Media Studies and Library and Information Science (FIMS)

Two Associate Deans-Graduate
>   Laura Murray, Associate Dean, (FHS)
>   Elizabeth Hayden, Associate Dean, (FSS)