**Graduate Programs Committee Policy Manual**

**Revised April 2018**

This manual describes Graduate Programs Committee activities.  The mission of the GPC states, “The Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) is responsible for all matters related to graduate programs; including the following primary activities: (a) review and development of criteria for new graduate courses and programs; (b) appointment and review of graduate faculty; (c) consideration of student requests for exceptions to certain Graduate Education Policies; (d) Review of Excellence in Education award applications; and (e) assessment and analysis of Graduate Bulletin changes prior to Assistant Provost of Graduate Education and Research. The Operating Procedures of the Graduate Programs Committee are located at <http://www.nmu.edu/gpc/node/1>

The GPC obtains its authority from the Academic Senate of Northern Michigan University, which, according to the Senate Bylaws, “…is established in accordance with the Agreement between the Board of Trustees, NMU, and the American Association of University Professors, NMU Chapter, and derives its authority from that Agreement."  The Senate Bylaws describe the function of the Academic Senate (Section 1.2) as “…to advise and make recommendations to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs on matters of faculty-wide concern, communicate items of concern to respective constituencies, and inform the academic community of issues under consideration.”  The GPC is named as a standing committee of the Senate.

The purpose of this document is to describe the processes that the GPC uses to address each of the elements articulated in the GPC mission statement.  The recommendations of the GPC are sent to the Senate, and that body then deliberates these recommendations.  The purview of the GPC is to review the academic merits of curricular issues; the Education Policy Committee reviews the financial implications of curricular changes.

**1. Curricular**

Article 3 of the Operating Procedures of the Graduate Programs Committee indicates that one of its charges is to be responsible for “…the development and review of criteria for: new graduate courses and new graduate programs.”  This section of the manual describes the role of the GPC in the graduate curriculum offered throughout Northern Michigan University.

**A. Curricular Processes**

1. **Timeline.**  Curricular changes may be submitted to the GPC at any time during the academic year.  The GPC meets on a monthly basis, or more frequently when needed.  Major curricular changes and new graduate program proposals must be submitted by September 15 to be considered for inclusion in the subsequent fall semester. Minor program revisions and course proposals may be addressed prior to February 15 to be included in the next year’s bulletin.
2. **Submission to CUP vs. GPC.**  New or revised courses that will carry both undergraduate and graduate credit should be sent to the Committee on Undergraduate Programs (CUP) before they are sent to the GPC.  Once approved by CUP, the department should then submit the request to GPC, incorporating any changes made after the CUP review.
3. **Conferring with Other Departments Prior to Submission to the GPC.**  Whenever a department proposes curricular changes that may affect other departments, it must notify that department in prior to submitting that change to the GPC.  The GPC must be notified of consultations with these other departments, including the outcomes of the consultations
4. **GPC Review.**  New or revised curricular submissions will be forwarded to the appropriate subcommittee.  After its review, the subcommittee will make a recommendation to the GPC.  The subcommittee requires that a representative of the proposing department be present at the relevant GPC meeting to answer questions and provide additional information.  After the GPC recommends curricular changes to the Academic Senate, a GPC representative should attend the Senate meeting, to answer questions about its recommendation(s).
5. **Program and Course Deletion.**  When a department elects to delete a program and/or course that carries graduate credit, the department must notify the GPC of the intended deletion.

**B. Graduate Courses – General Information**

1. **Graduate Course Instruction.** Graduate classes may only be taught by faculty who have NMU Graduate Faculty status.  Students will not be awarded graduate credit from courses taught by faculty members who do not have graduate faculty status.
2. **Co-listing of Undergraduate and Graduate Courses.**  While the GPC is interested in maintaining the quality, rigor and standards of graduate courses, the committee recognizes that faculty and programs may have an interest in co-listing 400-level and graduate classes to meet specific needs and educational objectives.  Such co-listed graduate offerings must conform to the standards and specifications required for 500-level graduate credit.  
   Courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students must distinguish between work expected of the undergraduate and graduate students, and separate course objectives must be presented for both groups of students.  Such courses will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Provost of Graduate Education and Research.
3. **Course Numbering**
   1. **Courses of Unspecified Content.**  Courses of Unspecified Content are named in the Graduate Bulletin ([www.nmu.edu/gradbulletin](http://www.nmu.edu/gradbulletin)).  These courses must complete the same approval process as all other graduate courses.  Directed or independent study credit may not be awarded if the description matches that of a course already approved for credit.  A maximum of 16 semester credit hours of courses of unspecified content can be applied to the total number of hours required to complete the master’s degree.
   2. **Special Topics Courses.** Special Topics Courses are experimental or timely in nature, or they take advantage of the expertise of a visiting faculty member.  A particular Special Topics Course cannot be taught more than twice; after a course is taught twice, the department must obtain permanent course approval prior to offering the course a third time.  Identical off-campus offerings of a Special Topics Course are viewed as multiple on-campus offerings of the course.
   3. **500 through 800 Level Courses.**  These courses must be approved by the GPC, but they do not require approval from the Committee on Undergraduate Programs (CUP).  A student cannot take these courses for undergraduate credit.  Normally, only academic departments that have graduate programs may offer 500- through 800-level courses.
   4. **Thesis Credits.**  599 and 699 are reserved for thesis work.
   5. **Dissertation Credits.** 899 is reserved for Dissertation work.
   6. **GD 593.**  Masters (MA or MS) students who have completed all the course work specified on their Graduate Plan of Study but have not completed their final project must enroll in GD 593 the semester prior to obtaining their graduate degree.
   7. **GD 693.**  Education Specialist or MFA students who have completed all the course work specified on their Graduate Plan of Study but have not completed their final project must enroll in GD 693 the semester prior to obtaining their graduate degree.
   8. **GD 599**. Thesis Completion. Students are automatically enrolled in GD 599 upon Graduate Education Office approval of their thesis as the final requirement for a master's degree.
   9. **GD 699** Thesis Completion. Students are automatically enrolled in GD 699 upon Graduate Education Office approval of their thesis as the final requirement for a Master of Fine Arts or Education Specialist Degree.
   10. **900-999.**   Professional development courses are numbered 900-999.  These workshop and seminar courses enhance professional or career development.  Credits from these courses may not be applied towards a degree.  Instructors of record for these classes must hold NMU Graduate Faculty Status.

**C.  New Courses.**  New courses proposals will be reviewed by GPC and must follow these [guidelines](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yMkpHDxDtJqT6OzJcauHM3ekxm3Dlfp6/view).

**D. Major Curricular Changes**

1. **Deletion of Course and Programs.** Deletion of courses or programs must be submitted to GPC for approval.  Departments must provide a rationale for the deletion(s) and submit evidence that they have considered the effect on other departments and curricula.  The Assistant Provost of Graduate Education and Research may remove courses not taught for five consecutive years from the Graduate Bulletin, after consultation with the relevant Department.
2. **New Programs and Major Curriculum Revisions.**
   1. A new program is defined as a new major or a new track in an existing program.
   2. Major curriculum changes are defined as those that significantly modify an existing program.
   3. New programs, and major curriculum changes will be reviewed by GPC and must follow these [guidelines](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yMkpHDxDtJqT6OzJcauHM3ekxm3Dlfp6/view).

**E. Program Suspension/Reinstatement / Termination**

1. **Suspension.**  A graduate program may be suspended for up to 4 years.   The 4 year suspension period begins in the academic year following approval of this status.  Suspension may be initiated by the department that offers the program, the Graduate Office or the GPC.  Suspension approval must include the GPC, the Academic Senate, the Graduate Office, and the Provost.
2. **Reinstatement.** The program may be reinstated at any time during the suspension period upon the recommendation of the GPC, the Academic Senate, the Graduate Office, Dean of the College, and the Provost.  If no recommendation for reinstatement is received by the GPC during the suspension period, the program will be terminated.  Extension of the suspension period of two additional years may be approved by GPC upon request from the department or the Graduate Office. A teach out program for students currently in the program must be included in the recommendation for suspension.
3. **Termination.**  An existing graduate program may be terminated by the recommendation of the GPC, the Academic Senate, the Graduate Office, the Provost, and the NMU Board of Trustees. Termination can take place without a prior suspension. Once terminated, no new candidates will be accepted into the program and the program will be removed from the Graduate Bulletin. A teach out program for students currently in the program must be included in the recommendation for termination.

**2. Graduate Faculty Status**

Each department is responsible for assuring that graduate faculty members have achieved the necessary academic experience prior to submitting their nominations to the Graduate Programs Committee.  Granting graduate faculty status is an important function of the University.  To attract the best graduate students, NMU is committed to providing faculty with the skills necessary to teach in the graduate setting.  Different academic experience and distinct instruction skills are necessary when teaching in graduate programs.  Departments should review and enforce the graduate faculty appointment guidelines to assure the highest quality academic standards in their graduate programs. The application for Graduate Faculty Status is at https://nmu.edu/graduatestudies/graduate-programs-committee.

**A. Level 3 Graduate Faculty Status**

Level 3 status is for NMU employees who have earned a terminal degree in their field and are:

* tenure-track, or
* tenured, or
* have earned continuing contract status and have been promoted.

A person at this level can teach graduate courses, serve on, and chair thesis committees. Once Level 3 graduate faculty status is obtained, there is no term limit. However, GPC can review a faculty member’s level 3 status upon request from the department head or dean.

**B. Level 2 Graduate Faculty Status**

Level 2 status is for NMU employees who are not eligible for Level 3 graduate faculty status but possess a terminal degree in their field. A person at this level can teach graduate courses, serve on, and chair thesis committees. Level 2 status can be requested for 1 to 3 years.

**C. Level 1 Graduate Faculty Status**

Level 1 status is for non-NMU employees or those who do not have a terminal degree in their field.  If the applicant does not have a terminal degree, an explanation from the department head should state why, specifically, the individual should be eligible. A person at this level can teach graduate courses and serve on thesis committees, but not chair them. Level 1 status can be requested for 1 to 3 years.

**3. Student Appeals**

The Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) is authorized to review requests for exceptions to certain Graduate Education policies. The Committee does not hear grade appeals; a separate procedure exists for those (see the Northern Michigan University Student Handbook). The GPC’s primary authority lies within the policies governed by the Office of Graduate Education (e.g., admission, matriculation and retention). However, in specific cases it may serve as an appellate body for academic matters deriving from the rules and practices of the departments and colleges. One function of the committee is to review petitions for academic reinstatement from graduate students who have been dismissed from the College of Graduate Studies. It will not review academic decisions that are based upon the expertise of the faculty in a particular field. However, the committee may examine the equity of the processes by which such academic decisions have been made. It will hear appeals of dismissal decisions.  Appeal shall be submitted no later than thirty (30) calendar days following the first day of classes for the next regular semester (exclusive of summer session). A decision shall be reached within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the appeal.

**4.  Excellence in Education Awards**

The Excellence in Education Program is established to support graduate student research in the summer. The awards are intended to assist graduate students in the conduct of scholarly research and creative works that will enhance their academic experience and professional growth.

Eligibility, specifics of fundable activities and non-fundable activities, application guidelines and procedures, specific deadlines, and evaluation criteria will be updated as necessary and posted on the Graduate Studies website.

Proposals are reviewed by the Graduate Programs Committee according to the following criteria:

* The significance of the proposed project and soundness of the methodology.
* Clarity of presentation and planning of the proposed project.
* Qualifications of the student investigator.
* Adherence to format and content requirements.
* Justification of additional funding for second year applicants.
* Support from the Advisor and the Department.
* GPC rankings will not supersede Departmental rankings for fundable proposals.

The GPC will rank all proposals and forward the recommendations for funding to the Grants Officer, who will make the awards.

Students receiving an Excellence in Education Research Award will receive a one-credit tuition stipend when they enroll in a course that is directly related to the project such as Directed Study or Thesis during one of the two summer sessions. Other appropriate courses will be considered with justification.

A Final Project Report must be submitted to the department and the Grants Officer by October 15th after completion of the project.  Grantees who fail to submit a Final Report will not be eligible for future Excellence in Education Research Award funding.

**5.  Graduate Bulletin changes**

Graduate bulletin changes, other than those described elsewhere in the policy manual, are presented directly to the Assistant Provost of Graduate Education and Research.  Examples of bulletin changes include but are not limited to:  editing errors on the website, errors in hyper-links, inaccurate information regarding a program or plan of study, etc.

Upon the Assistant Provost of Graduate Education and Research’s discretion, any requested changes to the bulletin may be sent to the Graduate Programs Committee for review prior to Assistant Provost of Graduate Education and Research approval.