

Office of Research and Graduate Studies
May 2018

Graduate Studies

Policy Guide

The Faculty of Graduate Studies is composed of 18 graduate programs, organized into two schools: the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and the Graduate School of Theological Studies (GSTS). It is overseen by the Vice Provost of Research and Graduate Studies and the Graduate Academic Council (GAC), which is a council of Senate and is administered through the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. GAC and Senate have approved the policies contained in this Guide.

Current Policies

1. Graduate Thesis / Dissertation Policy (ORGS)
 - Leave of Absence form
 - Annual progress report form
 - Supervisory Committee Approval form
 - Completion form
 - Supervision guidelines
 - Ethics & intellectual property guidelines
 - Copyright – Rights Statement
2. Incomplete Grade Policy (ORGS)
3. Graduation Ceremony Participation Requirements for Graduate Programs (ORGS)
4. Completion Policy
5. Integrity in Scholarship and Research Policy (see ORGS website for other Research related policies)
6. Final Grade Submission for Graduate Programs Policy (ORGS & RO)
7. Visiting Student Admission to Graduate Studies Policy (RO)
8. Recognition of Previous Learning (RO)
9. Grading – “A minimum cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 is required for graduation.” (Academic Calendar 2018, page 118)
10. Syllabi Compliance Approval and Review (Faculty/School Deans)

Policy Title: Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Policy

Parent Policy: None

Policy Administrator: Vice Provost Research and Graduate Studies

Approving Body: GAC

Approval History: Graduate Academic Council; April 25, 2017, Motion #2016/17-014

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure quality in written dissertations and oral exams
- To ensure that students, supervisors and administrators understand expectations and requirements in the process leading up to and following oral examinations
- To ensure compliance with Tri-Agency Open Access policy
- To ensure that graduate theses are registered and archived appropriately
- To define the criteria for the selection of supervisors, committees, and the external examiner, where applicable

Scope of this Policy: All thesis programs in the Faculty of Graduate Studies (i.e. both SGS and GSTS)

Policy Statement: All theses, dissertations and oral defences will be coordinated through the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is responsible for all procedures and documentation to support thesis-track students and their supervisory committees. Normally, students will be assigned a supervisor in the first semester after placement in a thesis-track option of a masters degree program, or by the second year of a doctoral degree program. Continuity of supervision throughout the thesis or dissertation, in keeping with graduate supervision best practices, is strongly recommended; however, changes may be approved by the Graduate Program Director upon request. Upon approval by the Supervisory Committee, the thesis or dissertation will be forwarded by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies to the Third Reader or External Examiner for review. The ORGS in consultation with the Graduate Program Director is responsible to schedule the oral defense.

For masters-level theses, the third reader may be an internal examiner, preferably from a different program or department, or an external examiner. For doctoral-level dissertations, the third reader must be an external examiner. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies has responsibility for the identification of, approval of, and communication with external examiners.

The Office of Graduate Studies and Research is responsible for compliance with external requirements such as those of the Tri-Agency councils and Canada Graduate Scholarships, and for ensuring that a final grade is submitted to the Registrar and that the thesis or dissertation is archived appropriately.

Definitions:

Best Practices: Includes the use of effective communication strategies through implementation of checklists, regular meetings with the supervisor, and annual progress reports.

Supervisor: Provides primary supervision and guidance at the outset and throughout the student's research, writing, and defence.

Supervisory Committee: 2 or more members consisting minimally of a primary supervisor and second reader

Second Reader: The supervisor will consult with graduate program faculty and/or the student in the selection of an appropriate second reader. The second reader may (but not necessarily) participate early in the development and throughout the thesis process until completion.

Supervisory Committee Approval (SCA) form: a signed consent form from the thesis student's committee to send the thesis to the external examiner. Upon a positive recommendation by the external examiner, the student will be allowed to proceed to an oral defence.

Third Reader: The third reader is selected by the Supervisory Committee because of their expertise in the thesis discipline. The Third Reader will receive the thesis for evaluation upon approval by the Supervisory Committee, but may be called upon to participate at any stage of the thesis process. Typically they have expertise in the field or in specific areas of the thesis research.

External Examiner: The external examiner is usually a doctorally prepared (or possesses the appropriate terminal degree), nationally or internationally recognized distinguished scholar with particular experience in the field of research. They must have no conflict of interest with either the student or thesis supervisor.

Thesis Examination Committee: Three or more scholars who adjudicate both the oral defence and written dissertation. The committee consists minimally of the Primary Supervisor, Second Reader, Third Reader or External Examiner.

Exam Chair: A non-voting member of tenure track TWU or ACTS faculty who ensures that policy and process are followed during the oral defence, that the defence forms are signed, and that the result is communicated both to the student and to the Office of Research & Graduate Studies. Typically, the Chair's expertise is in the same or a related discipline, but this is not an essential requirement.

Oral Defence: the oral examination, by the Supervisory Committee, of a thesis-track graduate student upon conclusion of a written thesis.

Post-Defence: includes thesis revisions, submission, and administrative requirements leading to grade submission by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Tri-Agency Open Access Policy: "The objective of this policy is to improve access to the results of Agency-funded research, and to increase the dissemination and exchange of research results. All researchers, regardless of funding support, are encouraged to adhere to this policy."

Child Policies: none

Monitoring Data:

The VPRGS will report annually to the Provost and Senate the following:

- Compliance with this policy
- Number of graduate defences and theses successfully completed
- Number of failed oral defences or incomplete theses

Policy Title: Incomplete Grade Policy

Parent Policy: Grading, Progression and Academic Standing

Policy Administrator: Vice Provost

Approval history: January 21, 2014; Senate Motion #2013/14-024

December 3, 2013; Senate Motion #2013/14-014

UAC Motion 1985 #51 (October 8, 1985); Amended by UAC motion 1994 #25 (April 5, 1994); Further revised by UAC motion 1999 #25 (March 17, 2009)

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that students who have extenuating circumstances beyond their control may still be able to complete courses in which they have put a substantial amount of time and effort into.
- To ensure that there are reasonable deadlines in which to complete extensions for course work
- To ensure that the university can limit additional course work which may distract students from completing INC courses.

Scope of this Policy: Undergraduate division, School of Graduate Studies, Graduate School of Theological Studies

Policy Statement: It is moved the designation “INC” be established for failure to complete a course within the normally required time and incompleteness is deemed temporary by the instructor. The following stipulations apply:

1. “INC” is not a grade, but designates a temporary delay in assigning a grade.
2. The time extension may normally not be for more than 15 weeks and will usually be only two or three weeks.
3. The instructor will indicate, after the “INC” the grade the student would receive should the course remain incomplete by the deadline. If no grade is submitted by the instructor in the meantime (A to F), the “INC” will be changed to the tentative grade.
4. “INC” is granted only when applied for on the appropriate form with the terms clearly set down (when the course is to be finished, what needs to be done, its grade value, the interim course grade for work already completed), mutually agreed upon by the student and the instructor (and signed by both).
5. Permission for the “INC” is to be granted by the instructor for adequate causes only (i.e., for extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control, such as sickness, etc. the normal current definition and consistent with WF/WD), or pedagogically sound reasons, on an individual basis and if completion is reasonably possible within the time limit.
6. An “INC” does not affect the GPA until it is changed to a grade.

The 2009 revision says the following:

When a student is unable to complete a course due to extenuating circumstances beyond his/her control, and each of the following criteria are met:

- The student has participated in at least three-quarters of the course and has completed a substantial amount of the course requirements;
- The student can provide documentation from a professional validating the extenuating circumstances; and
- The student could reasonably complete the outstanding course requirements in a timeframe not exceeding the following semester;

An “INC” can be recorded until the outstanding work is completed and a grade is submitted by the instructor.

In the event that the student does not complete the outstanding course requirements in the agreed-upon timeframe, then either,

1. An extension will be granted based on the student’s circumstances (with additional documentation); or
2. The default grade that was identified by the instructor at the point of application will be assigned.

If a student’s circumstances warrant the extension of an INC beyond the following semester (including the summer session), or if the student’s circumstances are such that s/he needs INCs in two or more consecutive semesters, the University reserves the right to limit the number of semester hours the student can enroll in while completing the outstanding course requirements.

Definitions: N/A

Child Policies: N/A

Monitoring Data: The Registrar will provide the Senate Secretary with a report at the end of each semester detailing the number of Incomplete Grade contracts that were created at the end of the semester.

Policy Title: Graduation Ceremony Participation Requirements for Graduate Programs

Parent Policy: None

Policy Administrator: Office of Graduate Studies

Approving Body: University Senate

Date policy approved: April 29, 2014; Senate Motion #2013/14-49

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that all graduate student participants in Trinity Western University graduation ceremonies have completed all applicable program requirements for graduation.

Scope of this Policy: School of Graduate Studies and Graduate School of Theological Studies thesis option programs at Trinity Western University.

Policy Statement: Students who intend to participate in a given graduation ceremony for Graduate Studies programs at Trinity Western University must have completed all requirements for their respective degree. This is understood as follows:

- a) All course work completed with a final grade submitted to the Office of the Registrar no less than five weeks prior to the anticipated graduation ceremony.
- b) The summative requirement of the program (thesis, essay, or project), must be completed and the grade submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than five weeks before the anticipated graduation ceremony.

Definitions: Thesis completion means the thesis has been defended, revised and checked for bibliographical format. If applicable, the final version of the thesis has received approval from the thesis supervisor, the student has submitted the electronic thesis to ProQuest, and a Notice of Completion has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

Child Policies:

Monitoring Data: Registrar to ensure students have completed requirements.

Policy Title: Faculty of Graduate Studies Program Completion Policy

Parent Policy: Graduation Requirements^[1]

Policy Administrator: Office of Graduate Studies

Approving Body: University Senate

Approval History: September 9, 2014; Senate Motion #2013/14 - 047

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To identify maximum completion times for graduate programs at Trinity Western University.

Scope of this Policy:

Faculty of Graduate Studies programs at Trinity Western University.

Policy Statement:

A maximum of five years (unless the program has been given an approved exemption from GAC) will be allowed for the completion of a Master's Degree program, and eight years for the completion of a Doctoral Degree program at Trinity Western University, whether the student is enrolled in full time or part time studies. This does not include time taken as a leave of absence, or an extension to continuing enrollment given due to extenuating circumstances. In either of these situations the student must seek formal approval from the Vice Provost Research and Graduate Studies in order to interrupt or extend their program of study. Completion of a program is understood to include:

1. All course work completed with a final grade submitted to the Office of the Registrar.
2. The summative requirement of the program, if applicable (thesis, essay, or project), must be completed and the grade submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

Definitions:

Thesis completion means thesis has been defended, revisions and APA check, if applicable, has received approval from thesis supervisor, student has submitted electronic thesis to ProQuest, and Notice of Completion has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Leave of absence is defined as discontinuing enrollment for a calendar year or more, therefore not qualifying for continuing enrollment. Continuing enrollment is defined as enrollment in at least one course, in at least one semester in the calendar year.

Procedure:

Monitoring Data: Admission dates and conferral dates to be provided by the Registrar to the Provost on an annual basis.

Policy Title: Integrity in Scholarship and Research

Parent Policy: None

Policy Administrator: Vice Provost of Research and Graduate Studies

Approval History: April 30, 2013; Senate Motion #2012/13–030
December 4, 2012; Senate Motion #2012/13–013
Est. October 1995; revised February 2007.
Revised: June 2015

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are: In accordance with the **Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research**, this policy promotes and protects the quality, accuracy, and reliability of research and scholarly activities conducted at the University and establishes a process for addressing allegations of research misconduct

Scope of this Policy: See the *Policy* section in the attached policy.

Policy Statement: See the attached policy.

Definitions: See the *Definition* and *Glossary* sections in the attached policy.

Child Policies: None

Monitoring Data: The Vice Provost of Research and Graduate Studies will provide Senate with a compliance report each fall semester for the preceding FA, SP, SU semesters on the objectives stated in the preamble section of the attached policy.

Policy Title: Final Grade Submission for Graduate Programs

Parent Policy: None

Policy Administrator: University Registrar and Vice Provost, Research and Graduate Studies

Approving or Recommending Body: GAC and Senate

Approval History: April 5, 2016; Senate Motion #2015/16-048

Purpose:

- To clarify final dates for grade submission for graduate courses.
- To ensure that grades are submitted to the Office of the Registrar office in a timely manner.

Scope of this Policy:

Courses in graduate studies may commence and end at any time in the academic year. This policy seeks to define a reasonable time period for the grading of coursework and submission of final grades to the Office of the Registrar. This policy does not apply to thesis, capstone projects, or clinical practica which are subject to continuing enrollment in multiple semesters.

Policy Statement:

Final grades for the graduate course must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than the end of the semester (December 31st, May 15th or September 15th) following the semester in which the course begins. The instruction period, deadline for submission of all assignments, and the date by which grades will be submitted to the Office of the Registrar will be clearly indicated on the graduate course syllabus.

Definitions:

Instruction Period: Refers to the period between the first and last class.

Procedure:

Child Policies: Individual programs may have their own policies regarding grade submission but which still fall within the limits of the parent policy.

Monitoring Data:

The Office of the Registrar will provide the Vice Provost of Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS) with a list of outstanding grades at the end of each semester, and the VPRGS shall report compliance with this policy to the Senate at its last meeting of the academic year.

Policy Title: Visiting Student Admission to Graduate Studies

Policy Administrator: Registrar

Approval History: May 10, 2016; Senate Motion #2015/16–077

Purpose:

To create a category of students that can take courses at the graduate level without a full admission to the program.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To facilitate visiting students in a program who don't intend on degree completion
- To facilitate students quick entry to the program
- To limit the amount of courses one could take without a full admission to a program

Scope of this Policy: School of Graduate Studies (not all programs are required to admit visiting students)

Policy Statement: A visiting student, who is deemed qualified by the program director, may audit or take courses for credit for a variety of reasons. (e.g Letter of Permission, single courses taken for personal or professional development, to get started in the program based on a quick timeframe). Visiting students will be restricted to 3 courses attempts or 9 semester hours, whichever is less. Further study would require full admission to a program (Letter of Permission excepting).

Admissions Requirements would include a short form admissions application outlining previous education experience. Unofficial transcripts may be required to verify degree as well as program readiness. Visiting students must still meet English proficiency requirements.

Monitoring Data: Registrar will report to the VPRGS the number of visiting students per year and the number of semester hours taken per visiting student.

Last updated September 9th, 2016 at 12:20pm by Nhien Pham

Policy Title: Recognition of Previous Learning

Policy Administrator: Office of the Registrar

Approving Body: University Senate

Approval History: University Senate, February 7, 2017; Motion #2016/17-035
April 8, 2014; Senate Motion #2013/14-031

Purpose: Trinity Western University values learning and seeks to provide appropriate recognition of learning that will promote student success in its programs and overall curriculum.

Scope of this Policy: Undergraduate, Graduate, and Seminary

Policy Statement: Trinity Western University provides formal recognition of learning where such learning is determined to be requisite or equivalent and/or applicable to University courses/programs. This formal recognition may take the form of:

- granting admission to programs
- waiving of program requirements
- academic credit.

Definitions:

Credit transfer is the recognition of credit taken at a host institution by the acceptance of that credit at a receiving institution, either for a specific course or for unassigned credit in a discipline. Transfer credit is accepted in lieu of an internal requirement and can be applied in the same way as an internal course or credit to fulfill general or specific credential requirements. A block of credit may be transferred when it is simpler to do than course-for-course transfer. Course and program equivalencies that have been articulated (i.e. assessed for equivalence and awarded credit through a formal inter-institutional request process) are recorded as transfer agreements in the BC Transfer Guide. Non-articulated courses are assessed by the department offering comparable courses and credit is awarded or denied on a case-by-case basis.

Credential recognition involves assessing a credential such as a certificate, diploma, or other similar formal document that may or may not have academic credit included in it, and determining whether it may be requisite or equivalent to a TWU program or requirement. Examples include a high school diploma that is requisite to admission to an undergraduate program; an Associate of Arts degree that is requisite to the Adult Degree Completion Program; or a Law degree that is both requisite to an MBA program and that may also allow the student to be waived from a business law course requirement in that program.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition is a recognized process by which students may complete a portfolio of learning through which they may challenge particular courses and be given credit for their documented learning.

Procedure:

Child Policies: See related admission policies, Transfer Credit policies, PLA policy (TEAC, Motion #2009-10);

If a school, faculty, department or program that requires a minimum letter grade for courses counted toward a major, minor, or concentration, this policy requires that said requirement shall apply to relevant transferred courses equally to those offered at TWU. Policies implementing such requirements shall reference this policy as parent.

Monitoring Data: The Registrar shall report compliance with this policy annually to Senate at its last regular meeting of the academic year.

Policy Title: Course Syllabi Approval and Review

Parent Policy: Standards for Course Syllabi^[1]

Policy Administrator: Faculty/School Deans

Approving Body: University Senate

Approval History:

November 10, 2015; Senate Motion #2015/16–016

January 13, 2015; Senate Motion #2014/15–026

December 1, 2009; Senate Motion #2009/10–011

UAC Motion #19, 2002

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To clarify the degree to which a course syllabus can be modified without Council approval;
- To clarify the means by which the course syllabi are reviewed;
- To ensure that students in each course are offered and have reasonable access to a copy of a course syllabus that lays out the professor's expectations, the anticipated learning outcomes of the course, specific requirements to succeed in the course, and an overview of the course's content

Scope of this Policy: Undergraduate, Graduate and TWU Extension academic programs.

Policy Statement: When a new course is approved by the Undergraduate, Graduate, or TWU Extension Council, the definition of that course is established and must be reflected in the initial version of the course syllabus and in each subsequent version, unless the relevant Council has approved a change to the definition of the course. Faculty/School Deans are responsible to ensure that:

- Syllabi for new courses meet the standards for course syllabi prior to the first time the course is offered;
- Syllabi do not deviate from the approved definition of the course; are distributed to students on the first day of the course; and are stored in a central database for future reference;
- Syllabi continue to comply with the requirements and definitions of the course; compliance will be assessed as part of each program's cyclical review.

Definitions: The definition of the course is considered to be changed from what was initially approved by a Council if one or more of the following applies:

- There is a substantial change in course content, as reflected in the course description (the Dean is responsible for noting and assessing such a change);
- There is a substantial change in the course objectives or learning outcomes (the Dean is responsible for noting and assessing such a change);
- There is a substantial change to any of the quantitative information required by the Council when the course was approved, such as:
 - o the credit hours assigned to the course;
 - o the course level (e.g., a change from 100-level to 200-level);
 - o the level of pre-requisites (e.g. 300 to 200);

- There is a change to any aspect of the course that is governed by policy, such as:
 - o the type of course grade assigned (e.g., a change from a letter grade to P/F);
 - o grade distribution requirements (e.g., minimum percentage requirements for final exams).

Procedure:

Monitoring Data:

New courses:

- The Dean will provide the chair of the Council that approved each course in his/her area with a statement of compliance with this policy two weeks prior to the last academic council meeting of the semester. The Fall semester's report will also include any courses offered during the previous summer session;

Ongoing undergraduate, graduate and extension courses:

- Syllabi distribution and definition of the course: The Dean will provide the Curriculum sub-committee with a statement of compliance with this policy two weeks prior to the last Senate meeting of each semester. The report will also include any courses offered during the previous summer session;

Program reviews:

- The Dean will provide the Curriculum sub-committee with a statement of compliance with this policy as a part of all program reviews.

Implementation Date: January 2010

The links below are current and 'live'. As new policies, revisions, and updates are approved the links will be updated to the most current version available.

Senate Educational Policies

<https://www8.twu.ca/governance/policies-procedures/educational-policies/>

Research Policies

<https://www8.twu.ca/governance/policies-procedures/research-policies/>

Office of Research and Graduate Studies Policies

https://sharepoint.twu.ca/orgs/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Home.aspx

Note: if there is a conflict between policies in the Academic Calendar (or any other posted information) the links on the Office of Research and Graduate Studies sharepoint site will supersede and be the most current.