

B. DEGREE STANDARDS

B1.000 - Defining Degree Standards

The University of Montana bestows substantial freedom on departments and schools to define their own degree structures; current information about particular programs may best be obtained by contacting the chair or dean of the program directly. University regulations, curricula, and fee schedules are subject to change without notice, and students in degree programs are responsible for meeting degree requirements and procedural deadlines.

B2.000 - Grades

Students must maintain a B average in courses taken for graduate credit at The University of Montana; no grade below C will be accepted toward any degree requirement. The student is automatically on academic probation if the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0.

The Graduate School may place limits on the time for the student to remediate the academic problem before being suspended (see policy B8.000 for details on Probation and Suspension).

In addition, a program may set a higher GPA minimum, and specify other academic performance measures to remain in good standing. Examples might include successful completion of specific core courses, demonstration of professional competencies, assembling a committee, or successfully being admitted to a research lab. Programs will communicate these standards clearly in their program handbooks. Failure to meet those standards may result in dismissal (see Policy B8.000, below).

B2.100 - Pass grades are not included in grade point calculations, but may apply toward degree requirements when earned in courses offered only on a Pass/Not Pass basis.

B2.200 - Credit grades are not included in grade point calculations, but may apply toward degree requirements when earned in courses offered only on a Credit/No Credit basis.

For Spring 2020, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, graduate and professional students may elect to take any graduate level course or any 400-level UG course on a Credit/No Credit (Cr/NCr) basis, rather than a traditional grade. The only exception is that the Cr/NCr will not apply to courses for which all requirements were due before spring break (10-week or shorter courses). Cr credits will not count toward GPA, but will count toward degree requirements. Students must consult with their academic advisors before making this decision, as different programs will have different concerns about long-term implications of non-graded courses on their transcripts (professional certification, employment opportunities, etc). Faculty will provide traditional grades as normal, but students can elect to opt for "Cr" for grades of C and above; grades of C-or lower will be awarded NCr.

Students have the option of choosing Credit/No Credit grading for any number of their courses up to seven calendar days after their final grade is posted to their transcript by the Registrar.

UM will include a designation on students' transcripts, indicating the extraordinary circumstances of the global public health emergency during Spring 2020.

B2.300 - Only N (Continuation), NCR (no credit received) and CR (credit) grades are awarded for research, thesis and dissertation work. The grades of CR and NCR are not defined in terms of their relationship

to traditional grades for graduate courses, but rather if the student completed the required work or not. Grades of I (Incomplete) not removed within one year revert to the alternate grade, usually F, or a grade assigned by the instructor when the incomplete is submitted.

B2.400 - The process for challenging courses provided in the UM General Catalog is not applicable for graduate credit.

B2.500 - In UG (undergraduate or graduate) designated 400-level courses, graduate students will be evaluated in a manner different from that of undergraduate students, and will complete an additional increment of graduate-level work as assigned by the instructor. **Beginning Fall Semester 2011, 300-level courses will not be applied toward a Master's or Doctoral degree.**

B3.000 - Continuous Registration

Graduate students in degree programs must register for credits each Fall and Spring Semester (with exceptions including some distance learning programs or the School of Education where students may be registering primarily in the Summer).

B3.100 - To ensure that costs for services are covered for continuing graduate students, a **continuous registration requirement of three credits per semester is mandatory**, except in documented and approved instances such as the following and for which registration of at least one credit is required. This policy applies to the regular academic year (fall and spring semesters) and to those students whose academic year may be an exception such as spring-summer or summer-fall). It does not apply to on-line, off-campus only programs.

1. International assignment with an NGO, Peace Corps, etc. as a program requirement (program registration documentation)
2. Parental leave or major illness (documented by physician, psychologist, etc.)
3. Extended family-leave due to illness (documented by physician, psychologist, etc.)
4. Significant off-campus field assignment (documented by department chair and dean).
5. Post-defense periods in which there is thesis, dissertation, or professional paper clean up only (no registration is required for one semester); after one semester, one-credit registration is required for one semester; beyond one semester, three-credits continuous registration is required

Application for exception to the three credit mandatory continuous registration policy should occur using the following procedures:

1. All exceptions must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.
2. All requests for exception should be submitted to the Graduate Dean before the first day of classes for the semester for which an exception is requested.
3. Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis, except for programmatic exceptions (e.g. ICD program in Resource Conservation, IYFD program in Education, predoctoral internships for clinical and school psychology Ph.D. students, and Creative Pulse) which can be requested by a programmatic memorandum from the program director to the Graduate Dean. The memorandum from the program director will constitute suitable documentation.
4. Parental or major illness and extended family leave exception requests should be in the form of a memorandum from the major professor (adviser) to the Graduate Dean, and suitable documentation

(from physician, psychologist, other medical professional, etc.) should be included as an attachment.

5. Significant off-campus field assignment (domestic or foreign) exception requests for each student should be in the form of a memorandum to the Graduate Dean from the major professor (adviser) and endorsed by the department chair and dean. This memorandum will constitute suitable documentation.
6. Exception request memoranda need not be lengthy, but should include the specific request including the student's name and student identification number, the reason for the request, and any supporting documentation.

Additional Note (not part of the continuous registration policy):

In addition to this continuous registration policy, the Graduate School allows up-to a one-year leave of absence with no penalty (See Policy B3.200), with approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. The form for requesting a leave of absence is available on the Graduate School web site. Since a leave of absence presumes the student is off-campus and not engaged in university activities, no university resources (except those available to the general public) are available during the leave of absence.

B3.200 - Students who step out of their graduate programs and who do not maintain continuous registration will be dropped from their program's roster and will need to petition their program and the Graduate School for readmission. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student's progress and a plan with time-table for completing the degree. Not all students will be readmitted.

In an attempt to discourage students from stepping out of their programs without a leave of absence, the Graduate Council established a policy that readmitted students may be required to register for up to four credits not taken under continuous registration or additional terminal credits in their final term.

B4.000 - Leave of Absence

The Graduate School allows up-to a one-year leave of absence with no penalty with approval of the Graduate School (e.g., for parental, major illness, or personal need). The form for requesting a leave-of-absence is available on the Graduate School web site. Because a leave-of-absence presumes the student is off-campus and not engaged in university activities, no university resources (except those available to the general public) are available during the leave-of-absence.

B5.000 - Dropping Out

Students who leave their graduate programs without prior permission from their program and the Graduate School, and who do not maintain continuous registration, will be dropped from their program's roster.

They will need to petition their program and the Graduate School for readmission. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student's progress and a plan with timetable for completing the degree. Not all students will be readmitted.

B6.000 - Plagiarism Warning

Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representing them as one's original work. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion.

Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed

wording but also ideas. Acknowledgement of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism.

B7.000 - Student Conduct Code

To the extent a particular graduate program subjects its students to specific professional ethics, professional conduct or honor code, violation of any such code may subject a student to academic misconduct charges, general misconduct charges or both pursuant to The University of Montana Student Conduct Code. Refer to the general catalog or contact the Vice President for Student Affairs for information about the Student Conduct Code.

B8.000 - Academic Probation and Suspension

A student may be placed on **probation** for either of the following reasons:

- A failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.000, which will be automatic unless the program appeals to the Graduate School on the student's behalf to explain contingent circumstances.
- A failure to make good academic progress as defined by the program.

After grades are finalized, the Graduate School will notify programs of their students who are below the minimum of 3.0, and ask that they identify students who are struggling in the program, or explain contingent circumstances that would suggest they do not need to be on Academic Probation (close to the 3.0 mark, making significant progress, etc).

If the student is placed on Academic Probation, the program will notify the student as well as the Graduate School and include with that notification benchmarks to achieve and a specific timeline to achieve them before Suspension.

A student can be **suspended** from an academic program for any of the following reasons:

- Provisional admission conditions not met (see Policy A2.000).
- Cumulative or program GPA falls or remains below a 3.00 after being placed in University Probation status (see above).
- Unsatisfactory progress in a degree program as defined by that program's student handbook.

When a program determines that a student should be suspended, they will notify the student and the Graduate School of the suspension, with details in the student's record relevant to existing program policy. If the program decides to suspend a student, the program will communicate to the student and the Graduate School, and offer the student a clear timeline for appeal (see below). Suspensions due to GPA as stipulated above cannot be appealed without the support of the academic program.

Suspension Appeal

If a degree-seeking student wishes to appeal their suspension due to unsatisfactory progress they must follow the steps in the following timeline:

1. **Notice of Appeal.** The student must notify the Graduate School of their intent to appeal within five (5) business days of receiving the suspension letter.
2. **Submission of Appeal.** The student has an additional ten (10) business days to provide a letter and any supporting documents to the Graduate School. The Appeal should provide specific evidence,

context, or mitigating factors that address directly the program or Graduate School standards that were not met.

The decision on an appeal resides with the Dean of The Graduate School or their designee. The Dean may reach out to the student or the program for additional information, if it deems such is necessary for its decision. The Dean may place requirements related to timeframes on responses to these requests. If additional information is received from the program, the student will be provided a copy. The submitted appeal can be accepted or denied, and the Graduate School will typically issue that decision within 10 days of submission, however, this timeframe may be longer if the Dean requires additional information from the student or faculty member.

- 3. Plan of Action.** If the appeal is accepted, the student will be sent a Plan of Action from the Graduate School to be completed by their committee chair/graduate coordinator. The Plan of Action must enumerate the items to be completed for the student to return to good standing. As with other petitions to the Graduate Dean, the Plan of Action should be submitted to the Graduate School by graduate program faculty (chair/advisor/program director) confirming their approval of the steps to return to good standing.

If the appeal is not made within 10 days, or the appeal is denied, students will be made "Inactive" as graduate students.

To be re-admitted after a suspension, the student must receive the approval of the graduate program, who may choose not to re-admit.

The decision of the Dean is considered the final administrative act of the University.

Pursuant to BOR 203.5.2, this decision is appealable to OCHE.