

# **Rules and Regulations for the Pursuit of Academic Degrees\* in the Graduate School**

## **ARTICLE I. ADMISSIONS**

### **Section 1. Admission to the Graduate School**

Any graduate with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0, an undergraduate baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, or any international student with equivalent qualifications is eligible to apply for admission to the Graduate School.

Graduate work is under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Faculty of various departments. A student is expected to have adequate undergraduate training in the field in which the individual plans to do graduate work. If a student's training is found to be inadequate, the individual will be required to take such additional courses as the department may prescribe.

Admission to the Graduate School does not automatically admit a student to candidacy for an advanced degree.

Applications for admission can be obtained from the Office of Admissions of the Graduate School, Howard University, Washington, D.C. 20059 or via the Graduate School web-site at [www.gs.howard.edu](http://www.gs.howard.edu). No application will be considered complete until official transcripts, Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, a resume, a statement of interest and/ or goals, and three letters of recommendation are received by the Graduate School Office of Admissions. International students are also required to provide the Graduate School with Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam scores. The minimum TOEFL score for admission is 550 on the paper scale (213 on the computer scale)<sup>†</sup>. Individual departments and schools may require additional submissions from the applicant. Please contact the departments for any additional application requirements.

### **Section 2. Admission to a Department**

The department in which the student plans to study shall determine whether or not the student meets the qualifications for admission to graduate study in that particular department. In addition to other requested materials, the applicant shall provide the Graduate School Office of Admissions with a complete transcript of academic performance of work done at Howard and/or other institutions of higher education that the applicant has attended. Upon receipt of the completed application, the Office of Admissions shall determine whether the student meets the general Graduate School admission requirements. The Office of Admissions shall notify the department and shall request that the department evaluate the student's credentials. The department shall communicate its decision to the Graduate School Office of Admissions, which will then communicate with the student.

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\* Unless otherwise specified, all references in this document to “department” should be construed to refer to the “Committee on Graduate Studies.”

† The Graduate School may, from time to time, update the minimum TOEFL exam score to reflect changes in the quality and coverage of the TOEFL exam.

If an applicant is seeking admission into an M.D. / Ph.D. program, the individual must be accepted into both the College of Medicine and the Graduate School. The applicant must meet all criteria for acceptance into the College of Medicine and the Graduate school. Similarly, if an applicant is seeking admission into an interdisciplinary program or a graduate certificate program, the rules of admission for the Graduate School and participating units will apply.

In those cases where a graduate student wishes to transfer from one graduate program in the Graduate School to another, he/she must submit an appropriate application to the Office of Graduate Admissions, and receive approval of the department in which he/she wishes to enroll. Unless approved by the Board of Trustees, a student may not matriculate simultaneously in two graduate programs.

### **Section 3. Departmental Admissions Committee**

Each department shall have a Departmental Admissions Committee composed of Graduate Faculty members. This committee and other interested departmental faculty members shall scrutinize the credentials of applicants and make recommendations concerning admissions decisions. Departmental admission decisions are then submitted to the Graduate School. The Dean or the Dean's designee will notify the applicant concerning the status of the application.

### **Section 4. Committee on Graduate Studies**

Each department shall have a Committee on Graduate Studies consisting only of current Graduate Faculty members. The chair of this committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. Among the responsibilities of this committee are the following: (a) the performance of an annual review of the academic progress of each graduate student in the department; the names of those students who have been found to be in academic jeopardy shall be reported to the Graduate School (see also: Article V, Section 4 and Article VI, Section 3); and (b) the recommendation to the Dean of external examiners on oral defense committees whose status is comparable to that of members of the Graduate Faculty who also serve on such committees (see also: Article V, Section and Article VI, Section 8).

### **Section 5. Categories of Admissions**

#### **A. Regular Student**

Applicants who meet the stated requirements for admission to a graduate program in the Graduate School shall be accepted as regular students. Students with a minimum cumulative grade point average greater to or equal to 3.0 and a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, (including any international student with equivalent qualifications,) are eligible to apply for admission to the Graduate School as a regular student.

#### **B. Provisional Student**

Applicants who have deficiencies in preparation or scholarship but are judged by the department to be capable of completing a graduate degree program may be accepted on a provisional basis. The student in this category will be allowed to take a maximum of ten (10)

credit hours per semester for a maximum of two semesters and shall also satisfy all special requirements set by the department before the student may qualify for admission as a regular degree student. Upon review of the conditions established at the time of admission, the Committee on Graduate Studies may recommend to the Dean that the status of the provisional student be changed to that of a regular student. Failure to meet requirements of the provisional admission within two semesters will result in dismissal from the graduate program.

### C. Unclassified Student (Non-Degree Student)

An unclassified status is an elected category for the student who wishes to pursue “course work only.” The applicant must meet all general admission requirements and any additional requirements prescribed by the department. A non-degree student, upon approval and recommendation of the department, may qualify for another category of admission in the Graduate School. Departments will determine the number of non-degree students they can accept on a yearly basis. Students may transfer no more than two (2) courses earned as a non-degree student to a degree program.

## **Section 6. Academic Advisement**

Each department shall provide faculty advisement for students in the Graduate School. Departments will assign each incoming student an academic advisor who will assist in academic planning throughout matriculation and development of a Program of Study. The student shall also be given a copy of the departmental handbook of course requirements, rules and regulations. The name of each student’s academic advisor must be reported, by the departmental Director of Graduate Studies<sup>‡</sup> (or Graduate Program Director if there are multiple programs in the department) to the Graduate School, within one semester following the initial registration for graduate study.

## **Section 7. Readmission to the Graduate School**

Any student dismissed for reasons other than the second failure of the comprehensive examination or the oral defense of the thesis/the dissertation may seek readmission to the Graduate School. First, the student must complete an application to the Graduate School Office of Admissions and include a complete record of prior academic performance at Howard University. Second, the student must submit a written request for readmission to the Dean of the Graduate School. Third, the student must receive approval for readmission from the Dean of the Graduate School and from the department in which the student wishes to enroll. Reinstatement requires fulfillment of conditions formulated by the department in which the student is a degree candidate and approved by the Dean. Following approval, the Dean will notify the student of these conditions.

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<sup>‡</sup> The departmental Director of Graduate Studies is a member of the Graduate Faculty recommended by the Graduate Faculty and Chair of the department. The appointment of the Director of Graduate Studies must receive the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. The appointment is for a term and usually on an annual basis. The Director of Graduate Studies is the link between the department and the Graduate School, and among other responsibilities, provides essential advice and mentoring to graduate students. The roles and responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies are available in a separate document in the Graduate School.

A student who fails the comprehensive examination or the final oral examination in defense of the thesis or dissertation a second time will be dropped from the Graduate School, and is ineligible for readmission. (see: Article VII: Appeal of Academic Decisions).

Returning students who were absent from, or not registered at, the University for one entire semester (summer session not included) are required to apply for readmission.

### **Section 8. Pursuit of An Advanced Degree by a Graduate Faculty Member**

An individual who holds a current special appointment as a member of the Graduate Faculty is ineligible to pursue an advanced degree from the Graduate School. Faculty members may enroll in courses for credit, but such work may not be applied towards fulfillment of requirements for a graduate degree at Howard University.

## **ARTICLE II. REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT**

Students must register for classes during the registration period and follow procedures for registration as outlined in the Student Reference Manual and Directory of Classes. Both documents can be found at the Howard University website, [www.howard.edu](http://www.howard.edu).

### **Section 1. Permanent Record**

The official permanent record of a student's enrollment in the university, registration for classes, grades earned, and other qualifications fulfilled are maintained in the Office of the Registrar.

### **Section 2. Student Load**

Nine credit hours are considered to be a full time schedule for students prior to being admitted to candidacy. After admission to candidacy, enrollment for at least one credit hour of dissertation research or dissertation writing may constitute a full time schedule.

The maximum load for a graduate student is fifteen credit hours. Enrollment in more than twelve credit hours requires approval by the Graduate Studies Committee of the department. Courses for no credit allowance will not be included as part of the regular student load.

### **Section 3. Leave of Absence for Exceptional Family Circumstances**

In recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, illness, disability, caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents), military service, or similar circumstances may have on the time and energy that graduate students have to devote to their educational programs, the University allows students in such circumstances to apply for a leave of absence:

### A. Length of Leave

Students who apply for a leave of absence should indicate the length of the requested leave of absence and explain why their circumstances warrant a leave of that length. Leaves of absence in excess of four semesters are disfavored and will not be granted absent extraordinary circumstances or as required by law.

### B. Application Procedures

A leave of absence for childbirth, adoption, illness, disability, dependent care, or similar circumstances normally must be requested and approved prior to the beginning of the academic term for which it is being requested. A letter of request should provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances leading to the request and a justification of the length of the requested leave. Each student should describe the progress they have made in their graduate program, and indicate if the requested leave of absence is expected to affect the time-to-degree, course-viability, or course-restoration limitations set forth elsewhere in these Rules. The letter of request should be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School and, in cases of disability, the Office of Special Student Services. The letter of request must also state whether the request is supported by the student's faculty advisor and Director of Graduate Studies, and include supporting documentation. The faculty advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, Office of Special Student Services, and/or the Graduate Dean may request a doctor's statement to document any limitations arising from a student's disability or illness.

### C. Special Considerations

#### 1. Registration Requirements

Students on approved leaves of absence are not registered at the University and, therefore, do not have the rights and privileges of registered students. Upon the conclusion of an approved leave of absence, a student may register without applying for readmission to the University. Students must be registered during a semester in which they fulfill a University or departmental degree requirement, such as taking qualifying exams or submitting a dissertation/thesis. In addition, students must also be registered in order to be eligible for any form of University financial aid (*e.g.* a teaching or research assistantship) and to be certified as full-time students.

#### 2. Impact on Funding

When contemplating a leave of absence, graduate students are advised to consult the sources of their funding to determine whether a leave might involve a long-term financial loss. Because academic programs and financial aid packages may be constructed and sequenced over a period of years, individual interruptions to the normal sequence of academic progress and scheduled employment may result in a loss of future funding and a slower time to completion of degree. In some programs, a leave of absence may mean that students may have to begin a new project upon return, with the likelihood that their research may take longer to complete. Whenever a leave of absence is being considered, a student should meet with the advisor to develop a plan for resumption of

study and gain a clear understanding of future funding opportunities. Some outside funding agencies frown on interruptions to a degree program. Some only allow leaves for medical reasons or military service. Others require prior approval of the fellowship agency.

Students with outstanding educational loans need to consider the effect of taking a leave of absence on their loan status. For some student loans, a grace period for repaying the loan begins once the student stops registering. If the leave period is longer than the grace period, then the student may have to begin repaying the loan while on a leave of absence. Prior to taking a leave, students should arrange to meet with a Student Financial Aid officer, and/or contact their lenders.

### 3. International students

Non-immigrant F-1 and J-1 students and their dependents must maintain legal immigration status at all times. Students with F-1 or J-1 visas must be enrolled full-time every semester at the University while they remain in the United States. The only possible exception that might allow a student to remain in the United States while on an approved leave of absence might be a serious illness or medical condition. Students are advised to consult with the staff of the Office of International Educational Services for more information when considering a leave of absence.

### 4. Student Accounts

Students are advised to check with the Enrollment Management Office prior to taking an approved leave of absence in order to determine the status of their student accounts. Students are advised that accounts that are overdue will be subject to regular procedures in accordance with University guidelines, notwithstanding any approved leave of absence: specifically, late fees and finance charges will continue to accrue, students will be blocked from future registration upon their return, and accounts will be referred for collection, with the imposition of additional collection charges, for non-payment in accordance with regular timeframes.

### 5. University Housing and Other Resources

The University's general policy is that students must be registered to be eligible for University housing. For specific information about continued eligibility for University housing during an approved leave of absence, students are advised to contact the Department of Resident Life. Students who are on a leave of absence do not have a valid Howard University identification card and therefore are not entitled to use University resources, such as the libraries, shuttle buses, and other services covered by mandatory fees.

## **Section 4. Temporary Interruption of Student's Program for Other Reasons**

Students who are readmitted to the Graduate School are subject to the rules and regulations in place at the time of readmission.

## ARTICLE III. GRADES AND COURSE CREDIT

### Section 1. Letter Grades and Their Value

#### A. The Grading System

The grading system for all graduate level courses leading to a graduate degree awarded by the Graduate School shall be as follows:

LETTER GRADE	NUMERICAL VALUE FOR PURPOSES OF CALCULATING A GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)
<b>A</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>C-</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>0</b>

#### B. D and F Grades

No degree credit may be earned for D and F grades received in graduate level courses. Such courses must be repeated and a grade of B- or higher must be earned to satisfy graduate degree requirements. Grades of D and F are a permanent part of the record, however, and are used in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average.

#### C. Incomplete Grades

All incomplete grades, except those for thesis, dissertation, or research courses, shall carry an alternate grade designation. The grade "I" with an alternate letter grade indicates that the work was incomplete at the end of the course. The alternate letter grade indicates the grade that will be recorded if the work is not completed by the end of the last day of the next semester in which the student is enrolled. This grade may be given to a graduate student who, upon petitioning the instructor in writing, has provided adequate justification for partial completion of the course requirement when the final grade report is due.

Completion of a course in which an incomplete grade has been given will involve the submission of required documents, e.g., term papers, exams, and notebooks, or may also include completion of contractual period of service not corresponding to the grading period. At the time the alternate letter grade is assigned, the instructor and student must complete an Incomplete

Grade Processing Form (IGPF) with details of what the student must do and by what date in order to remove/change the incomplete grade. A copy of the IGPF must be placed in the student's file in the department office.

The grade of "W" will be reported for a graduate student who withdraws from a course after the end of the add/drop period according to the University calendar. The "W" remains a permanent part of the student's academic record.

## **Section 2. Change of Grade**

A grade assigned for work in a graduate level course is not subject to change. Exceptional cases (such as errors in the computation of final grades) may be considered upon submission of a petition by the instructor of the course to the Dean of the Graduate School no later than one month after the beginning of the next semester in which the student is enrolled.

## **Section 3. Approval for New or Additional Courses**

Students may not receive graduate degree credit for courses not duly authorized for this purpose by the Graduate School.

## **Section 4. Auditors**

A student may audit a graduate level course and is required to pay the regular tuition and other fees. An auditor is not required to take examinations, and will not receive credit for the course. An audited course will be recorded on the student's permanent record with an assigned grade of AD.

## **Section 5. Undergraduate Courses Taken by Graduate Students**

Undergraduate courses taken to fulfill entrance deficiencies will not be calculated into the grade point average (GPA). Grades earned in required undergraduate courses taken by a graduate student as a requirement for their program are calculated as a part of both the semester and cumulative grade point averages. A maximum of six credits of such courses may be counted toward a graduate degree with the approval of the department in which the degree is pursued. Only undergraduate courses in which a grade of "B" or better is earned will be counted toward the graduate degree.

## **Section 6. Graduate Courses Taken by Undergraduate Students**

A department may permit a Howard University undergraduate student to take not more than two graduate courses in his/her senior year. When the credits earned in graduate courses exceed the total number of credits required for the baccalaureate degree, these credits may, with department approval, be counted toward requirements for a graduate degree at Howard University.

## **Section 7. Transfer of Credit to Graduate Degrees**

Departments may approve transfer of credits for graduate courses, earned in other graduate programs, where the grade is B or better. However, it must be the considered judgment of the department that the work is relevant and meets the objectives of comparable courses. In no case may transfer credit hours exceed the limit specified in Article V., Section 5 (Master's degree) and Article VI, Section 5 (doctoral degrees) herein. Such transfer may not be used to satisfy the residency requirement specified in Article V, Section 1A and Article VI, Section 1A and must be approved by the Graduate School.

## **Article IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

In addition to departmental requirements for the degree or certificate, all graduate students must demonstrate competency in the English language and pay all degree fees. All graduate students must participate satisfactorily in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) workshop or equivalent.

### **Section 1. English Competency and Expository Writing**

All graduate students must demonstrate their competency in the English language as evidenced by earning a passing score on the English Proficiency Examination. Students who do not pass the examination must successfully complete a course on expository writing, "Writing Workshop in Exposition for Graduate Students." All graduate students, both part-time and full time, must satisfy this requirement during their first year of enrollment and may not advance to candidacy without having done so. Doctoral students who have demonstrated competency at the Master's level at Howard University need not do so again at the doctoral level.

### **Section 2. Responsible Conduct of Research**

The Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Workshop is intended to provide students with information on pertinent federal and University guidelines and regulations pertaining to the responsible conduct of research as well as to instruct them in a method of utilizing moral reasoning skills in responding to ethical dilemmas in research. Workshop topics include intellectual property, data sharing and understanding of Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and procedures, data acquisition and management, and mentoring. The RCR training workshop is a requirement for admission to candidacy. To receive the RCR certificate, students must complete all required training sessions and successfully complete a learning assessment exercise at the end of the workshop.

## ARTICLE V. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

### Section 1. Residency, Credit Requirements, and Admission to Candidacy

#### A. Residency

A minimum of six credit hours per semester constitutes residency. A student must be in residence in the Graduate School for at least one semester in order to be recommended for a degree. Credits transferred from other accredited graduate institutions may not be used to meet the residency requirement.

#### B. Minimum Credit Requirements

The minimum number of credits required for the Master's degree is thirty. However, departments may require credits in excess of this amount, and various factors may result in a student's taking more than the minimum number of credit hours prior to satisfactorily completing the degree requirements. The completion of minimum course requirements or credit does not guarantee receipt of the degree.

The distribution of credits for the degree shall be as follows:

1. Twenty-four credits in course work, at least eighteen of which shall be earned in the major subject.
2. No more than six (6) credits in thesis writing courses may count towards the requirements of the degree.

#### C. Admission to Candidacy

Admission to a Master's degree program does not automatically admit a student to candidacy for the Master's degree. A student will be admitted to candidacy upon completion of a majority of the requirements for the Master's degree, except the thesis or its equivalent.

Prior to admission to candidacy, a student must:

1. Submit an admission to candidacy form (available from the Graduate School), listing graduate courses completed, in process, and yet to be completed.
2. Pass all of the required core courses.
3. Pass the qualifying or comprehensive examination administered by the department (where applicable).
4. Demonstrate proficiency in expository writing in addition to satisfying the RCR requirement as described in Article IV, above.

5. Pass the foreign language examination or fulfill the approved substitute where applicable.
6. Secure the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or other institutional committees as required for the research project.
7. Receive approval of a thesis subject or an optional requirement as determined by the Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department.
8. Receive the endorsement of the Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department.
9. Receive the approval of the Graduate School.

Admission to candidacy must be achieved at least six weeks *prior to* the end of the semester in which the student expects to receive his/her degree.

Candidacy for the Master's degree shall be valid for no more than two academic years. Any student seeking renewal of candidacy must apply to the Graduate School through the department for reinstatement. The department in which the student is seeking the degree shall determine the conditions under which he/she may be reinstated, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee of the Graduate School.

The responsibility for fulfilling these requirements on time is that of the student. The departmental Director of Graduate Studies should be consulted regarding any of the stated requirements. Students should carefully note the specific requirements of their department relative to admission to candidacy and regard them as additional to these general requirements.

## **Section 2. Course Requirements**

### **A. Length of Time for Completion of the Master's Degree**

Students are expected to complete a Master's degree within a maximum of five years from the date of initial registration in the program. A student who exceeds the five year period may be dismissed. After five years, students must petition for readmission and may be readmitted only upon fulfillment of conditions recommended by the departmental Committee on Graduate Studies and approved by the Executive Committee of the Graduate School, subject to the rules for readmission to the Graduate School in Article I, Section 7.

### **B. Course Viability**

The Graduate School has a fundamental interest in ensuring that its graduating M.A. students have currency of knowledge in their fields. Therefore, the Graduate School places limits on the age of courses that can be counted toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements.

Credit for courses pursued more than five and less than seven years, prior to the term in which the student presents herself/himself for the final examination, can be counted toward the fulfillment of degree requirements only if they are restored as described in this paragraph with the approval of the departmental Committee on Graduate Studies and the Dean. In order for a course to be restored under this paragraph, the student must pass an examination administered expressly for the purpose of restoration of credits in the course concerned or a comprehensive examination in the field in which the course falls.

A student may not receive credit toward the degree for a course, which the student took and completed more than seven (7) years prior to the time the student presents herself/himself for the final examination. Such courses may not be restored.

In the event that a student has been granted a leave of absence pursuant to Article II, Section 3 on account of childbirth, adoption, illness, caring for incapacitated dependents, disability, military service, or similar circumstances, or if the student's progress toward a degree has been delayed as a result of such conditions or circumstances but without the need for a leave of absence, the student may apply in writing to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee and the Dean for an exception to the foregoing limitations on course viability and course restoration. A copy of any such application must be provided to the Office of Special Student Services. Such exceptions are strongly disfavored where the courses exceed the foregoing time limitations because of the Graduate School's fundamental interest in ensuring that graduating students have currency of knowledge in their disciplines.

#### C. Enrollment in Thesis Writing Courses

A student who has met course credit requirements but is using University facilities, or is conferring in person with the thesis advisor, must continue to enroll in a thesis-writing course. A student shall register as an auditor if he/she has already accumulated the maximum number of hours permitted for thesis writing courses.

#### D. Assignment of Grades for Thesis Writing Courses

Thesis writing courses shall be assigned a grade of Incomplete while the work is in progress. These incomplete grades are removed after completion of the final oral examination on the thesis.

#### E. Enrollment in the Semester in Which the Degree is conferred.

A candidate for a degree must be enrolled in the Graduate School during the semester in which the degree is conferred.

### **Section 3. Program of Study**

The department in which the student is enrolled shall specify the program and departmental requirements for each of its candidates. An approved Program of Study for each student must be filed with the Graduate School no later than the end of the first semester in residence. The responsibility of submitting the individualized Program of Study is that of the

student. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in suspension of enrollment privileges at the University.

#### **Section 4. Grades and Academic Status**

- A. A cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (B) is required for graduation.
- B. A student who falls below the 3.00 GPA shall be warned and informed by the Graduate School and must raise the quality point index to 3.00 in the next two terms in residence. Students failing to do so will be dismissed from the Graduate School.
- C. A student may earn no more than two grades below B-, or they will be dismissed from the Graduate School
- D. A student who demonstrates an inability to perform satisfactorily at the graduate level should be recommended for dismissal.

#### **Section 5. Transfer of Credit**

Course work taken in another graduate program may be approved for transfer up to a maximum of six credits provided the courses to be transferred were not applied to satisfy requirements for a degree. The specific courses for which these six credits may be transferred shall be determined by the Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department subject to the approval of the Graduate School. Official transcripts must accompany any request for transfer of credits. Viability of transfer courses shall be governed by the rules specified in Section 2B above.

Students currently enrolled in a program of the Graduate School who wish to seek admission to another program in the Graduate School must obtain written permission from the department in which the student is enrolled for transfer to another program. A copy of the approved document must be submitted to the Graduate School. The student must formally apply for admission into the new program. The rules on transfer of credits noted above will apply to students who desire to switch programs.

#### **Section 6. Foreign Language Requirement for a Master's Degree**

The department in which the student is enrolled shall determine the foreign language requirement, if any, or its substitute for the Master's degree.

Students may satisfy the foreign language requirement by passing an examination prepared by the foreign language department at Howard University based on materials submitted by the department concerned.

## **Section 7. Qualifying and/or Comprehensive Examination**

Graduate departments require that students pass a qualifying and/or a comprehensive examination before they qualify for candidacy. Students must consult their departments for specific information on the examination(s).

A candidate who fails such an examination on the first try may sit for a second examination, provided that the second examination not be administered earlier than two months from the date of the first examination. Failure on the second examination will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.

## **Section 8. Thesis or its Equivalent: Committee, Document, and Defense**

Master's degree programs require the submission of a thesis, or in the case of a non-thesis equivalent, completion of a project or courses in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree. A member of the Graduate Faculty who shall act as his/her advisor must supervise students preparing a required document. Said advisor must be a member of the department in which the degree will be granted. Students are advised to consult their departments concerning requirements and options, because departments, in accordance with disciplinary practices, determine acceptable projects.

The subject of the thesis or its equivalent shall be determined as early in the program as possible.

### **A. The Committee**

The committee for the thesis or its equivalent must consist of the thesis advisor and at least two other members, a majority of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty at Howard University. Each member of the committee is responsible for fully reviewing and approving both the process and the final document (i.e. the thesis or its equivalent). Final approval of the thesis or its equivalent in all aspects is the responsibility of the full committee acting on behalf of the Graduate School.

### **B. The Document**

The document shall be prepared in accordance with the conventions of the discipline and shall conform to requirements of the Graduate School as specified in the manual available in the Graduate School.

Thesis students shall deposit three approved copies with the department no later than two weeks after the date of the final oral examination; these documents along with other supporting documents will then be forwarded to the Graduate School. Students who fail to comply with this regulation will be considered to have failed the first oral examination and will have to sit for a second one.

### C. Defense

The candidate is required to pass a final oral examination in defense of the thesis or its equivalent. In accordance with the academic calendar of the Graduate School, the department must notify the Graduate School to schedule the examination. In scheduling the examination, the student's major department shall furnish the names of the members of the oral defense committee. The examination shall be based primarily on the research, the field of research, and related areas of study. The majority of the oral examination committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty at Howard University.

The final examination shall be open to members of the faculties of the University, and to other persons who may be invited by the candidate's major department and by the candidate.

A candidate who fails such an examination on the first try may sit for a second examination, provided that the second examination not be administered earlier than two months from the date of the first examination. Failure on the second examination will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.

## **ARTICLE VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE**

### **Section 1. Residency, Credit Requirements, and Admission to Candidacy**

#### A. Residency

A minimum of six (6) credit hours per semester constitutes residency. A student must be in residence in the Graduate School for at least four (4) semesters in order to be recommended for a degree. Credits transferred from other accredited graduate institutions may not be used to meet the residency requirement.

#### B. Minimum Credit Requirements

The minimum course credits for the degree is 72 graduate credits (inclusive of dissertation) beyond the bachelor's degree. However, departments may require credits in excess of this amount, and various factors may result in a student's taking more than the minimum number of credit hours prior to satisfactorily completing the degree requirements. No more than twelve (12) credits in dissertation writing courses may count towards the requirements for the degree. The completion of minimum course requirements or credit does not guarantee receipt of the degree.

#### C. Admission to Candidacy

Admission to the Ph.D. program does not automatically admit a student to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. A student shall be admitted to candidacy upon completion of most requirements for the Ph.D. degree, except the dissertation.

A student can be admitted to candidacy upon meeting the following requirements:

1. Submit a complete admission to candidacy form to the Graduate School. It must include a list of graduate courses completed, those in process, and those courses in the field yet to be completed.
2. Pass all of the required core courses.
3. Pass the qualifying and/or comprehensive examination administered by the department (where applicable).
4. Demonstrate proficiency in expository writing in addition to satisfying the RCR requirement as described in Article IV above.
5. Pass the foreign language examination or fulfil the approved substitute (where applicable).

6. Secure the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or other institutional committees as required for the research project.
7. Receive approval of a dissertation topic via a process determined by the Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department. A copy of the approved dissertation proposal must accompany the request for the admission to candidacy.
7. Receive the endorsement of the Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department.
8. Receive the approval of the Graduate School.

Admission to candidacy must be achieved at least one semester *prior to* that in which the student expects to receive the degree.

Candidacy for the Ph.D. degree shall be valid for no more than five academic years. Any student seeking renewal of candidacy must apply to the Graduate School through the department for readmission. The department in which the student is seeking the degree shall determine the conditions under which the student may be reinstated, subject to approval of the Graduate School.

The responsibility for fulfilling these requirements is that of the student. Students should consult the Director of Graduate Studies in their department if in doubt as to any of the requirements. Students should carefully note the specific requirements of their departments relative to admission to candidacy and regard them as additional to these general requirements.

## **Section 2. Course requirements**

### **A. Length of Time for Completion of the Ph.D. Degree**

Students are expected to complete a Ph.D. degree within a maximum of seven (7) years from the date of initial registration in the program. A student who exceeds this period may be dismissed. After seven years, students must petition for readmission and may be readmitted only upon fulfillment of conditions recommended by the departmental Committee on Graduate Studies and approved by the Executive Committee of the Graduate School, subject to the rules for readmission to the Graduate School in Article I, Section 7.

### **B. Course Viability**

The Graduate School has a fundamental interest in ensuring that its graduating Ph.D. students have currency of knowledge in their fields. Therefore, the Graduate School places limits on the age of courses that can be counted toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements.

Credit for courses pursued more than seven and less than ten years, prior to the term in which the student presents herself/himself for the final examination, can be counted toward the fulfillment of degree requirements only if they are restored as described in this paragraph with

the approval of the departmental Committee on Graduate Studies and the Dean. In order for a course to be restored under this paragraph, the student must pass an examination administered expressly for the purpose of restoration of credits in the course concerned or a comprehensive examination in the field in which the course falls.

In the event that a student has been granted a leave of absence pursuant to Article II, Section 3 on account of childbirth, adoption, illness, caring for incapacitated dependents, disability, military service, or similar circumstances, or if the student's progress toward a degree has been delayed as a result of such conditions or circumstances but without the need for a leave of absence, the student may apply in writing to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee and the Dean for an exception to the foregoing limitations on course viability and course restoration. A copy of any such application must be provided to the Office of Special Student Services. Such exceptions are strongly disfavored where the courses exceed the foregoing time limitations because of the Graduate School's fundamental interest in ensuring that graduating students have currency of knowledge in their disciplines.

#### C. Enrollment in Dissertation Writing Courses

A student is not permitted to register for dissertation writing until he or she has been admitted to candidacy. A student who is using the University facilities or is conferring in person with the dissertation advisor must continue to enroll in a dissertation writing course. The student must register as an auditor if he/she has already accumulated the maximum number of hours permitted for dissertation writing courses (12 credit hours).

#### D. Assignment of Grades for Dissertation Writing Courses

Dissertation writing courses will be assigned a grade of Incomplete while the work is in progress. The "incomplete" grades will be removed upon successful passage of the final oral examination for the dissertation.

#### E. Enrollment in the Terminal Semester

A degree candidate must be registered for at least one graduate credit hour during the semester in which the degree is conferred.

### **Section 3. Grades and Academic Status**

A cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (B) is required for graduation.

A Ph.D. student will be permitted only two grades below B-, and will be dismissed after he/she receives a third grade below B-. Grades below B- earned at the Master's level at Howard University or elsewhere are not included in this count; the reference here is to grades below B- in Ph.D. course work done at Howard University.

A student who falls below 3.00 GPA will be given due notice by the Graduate School that he/she must raise his/her quality point index to 3.00 in the next two terms in residence. Students failing to do so will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

A student who demonstrates an inability to perform satisfactorily at the graduate level may be recommended for dismissal.

#### **Section 4. Program of Study**

Each department in which the student is enrolled shall specify the programs and the requirements for each matriculating degree student. An approved Program of Study for each student must be filed with the Graduate School no later than the end of the first semester in residence. The responsibility of submitting the individualized Program of Study is that of the student. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in suspension of enrollment privileges at the University.

#### **Section 5. Transfer of Credit to the Ph.D. Degree**

Students holding a bachelor's degree who were admitted directly into the Ph.D. program may—with the approval of the Committee on Graduate Studies—transfer a maximum of 18 semester credit hours of graduate credits with a grade of B or better into the Ph.D. program. Students holding a Master's degree from a recognized accredited institution or an equivalent international institution may transfer no more than 24 graduate course credits with a grade of B or better into the Ph.D. program, dependent upon approval of the Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department. Official transcripts must accompany any request for transfer of credits.

Students currently enrolled in a program of the Graduate School who wish to seek admission to another program in the Graduate School must obtain written permission from the department in which the student is enrolled for transfer to another program. A copy of the approved document must be submitted to the Graduate School. The student must formally apply for admission into the new program. The rules on transfer of credits noted above will apply to students who desire to switch programs

#### **Section 6. Foreign Language Requirement**

The department in which the student is enrolled shall determine any foreign language requirement or its substitute.

Students may satisfy the foreign language requirement by passing an examination prepared by the foreign language department at Howard University based on materials submitted by the department concerned.

#### **Section 7. Ph.D. Qualifying and/or Comprehensive Examinations**

The student will be required to pass a qualifying and/or comprehensive examination administered by the Graduate Faculty of the department in which the student is enrolled. This examination will be given only once each semester. A student should take the examination while earning his/her first 48 credits towards the Ph.D. degree, or as required by the department

concerned. Students must consult their departments for specific information on the examination(s).

A candidate who fails such an examination on the first try may sit for a second examination, provided that the second examination not be administered earlier than two months from the date of the first examination. Failure on the second examination will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.

### **Section 8. Dissertation Proposal, Committee, Document, and Defense**

Ph.D. programs require the submission of a dissertation in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree. A member of the Graduate Faculty who shall act as the student's advisor must supervise students preparing the dissertation document. Said advisor must be a member of the department in which the degree will be granted. Students are advised to consult their departments concerning requirements.

#### A. Dissertation Proposal

The subject of the dissertation shall be determined as early in the program as possible. As a condition for admission to candidacy, the student must present an approved proposal for his/her doctoral dissertation research as authorized by his/her advisor and members of the dissertation committee.

The proposal should include an outline of the proposed research including the nature, scope, and significance of the problem, the theory, methodology, and a tentative title. A copy of the approved dissertation proposal must accompany the admission to candidacy form submitted to the Graduate School. The proposal and candidacy application must be approved by at least four members of the Graduate Faculty with a majority of members from the department.

#### A. Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee must consist of the dissertation advisor, at least three other members of the Graduate Faculty, and an external member of comparable stature as determined by the Committee on Graduate Studies. Each member of the committee is responsible for fully reviewing and approving both the process and the final dissertation document. Final approval of the dissertation, in all aspects, is the responsibility of the full dissertation committee acting on behalf of the Graduate School.

#### B. Dissertation Document

The candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is required to present a dissertation, which is the result of significant and sustained research in his/her discipline. The student must demonstrate ability to organize and present effectively the findings and results of his/her research. When completed, it is expected that such research will make a meritorious contribution to the field of knowledge.

The document shall be prepared in accordance with the conventions of the discipline and conform to the requirements of the Graduate School as specified in the manual available in the Graduate School. Before the final oral examination is scheduled, the dissertation must be deposited with the Graduate School according to a schedule established by the Graduate School. The dissertation shall also be deposited in the department where the student is seeking the Ph.D. degree not later than three weeks *before* the date of the final examination for the degree. The candidate shall prepare three copies of the dissertation and four copies of the dissertation abstract in accordance with the prevailing Graduate School guidelines on preparing such documents.

### C. Final Oral Examination and Defense of the Dissertation

The candidate shall be required to pass a final oral examination in defense of the dissertation. The examination shall be based primarily on his/her research, the field of his/her research, and related areas of study.

The oral examination committee shall consist of a minimum of five members, four of whom must be current members of the Graduate Faculty at Howard University, and at least one of whom shall be from outside the University and be of comparable stature (see: Article I, Section 4). Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Graduate Studies in the department where the degree is earned, the Dean of the Graduate School shall appoint members of the oral examination committee.

The process for the conduct of the final oral examination shall be as follows:

1. The Committee on Graduate Studies in the major department shall request permission from the Graduate School to conduct an oral examination, adhering to the published deadlines. A copy of the approved candidacy form must accompany the request. Currency of courses as stipulated in Article VI, Section 2B must be established and affirmed in the memorandum to request the scheduling of an oral examination.
2. The Committee on Graduate Studies in the department shall submit to the Dean a list of recommended examiners.
3. The Dean or his designee shall appoint an examination committee and shall notify each member of the committee of the date, time, and place of the examination.
4. The Dean and Associate/Assistant Deans of the Graduate School shall be ex-officio members of all oral examination committees.

The final oral examination shall be open to members of the faculty of the University, and to other persons whom the candidate's major department or the candidate may invite. Final approval of the dissertation in all aspects is the responsibility of the full committee acting on behalf of the Graduate School.

A candidate who fails the oral examination on the first try may sit for a second examination, provided that the second examination not be administered earlier than two months

from the date of the first examination. Failure on the second examination will result in dismissal from the Graduate School. A student dismissed for this reason will not be readmitted to the Graduate School.

A department can recommend dismissal of a student who, after failing the dissertation oral defense the first time, does not resubmit the dissertation and present himself/herself for re-examination within a six-month period.

## **ARTICLE VII. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

Certificate programs have been established in the Graduate School to 1) enhance the marketability of graduate students and programs across the university; 2) provide a service to the community at-large through short-term, academic-based graduate programs; and 3) provide expanded opportunities for students wishing to further their education for personal or career advancement.

These programs are of two general types: those intended as enhancements to existing degree programs, and those intended to stand alone.

### **Section 1. Residency and Credit Requirements**

#### **A. Residency**

A minimum of three credit hours per semester constitutes residency. A student must be in residence in the Graduate School for at least one semester in order to be recommended for a certificate. Credits transferred from other accredited graduate or undergraduate institutions may not be used to meet the requirements of a certificate program. Students enrolled in online courses offered by the Graduate School of Howard University are considered in-residence for such courses.

#### **B. Minimum Credit Requirements**

The number of credits required for certificate programs will be determined by the departments offering the programs, but will generally be 12-18. Students pursuing such programs must consult the specific departmental requirements.

### **Section 2. Course Requirements**

#### **A. Length of Time for Completion of the Certificate Program**

Students must complete a certificate program that is part of a Masters or a Ph.D. program by the time they complete the requirements for the degree. Students must complete a stand-alone certificate program in two years from the date of original registration. Those who have not completed the program within that time may be dismissed. Students who have not completed the program within two calendar years may petition for readmission and may be readmitted only upon fulfillment of conditions recommended by the departmental Committee on Graduate Studies and approved by the Executive Committee of the Graduate School, subject to the rules for readmission to the Graduate School in Article I, Section 7.

#### **B. Course Viability**

For certificate programs that are included in a degree program, course viability will be the same as for other courses taken for the degree. Stand-alone Certificate Programs must be completed in two calendar years except where an exception is provided under the same procedures described in Article V, Section 2(B) of these Rules.

**Section 3. Grades and Academic Status**

- A. A cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (B) is required for the awarding of a certificate.
- B. A student will be permitted only two grades below B-, and will be dismissed after he/she receives a third grade below B-.
- C. A student who falls below 3.00 GPA will be given due notice by the Graduate School that he/she must raise his/her quality point index to 3.00 in the next two terms in residence. Students failing to do so will be dismissed from the Graduate School.
- D. A student who demonstrates an inability to perform satisfactorily at the graduate level should be recommended for dismissal.

**Section 4. Program of Study**

Each department in which the student is enrolled shall specify the programs and the requirements for each matriculating certificate student. An approved Program of Study for each student must be filed with the Graduate School no later than the end of the first semester in residence. The responsibility of submitting the individualized Program of Study is that of the student. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in suspension of enrollment privileges at the university.

**Section 5. Transfer of Credit to a Certificate Program**

Generally, students may not transfer credits from other programs or institutions to a certificate program.

Students currently enrolled in a program of the Graduate School who wish to seek a Certificate in the Graduate School must formally apply for admission into the certificate program and obtain written acceptance from the department in which the certificate is offered. A copy of the approved document must be submitted to the Graduate School.

## ARTICLE VIII. APPEAL OF ACADEMIC DECISIONS

Grievance procedures<sup>§</sup>, as detailed under the “Policy on Student Academic Procedures” in The Student Reference Manual, the H-Book and other University publications, are applicable in the case of challenges to academic decisions. The procedure approved by the Board of Trustees on April 23, 1994, is as follows:

### **Section 1. The Informal Process**

- A. A student who believes that he/she has been aggrieved must first attempt to seek an informal resolution with the other party involved in the dispute, e.g., a grade dispute with the instructor.
- B. If the student is unable to resolve the dispute with the primary party of the dispute, then the student is advised to seek the intervention of his or her departmental chairperson.
- C. All disputes, which are not resolved at the departmental level, are then brought to the Dean’s Office, whereupon the Dean or his/her designee will seek to reach an informal resolution through mediation between the parties.
- D. If mediation at the Dean’s level fails, then the student’s grievance is consigned to the committee designated by the school/college to address student grievances herein referred to as the Student Grievance Committee.

### **Section 2. The Formal Process**

- A. Student grievances, which are consigned to the Student Grievance Committee, must be specified in writing by the student and given to the Dean or his/her designee.
- B. The student’s written statement, along with supportive evidence, constitutes a case document, which will be submitted to each member of the committee.
- C. The second party to the dispute is also requested to provide to the office of the Dean with his or her written account of the matter in dispute, which becomes a part of the case document that is forwarded to each member of the committee.
- D. The Student Grievance Committee is then required to set a date for convening a meeting to hear the case as expeditiously as possible.
- E. After the date has been set, each party to the dispute is sent a certified letter, which informs him or her of the charges, and date of the meeting as well as a statement requesting his or her presence.

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<sup>§</sup> The procedures for resolution of grievance matters are subject to revision by the Board of Trustees.

- F.** During the hearing, the student presents his/her case; after, the accused party is allowed to present the other side. Each side is permitted to have witnesses.
- G.** Following the hearing, members of the committee after deliberation on their assessment of the case reach a decision as to how the case should be resolved.
- H.** The committee's decision is sent to the Dean of the Graduate School in the form of a recommendation.
- I.** The Dean then informs the student in writing of the decision, which may be based upon the committee's recommendation or upon a modification of it.