Exceptions

Graduate Academic Concerns Committee

Academic policies define institutional standards and ensure equitable treatment of all students. All students are expected to observe the academic policies and practices of the University. However, in instances of documented extraordinary circumstances, a student may request an exception to a policy or practice.

The Graduate Academic Concerns Committee is a standing subcommittee of the Graduate Council which represents the Graduate Council’s interests as advisory to the Associate Provost. As chair of the Committee, the Associate Provost appoints its members and ensures that the committee is representative of appropriate academic and administrative units. This committee also may serve as the review body for graduate academic appeals and grievances as referred to them by the Provost and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

Decisions of the Committee are final. The Committee re-considers its decisions only on the basis of new information not previously available for the initial review.

Purview

The Graduate Academic Concerns Committee considers requests for exceptions to University-wide policy affecting graduate students. Permission to deviate from University policies is not granted automatically or perfunctorily. Each request is considered on its merits. Decisions are made on the academic basis of the petition and requests granted when approval does not weaken the integrity of the academic program. While the committee is cognizant of the hardships that students may face, petitions based primarily on cost or convenience considerations will not be approved.

Prohibited Exceptions

Exceptions to University policies will be considered only if there is no University prohibition against deviating from regulations. The University prohibits exceptions regarding the following:

- Late registration for courses students have sat in on, but were not enrolled. Students may not be permitted to attend courses for which they have not registered.
- Removal of markers of Withdrawal “W” from the student’s record. Notations of Withdrawal “W” do not impact the student’s GPA and are official markers of University registration transactions.
- Waivers of graduation requirements. Students may not receive a University of Denver degree without completing all degree and credit hour requirements or with a cumulative GPA below the minimum required for their degree program.
- To count undergraduate courses, courses numbered below 3000 level or 3000 level courses that are offered for undergraduate credit only for the graduate degree. Students should consult with their academic advisors to enroll for appropriate graduate level courses.

Items for Committee Review

The Graduate Academic Concerns Committee will review the following requests in addition to any issues referred to the Committee by the Associate Provost.

Changing Course Registration After the Close of a Term

The Committee will consider retroactive adds or drops only in the event of extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control:

- An error on the part of the University in registration.
  Documentation: Letter(s) on institutional letterhead from an appropriate University authority.
- Registration for the wrong course or course level. (e.g. registered for 4991 Master’s level, should have been 5991 doctoral level)
  Documentation: Letters(s) on institutional letterhead from an appropriate University authority.
- The student registered for but never attended the course.
  Documentation: Letter(s) on institutional letterhead from an appropriate University authority.
- Erroneous re-registration for the same course for which a student already received an Incomplete “I” grade.
  Documentation: Letter(s) on institutional letterhead from an appropriate University authority.
- Physical injury/illness and/or mental illness that prevents the student from completing course(s).
  Documentation: Letter(s) on letterhead from the physician for physical injury/illness or psychiatrist or other licensed mental health professional for mental illness. The letter(s) must specifically state that the student was advised to withdraw due to injury/illness.
- Serious illness or death of immediate family member that prevents the student from completing the course(s).
Exceptions

Documentation (for illness): Letter on business letterhead from the attending physician for the physical illness or psychiatrist or other licensed mental health professional for mental illness.

Documentation (for death): Memorial service folder, obituary, or copy of death certificate

- Job relocation or loss of employer reimbursement eligibility due to involuntary job loss.

Documentation: Letter on business letterhead from immediate supervisor or human resources administrator.

- Unexpected increase in job responsibilities, required change in work schedule, or required travel that prevents completion of course(s).

Documentation: Letter on business letterhead from immediate supervisor or human resources administrator that specifies the dates of increased workload and/or travel.

Note: The Graduate Academic Concerns Committee does not handle registration for the wrong section of a course.

Extensions of Time to Complete Degree

The Committee will consider petitions for extensions of time to complete the degree with the following minimum documentation required:

- letter of input from the student,
- student submission of a detailed outline plan with milestones and goal dates leading to completion of the degree, and
- letter(s) of input from the student’s faculty and/or departmental advisor.

Petition Process

Students must initiate petitions online using PioneerWeb (see instructions below). Required documentation may be submitted to:

Office of Graduate Studies
2199 S. University Blvd
Mary Reed Building, Room 5
Denver, CO 80208-4802

Email: graduatestudies@du.edu (gradstudies@du.edu) (preferred)

Fax: 303-871-4566.

Instructions for Online Submission

Navigate to PioneerWeb (https://PioneerWeb.du.edu) Log in using the DU ID and Passcode, select the “Student” tab, go to “myWeb (Banner Self-Service),” select “Student and Financial Aid,” select “Student Records,” go to “Request Academic Exception.”

Required Documentation

A valid petition includes, at minimum, the official online request submission, written documentation from the student, the student’s advisor and, if the request is in regards to a class, the instructor of the course being petitioned. Additional documentation may be required before the petition can be reviewed.

Petitions for students in the Morgridge College of Education, University College, Graduate School of Social Work and Josef Korbel School of International Studies must also include unit input. Once the student’s electronic petition and faculty input for that petition have been received, the information will be sent to the unit for review. The unit will then email input to graduatestudies@du.edu (gradstudies@du.edu).

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all documents, including faculty and unit input, are submitted in a timely fashion. Documentation must be received at least one week prior to the monthly Graduate Academic Concerns Committee meeting.

The Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, or the Associate Provost’s designee, has final determination as to whether the documentation the student has submitted is sufficient.

Petition Review and Status

Petitions are reviewed and decided by the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and the Graduate Academic Concerns Committee, which meets once per month during the regular academic session. The Committee does not meet during the summer or interterm periods. Petitions submitted during interterm periods are reviewed at the discretion of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

It is the responsibility of the student to check the status of their petitions and respond to requests by the Committee representative.

The student will be notified (via webCentral) of the decision of the Associate Provost and/or the Graduate Academic Exceptions Committee within one week of when the request was reviewed. The decision report will be emailed to the instructor and department.
Statute of Limitations

The Committee will not consider petitions for policy exceptions more than one calendar year after the completion of the quarter in question or once a student’s degree has been certified and posted to the transcript.

A student has two weeks from the initial submission to complete their petition. If, at the end of two weeks there are still outstanding documents, the petition will be archived and no further actions will be taken.

Items for Associate Provost Review

Transfer of Credit Policy and Credit Hours to Count for the Degree

- Transfer hours from another institution older than five years do not count for the graduate degree.
- Students cannot take more than eight credits beyond degree requirements in order to make up grade deficiencies.

English Language Proficiency Assessment for Students with a Low TOEFL/IELTS Speaking Test

If the student earns minimally a score of 24 on the speaking section of the TOEFL or a 7.5 on the speaking section of the IELTS and performs high on the DU speaking assessment, the academic unit may submit a petition to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies requesting that the student be awarded the GTA but must enroll in and successfully complete the ELC Bridge Course in his/her first academic term of enrollment. Petitions must provide a compelling case for the exception. Petitions are submitted at the discretion of and by academic units. The Office of Graduate Studies will not accept requests and petitions from students.

Unit-specific Admission Requirements Set by Individual Academic Programs

The Associate Provost will consider petitions for applicants that are requesting waivers from unit-specific admission requirements (i.e. letter of recommendation or essay). These petitions need to be supported by the departmental admission committee and have a strong rationale.

Note: The dean of the graduate unit reviews requests for waivers regarding entrance exams.

Concurrent Enrollment and Residency Requirements

Students may enroll elsewhere concurrently only if they are pursuing a requirement not currently offered at DU and if the concurrent enrollment doesn’t result in an unacceptable overload.

Students may be allowed an exception to the residency requirement if extenuating circumstances (e.g. medical or personal issues) require that they be away from the University of Denver campus. Any off-campus study request must be consistent with the student’s graduate program and must have appropriate departmental approvals.

The residency requirement will not be waived if a student’s time out-of-residence results in too substantial a proportion of their graduate work being taken outside the University of Denver.

Permission for concurrent enrollment or waivers of residency will never be allowed for financial reasons.