Continuous Enrollment Policy

Oregon State University
Continuous Enrollment Policy
Effective Fall term, 2002

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Provost and Executive Vice President

Preface

Implementation of this policy will occur over the interval Fall 2002 to Fall 2004. Categories of students will be affected as described below:

- The policy is effective as of Fall 2002 for all new graduate students admitted for the first time in Fall 2002 or thereafter, and for all currently inactive graduate students who are readmitted beginning Fall 2002 or thereafter.
- Currently enrolled graduate students who change into a different degree program (e.g., from masters to doctorate, or from one degree to another) in Fall 2002 or thereafter are subject to the policy at the time of change.
- Currently enrolled students who become inactive by failing to register for more than two consecutive terms will become subject to the policy, effective with the term of inactivity to the University.
- All graduate students, including currently enrolled students, will become subject to this policy no later than Fall 2004, regardless of their original matriculation date.

Executive Summary

Continuous graduate enrollment refers to the policy of requiring continuous registration of graduate students from original matriculation until all degree requirements are met.

All graduate students in graduate degree and certificate programs must register continuously for a minimum of 3 graduate credits and pay fees, regardless of the student's location, if they will be using any University resources (e.g., facilities, equipment, computing and library services, or faculty or staff time) until their degree or certificate is granted or until their status as a credential seeking graduate student is terminated. This includes students who are taking only preliminary or final examinations or presenting terminal projects. Graduate students who do not plan to make use of University resources during summer session are not required to register during the summer and do not need to submit an Intent to Resume Graduate Status form. However, if students do plan to utilize University resources during summer session, they must register for the minimum 3 graduate credits. It is the student's responsibility to register for the appropriate number of credits that may be required for any funding eligibility and/or compliance as outlined by specific agency regulations under which their funding may be governed.

A graduate student intending to resume active graduate student status following interruption of his/her study program for one or more terms must apply for Regular Leave of Absence (Maximum: 3 terms for master's students; 5 terms prior to candidacy and 3 terms after advancement to candidacy for doctoral students) or Planned Leave of Absence (Maximum: 9 terms) to maintain graduate student standing in their programs and to avoid registration for 3 credits for each term of unauthorized break in registration. Intent to Resume Graduate Status forms must be received by the Graduate School at least 15 working days prior to the first day of the term involved. The time the student spends in approved on-leave status will be included in any time limits relevant to the degree. Students in on-leave status may not a) use any University facilities, b) make demands upon faculty time, c) receive a fellowship or financial aid, or d) take course work of any kind at Oregon State University. Regular Leave of Absence is granted in cases where the student indicates good cause (e.g., illness, employment, family issues, financial need, personal circumstances). Planned Leave of Absence is granted to students for whom the design of their academic program is such that the offering of courses and/or the conduct of research/scholarly work are not on a continuous term-to-term basis. Planned Leave of Absence is set by the program with the approval of the Graduate School.

Approval of the Major Professor, Department/Program Chair, and Graduate Dean are required for all Leaves; multiple terms of leave may be requested at one time.

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A graduate student who takes an unauthorized break in registration by failing to maintain continuous enrollment or by failing to obtain Regular or Planned Leave of Absence will relinquish his/her graduate standing in the University. Students who wish to be reinstated will be required to file an Application for Graduate Reenrollment, pay the readmission fee, and register for 3 graduate credits for each term of unauthorized break in registration.

In the case of extraordinarily extenuating circumstances, students may appeal the provisions of the Continuous Graduate Enrollment Policy by submitting a detailed request in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School for additional terms of Leave of Absence or forgiveness of additional credits of registration.

PHILOSOPHY

Graduate study is a learner-focused activity that is characterized by partnerships between graduate students and the Graduate Faculty and is supported by the Graduate School. As a learning community we are committed to a learning environment that fosters a collaborative approach to the goal of graduate student success. We believe that graduate student success includes timely completion of academic goals and is dependent on access to programs, services, and University resources and a high degree of interaction between graduate students and the Graduate Faculty.

BACKGROUND

Continuous graduate enrollment refers to the policy of requiring continuous registration of graduate students from original matriculation until all degree requirements (i.e. successful completion of the final examination and/or submission of library copies of thesis to Graduate School) are met. Such policies generally specify that, once admitted to a program, graduate students must maintain active enrollment for a specified minimum number of credits every term until the degree is completed. Such policies are commonplace in many U.S. universities. The intent of such regulations is to encourage graduate students to complete their degrees in a timely manner and without dropping out of school unless approved.

RATIONALE

The primary objectives of the Continuous Enrollment Policy are to:

1. encourage graduate student degree completion;
2. minimize time to degree for graduate students;
3. require registration at any time when University resources, including facilities and faculty time, are used;
4. provide the University with an accurate account of active graduate students;
5. provide the University with an indication of student intent when students break registration; and
6. hold a place for students who intend to resume graduate study following a Leave of Absence.

POLICY

1. Minimum Registration

Unless on approved Leave of Absence (see Section II), all graduate students in graduate degree and certificate programs (level 02) must register continuously for a minimum of 3 graduate credits, excluding summer session, until their degree or certificate is granted or until their status as a credential seeking graduate student is terminated. This includes students who are taking only preliminary comprehensive or final examinations or presenting terminal projects. Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits and pay fees if they will be using University resources (e.g. facilities, equipment, computing and library services, or faculty or staff time) during any given term, regardless of the student’s location. If degree requirements are completed between terms, the student must have been registered during the preceding term.

For students who have successfully completed the final examination in accordance with Survival Guide diploma deadlines (see Graduate School web site), registration during the subsequent term is not required. However, for students whose final examination occurs after the diploma deadlines published in the Survival Guide, minimum registration of three graduate credits during the subsequent term is required only if library copies of the thesis have not been submitted to the Graduate School within the first two weeks of the subsequent term.

Graduate students who do not plan to make use of University facilities or faculty time during summer session are not required to register during the summer and do not need to submit an Intent to Resume Graduate Status form. In such instances, summer session will not be counted within allowed Leave of Absence limits (see section II.C.). However, if students do plan

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to utilize facilities or faculty time during summer session, they must register for a minimum of 3 graduate credits.

It should be noted that graduate assistantship eligibility requires enrollment levels that supersede those contained in this Continuous Enrollment Policy. Various agencies and offices maintain their own registration requirements. If they exceed those specified by this Continuous Enrollment Policy (e.g., those of the Veterans Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Service for international students, and those required for federal financial aid programs). Therefore, if the student's responsibility to register for the appropriate number of credits that may be required for funding eligibility and/or compliance as outlined by specific agency regulations under which they are governed.

II. Leave of Absence

On-leave status is available to students who need to suspend their program of study for good cause. Students who desire a leave of absence will work with their major professor, program administrator, and the Graduate School to arrange authorized leave. Graduate programs are designed such that the offering of courses and/or the conduct of research/scholarly work are not on a continuous term-to-term basis will work with the Graduate School to arrange planned leave. Students understand that while on leave they will not use University resources. Graduate Faculty members are students' most important resource at the University and will work closely with graduate students to ensure timely completion of academic goals, understanding of the Continuous Graduate Enrollment Policy, and that graduate students enroll each term rather than when they are authorized leave. The Graduate School will assist graduate students and Graduate Faculty members with administrative procedures related to the Continuous Graduate Enrollment Policy. The Graduate School recognizes the diverse circumstances and unpredictability of graduate students' lives and will work in partnership with the graduate community in arranging leaves and responding to unexpected situations.

A graduate student intending to resume active graduate student status following interruption of his/her program of study for one or more terms, excluding summer session, must apply for Regular or Planned Leave of Absence to maintain graduate student standing in his/her degree program and to avoid registration for 3 graduate credits for each term of unreported break in registration (see Section IV below). Intent to Resume Graduate Status Forms must be received by the Graduate School at least 15 working days prior to the first day of the term involved. The time the student spends in approved on-leave status will be included in any time limits relevant to the degree (see Sections C.1. and C.2. below). Students in on-leave status may not:

A. Eligibility. Only graduate students in good standing are eligible for Leave of Absence.

B. Leave of Absence Categories.

1. Regular. Regular Leave of Absence is granted in cases where the student demonstrates good causes (e.g., illness, temporary departure from the University for employment, family issues, financial need, personal circumstances). The student must indicate reason for on-leave status.

2. Planned. Planned Leave of Absence is granted to students for whom the design of their academic program is such that the offering of courses and/or the conduct of research/scholarly work are not on a continuous term-to-term basis. Planned Leave of Absence is set by the program with the approval of the Graduate School. (For a current list of Planned Leaves, consult the Graduate School at 737-4881.) Planned Leave of Absence includes students enrolled in summer-only programs and graduate students in other programs that have been pre-approved by the Graduate School for Planned Leave of Absence. Summer-only students and other students who qualify for Planned Leave of Absence must a) be in good standing, b) submit the Intent to Resume Graduate Status Form indicating each term for which leave is requested, and c) complete all degree requirements within the time limits established in the Graduate Catalog. Requests for multiple terms of Leave may be submitted at one time.

C. Limits.

1. Regular Leave of Absence is granted for a specified time period that may not exceed three terms, excluding summer session. In no case may Regular on-leave status exceed the maximum listed below throughout the student's degree program.
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a. Master's degree. Master's degree students, except for summer-only students, may request a maximum of three academic terms of Regular on-leave status during the course of study for the degree. The time spent in approved on-leave status will be included in the 7-year time limit for completing all requirements to the master's degree.

b. Doctoral degree. Doctoral degree students may apply for a maximum of three academic terms of Regular on-leave status prior to advancement to candidacy, and they may apply for a maximum of three academic terms of on-leave status after advancement to candidacy. The time spent in approved on-leave status will be included in the maximum 5 years that may elapse between the preliminary oral examination and the final oral examination.

2. Planned Leave of Absence is available for a maximum of 9 terms, excluding summer session, to students enrolled in programs for which Planned Leave has been approved by the Graduate School. However, time spent in Planned on-leave status will be included in all time limits pertaining to the student's degree program.

D. Approval. Approval of the Major Professor, Department/Program Chair, and Graduate Dean are required.

III. Student Fees

Students with approved on-leave status are not required to pay tuition or fees. However, students who must register as per section I, "Minimum Registration" (p. 1), must pay both tuition and student fees.

IV. Unauthorized Break in Registration

A graduate student who takes an unauthorized break in registration by failing to maintain continuous enrollment or by failing to obtain Regular or Planned Leave of Absence will relinquish his/her graduate standing at the University. Students who wish to have their graduate standing reinstated will be required to file an Application for Graduate Readmission, pay the readmission fee, and register for 3 graduate credits for each term of unauthorized break in registration. The readmission application must be approved by the student's Major Professor, Department/Program Chair, and Graduate Dean. Acceptance back into a graduate program is not guaranteed even if the student departed in good standing. The petitioner for readmission will be required to meet University and departmental admission requirements and degree completion requirements that are in effect on the date of readmission. Review of the Application for Readmission may also result in a change of residency status from resident to nonresident.

When readmission is approved, the student must register for a minimum of 3 graduate credits for each term of unauthorized break in registration in addition to the minimum 3 credit registration required during the first term of reinstatement and each subsequent term until all degree requirements have been met except for any subsequent term of approved Leave as provided in Section II of this policy. If the accumulated credits total more than 16, the student may be required to enroll in more than one term of increased registration.

V. Appeal

In the case of extraordinarily extenuating circumstances, students may appeal the provisions of the Continuous Graduate Enrollment Policy by submitting a detailed request in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School for additional terms of Leave of Absence or forgiveness of additional credits of registration.