PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

1. Leave of Absence Guidelines

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| **Grad Council File No** | GC2017 – 002 |  |
| **Title** | Leave of Absence Guidelines  <http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/registration_policies.htm#8> |  |
| **Justification** | For purposes of clarity, there is a need to address additional justification for Leave of Absence: Military Service.  Under Leave of Absence, the time to completion clock would stop while under military service. |  |
| **Proposed Changes** | Leave of Absence for Childbearing, Adoption, Illness or Dependent Care, or Military Service  In recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, illness, and caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents), or Military Service 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 of up to two semesters during which time they do not intend to make academic progress toward the completion of their degree. The time taken on an approved leave of absence is not included in the time limitations for degree completion and advancement to candidacy. For the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy, which enables students to maintain full-time enrollment status rather than take a leave of absence, see the [Parental Accommodation Policy](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/academic_record.htm#19).  Leave of Absence for Childbearing, Adoption, Illness or Dependent Care  *Length of Leaves*  Application for a leave of absence may be made on a one- or two-semester basis. A leave of absence ordinarily will not be granted for more than one academic year. Leaves requested for a longer period are approved only in exceptional circumstances. An approved leave for one semester will be extended to two semesters as needed, if so requested by the applicant prior to the expiration of the approved one- semester leave of absence.  *Application Procedures*  A leave of absence for childbearing, adoption, illness, or dependent care 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 be addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School and should provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances leading to the request and a justification of the time requested (one semester or one year). The request must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and Graduate Director prior to submission to the Graduate Dean. The faculty advisor, Graduate Director, and/or Graduate Dean may request a doctor's statement. Approved leaves will stop the student's "time-to-degree clock."  Leave of Absence for Military Service  Length of Leaves  In recognition of extraordinary circumstances that may require graduate students to fulfill military commitments, students in such circumstances may apply for a leave of absence of up to two semesters (Fall and / or Spring) during which time, the requirement of continuous graduate registration is suspended.  Leaves of absence are only applicable for students who had a military commitment prior to entering a graduate program.  Students who volunteer for military service while registered in a program may not request a leave of absence unless there are extraordinary circumstances. This would exclude volunteering for service, and requesting a leave for basic training.  Application Procedures  A leave of absence for military service must be requested and approved prior to the beginning of the academic term for which it is being requested.  A letter of request should be addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School and should provide a detailed written explanation of the circumstances and a justification for the time requested (one semester or one year) as well as formal documentation regarding the call to military service.   The request must be approved by the student’s faculty advisor and Graduate Director prior to submission to the Graduate Dean. In their letter of support, both the faculty advisor and the Graduate Director must confirm that have read the Graduate School guidelines regarding the transfer of credits and will abide by them. |  |
| **Revised Version (Showing edits)** |  |  |
| **Discussion Notes** |  |  |
| **Adoption** |  |  |

1. Incomplete Grades

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| **Grad Council File No** | GC2017 – 008 |  |
| **Title** | Incomplete Grades  (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/academic_record.htm#6>) |  |
| **Justification** | Clarify policy regarding (1) blank grades (no grade) and incompletes,  (2) providing grades for 799, and 899, An incomplete or blank grade on the transcript for courses not required for a degree does not prevent the award of the degree. |  |
| **Proposed Changes** | A course is considered completed in the semester that the contract is fulfilled  All courses must receive a grade. A “blank” grade is not equivalent to a grade of Incomplete.  Incompletes and blank grades must be completed by time of graduation.  For graduate courses 799 and 899, a grade of I(ncomplete) must be assigned until the student has completed the thesis/dissertation. Upon successful completion of all degree requirements and the award of the degree, all Incompletes for 799 and 899 will be changed to S, unless the advisor has provided another grade (as noted on the Oral Committee Form). |  |
| **Revised Version (Showing edits)** | An incomplete is a mark that an instructor may award to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, but who is unable to complete some portion of the work required because of illness or other circumstance beyond the student's control.  In awarding the mark of "I" for graduate courses other than 799 and 899, instructors must fill out an "Incomplete Contract for Graduate Students."(<https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/graduate_school_incomplete_contract.pdf>)  The contract will specify the work remaining to be completed. It must be signed by the instructor and the student and maintained by the department offering the course. The student is responsible for providing a copy of the contract to the director of graduate studies in his or her program.  A course is considered completed in the semester that the contract is fulfilled.  The mark of incomplete in 500-, 600-, 700-, and 800-level courses will not automatically roll-over to letter grades. Normally, students are expected to complete courses in which they have received an "I" by a date no more than twelve months from the beginning of the semester in which the course was taken.  The mark of incomplete in 400-level courses will be governed by the rules for awarding incompletes to undergraduate students, including the provision of automatically converting an "I" to a letter grade.  All courses must receive a grade. A “blank” grade is not equivalent to a grade of Incomplete.  Advisors should stay current with their students in urging completion of incomplete grades, and programs should review the status of incompletes in their annual reviews of students' progress toward their degrees. Students will remain in good standing despite marks of incomplete if the courses are not required for their degrees.  For a submission of an Incomplete grade, faculty will be required to enter  (1) an expected date of completion no later than the date of graduation, and (2) a default grade if the deadline is not met.  Faculty will have the option of changing the Incomplete grade or default grade as appropriate.  For courses required for graduation, students will be considered to be making satisfactory progress only if they fulfill the conditions of any outstanding incomplete contracts in a timely manner. ~~An "I" can remain in place on a student's transcript for a maximum of one year.~~  It is the responsibility of the instructor or department chair concerned to submit the grade promptly upon completion of the conditions of the Incomplete Contract.  If the instructor is unavailable, the department chair, upon request of the student will make appropriate arrangements for the student to complete the course requirements.  Departments and programs may specify the maximum number of incomplete credits students may carry, exclusive of credits in 799 and 899.  For graduate courses 799 and 899, a grade of I(ncomplete) will be automatically assigned until the student has completed the thesis/dissertation. Upon successful completion of all degree requirements and the award of the degree, all Incompletes for 799 and 899 will be changed to S, unless the advisor has provided another grade. |  |
| **Discussion Notes** | Undergraduate Policy regarding Incompletes (<http://catalogundergraduate.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1536>)  The mark of 'I' is an exceptional mark that is an instructor option. It is given only to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, when, because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control, he or she has been unable to complete some small portion of the work of the course. In no case will the mark 'I' be recorded for a student who has not completed the major portion of the work of the course.  1. This Incomplete Contract form must be submitted to the dean of the college offering the course within six weeks after the grade submission deadline (if a grade hasn't already been submitted). If any Incomplete Contract isn't completed within the six week period, the instructor will convert the 'I' to the appropriate grade.  2. The student will remove the 'I' by completing work assigned by the instructor; it is the student's responsibility to request arrangements for the completion of the work. The work must be completed by the time stipulated in the contract, usually by the end of the next semester, but in any event, no later than one year. If the remaining work for the course as defined by the contract is not completed on schedule, the instructor will convert the 'I' to the grade indicated by the contract.  3. Exceptions to the stated deadline may be granted by the student's dean (in negotiation with the faculty member or the faculty member's dean) upon the written request of the student if circumstances warrant further delay.  4. If the instructor is unavailable, the department chair, upon request of the student will make appropriate arrangements for the student to complete the course requirements.  5. It is the responsibility of the instructor or department chair concerned to submit the grade promptly upon completion of the conditions of the Incomplete Contract.  6. The 'I' cannot be removed through re-registration for the course or through credit by examination. An 'I' mark is not used in the computation of quality points or cumulative grade point averages. |  |
| **Adoption** |  |  |

1. Procedures for the Oral Dissertation Examination

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| **Grad Council File No** | GC2017 – 012 |  |
| **Title** | Procedures for the Oral Dissertation Examination  (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/doctoral_degree_policies.htm#4>) |  |
| **Justification** | Clarify logistical considerations for oral dissertation exam, the role of the Dean’s Representative, situations where a committee fails to show. |  |
| **Proposed Changes** | Examinations may not be held on Sundays or when campus is officially closed.  Regardless of being a voting or non-voting member of the Examination committee, the Dean’s Representative must sign the “Report of the Examining Committee” attesting to the compliance of the oral examination  Chair in consultation with the Dean’s Representative and the student with the support of the Committee may choose to reschedule the defense or invoke emergency substitution procedures if a committee member does not show up within 30 minutes of the scheduled defense. |  |
| **Revised Version (Showing edits)** | ·         Location of the Examination. Oral examinations must be held in University facilities that are readily accessible to all members of the Dissertation Examining Committee and others attending the examination. The chair of the dissertation examining committee selects the time and place for the examination.  Examinations may not be held on Sundays or when campus is officially closed.  ·         The Dean's Representative. The Dean's Representative must be identified at the beginning of the examination. The responsibilities of the Dean's Representative include the following: ensuring that the procedures of the oral examination comply with those of the Graduate School (as described herein) and reporting to the Dean of the Graduate School any unusual problems experienced in the conduct of the examination.  Regardless of being a voting or non-voting member of the Examination committee, the Dean’s Representative must sign the “Report of the Examining Committee” attesting to the compliance of the oral examination.  Emergency Substitution Procedure   The Graduate School is aware that last-minute emergencies can prevent a committee member from attending a scheduled dissertation examination and will work with the chair of the examining committee and/or Graduate Director to make last-minute substitutions in committee membership to allow the examination to take place as scheduled.  If a committee member fails to show up after 30 minutes, the dissertation chair (co-chairs) in consultation with the student and Dean’s Representative and support of the remaining may choose to either postpone the defense or invoke emergency substitution procedures.  In the event that substitution procedures are invoked, the same group shall decide upon the amount of time to find a substitute before rescheduling the defense.  ·         The request must be sent in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School . ~~Fax~~ or e-mail requests (gradschool@umd.edu) are acceptable. A telephone call (301-405-3644) to the Graduate School explaining that an emergency request is coming will facilitate the process. |  |
| **Discussion Notes** |  |  |
| **Adoption** |  |  |

# Doctoral Dissertation and Examination

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| **Grad Council File No** | GC2017 – 0013 |  |
| **Title** | The Doctoral Dissertation and Examination  (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/doctoral_degree_policies.htm#4>) |  |
| **Justification** | Clarification of processes regarding changes in Dissertation Examining Committee, the role of the Registrar’s Office, and role of Special Members. |  |
| **Proposed Changes** | Clarification:  Approved dissertation committee is considered void, if any of its members change or the status of a member changes.  Dissertation chairs are to received of responsibilities upon receipt and validation of the Nomination Committee Form  Acknowledgement that Special members may co-chair a dissertation committee. |  |
| **Revised Version (Showing edits)** | * **Nomination of the Dissertation Examining Committee.**Membership on a Dissertation Examining Committee requires nomination by the student's advisor and the Graduate Director of the student's graduate program, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. The nomination of a Dissertation Examining Committee should be provided to the Graduate School at least six weeks before the date of the expected dissertation examination. The dissertation examination cannot be held until the Graduate School approves the composition of the Dissertation Examining Committee. Furthermore, if the Graduate Faculty status of any member of an approved Dissertation Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Dissertation Examining Committee ~~may~~ will be void, and a new Dissertation Examining Committee nomination form ~~may~~ will be required to be approved by the Graduate School.  Similarly, if the composition of an approved Dissertation Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Dissertation Examining Committee ~~may~~ will be void, and a new Dissertation Examining Committee nomination form ~~may~~ will be required to be approved by the Graduate School.  Similarly, if the composition of an approved Dissertation Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Dissertation Examining Committee ~~may~~ will be void, and a new Dissertation Examining Committee nomination form ~~may~~ will be required to be approved by the Graduate School.   §  **Chair.**Each Dissertation Examining Committee will have a chair, who must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty or, by special permission, has been otherwise appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School.  Dissertation Examining Committees may be co-chaired upon written recommendation of the program's Graduate Director and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School; at least one of the co-chairs must be a Full Member of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty.  Upon receipt and validation of the Nomination of Committee Form, the Office of the Registrar will email the dissertation chair and Director of Graduate Studies an explanation of his/her responsibilities, and the Report of Examining Committee form to be filled out upon completion of the defense.   * **Representative of the Dean of the Graduate School.**Each Dissertation Examining Committee will have appointed to it a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean's Representative should have some background or interest related to the student's research. The Dean's Representative must be a tenured member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Maryland. The Dean's Representative must be from another tenure home than the student's ~~primary advisor, or co-advisor(s)~~ dissertation chair or co-chairs.  In the case of multi-disciplinary programs, the Dean's Representative can be a member of the program, as long as they have a different tenure home from the primary advisor, co-advisor(s), or Doctoral Committee Chair (if the Doctoral Committee Chair is not a primary advisor).  Upon receipt and validation of the Nomination of Committee Form, the Office of the Registrar will email the Dean’s Representative an explanation of his/her responsibilities, and the Report of Examining Committee form to be filled out upon completion of the defense. * **Special Members.** Individuals from outside the University of Maryland who have been approved for Special Membership in the Graduate Faculty may serve on Dissertation Examining Committees. These Special Members must be in addition to the required three Full Members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. For procedures to nominate an individual for Special Membership, please refer to the section below on Graduate Faculty.  Special Members may not chair a dissertation committee.  Special Members may serve as co-chairs of a dissertation committee with written approval from the Graduate School, and only if the other co-chair is a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty. |  |
| **Discussion Notes** |  |  |
| **Adoption** |  |  |

# Emergency Substitution Procedures

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| **Grad Council File No** | GC2017 – 0014 |  |
| **Title** | Emergency Substitution Procedures |  |
| **Justification** | Addendum to Emergency Substitution Procedures to address the event a Committee member fails to appear |  |
| **Proposed Changes** | Committtee members have 30 minutes to show up for a defense.  If they do not, the defense can be rescheduled, or emergency substitution procedures can be implemented. |  |
| **Revised Version (Showing edits)** | **Emergency Substitution Procedure due to absent Committee member (s)**  The entire Committee must convene within 30 minutes of the scheduled time.  If after thirty minutes the entire committee is not present, the Chair should immediately contact the Graduate School and the Registrar’s Office to alert them of a potential problem.  Then, in consultation with the Dean’s Representative and those members present decide whether to:  1.         Invalidate the defense, and reschedule a new date and time  2.         Find substitute member (s) for those absent within an agreed upon time limit minutes.  ·         The proposed substitute (s) must be a member of the Graduate Faculty consistent with the rules for committee membership. Thus, if the Dean's Representative (who must be a tenured faculty member) could not attend, the substitution of an untenured member of the Graduate Faculty would not be acceptable.  ·         Once a substitute (s) have been been found and are present for the defense, the Chair will call the Registrar’s Office and Graduate School to confirm new membership. The Registrar’s Office and / or Graduate School will provide a revised Oral Defense form as quickly as possible. In the interim the defense may proceed.  ·         An examination that is held with one or more substitute members on the committee, but without prior confirmation from the Registrar’s Office and / or Graduate School that the substitution(s) have been approved, will be voided and the examination will have to be repeated.  ·         If an originally designated Committee member shows up while the search for the substitute (s) is in progress, the defense with the original member (s) may proceed as planned at the discretion of the Chair in consultation with the Dean’s Representative.  ·         If a complete committee cannot be fielded within the next 45 minutes, the defense will be voided and the examination will have to be repeated. |  |
| **Discussion Notes** |  |  |
| **Adoption** |  |  |

1. Remote Participation

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| **Grad Council File No** | GC2017 – 017 |  |
| **Title** | Remote Participation |  |
| **Justification** | Need to update guidelines for remote participation to reflect current technology. |  |
| **Proposed Changes** | Change restriction of one remote site to multiple remote; change technical support requirements from individual  technician at both sites to technical assistance available for both sites. |  |
| **Revised Version (Showing edits)** | * **Remote Participation in a Dissertation Defense**(<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/doctoral_degree_policies.htm#5>)   The integrity of the dissertation defense requires that a~~A~~ll members of a Dissertation Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire dissertation defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted under the following circumstances   * + Permission to conduct a remote-participation defense must be obtained by the dissertation chair from the Graduate School  two weeks prior to the defense. ~~in advance.~~ In making this request, the chair must indicate in writing that he/she  has read the rules for a remote defense listed below and that every effort has been made to insure that technical difficulties will not compromise the integrity of the defense.   + ~~A competent video technician~~ Technical support must be ~~present~~ ~~at~~ available for both the University site and the remote location (s) for the entire duration of the defense in the event that technical difficulties arise.   + ~~Only one remote site may be used during the defense.~~ Multiple remote sites may be used during the defense.  A single remote site may be shared by multiple individuals.   + The candidate, the committee chair, and the Dean's Representative must all be present in the examination room. None of them may be at the remote site. In the case of co-chairs, one co-chair may participate remotely.   + The program must pay for all of the costs of the video teleconferencing arrangements.    Master’s Thesis Defense (<http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/masters_degree_policies.htm#10>)    Permission to conduct a remote-participation defense must be obtained by the thesis chair from the Graduate School two weeks prior to the defense~~in advance~~. In making this request, the chair must indicate in writing that he or she has read the rules for a remote defense listed below and that every effort has been made to insure that technical difficulties will not compromise the integrity of the defense.  ·        ~~A competent video technician~~ Technical support must be ~~present at~~ available for both the University site and the remote location for the entire duration of the defense in the event that technical difficulties arise.  ·         ~~Only one remote site may be used during the defense.~~  Multiple remote sites may be used during the defense.  A single remote site may be shared by multiple individuals.   * The candidate and the committee chair must both be present in the examination room. Neither may be at the remote site.  In the case of co-chairs, one co-chair may participate remotely. * The department/program must pay for all of the costs of the video teleconferencing arrangements. |  |
| **Discussion Notes** |  |  |
| **Adoption** |  |  |