

Graduate Course Related Policies and Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Graduate School has prepared this guide in order to provide you with information about graduate course policies, other policies related to graduate study, and relevant on-campus resources. Your syllabus applies specifically to a given course. The following applies in general to your graduate coursework and experience at UMD.

For a complete guide to graduate studies at UMD refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#)

For a complete listing of UMD Policies refer to the [Office of the President](#)

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University is an intellectual community. Its fundamental purpose is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Like all other communities, the University can function properly only if its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Essential to the fundamental purpose of the University is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic honesty. The Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. While all members of the University community share this responsibility, The Code of Academic Integrity is designed so that special responsibility for upholding the principle of academic honesty lies with students.

Honor Pledge

On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, the student will write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.

Failure to sign the pledge is not an honors offense, but neither is it a defense in case of violation of this Code. Students who do not sign the pledge will be given the opportunity to do so. Refusal to sign must be explained to the instructor. Signing or non-signing of the pledge will not be considered in grading or judicial procedures. Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

On examinations, no assistance is authorized unless given by or expressly allowed by the instructor. On other assignments, the pledge means that the assignment has been done without academic dishonesty, as defined in the Code of Academic Integrity, available [online](#).

The pledge is a reminder that at the University of Maryland students carry primary responsibility for academic integrity because the meaningfulness of their degrees depends on it. Faculty are urged to emphasize the importance of academic honesty and of the pledge as its symbol.

Penalties for Violations of Academic Integrity

Students who are found to have falsified, fabricated, or plagiarized in any context, such as course work, laboratory research, archival research, or thesis / dissertation writing--will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. The [Office of Student Conduct](#) has some discretion in determining penalties for violations of the University's standards of academic integrity, but the normal sanction for a graduate student found responsible for a violation of academic integrity will be dismissal (suspension or expulsion) from the University.

University Policy

[University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity](#)

Resources

[The Student Honor Council](#)

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

[Graduate School Writing Center](#)

[UM Libraries Reference](#)

[Student Legal Aid Office](#)

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The purpose of this policy is to set standards of conduct for all students (graduate and undergraduate).

As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards. A complete list of prohibited conduct as well as procedures for resolving allegations of misconduct may be found in the [University of Maryland Code of Student Conduct](#). It is very important for you to familiarize yourself with the policies set forth by the University and be aware of the consequences of violating these policies.

University Policy

[V-1.00\(B\) University of Maryland Code of Student Conduct](#)

Resources

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

[Legal Aid Office](#)

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits a broad range of behaviors including, but not limited to sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and dating and domestic violence. The Sexual Misconduct Policy also prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a complaint or participates in an investigation under the Policy.

The Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct (OCRSM) responds to all complaints of sexual misconduct. To [file a complaint](#) go to OCRSM and under Reporting, complete the online sexual misconduct complaint form. For more information please contact OCRSM by phone at [301-405-1142](tel:301-405-1142), or email at titleixcoordinator@umd.edu

University Policy

[VI-1.60\(A\) University of Maryland Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures Summary of Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

Resources

[Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct](#)

For information about the University's compliance with Title IX as well as other federal and state civil rights laws and regulations.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Use *Anonymous Ask* for a safe, anonymous space to ask about the Code of Academic Integrity, the Code of Student Conduct, or any conduct-related questions through the Office's.

[Resident Life, Office of Rights & Responsibilities](#)

Confidential Resources A confidential resource keeps whatever information you share private. The resource provider will not share your information with others. CARE to Stop Violence, 24 hour call/text: 301-741-3442 Campus Chaplains, 301-405-8450 or 301-314-9866 University Counseling Center, 301-314-7651 University Mental Health Services 301-314-8106.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Non-Discrimination Policy prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of “protected classes.” Protected classes include: race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, and any other legally protected class. The Non-Discrimination Policy also prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a complaint or participates in an investigation under the Policy.

[The Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct \(OCRSM\)](#) responds to all complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on a protected class. [To file a complaint go to OCRSM](#) and under Reporting, complete the online complaint form. For more information please contact OCRSM by phone at [301-405-1142](tel:301-405-1142), or email civilrights@umd.edu.

University Policy

[VI-1.00\(B\) University of Maryland Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures](#)

[Summary of Non-Discrimination Policy](#)

Resources

[Office of Graduate Diversity and Inclusion \(OGDI\)](#)

[Hate Based Incidents Resources and FAQs](#)

[Office of Diversity & Inclusion](#)

[Office of Civil Rights and Misconduct](#)

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender \(LGBT\) Equity Center](#)

[Nyumburu Cultural Center](#)

[Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education \(OMSE\)](#)

ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The University of Maryland provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. Reasonable accommodations shall be made in a timely manner and on an individualized and flexible basis.

Discrimination against individuals on the grounds of disability is prohibited. The University also strictly prohibits retaliation against persons arising in connection with the assertion of rights under this Policy.

Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) facilitates reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at [301.314.7682](tel:301.314.7682), or adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. More information is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

After receiving an Accommodations Letter from ADS, as a student you are expected to meet with each course instructor, in person, to provide them with a copy of the Accommodations Letter and to obtain their signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. You and your instructors will discuss a plan for how the accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester for the course. Specific details regarding the implementation of certain ADS approved accommodations agreed upon between you as the student and the individual course instructor must be documented on an Acknowledgment of Student Request Addendum, signed by the instructor, and submitted to ADS. You as the student are responsible for submitting the signed original forms to ADS and retaining a copy of the signed Acknowledgment of Student Request for your records.

University Policy

[VI-1.00\(D\) University of Maryland Disability & Accessibility Policy and Procedures](#)

Resources

[Accessibility & Disability Services](#)

Call [301-314-7682](tel:301-314-7682) or email at adsfrontdesk@umd.edu.

[Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct](#)

Where to file a complaint for students who believe that they have been denied reasonable accommodations.

ABSENCES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Excused Absences

An excused absence is an absence for which the student has the right to receive, and the instructor has the responsibility to provide, academic accommodation. Students are expected to take full responsibility for their own academic work and progress. Students, to progress satisfactorily, must meet all of the requirements of each course for which they are registered. Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Consistent attendance offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Excused absences must be requested promptly and must be supported by appropriate documentation.

Excused absences do not alter the academic requirements for the course. Students are responsible for information and material missed on the day of absence. Students are within reason entitled to receive any materials provided to the class during the absence. Students are responsible for making provision to determine what course material they have missed and for completing required exercises in a timely manner.

Events that justify an excused absence include:

- Religious observances
- Mandatory military obligation
- Illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member
- Participation in university activities at the request of university authorities
- Compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance)

Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

Notification

To receive academic accommodation for an excused absence the student must notify the instructor in a timely manner. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible.

Academic Accommodations

In keeping with the USM III-5.10 Policy Concerning the Scheduling of Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observance, "Students shall not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays and shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances." For all other excused absences, the student must be provided reasonable accommodation. The accommodation provided should, within reason, neither advantage nor disadvantage either the student or the rest of the class.

Students who miss a substantial number of class sessions or course assignments should seek guidance from an academic advisor with respect to academic options. Extended absences stemming from active military duty are addressed in the [USM V-7.00 Policy on Students who are called to Active Military Duty during a National or International Crisis or Conflict](#). Absences related to a student's disability are addressed in the [VI-1.00\(D\) University of Maryland Disability & Accessibility Policy and Procedures](#).

University Policy

[V-100\(G\) University of Maryland Policy on Excused Absence](#)

Resources

[Medical Excused Absence](#)

Template for a self-signed note for medical excused absence.

[Faculty Affairs Handbook](#)

Information on dates where tests and due dates of other significant assessments must not be scheduled

COURSE AND CREDIT CHANGES AND WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASSES

Course and Credit Changes

A graduate student may drop a course, add a course, change between audit and credit status, change the number of credits for a course within the listed range, cancel registration, or withdraw from the University without special approval until the end of Schedule Adjustment Period. No credit level changes or grading option changes are permitted after the “Graduate Student Deadline To” date. The [deadlines](#) are published each term on the Registrar’s website; the procedures governing each of these transactions are listed below. Drop/Add and other changes may be done in person at the Office of the Registrar or online at <http://www.testudo.umd.edu>. **Full refunds are not available for reductions in total credits after the first day of classes.** [For more information, please see the Refunds section of this Catalog.](#)

Exceptions to the published deadlines require a petition to the Graduate School which must include the written approval of the instructor and the Graduate Director of the program. Petitions should be submitted to the Graduate School, 2123 Lee Building. The graduate program stamp must be placed on the change of grading option/credit level form.

Withdrawal from Classes

The term “withdrawal” means termination of enrollment in all classes for a given term (semester or 12-week). The date of the withdrawal is indicated on a graduate student’s academic record. To withdraw from a term (semester or 12-week) on or before the last day of classes a graduate student must notify the Office of the Registrar, 1113 Mitchell Building, in writing or in person. Withdrawal becomes effective on the date notification is received in the Records Office. The University Refund Policy applies to withdrawals after the first day of classes. Students who withdraw may be in violation of the University’s continuous registration requirement, unless they have received a waiver of registration from the Graduate School.

If the time limitation in a master’s or pre-candidacy student’s program has not lapsed (5 years to obtain a master’s degree and 5 years to reach doctoral candidacy), the graduate student is eligible to re-enroll without readmission provided he or she has received a waiver of registration from the graduate program or has received an approved Leave of Absence from the Graduate School; withdrawal by a doctoral candidate without an approved Leave of Absence or Waiver of Registration will officially end the student’s status as a graduate student.

REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS OF FACULTY IN CONDUCTING ACADEMIC COURSES

a. **There shall be a complete course syllabus for the current term made available to students no later than the first day of class at the beginning of each undergraduate course.** Any changes to the syllabus made after the first day of class must be announced and must be clearly represented with the date of the revision. The course syllabus will specify in general terms:

- Course description including course objectives
- Content and nature of assignments
- Schedule of major graded assessments (e.g., examinations and due dates for projects and papers)
- Examination and/or assessment procedures

b. **There shall be academic accommodations for students in accordance with University policies, including policies on disability and accessibility, excused absences, and sexual misconduct.**

c. **There shall be a reasonable opportunity for students to review papers and examinations, including the final examination or assessment, after evaluation by the instructor, while materials are reasonably current.**

d. **There shall be reasonable access to the instructor during announced regular office hours or by appointment.**

e. **There shall be regular attendance by assigned faculty unless such attendance is prevented by circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member.**

f. **There shall be reasonable adherence to the course syllabus.**

g. **There shall be reasonable adherence to the published academic calendar, campus schedules, and location of classes and examinations.**

h. There shall be public acknowledgement of significant student assistance in the preparation of materials, articles, books, devices and the like. **Students retain their intellectual property rights as set forth in the University of Maryland Policy on Intellectual Property.**

i. **Assigned course materials should be readily available.** Faculty must ensure that eligible students receive reasonable accommodations relative to their coursework in accordance with federal and state disability laws, subject to the University's disability and accessibility policies and procedures.

j. **The instructor of record is responsible for the overall management of the course,** including management of the aspects of the course and coursework delegated to teaching assistants and laboratory assistants.

OFFICIAL UMD COMMUNICATIONS

The University has adopted email as the primary means for sending official communications to students. Academic advisors, faculty, and campus administrative offices use email to convey important information and time-sensitive notices. All enrolled students are provided a University email address. Students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date or for forwarding email to another address. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding email, and returned email due to mailbox full or user unknown will not excuse a student from missing announcements or deadlines.

UMD Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website at umd.edu and are sent to the campus community via alert emails.

Resources

[Help Desk](#)

For email account information and help with email.

[UMD Alerts](#)

Learn about UMD Alerts and how to edit your alert settings.

ARBITRARY AND CAPRICIOUS GRADING POLICY

Policy and Procedures for Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading in Courses

Arbitrary and capricious grading is constituted by the assignment of a course grade to a student on some basis other than performance in the course, or the assignment of a course grade to a student by unreasonable application of standards different from standards that were applied to other students in that course, or the assignment of a course grade by a substantial and unreasonable departure from the instructor's initially articulated standards.

A student who believes he or she has received an improper final grade in a course should inform the instructor promptly. The instructor will meet with the student at a mutually convenient time and place within ten working days of receipt of the information. The purpose of the meeting is to attempt to reach a resolution.

If the instructor has left the University, is on approved leave, or cannot be reached by the student, the student should contact the Department Chairperson. The Department Chairperson, or a designee, will meet with the student as described above to attempt to resolve the problem.

If these meetings (known as the informal process) do not resolve the problem, the student may initiate a formal appeal. This appeal must be made in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School and must contain: the course title and number; the instructor's name; and a statement detailing why the grade is believed to be arbitrary and capricious as defined in this policy, and providing all relevant supporting evidence. The appeal must be received in the Dean's Office within twenty (20) days of the first day of instruction of the next semester (excluding summer and winter semesters.) If these criteria are met, the Dean will institute a formal procedure. For more information about the formal procedure, please see [Formal Procedures](#).

Policy and Procedures for Appeals of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading of Doctoral Qualifying Examinations

The University procedures for reviewing alleged arbitrary and capricious grading of doctoral qualifying examinations envision a multi-step process. (Qualifying examinations are defined as any examinations, oral or written, that are necessary, but not sufficient, for admission to candidacy for a graduate degree.) Prior to filing a formal written appeal, the student must engage in an informal attempt to resolve the problem directly with the Chair of the Examination Committee. The Graduate School's Ombudsperson may be called upon to facilitate resolution if both parties agree. If these informal efforts fail, then the student may file a formal appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School. When such an appeal is received by the Graduate School, the Program will be notified and will receive a copy of the appeal letter. An Appeal Committee of faculty and students established by the Department/Program will then meet to conduct the formal appeal process.

The formal appeal process consists of four phases. In the first phase, the Committee evaluates the student's written appeal and determines, according to certain established criteria, whether it should be dismissed on procedural grounds or whether the process should move forward to the

next phase. In the second phase, the appeal is sent to the Chair of the Examination Committee for a written response.

In the third phase, the Appeal Committee decides if there may be a viable informal solution and if so, pursues it with both the student and the graduate program. If the Appeal Committee does not feel that such an attempt would be feasible or if the effort is unsuccessful, the process moves to phase four, which is the fact-finding phase.

In the fact-finding phase, the student, the graduate director, and a member of the examination committee meet with the Appeal Committee. Each party may make statements to the Appeal Committee and may call witnesses. This phase, however, is both informal and non-adversarial, and neither side may be represented by an advocate. After hearing both sides, the Appeal Committee meets privately to consider the evidence and decide whether the evidence offered in support of the allegation of arbitrary and capricious grading is clear and convincing. If the Appeal Committee supports the allegation, it then has several options for resolving the issue. Whatever the decision of the Appeal Committee, it is binding on both parties and is final; i.e., it may not be appealed elsewhere in the University of Maryland or elsewhere within the University System of Maryland.

Qualifying examinations are defined as any examinations, oral or written, that are necessary, but not sufficient, for admission to candidacy for a graduate degree. Arbitrary and capricious grading applies only to the grade assigned in a doctoral qualifying examination. Arbitrary and capricious grading is defined as any of the following:

- a) The assignment of a grade to a student on some basis other than performance in the qualifying examination; or
- b) the assignment of a qualifying examination grade to a student by an unreasonable application of standards different from standards that were applied to other doctoral students, where an objective comparison of students is possible; or
- c) the assignment of an examination grade by a substantial and unreasonable departure from the graduate program's or the Examination Committee's initially articulated standards or requirements for the doctoral qualifying examination.

For more information, please see [Appeals Processes](#).

Resources

[The University Policy on Arbitrary and Capricious Grading.](#)

INCOMPLETE GRADES

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." The contract will specify the work remaining to be completed, the date by which the work must be completed, and the letter grade that will replace the incomplete if the work is not completed by the date specified. 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. All courses must receive a grade by the time the student graduates.

The mark of incomplete in 500-, 600-, 700-, and 800-level courses will automatically roll-over to letter grades if the work is not completed by the specified date. 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 term (semester or 12-week) in which the course was taken or by date of graduation. A course is considered complete in the semester that the contract is fulfilled. 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.

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 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.

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, the grade of I (incomplete) 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 automatically be changed to S, unless the advisor has provided another grade. 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 by the student, will make appropriate arrangements for the student to complete the course requirements.

GOOD STANDING AND ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISMISSAL

Good Standing

In order to maintain good academic standing, every graduate student must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 for all courses taken at the University.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. When a student is placed on probation, the Graduate School will notify both the student and the Graduate Director of the student's program. Permission of the academic advisor and the Graduate Director will be required for a student on probation to register for courses. Probation will be lifted when the student achieves a cumulative GPA of 3.0.

A student who has completed fewer than 12 credit hours and has a cumulative grade point average below 3.0 in the first term (semester or 12-week) will receive a warning. A student who has completed 12 credit hours or two or more terms (semester or 12-week) and whose cumulative grade point average is below 3.0 will be placed on probation and have one term (semester or 12-week) to raise their grade point average 3.0 or higher or be dismissed from the Graduate School. If the grade point average cannot be raised to 3.0 in that term, the student will be prevented from registering and will be immediately dismissed from the Graduate School.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICIES

Leave of Absence for Childbearing, Adoption, Illness or Dependent Care

In recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, illness, and caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents) 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 or up to three 12-week terms 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](#).

Length of Leaves

Application for a leave of absence may be made either on a one- or two-semester basis or on one- or two- or three 12-week term 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 or an approved leave for one 12-week term will be extended to two will be extended to three, if so requested by the applicant prior to the expiration of the approved one-term (semester or 12-week) 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. 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

Graduate students in the United States Armed Forces, including members of the National Guard or Reserve, may apply for a leave of absence to fulfill a voluntary or involuntary service commitment. Students may apply for a leave of absence of up to two semesters, during which time the requirement of continuous graduate registration is suspended.

Length of Leaves

Application for a leave of absence may be made for one or two semesters. An approved leave for one semester may be extended to two semesters if requested by the applicant at least four weeks

prior to the expiration of the approved one-semester leave of absence. Leaves of absence for more than two semesters will be considered on a case by case basis.

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 or two semesters). The request must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and Graduate Director prior to submission to the Graduate Dean. Approved leaves will stop the student's "time-to-degree clock."

Special Considerations

- **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. Students must be registered during a term (semester or 12-week) 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.
- **Impact on Funding.** When contemplating a leave of absence, graduate students are advised to consult with 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 join 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.
- **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 term (semester or 12-week) 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 [International Student and Scholar Services](#) for more information when considering a leave of absence.

- **Student Accounts.** Students are advised to check with [Student Financial Services and Cashiering](#) 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 to the State Central Collection Unit, with the imposition of additional collection charges, for non-payment in accordance with regular time frames.
- **University Housing.** 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. Additional restrictions may apply to students leasing housing through Southern Management Corporation. For specific information, students should contact the appropriate rental agent.
- **Access to University Resources.** Students who are on a leave of absence do not have a valid University of Maryland Identification card and therefore are not entitled to use University resources, such as the libraries, recreational centers, shuttle buses, and other services covered by mandatory fees. Students seeking information on the use of the libraries may find it at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/access/access-privileges>, or they may contact the McKeldin Library Circulation Department, Community Borrowers Office, Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

GRADUATE STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the policy of the University of Maryland to maintain the campus as a place of study and work for students, faculty, and staff in which all parties are expected to uphold the values of the University by conducting themselves in accordance with University policies and procedures. Such an environment must be free of intimidation, fear, coercion, reprisal, harassment, bullying or other unacceptable behaviors. Graduate students can expect to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect as outlined in the [VI-1.00\(B\) University of Maryland Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures](#).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The University is an academic and collegial community. Graduate students are subject to a range of policies and procedures relating to academic standards, as well as rules and regulations of behavior set forth by the University and the Office of Student Conduct. Graduate Assistants are subject primarily to the Policy on Graduate Assistantships **[add link]**. If a graduate student believes that they have experienced treatment that is unethical, grossly unjust, uncivil, or otherwise creates a hostile learning or working environment from a faculty member, a staff member, or another student, the student should attempt to resolve the matters locally, collegially, and informally. If the issue has not been resolved to the graduate student's satisfaction or the treatment cannot be stopped through informal means, the graduate student may elect to file a formal grievance.

Limitations

No other University grievance procedure may be used simultaneously or consecutively with this procedure with respect to the same or substantially same issue or complaint, or with issues or complaints arising out of or pertaining to the same set of facts. Neither the [VI-1.00\(B\) University of Maryland Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures](#) nor any other University grievance procedure may be utilized to challenge the actions, determinations, or recommendations of any person(s) or board(s) acting pursuant to these procedures.

Notwithstanding any provision of this Policy to the contrary, the following matters do not constitute the basis for a grievance under this procedure:

1. Policies, regulations, decisions, resolutions, directives and other acts of the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland, The Office of the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, and the Office of the President of the University of Maryland;
2. Any statute, regulation, directive, or order of any department or agency of the United States or the State of Maryland; V-1.00(A) page 4
3. Any matter outside the control of the University System of Maryland;
4. Course offerings;
5. The staffing and structure of any academic department or unit;
6. The fiscal management and allocation of resources by the University System of Maryland and the University of Maryland;
7. Any issues or acts which do not affect the complaining party directly;
8. "Class-action" grievances are not permitted under these procedures. Grievances must be presented by individual students. If multiple students file individual grievances on the same matter, a screening or hearing board may, in its discretion, consolidate grievances presenting similar facts and issues, and recommend generally applicable relief as it deems warranted;
9. Under these procedures, there may be no challenge to the award of a specific grade.

Informal Consultation

The graduate student is strongly encouraged but not required to first attempt to resolve the difficulty by discussing the situation with the person/persons (faculty member, the staff member, and/or student) as expeditiously as possible and/or practical. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the graduate student should next discuss the situation with the Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent) and/or the Department Chair (or equivalent). It is expected that these discussions will be kept confidential and not discussed publicly beyond the individuals involved. However, the Director and/or Chair should keep a record of such complaints and report annually to the Graduate Ombuds Office.

Either before or after such discussions, the graduate student may wish to confidentially seek advice from another academic advisor, an assistant or associate dean of their college or of the Graduate School, or the [Ombuds Officer for Graduate Education](#). The graduate student is encouraged to consult with the Ombuds Officer early in the informal discussion process, and must consult with the Ombuds Officer before initiating a formal grievance.

The Ombuds Officer for Graduate Education

The [Ombuds Officer](#) is available to all graduate students with questions or concerns related to their graduate experience, including their roles as GAs. The Ombuds Officer provides informal assistance in resolving conflicts and works to promote fair and equitable treatment within the University. The Ombuds Officer works confidentially within the scope of the law. The purpose of the Ombuds Officer is to ensure that the graduate student's voice is heard and that problems receive prompt and impartial attention. The Ombuds Officer does not advocate for an individual; rather, the Ombuds Officer advocates for a fair process that promotes the University's commitment to excellence in graduate education and in the graduate student experience. Queries may be directed to Ombuds Officer for Graduate Students, The Graduate School, 2103 Lee Building, phone (301) 405-3132.

Formal Grievance

These conflicts should be ideally addressed first by the Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent) and then by the Department Chair (or equivalent) according to the process and appropriate remedies and disciplinary actions set by the grievance policy of the college or school. If the conflict cannot be resolved at this level and/or the graduate student does not feel comfortable disclosing an issue to one or more of these parties, the grievance shall be formally filed with the dean of the college or school. The dean will initiate the grievance process created within the college or school to address such issues. The process is to remain confidential and not publicly discussed beyond the parties involved. If the Director of Graduate Studies or Chair or Dean is the subject of the accused, said person will recuse him or herself.

In cases in which this process is not effectively resolved, the graduate student may file an appeal to the Graduate School. If the grievance is with the Director of Graduate Studies or Dean, the appeal may be made directly to the Dean of the Graduate School. For more information, please see the [Formal Appeals Process](#).

OTHER RESOURCES

For links to a wide range of additional services and resources please visit the Graduate School's [Student Support Services](#).