Graduate Academic Policies

Fellowship Tuition Policy for Graduate Students

The purpose of this policy is to allow students pursuing graduate degrees to take courses beyond their degree requirements without additional financial burden to the student and little or no cost to the university. Such courses, referred to as “fellowship” courses, can broaden the educational experience of graduate students by allowing them to pursue studies according to their own intellectual needs.

1. A student pursuing a graduate degree shall be charged tuition at the standard hourly rate for all of the credit hours which are intended to count toward the degree. In the fall and spring semesters for which students are registered for a minimum number (as determined by the school) of credits that will be applied toward the degree, fellowship courses will not incur a tuition charge. In the summer semester, there is no minimum registration required to qualify for the fellowship tuition policy.

2. In order to enroll in a fellowship course, the student must be in good standing, meet course prerequisites, and obtain consent of instructor. In addition, the student must obtain permission from his/her advisor and the School of Graduate Studies. Up to eight fellowship courses may be permitted in aggregate.

3. Thesis research (651 and 701) and similar courses cannot be taken as fellowship courses and prior rules for 701 (dissertation research) are not changed by this policy.

4. Fellowship courses cannot be audited. The grade that a student receives in the course will not count toward the degree program GPA.

5. Fellowship courses cannot be used toward a degree program at Case Western Reserve University.

6. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing provisions and policies, the rules, regulations, and terms of tuition and credit enrollments for each school shall remain in full force and effect.

7. Registration for fellowship courses within the College of Arts and Sciences is not permitted in the summer term.

Guidelines for Multidisciplinary Graduate and Graduate Professional Studies

Multidisciplinary studies have as their goal the education of individuals who can make contributions to academic disciplines or professional endeavors that would be less likely to be accomplished by individuals with a background in a single discipline. Departments or faculty members may design a joint degree program, which will generally result in two degrees, or a multidisciplinary degree, which will generally result in a single degree which has a broader perspective than similar existing degrees. Such programs should meet challenges of new interdisciplinary knowledge and/or developments requiring new combinations of talent. In addition, such programs or degrees should enhance and not duplicate existing programs in the university. Individual students with specific multidisciplinary interests that desire to pursue them at Case Western Reserve University and faculty members who wish to run pilots for joint degree programs or multidisciplinary degrees are encouraged to do so, even if no official joint or multidisciplinary degree program currently exists, by organizing an individual joint degree or an individual multidisciplinary degree. Such degrees require faculty and departmental support. Guidance for the design and approval of both such programs and such individual degrees is available from the School of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with the general rules and regulations of the university, not just those of the School of Graduate Studies. A member of the University community who is accused of violating any of these rules and regulations is subject to university disciplinary action. Due process procedures of adequate notice of all charges and a fair hearing will apply. Case Western Reserve University has established a mechanism whereby students may express a grievance against the actions of other students or members of the faculty and staff.

A statement of the policies and procedures to be followed in the case of academic infractions by graduate students may be obtained through the School of Graduate Studies. The policies and procedures governing all other infractions are detailed in the university’s Case Student Handbook (http://studentaffairs.case.edu/handbook). The University Office of Student Affairs (http://students.case.edu) should be consulted for non-academic infractions.

It is also the responsibility of the student to become acquainted with the general regulations and administrative procedures governing graduate study, together with the departmental or school regulations which apply to the student’s course of study, and, in consultation with the faculty advisor or advisory committee of the supervising unit, to plan the program and carry out the work in accordance with these regulations and procedures.

Departmental Responsibility for Requirements

Requirements for master’s and doctoral degrees beyond those set forth in these regulations may be established by departments or curricular program committees with the approval of the dean of graduate studies. Individual students may be required to take courses beyond the published requirements in order to successfully complete their degree programs. In such instances the student must be notified in writing upon matriculation by the chair of the department or curricular program, with a copy to be filed in the School of Graduate Studies.

Maintenance of Good Standing

A student maintains good standing in the School of Graduate Studies by registering each fall and spring semester unless on an official leave of absence which has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies. A student is in good standing who meets the standards set by the academic department and the School of Graduate Studies to ensure normal progress toward the fulfillment of the stated requirements at levels of quality without warning or probation or extension of the allowable time limit for degree completion. Students whose quality point averages fall below minimum standards (3.00 for doctoral students; 2.75 for master’s) will automatically be placed on probation until the minimum standards are achieved. In addition, a student will be subject to separation from the university for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to receive a grade of S in thesis research 651 or dissertation research 701. A student who receives a grade of U in thesis (Course 651) or dissertation research (Course 701) will be placed on probation and be subject to separation. The probationary status will be recorded on the student’s transcript. The student must be removed from probation by the end of the semester immediately following
receipt of the grade of U by repeating the course for the same number of credit hours, and achieving a grade of S. The tuition and associated fees for the repeated course may be the responsibility of the student. Although removal from probation restores the student’s good standing, the grade of U received will not be canceled or substituted by the grade of S subsequently received. Separation will occur if the student placed on probation receives another grade of U in the following semester; or, if the School of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the academic unit, determines that the student is unlikely to be successful in working independently and productively toward the completion of the thesis or dissertation research.

4. Failure of a conditionally or provisionally admitted student to satisfy the conditions or provisions stated in the letter of acceptance by the end of the first academic year (2 semesters) or after 18 credits of course work.

5. Failure to make progress towards degree completion. If the student is not making progress towards degree completion, and it has been judged that the student is unlikely to be successful in working independently and productively toward the completion of clinical requirements, thesis or dissertation research the department and/or the dean of graduate studies (in consultation with the department) can recommend academic separation.

6. In addition to disciplinary actions based on academic standards, on recommendation of the student’s department or school, the School of Graduate Studies can suspend or separate a student from the university for failure to maintain appropriate standards of conduct and integrity. Such a suspension or separation will be implemented only for serious breaches of conduct that threaten to compromise the standards of a department or create concern for the safety and welfare of others. In the event of such suspension or separation, the student will be entitled to an appeal through the grievance procedure of the Graduate School.

Maintenance of Quality-Point Average

In calculating the quality-point average, courses taken as a student in the School of Graduate Studies at the 400 level or above as well as any courses accepted toward fulfillment of degree requirements for which quality points are given will be counted, including courses which may need to be repeated. Unless otherwise stated by the department, a minimum cumulative quality-point average of 2.75 is required for the awarding of the master’s degree, and a minimum cumulative quality-point average of 3.00 is required for awarding of the doctoral degree. Any department, school, or curricular program committee may choose to establish quality standards higher than those stated above if such additional requirements are made known in writing to the students upon matriculation and are recorded with the School of Graduate Studies. In that case, the departmental standards supersede the minimum standards. Students who do not maintain the minimum quality point average will be placed on academic probation until the minimum standard has been achieved.

Course Repeat Policy

Graduate students may petition their department chair to repeat a maximum of two courses during their degree program in order to improve their performance. When a course is repeated, the first grade will remain visible on the transcript but will be removed from the calculation of the cumulative grade point average and the grade point average for the semester in which the course was first taken. The new grade will then be used for calculation of the cumulative grade point average and the grade point average for the semester in which it was earned, regardless of whether the new grade is higher or lower than the first grade. The student’s transcript will show the comment “Repeated: No credit awarded” directly below the original grade. However, if the first attempt of the course resulted in a passing grade, but the second attempt results in a failing grade, then the original grade will remain. Similarly, if a student withdraws from a course that is being repeated, the Course Repeat Option will not be applied and the original grade will stand. Course repetition may be exercised according to the following conditions:

1. The course repeat option can only be used on course in which a C or lower was earned. Courses with a grading basis of P/NP are not eligible under this policy.
2. A student may not use the Pass/No Pass Option on a course that is being repeated.
3. A student may only use the repeat option on the same course.
4. Research based courses 651, 601 and 701 are exempt from this repeat policy. Thesis research course 651 and dissertation research course 701 grading policies can be found in this bulletin.
5. The course repeat option may not be exercised after a degree has been awarded.
6. Approval from student’s advisor and department chair are required. Some departments may also require the signature of their director of graduate studies and/or graduate affairs committee.
7. The tuition and associated fees for a repeated course may be the responsibility of the student.

Periodic Review and Evaluation of Doctoral Student Progress

In order to achieve excellence in student mentoring in doctoral programs within the School of Graduate Studies at Case Western Reserve University, an annual review of student progress toward the degree is required for every doctoral student. This review has two purposes: i) to support mentoring of students by providing regular and timely feedback that will enhance their success at CWRU and their career goals and professional development, and ii) to evaluate progress toward completion of the degree. To achieve these goals, the review should evaluate the previous year’s progress, detail the student’s strengths and areas that need improvement, and make recommendations for future action to complete the degree.

Each doctoral program shall develop its own annual review format and timing within these minimal guidelines:

1. Every doctoral student will submit an annual progress report to their program, department, or school. The report should describe progress toward the degree in the past year, future plans for completing the degree, career goals and progress toward professional development.
2. Faculty of the program, department, or school will review the student reports to evaluate student progress in the program. The review process shall include at least two faculty members, such as the faculty advisor, dissertation or thesis chair or committee, graduate student director, or other subset of faculty designated by the department. Additional faculty members may be asked to provide input to help the review process.
3. The findings of the evaluation shall be communicated to the student in a written report and, whenever possible, discussed in person, that details the student’s current status in the program, progress towards completion, career goals and professional development, and makes concrete suggestions for future actions.
4. Master’s level students may be evaluated in a similar fashion at the discretion of the program, department, or school.
If a doctoral program already has an annual review policy in place, the program shall inform the School of Graduate Studies of what form that review takes. For programs that do not have an annual review policy, the School of Graduate Studies requests that they create an annual review policy within a year from the approval of the policy. This policy does not mandate the use of one student review format. Examples of existing formats for review of student progress will be posted on the Graduate Studies website. For some programs, the annual report can be coordinated with other reporting needs (e.g. NIH grants) so as to eliminate redundancies in reporting for the student.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by SGS. Programs shall provide an annual list of names of students who have been reviewed by June 30th. A template of the department review form shall be provided to SGS. Copies of an individual student’s annual reviews will be made available to SGS upon request.

The School of Graduate Studies shall conduct a process evaluation two years after implementation of this policy.

**Residency Requirement**

The doctoral residency requirement is intended to assure a period of intensive academic interaction with faculty and peers and of sustained independent research. Graduate students are considered to be in residence when they are fully engaged in academic work. As resident students they may teach at the university, take graduate courses, assist in course development, and assist in research or in other scholarly activities at the university. Regardless of the nature of the work, the student’s regular presence at the university is expected during fulfillment of the residency requirement.

The formal fulfillment of residency requires continuous registration in at least six consecutive academic terms (fall, spring and/or summer) from matriculation to a period not exceeding five years after the first credited hour(s) of dissertation research (701). The period while students are on a leave of absence do not count towards fulfilling the residency requirement. Within the context of continuity of registration, departments may enact other restrictions. In such instances, the departmental requirements take precedence and must formally be disclosed to the student at matriculation. This is meant to be a reflection of the appropriate reality that departments and fields have different norms and traditions of graduate study.

**Time Limitation**

All the requirements for the master’s degree must be completed within five consecutive calendar years after matriculation as a graduate student, including any leaves of absence. Doctoral students have five consecutive calendar years from the semester of the first credited 701 registration, including leaves of absence, to complete all requirements for the doctorate. Any graduate student who fails to complete the requirements within the five year limit for his or her degree program will be subject to separation from further study unless granted an extension by the School of Graduate Studies with the recommendation of the faculty advisor or advisory committee and approval by the department chair. An extension may be granted if the student and his or her advisor work out a plan of action for degree completion within a specified time frame which must be endorsed by the department chair. Students will be expected to meet all the specified deadlines outlined in the plan of action. The minimum acceptable registration during this extended period for each semester until graduation is three credit hours of 651 or 701. Plan B master’s students must register for at least three credits of appropriate course work.

**Graduate Student Holiday, Vacation, Parental Leave and Sick Leave Policies**

These policies apply to graduate students in the School of Graduate Studies who receive stipends that support their effort toward earning a degree during the period when they receive support. They represent the minimum to which graduate students are entitled.

If a graduate student receives a stipend, they will receive support for holidays, vacations, sick leave, and parental leave as set forth below. The stipend support for those days will be at the same rate as for normal work days. For all anticipated leaves longer than two weeks, appropriate departmental approvals must be obtained and paperwork submitted to the School of Graduate Studies prior to the start of the leave.

These policies do not supersede other university policies concerning attendance or residence at the university (e.g. participating in classroom activities as a student or teaching assistant). These policies only apply to student effort toward earning a degree.

**Holidays**

Graduate students are entitled to observe all university closings for holidays and other recognized events.

**Vacations**

Graduate students are allowed two weeks of vacation per calendar year (10 traditional work days) if they receive full support during a 12-month period. Students who receive less than 12 months of support are not entitled to vacation during the period of support. The dates of vacations must be approved in advance by the student’s research mentor to ensure that time-sensitive work is not disrupted.

Vacation days can be accrued from one year to the next only with the prior written approval of the Program and only up to a maximum of 20 traditional work days, to allow for international travel, for example. There is no terminal leave.

The times between academic terms and the summer are considered part of the active training period and are not to be regarded as vacation time.

**Sick Leave**

Graduate students are entitled to two weeks (10 traditional work days) of sick leave per year, with no year-to-year accrual. Sick leave may be used for medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth. Under exceptional circumstances, additional sick leave days may be granted following receipt of a written request from a physician, and prior written approval by the Program.

**Parental Leave**

Graduate students are entitled to paid parental leave for the adoption or birth of a child. The primary caregiver is entitled to 6 weeks leave and the other parent or domestic partner is entitled to 3 weeks leave. When both parents are supported graduate students, the leave may be used consecutively or together. The leave must be used within 12 months of birth or adoption. Parental leave must be approved in advance in writing by the Program. It is permissible to add parental leave and sick leave together for the adoption or birth of a child.

**Unpaid Leave**

Students who require additional leave beyond what is stipulated above must seek prior written approval from the School of Graduate Studies for an unpaid leave of absence. Approval for a leave of absence must be requested in advance by the student and the student should provide documentation for the leave request and obtain approval. Conditions for the leave and approval must be submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies. Continued coverage of health insurance is allowable as permitted within the guidelines of University Health Services and with written approval by the Program and School of Graduate Studies.

Unused Leave
A student is not entitled to receive any form of compensation for any unused holidays, vacation days, sick leave, parental leave, and/or other accrued time off.

Disclaimers
These policies do not supersede any HR policy. In addition, these policies do not create a contractual relationship with any student and the policies may be amended at any time by the Faculty and the School of Graduate Studies.

The School of Graduate Studies policies regarding continuous registration and leave of absence still apply.

Maintenance of leave records is the responsibility of the academic department.

Leave of Absence from Graduate Study
Students undertaking graduate work are expected to pursue their studies according to a systematic plan each year whether registered for full or part-time study. Occasionally a student finds it necessary to interrupt his or her studies before completion of the graduate program. A leave of absence is not to be requested unless the circumstances are such that the student cannot continue graduate study. Under such circumstances the student must request in writing a leave of absence for a period not to exceed two consecutive regular academic semesters. Forms (http://gradstudies.case.edu/current/forms.html) can be found at the School of Graduate Studies website. In exceptional circumstances, the leave can be extended for another two semesters. However, the maximum amount of leave permitted per graduate program is four semesters. The reason for the leave must be stated clearly, and the request must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies with the written endorsement of the student's academic department. During a leave of absence the student must not seek aid from faculty members or use of the facilities of the university. This means that students may not take exams or defend theses and dissertations while on a leave. A leave of absence does not extend the maximum time permitted for the completion of degree requirements, and a leave cannot be taken while students are on extension of the five-year limit. At the expiration of the leave the student must resume registration unless formally granted an extension of the leave. Retroactive leaves are not permitted. A student who fails to obtain a leave of absence, or who fails to register following an official leave, must petition the School of Graduate Studies for reinstatement in order to resume work as a student in good standing at the university.

A student who is granted a maternity or paternity leave of absence related to infant care, as well as those who must fulfill military duty obligations, can petition to extend the five-year time limit associated with completion of the degree. The length of the extension may not exceed two years. International students must check with the Office of International Student Services before petitioning for a leave of absence, as such a leave can affect their visa status.

Withdrawal, Resignation, and Reinstatement
Students must maintain continuous registration in the fall and spring semesters throughout their degree programs unless granted an official leave of absence. Students who fail to register for any academic term will be automatically withdrawn from their programs. Students who are withdrawn from their programs must petition for reinstatement in order to continue graduate study. The petition must be approved by both the student's department and the School of Graduate Studies before the student may register for further course work as a student in full standing. In each case of readmission with full standing, the official letter will state the terms of readmission, including future time limits for the degree program, and the past course work that will be credited toward the degree. If more than 24 months have elapsed since the last registration, students may have to resubmit file materials if requested by the School of Graduate Studies.

Transfer of Credit
Transfer of credit from another university toward master's and doctoral degree requirements is awarded for appropriate course work (not applied to another degree program) taken prior to admission. Transfer of credit must be requested in the student's first academic year and must be appropriate for the student's planned program of study. For master's candidates, transferred credit is limited to six semester hours of graduate-level courses, and no credit for master's thesis may be transferred from another university. No transfer of credit will be awarded towards the PhD degree except by petition, and no credit for the doctoral dissertation may be transferred from another university.

Students who wish to receive credit for courses taken outside the university once they are enrolled must petition for approval before taking the classes. All transfer of credit requires approval from the student's advisor, the departmental chair or graduate committee, the department for which credit is being granted, and the School of Graduate Studies. Such courses must have been taken within five years of first matriculation at Case Western Reserve University and passed with grades of B or better. Forms can be found at the School of Graduate Studies (http://case.edu/gradstudies/current-students/forms).

Transfer of credit does not include the transfer of grades and therefore cannot be used to fulfill GPA or percentage of graded coursework policies.

Internal Transfer of Credit
Students of exceptional ability in the undergraduate programs of Case Western Reserve University who have the approval of the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the School of Graduate Studies may apply to receive credit for graduate courses completed in excess of the undergraduate degree requirements.

Graduate students who internally transfer to another degree program may seek approval to transfer coursework from the original degree program by petition (http://gradstudies.case.edu/current/forms.html).

Changes in Registration
To add or withdraw from courses or to change registration from credit to audit, a student must obtain the appropriate official form to submit to the University Registrar in accordance with the dates published each academic term for such actions to be taken. Students must make appropriate changes to their schedules by the end of the second week of classes in order to avoid paying full tuition for a withdrawn course. Only complete withdrawal for the semester entitles a student to a percentage refund of the withdrawn courses after the second week of classes. Failure to attend class or merely giving notice to the instructor will not be regarded as official notice of withdrawal or change. When making changes in registration, an international student must be aware of maintaining full-time status. Full-time status requires registration for a minimum of 9 semester hours per semester (or 1 semester hour of 651 or 701). Students financed by federal loans must remain registered for at
least 6 semester hours (defined as half-time) each semester to maintain continued eligibility for that funding or to initiate such a loan.

Graduation
A candidate for a degree awarded by the School of Graduate Studies must make application for the degree to the School of Graduate Studies by the deadline established for that semester. Students are encouraged to visit the School of Graduate Studies website at the beginning of the semester in which they intend to graduate to obtain a packet of graduation materials for either the Master's (http://case.edu/gradstudies/current-students/graduation) or Doctorate (http://case.edu/gradstudies/current-students/graduation) degree. The candidate must meet all the deadlines for completion of degree requirements set forth in the calendar. All candidates must be registered for credit and in good standing during the semester in which the degree is awarded. The diploma and official transcript reflecting the conferral of degree will not be released to the candidate until all outstanding tuition, fees, and fines are resolved.

Waiver of Registration
It is a requirement of the School of Graduate Studies that a student be registered for credit in the semester in which he or she completes all the requirements to graduate in accordance with established deadlines for that semester. For a student engaged in thesis or dissertation research the completion of all requirements to graduate is not easily predicted, making it difficult to adhere to scheduled deadlines. If a student will not be able to meet the degree requirements to graduate in one semester, but will finish before the next semester begins, he or she can apply for a waiver of the requirement to be registered in the semester of graduation. To be granted a waiver of registration students must be registered for the appropriate thesis or dissertation credit hours in the semester (or summer session) immediately preceding the semester of graduation, complete all degree requirements including a current application to graduate, and submit all required materials to the School of Graduate Studies by the end of the Drop/Add period of the next semester.

A student who qualifies for the waiver will be awarded the degree at the next graduation without the need to be registered. If a student fails to meet the waiver deadline, he or she will be required to register for the appropriate thesis or dissertation credit hours in the next semester, and to reapply for graduation in that semester.

Exceptions to Regulations
Students have the right to petition for exceptions to these regulations. Such a petition should be addressed to the School of Graduate Studies. In most cases the student’s department or program committee must endorse the petition.

Graduate Student Grievance Procedure
It is the responsibility of the School of Graduate Studies to ensure that all students enrolled for graduate credit at Case Western Reserve University have adequate access to faculty and administrative consideration of their grievances concerning academic issues. A three-step procedure has been established for graduate students to present complaints about academic actions they feel are unfair.

1. Students with complaints should first discuss their grievances with the person against whom the complaint is directed.
2. In those instances in which this discussion does not resolve a grievance to the student's satisfaction, a complaint should be presented in writing to the department chairperson. If the complaint is against the department chair and is not resolved with this individual, the complaint should be presented to the dean of the school/college.
3. In the event that a decision still appears unfair to the student, the student may bring the matter to the attention of the dean of graduate studies. The dean may ask the student to put the complaint in writing. The dean will then discuss the case with the student and the department chair to evaluate the particulars and to make a ruling on it. As the situation warrants, the dean may appoint a Grievance Committee to recommend what action should be taken. In this event the Committee will be composed of two faculty members selected from the Committee on Graduate Studies of the Faculty Senate and two graduate students selected either from the Executive Committee of the Graduate Student Council or from the student members of the Committee on Graduate Studies.

The dean of graduate studies has the responsibility for the final decision, and the ruling from the School of Graduate Studies will be considered final and binding on the persons involved in the grievance. Additional information about the grievance procedure can be obtained from the School of Graduate Studies.

It should be understood that this grievance procedure relates solely to graduate student complaints concerning academic issues. The procedure for handling complaints about other matters is detailed in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Procedures and Sanctions for Graduate Student Academic Infractions
Graduate students accused of violating the university’s standards of conduct, which are detailed in this Academic Integrity Policy (http://case.edu/gradstudies/about-the-school/policies-procedures), are entitled to adequate notice of all charges and to a fair hearing and may subsequently be subject to disciplinary action. The process that is outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy will apply to academic infractions, e.g., cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and other forms of dishonesty in academic activities. Additional information is available from the School of Graduate Studies.