




**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Deans, Department Chairs, Graduate Directors and Graduate Coordinators  
**FROM:** Ann G. Wylie, Interim Dean of the Graduate School   
**DATE:** December 17, 2004  
**SUBJECT:** Satisfactory Progress toward Degrees for Master's and Ph.D. Students

Background Information

It is important to the successful completion of a graduate program for students to move steadily toward their degrees by meeting the expectations of the graduate program faculty. The University therefore requires that students make satisfactory progress toward the degrees they seek. What constitutes satisfactory progress is determined at the graduate program level.

In keeping with the requirement for satisfactory progress, the Graduate School asks all students to develop an individual program of study and research in consultation with graduate advisors, and requires that students register for the number of graduate units that will, in the judgment of the graduate program, accurately reflect their involvement in graduate study.

There also are several Graduate Council requirements regarding their graduate work to which students must adhere. As explained in the attached memo on continuous registration, all students must register for at least one credit hour each semester. To maintain good academic standing, students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0. (Graduate programs may stipulate more stringent requirements than the minimum standards established by the Graduate School.) Students in the master's program must complete all requirements for the degree (including 30 hours of course work) within five years. Some credits may be transferred from other universities, but no course may be counted toward the degree if it is more than seven years old at the time of graduation. Students in the Ph.D. program must be admitted to candidacy within five years of admission to the doctoral program. All requirements for the Ph.D., including the dissertation, must be completed within four years of admission to candidacy or nine years of admission to the doctoral program, whichever is greater.

Graduate School Request and Recommendation:

To facilitate students' satisfactory progress toward their degrees, the Graduate School is making three requests:

- 1) that graduate programs formalize their expectations of entering students with a written document. This statement should include the program's expectations with respect to course work, comprehensive examinations, attendance at seminars, professional meetings, presentation of papers, and so on; the time the program expects each stage of work to take; and the minimum standards for satisfactory progress.

- 2) that programs provide each student with an annual assessment of his or her progress toward the degree, both before and after admission to candidacy, to confirm that the program's requirements for satisfactory progress have been fulfilled.
- 3) that each department send the Graduate School its statement of expectations, time lines, and requirements for satisfactory progress, either electronically or in hard copy. The Graduate School also asks that it be informed when changes are made to these statements. These statements will help us when questions are raised about students' progress through their degree programs.

cc: William W. Destler