

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

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2021 ed.

**University of Colorado at Boulder**  
**Graduate School Rules**  
**Rev. 1998, draft effective fall 1999**  
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**Updated 2018, 2021**

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# **University of Colorado at Boulder**

## **Graduate School Rules**

### **2001, updated 2018 and 2021**

Graduate education is a preeminent role of the University of Colorado at Boulder. The responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating graduate programs and graduate education policies and procedures rests with the Graduate School. The mission of the Graduate School is to facilitate and enhance the educational experiences and opportunities for all graduate students and to encourage excellence in research, creative and scholarly work.

## **ARTICLE I: ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 1: Structure**

The primary responsibilities of the Graduate School are to promote graduate education at CU Boulder, maintain the high standards and quality of Graduate Faculty and programs, and coordinate the various graduate programs. The Graduate School along with the Graduate Faculty develops and administers programs according to the needs of the campus and in accord with the general standards of excellence and sound academic administration established by the Graduate School.

1. The Dean of the Graduate School, who reports to the Provost, is responsible for the administration of Graduate School policies and programs.
2. The Executive Advisory Council of the Graduate School, which consists of members of the Graduate Faculty, advises the Dean on issues concerning Graduate School policies and programs.
3. The constituent academic and research units of CU Boulder's Graduate School include the graduate programs in all CU Boulder units (e.g. departments,

The Dean of the Graduate School is responsible for the overall coordination and effectiveness of Graduate School programs, chairs the Executive Advisory Council, and serves as the presiding officer for meetings of the Graduate Faculty. The Dean of the Graduate School reports to the Provost and is responsible for administering the programs of the Graduate School in a manner consistent with the “Graduate School Rules” and other CU policies and procedures.

**Responsibilities**

Acting in conjunction with the Executive Advisory Council, and in participation with the faculties of the constituent schools and colleges, the Dean of the Graduate School is responsible for the following:

- compliance of all Graduate School programs with standards for faculty appointment, student admission, and graduation requirements
- approval of all graduate credentials, including new degree programs, graduate certificate programs, dual degrees (including international agreements etc.)
- approval of any program elements which deviate from established Graduate School rules or procedures prior to program implementation
- approval of degree program discontinuance
- approval of significant modifications of curricula or

### **Section 3: Executive Advisory Council**

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research supervision of CU Boulder graduate students must be appointed to the Graduate Faculty to ensure minimum standards of excellence in relation to graduate education.

Membership

Appointment to the Graduate Faculty of the Graduate School is based on uniform,

### Criteria

The criteria applied in evaluating applications for regular membership include:

- evidence of continuing scholarship -- defined as a broad and inclusive concept that includes research and/or creative work and related inquiries and activities that lead to the development and application of knowledge
- evidence of continuing teaching competency, especially as demonstrated in graduate level courses and in thesis/dissertation supervision
- when evidence of continuing scholarship or teaching competency is not clear, the department chair/program director must document equivalent professional competence

### Privileges

The appointment of a faculty member as a regular member of the Graduate Faculty means the faculty member may:

- teach graduate courses\*
- serve on graduate examining committees as chair or member, including serving as a member of a committee in another CU Boulder unit\*
- serve as outside member for a student's committee in another CU Boulder unit\*
- participate in program activities for the specific program(s) for which the faculty member was appointed
- vote on issues before the Graduate Faculty
- participate in meetings and committees of the Graduate School in accordance with the CU Boulder "Graduate School Rules"

\*The responsibility for certifying faculty members on regular Graduate Faculty appointments to teach particular courses or to supervise theses or dissertations in a particular area rests with the department chair or dean (where appropriate) of the approved degree program in which the course is taught or the thesis/dissertation is to be completed.

### **Special Graduate Faculty Appointment**

The appointment of a special member to the Graduate Faculty is for a maximum of three years. Such appointments may be renewed upon recommendation by the department chair/program director and re-approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

### Qualifications

The classification of special membership in the Graduate Faculty is intended for individuals who are not full-time members of the CU Boulder faculty, for retired faculty, or for faculty members who are full-time members of the CU Boulder faculty but do not meet the qualifications outlined for regular membership in the Graduate Faculty.

Special members hold a doctoral degree or the terminal degree appropriate to the discipline, or have demonstrated other achievements that indicate that they are outstanding members of their profession or discipline.

Graduate students are not eligible for Graduate Faculty appointments. They may be granted “special” Graduate Faculty appointments only in very exceptional circumstances.

#### Criteria

The criteria to be applied in evaluating applications for special membership include:

- evidence of continuing scholarship -- defined as a broad and inclusive concept that includes research and/or creative work and related inquiries and activities that lead to the development and application of



then be approved by the Executive Advisory Council and the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Meetings of the Graduate Faculty**

Graduate School business is normally conducted by the Dean of the Graduate School, the Graduate School staff, and the Executive Advisory Committee; however, special meetings may be called at any time on twenty-four hours notice by the Dean of the Graduate School, or upon filing with the Dean of the Graduate School a petition signed by fifteen members of the Graduate Faculty. The petition must set forth in full the reason for calling the meeting. The members present at such a meeting constitute a quorum. The meetings are conducted in accord with “Robert’s Rules of Order.”

**ARTICLE II: GRADUATE EDUCATION**

**Section 1: Degree Programs**

**Independent or Single Campus Degree Program**

An independent degree program is a program existing on only one campus, under the authority of the Graduate Faculty and the dean of the graduate school of the campus.

Graduate School, Provost, Chancellor, System Administration, the Board of Regents, and the CDHE. Final approval for new degree programs or major modifications rests with the CDHE. Major modifications of degree programs follow the same routing.

## **Section 2: Admissions**

A student may be admitted to the Graduate School as either a regular degree student or a provisional degree student.

### Regular Degree Students

Qualified students may be recommended for admission to regular degree status by approved programs of the Graduate School provided they meet the following criteria:

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Former students who wish to change from one major to another must apply to the intended department.

A student admitted to the Graduate School for the master's program must have departmental approval to be admitted or advanced to the doctoral program.

A regular degree student who is suspended or dismissed for failure to maintain a 3.0 grade point average is eligible to apply for readmission after one year. The student must submit an academic plan for raising the grade point average to 3.0. Approval or rejection of this application rests jointly with the student's major department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

#### Changing University of Colorado Campuses

Students transferring from one campus to another must apply and be accepted to the new campus.

#### Changing Major Departments

Students who want to change major departments must apply to and be accepted by the new department.

### **Section 3: Transfer Credits**

Transfer credits from accredited institutions are accepted by CU Boulder only after approval by the department chair/program director and under the special conditions outlined below. Transfer credit is defined as any credit earned at another accredited institution, credits earned on another campus of the CU system, or credits earned as a non-degree student within the CU system. Students seeking a degree from the University of Colorado Boulder must complete the majority of their course work while enrolled in a graduate program as a degree seeking student.



Unless otherwise specified by departmental requirements, all courses at the 5000 level or above, taken for the master's degree at CU Boulder, may be applied toward the doctoral degree if they meet all applicable standards. Course work taken in completion of a doctoral degree cannot be applied toward subsequent master's degree work.

Graduate Status Courses: All courses at the 5000 level or above must be taught by an approved member of the Graduate Faculty.

## **Section 5: Grades and Quality of Work**

Grade Point Average: A student is required to maintain at least a B (3.0) average in all work attempted while enrolled in the Graduate School, and a student must have at least a 3.0 overall average to receive a graduate degree. Grades received in foreign language courses taken to fulfill the language requirement are not used by the Graduate School in calculating grade point average.

### Grades Below B

1. A degree-seeking graduate student who earned a grade of C+ or below may retake the course under the university-wide [grade replacement policy](#), subject to the policies and limitations of the program.
2. Courses in which grades below B- (2.7) are received are not accepted for doctoral programs.
3. Courses in which grades below C (2.0) are received are not accepted for master's degree programs or for the removal of academic deficiencies.
4. Courses taken toward the fulfillment of requirements for graduate degrees may not be taken pass/fail.
5. Grades received in courses transferred from another institution and/or grades earned while a student was classified as a non-degree student are not included in the calculation of grade point average.
6. Graduate students may not register for more than 15 credits during any one semester.
7. Students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 at any time during their graduate career will be placed on probation and may be dismissed from their program.

### Probation and Suspension

When a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.00, he/she will be placed on academic probation. Except in cases where a program has stricter policies approved by the Graduate School, the student has two semesters in which to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above. If the student's cumulative GPA is at or below 2.5 a dean's administrative stop is placed on the student's record and the student may be withdrawn from course work for upcoming semesters. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, the department chair/program director may petition the Dean of the Graduate School Rules

Graduate School showing compelling reasons for the student to be granted a chance to continue. A provisionally admitted student whose GPA falls below 3.0 has a dean's administrative stop placed on his/her record pending a review by the major department and the Graduate School. If there are extenuating circumstances, the department chair/program director may petition the Dean of the Graduate School showing compelling reasons for the student to be granted a chance to continue. Such petition must include an academic plan to raise the GPA to 3.00 and the conditions under which the student will be dismissed from the program.

1. If a student does not earn a 3.0 GPA in all courses taken in the first of two probationary semesters, a dean's administrative stop is placed on the student's record, and he/she may be subject to dismissal at the conclusion of that first semester. The final decision on dismissal is made by the Dean of the Graduate School based on departmental recommendation.
2. If, after the two-semester probationary period, the student's cumulative GPA is still below 3.0, a dean's administrative stop is placed on the student's record and he/she may be subject to dismissal. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, the department chair/program director may petition the Dean of the Graduate School for an extension of the probationary time period. The petition should include an academic plan to raise the grade point average to 3.0 and the conditions under which the student will be dismissed.
3. The dismissal decision is made upon the department's recommendation. Should the student be dismissed from the program, a dean's administrative stop is placed on the student's record and the student is withdrawn from classes for any future semesters.

English Proficiency: A student who is noticeably deficient in the written and/or oral use of the English language cannot obtain an advanced degree from CU Boulder. Each program judges the qualifications of its students in the use of English. The department chair/program director is responsible for deciding whether a student is proficient in the use of English.

Student Ethics: Students are expected to adhere to the highest codes of personal and professional ethics. Students who do not adhere to written guidelines regarding academic honesty or academic or research ethics may be dealt with according to the policies for academic dishonesty, academic ethics, or research misconduct as published in the appropriate Graduate School and University policy documents. Students found guilty of misconduct in any of these areas may have sanctions imposed, or may be dismissed from CU Boulder.

Grievances: The designation ~~is~~ covers those problems related to academic issues. Such issues are distinguished from academic ethics cases and disciplinary cases for which separate procedures exist. Included within academic grievance cases are faculty, departmental, college or Graduate School policies affecting individual student prerogatives, deviations from stated grading procedures (excluding individual grade challenges), unfair treatment and related issues. Policies and procedures governing the filing of an academic grievance are published in a separate policy document available in the Graduate School. Students who feel they have been treated unfairly or outside of normal departmental policies may file a grievance with the Graduate School in accordance with published grievance procedures and after all grievance opportunities at the department level have been exhausted.





1. Ph.D. students must be registered as full time, regular degree-seeking students at CU Boulder, for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours during the semester in which they pass the final examination. D.M.A. students must be registered, full-time for DMA dissertation credits (course # 8200-8399) or TMUS 8029 during the semester in which they pass the final examination. Au.D. students must be registered full time with at least

- 8 credits of combined undergraduate and graduate course work or 12 hours of undergraduate level course work
- at least 1 master’s thesis hour
- at least 1 hour of “Master’s Candidate for Degree”

Ph.D. students

- one who is carrying a minimum of 5 credits (pass/fail or for a grade) of graduate level course work prior to passing the comprehensive exam
- 8 credits of combined undergraduate and graduate course work, or 12 credits of undergraduate level course work, prior to passing the comprehensive exam
- at least one doctoral dissertation credit prior to passing the comprehensive exam
- a minimum of 5 dissertation hours after passing the comprehensive exam

D.M.A. students

- one who is carrying a minimum of 5 credits (pass/fail or for a grade) of graduate level coursework prior to passing the comprehensive exam
- at least one hour of coursework numbered TMUS 8200-8399 or “precandidate for Doctor of Musical Arts” before the comprehensive examination
- at least one hour of coursework numbered TMUS 8200-8399 or “candidate for Doctor of Musical Arts” after the comprehensive examination

Au.D. students

- one who is carrying a minimum of 5 credits (pass/fail or for a grade) of graduate level course work
- 8 credits of combined undergraduate and graduate course work, or 12 credits of undergraduate level course work

Additional full-time and part-time registration requirements may exist for international students or students receiving or deferring financial aid, though degree requirements remain the same. Affected students should consult with International Student and Scholar Services or the Office of Financial Aid for more information.

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two of which must be consecutive in one academic year, must be earned for work completed at CU Boulder.

## **Section 9: Admission to Candidacy**

Master's Degree: A student who wishes to be granted a graduate degree must become a candidate for a master's degree. To become a candidate all students must file an "Application for Admission to Candidacy" with the Graduate School no later than the posted graduation deadlines during the semester in which they plan to have their degree conferred.

Application must be made on forms available in the Graduate School and appropriate departments, and must be signed by the major department, certifying that a student's work is satisfactory and that the program outlined in the application meets the requirements set for the student.

Doctoral Degree: A student must formally apply for Admission to Candidacy for the doctoral degree on forms supplied by the Graduate School when completing the comprehensive examination. Before being admitted to candidacy a student must have at least three semesters of full-time registration and pass the comprehensive examination.

## **Section 10: Thesis/Dissertation Requirements**

Master's Thesis: A thesis, which may be research or expository, critical, or creative work, is required€

2. The student is responsible for notifying the Graduate School of the exact title of the dissertation on or before the posted deadlines during the semester in which the doctoral degree is to be conferred.

3. The dissertation must comply in mechanical features with the specifications for theses and dissertations available in the Graduate School.

The final grade is withheld until the

a student in good standing in the Graduate School. The department may require that the student validate course work more than five years old. At its discretion, the department may petition the Dean of the Graduate School for a time limit for completion of all degree requirements of up to one year after the retaking of the

program. Students who fail to complete the degree in this six-year period may be dismissed from their program with the concurrence of the major advisor and/or appropriate departmental personnel. To continue, the student must file a petition for an extension of the time limit with the Dean of the Graduate School. Such petitions must be endorsed by the student's major advisor and/or other appropriate departmental personnel and may be granted for up to one year. If the Dean of the Graduate School and the department chair/program director cannot agree on whether a student should continue, the Executive Advisory Council makes a final recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School.

1. All degree requirements include the filing of the dissertation and all accompanying forms with the Graduate School.
2. Students who need to leave the University for a period of time may apply for a leave of absence for up to one year. Doctoral students who are required to maintain continuous registration may take a leave of absence for parental leave, and may petition for an exception to take a leave of absence in the case of other extenuating circumstances. A leave of absence does not extend the student's time limit, but may be used as a reason when applying for an extension, should that become necessary.
3. Students whose residence at CU Boulder is interrupted by military service may apply to the Dean of the Graduate School for an extension of time.

### **ARTICLE III: AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these standing rules may be brought forward by petition from at least 15 members of the CU Boulder Graduate Faculty and may be adopted upon recommendation by an ad hoc committee composed of Graduate Faculty representing constituent schools and colleges and a United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) representative, recommendation by the Executive Advisory Council, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Upon consultation with the Executive Advisory Council, the Dean of the Graduate School may approve revisions to the standing rules that update information, resolve ambiguities, promote clarity, or ensure compliance with state or CDHE mandates.