

# Academic Requirements

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## Academic Performance

A student's academic progress is determined by his or her department as well as requirements established by University policy. Each academic program shall establish and document standards that define satisfactory academic performance specific to that program. Unsatisfactory academic performance indicators may include: inadequate grade point average, too many grades below a B, too many U grades, failure(s) on preliminary/comprehensive examination, unsatisfactory defense(s) of thesis or dissertation, and/or failure on any other required component of one's graduate program.

## Degree Completion

To graduate, the student must complete all University and degree program requirements listed in the Catalog of the Graduate School under which he/she began the program. A graduate student cannot graduate under any of the following circumstances.

1. A GPA lower than 3.00 for all courses attempted for graduate credit after admission to the degree program or
2. A grade of D or lower on the program of study or
3. More than two courses (not exceeding 8 credit hours) with a grade of C or lower earned for all courses since admission into the program, including those outside the program of study\* or
4. A U grade in thesis or dissertation research credit in the final semester or
5. A grade of I (Incomplete) on his/her transcript

\*NOTE: The original grade for a course that is retaken will not be included in the eight hours. However, the original grade is included as part of the calculation of the GPA. See the Course Retake Policy (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/archives/2016-17/graduate/academic-policies/program-of-study/#courseretake>) section for additional details.

No graduate courses with pass/fail credit are accepted as part of a graduate program. Grades of pass/fail are not awarded at MSU and cannot be transferred to MSU.

A GPA of 3.00 on the minor coursework is required for students completing a minor.

## Academic Amnesty

Academic amnesty is designed to provide those graduate students previously enrolled at Mississippi State University the opportunity to have up to 9 hours of previously completed graduate courses eliminated from the computation of his or her grade point average upon successful readmission.

To be eligible for the program, an individual cannot have been enrolled as a graduate student at MSU for at least five years. Approval of academic amnesty may be requested of the Dean of the Graduate School through the student's college Dean's office after either provisional admission to a graduate program or provisional readmission to their former program has been granted. Upon successful completion of at least 12 credit hours with a 3.00 or higher GPA, provisional admission is removed and the student can then request Academic Amnesty until the end of the semester preceding that in which the student graduates.

With notification from the Dean of the Graduate School, the Registrar's Office will segment the student's academic record showing all courses and grades to be included in academic amnesty and recalculate the graduate GPA accordingly. Academic amnesty will be applied to the student's record only once, and the new grade point average will be noted on the transcript at the end of the semester during which the request was approved.

The student is permitted to retake a course that was included as part of the 9 hours of coursework eliminated under the academic amnesty. All courses and grades will remain a part of the student's academic record. A notation will appear on the transcript indicating the student was approved for academic amnesty. Those courses approved for academic amnesty and then granted cannot be revalidated or applied toward the completion of another graduate degree.

The academic amnesty policy is applicable only upon the in-residency completion of current curriculum requirements to earn a degree. **Students must be advised that the academic amnesty provision pertains only to MSU and may not be honored by other institutions of higher learning.** [AOP 20.18] [www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/PDF/1218.pdf](http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/PDF/1218.pdf)

## Distance Student Certification of Off-Campus/Non-MSU Research Facility

Students enrolled in graduate programs (master's, educational specialist, or doctoral) offered via distance learning and requiring a thesis or dissertation must meet established research requirements as stated in the Mississippi State University *Graduate School Catalog*. Distance education students engaged in research will be provided the same student support services as those of on-campus students, including access to Library resources, thesis and dissertation workshops, etc. MSU believes that special attention must be directed toward the mentoring of the students and the development of a creative and supportive environment for research hours offered via distance. Each academic unit which administers a Distance graduate degree program with a thesis or dissertation will determine and define the appropriate use of communication and technology. A student's thesis/dissertation

committee must approve the procedures which the student must follow to ensure quality and integrity of the research process at all stages: proposal, preparation and presentation, data collection/analysis, and final defense stages. **Should the student request, or be required, to conduct research at an off-site research facility, appropriate certification must be completed prior to beginning the research process.** The form is required of all Distance students submitting a thesis or dissertation and must be submitted to the student's committee to document the research facility involved (if applicable), describe the software utilized, and provide a thorough description of the proposed research.

Any department offering such a distance program must include specific language that addresses delivery of research/thesis or research/dissertation hours via Distance in a published format (policy handbooks for approved distance programs, website, etc.).

## Foreign Language Requirement

The Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures ([kmoser@fl.msstate.edu](mailto:kmoser@fl.msstate.edu)) offers courses for graduate students seeking to fulfill a foreign language requirement for a degree program. Contact that department for more information.

## Graduation

A candidate for a degree **must apply** for graduation online via MyState and pay the required fee by the final date set by the Registrar for the semester of graduation. Deadline and fee information are posted on the Graduate Academic Calendar (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/archives/2016-17/graduate/academic-calendar>) and on the Registrar's website. The degree applicant must arrange cap and gown rental through the MSU Barnes & Noble Bookstore. A candidate for a degree should be present at commencement for the official conferring of the degree.

**A student who applies for graduation in a certain semester and subsequently does not graduate must apply again and pay another application fee. Degree applications and application fees do not roll over to a following semester.**

## Incomplete Grades/Change of Grades

An instructor may submit a grade of I (Incomplete) when a student does not complete the course requirements. Graduate students who receive a grade of I must complete all work no later than the last day of class of the next semester (excluding summer) whether the student is enrolled or not. The specific date for each semester is found on the Graduate Academic Calendar (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/archives/2016-17/graduate/academic-calendar>). Failure to remove an I grade during the specified time will result in the automatic grade of F. Once this has occurred, no additional grade change is allowed except under extreme circumstances as approved by the Provost. I grades cannot be assigned for thesis/dissertation credits.

## Provisional Admission Requirements

A student who has not fully met the GPA or other requirements stipulated by the University may be admitted on a provisional basis. The provisionally-admitted student is eligible for a change to regular status after receiving a 3.00 GPA on the first 9 hours of graduate courses at Mississippi State University (with no grade lower than a C). The first 9 hours of graduate courses must be within the student's Program of Study. Courses with an S grade, transfer credits, or credits earned while in Unclassified status cannot be used to satisfy this requirement. If a 3.00 is not attained, the provisional student **shall** be dismissed from the graduate program. Academic departments may set higher standards for students to fulfill provisional requirements; a student admitted with provisional status should contact the graduate coordinator for the program's specific requirements. **While in the provisional status, a student is not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship.**