

Academic Performance

Degree Completion

To graduate, the student must complete all University and degree program requirements listed in the *Graduate Catalog* 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/2017-18/graduate/academic-policies/program-of-study/#courseretakepolicytext>) 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.

Provisional Students

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.**

Academic Probation

A graduate student should be placed on probation by the department when academic problems occur but the student can potentially meet all degree requirements successfully. Examples of these situations include but are not limited to the following.

- GPA falls below 3.00 required by the University
- Receives a third course grade lower than a B
- Failure to meet a departmental requirement

A student may also be placed on academic probation if he or she falls short of any other standards for satisfactory academic performance established by their academic unit. Specific information relative to retaking of courses or completing remedial work will be established by the appropriate academic advisor, graduate committee, and graduate coordinator and shall be documented in written form. This remediation plan must specify a required date of completion. If the student intends to pursue the academic appeal process relating to the reason for being placed on probation, he or she must do so during the first probationary semester.

A student cannot take a preliminary/comprehensive examination or defend/submit a thesis or dissertation during the probationary period.

If, at the end of the probationary period, the student has not met the requirements outlined in the remediation plan, she or he shall be dismissed.

Academic Dismissal

A graduate student **shall** be dismissed from the University if one or more of the following conditions occur.

- He or she receives a second course grade of D or lower.
- He or she receives a fourth course grade of C or lower.
- He or she is found to be responsible for violating the Student Honor Code for a second time.
- He or she was placed on academic probation and failed to meet the requirements for release from probationary status.
- He or she failed a comprehensive examination two times in pursuit of an academic degree.

- He or she falls short of any standards established by his or her academic unit, and the department recommends dismissal with approval of the College Dean and the Dean of the Graduate School.

A student shall be dismissed by the Graduate School for failure to meet University requirements as stated above. A student can also be dismissed if the student's academic department recommends dismissal by submitting a Recommendation for Academic Dismissal (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/pdf/dismissal.pdf>) form (a letter may be attached) from the Graduate Coordinator, approved by the College Dean, to the Dean of the Graduate School clearly stating the departmental requirements the student failed to meet.

Upon review and approval of the reason(s) for dismissal, an official academic dismissal letter from the Dean of the Graduate School is sent to the student through the U.S. Postal Service and through email to the student's MSU account. The letter informs the student that any schedule of classes for the following semester(s) will be dropped, and the Graduate School places an academic dismissal hold on the student's record to prevent further enrollment. The student may refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for information regarding the appeals process (see Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure below). A student who has been dismissed from a graduate program and has not been reinstated via the appeal process cannot apply for readmission into that program, except by meeting the conditions necessary to request Academic Amnesty (see Academic Amnesty under Academic Requirements).

Grade Appeal

A graduate student who wishes to appeal a grade should refer to the MSU Grade Appeals Policy, Academic Operating Procedure (AOP) 13.14 www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/1314.html and appeal to the Academic Review Board.

Dismissal Appeals for Regularly Admitted Students

Following the receipt of a letter of dismissal from the Graduate School, a graduate student may appeal the decision of dismissal and must begin the process within 15 work days. The entire appeal process consists of up to three stages. If the entire appeal process is used, all levels of appeal should be normally completed within 60 work days of the submission of the first appeal. At each level, decisions will be promptly rendered by the appropriate administrator. If the appeal of a student is upheld at any level, then the student will be reinstated into the graduate program. Application for readmission is not required.

1. The appeal to the Department Head is submitted by letter along with relevant support documentation. The Department Head must inform the Graduate School when an appeal is received. In rendering a decision, the Department Head may convene an existing or *ad hoc* departmental committee to review the appeal and offer a recommendation to the Department Head. The Department Head may or may not choose to adhere to the recommendation of the appeals committee. The Department Head will render a decision in writing to the student and copy the notification to the Graduate School. If the dismissal is upheld at the departmental level, the student may appeal the departmental decision by submitting a written request with all relevant supporting documentation to the College Dean. A Department Head may not reverse a dismissal decision if the reversal violates the University's academic dismissal standards.
2. The appeal to the College Dean is submitted by letter along with relevant support documentation. The College Dean must inform the Graduate School when an appeal is received. In rendering a decision, the College Dean may convene an existing or *ad hoc* college committee to review the appeal and offer a recommendation to the Dean. The College Dean may or may not choose to adhere to the recommendation of the appeals committee. The College Dean will render a decision in writing to the student and copy to notification to the Graduate School. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the College Dean, he/she may choose to submit a final appeal of the dismissal to the Provost. A College Dean may not reverse a dismissal decision if the reversal violates the University's academic dismissal standards.
3. The appeal to the Office of the Provost is submitted by letter along with relevant support documentation. The Provost will inform the Graduate School when an appeal is received. In rendering a decision, the Provost may request that the Dean of the Graduate School convene a subcommittee consisting of three voting members of the Graduate Council who do not have a conflict of interest with the graduate student or the student's department to review the appeal and offer a recommendation to the Provost. A subcommittee chair will be named by the Dean of the Graduate School. Relevant supporting documents submitted by the student, department, and/or the Graduate School will be assembled by the Graduate School and delivered electronically to the subcommittee for review. The subcommittee may choose to deliberate via email or in a face-to-face meeting. The recommendation of the subcommittee will be conveyed to the Provost in writing and copied to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost may or may not choose to adhere to the recommendation of the appeals subcommittee. The Provost will render a decision in writing to the student and copy the notification to the Dean of the Graduate School. Recourse to the Provost is the final stage of dismissal appeal. All correspondence will remain confidential.

Dismissal Appeals for Provisionally Admitted Students

(Students admitted with the requirement to earn a 3.00 GPA on first 9 hours of graduate work)

Following the receipt of a letter of dismissal from the Graduate School, a graduate student may appeal the decision of dismissal and must begin the process within 15 work days. The entire appeal process consists of two stages. If the entire appeal process is used, both levels of appeal should be normally completed within 60 work days of the submission of the first appeal. At each level, decisions will be promptly rendered by the appropriate administrator. If the appeal of a student is upheld at any level, then the student will be reinstated into the graduate program. Application for readmission is not required.

1. The appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School is submitted by letter along with relevant support documentation. The Graduate School will inform the student's department and college when an appeal is received and request a letter of evaluation from both units. In rendering a decision, the

Graduate School Dean may convene an existing or *ad hoc* University committee to review the appeal and offer a recommendation. The Graduate School Dean may or may not choose to adhere to the recommendation of the appeals committee. The Graduate School Dean will render a decision in writing to the student and copy the notification to the student's department and college. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Graduate School Dean, he/she may choose to submit a final appeal of the dismissal to the Provost.

2. The appeal to the Provost is submitted by letter along with relevant support documentation. The Provost must inform the Graduate School when an appeal is received. In rendering a decision, the Provost may request that the Dean of the Graduate School convene a subcommittee consisting of three voting members of the Graduate Council who do not have a conflict of interest with the graduate student or the student's department to review the appeal and offer a recommendation to the Provost. A subcommittee chair will be named by the Dean of the Graduate School. Relevant supporting documents submitted by the student, department, and/or the Graduate School will be assembled and delivered electronically to the subcommittee for review. The subcommittee may choose to deliberate via email or in a face-to-face meeting. The recommendation of the subcommittee will be conveyed to the Provost in writing and copied to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost may or may not choose to adhere to the recommendation of the appeals subcommittee. The Provost will render a decision in writing to the student and copy the notification to the Dean of the Graduate School as well as the student's department and college. Recourse to the Provost is the final stage of dismissal appeal. All correspondence will remain confidential.

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. Academic amnesty may be requested of the Dean of the Graduate School through the student's academic Dean's office after either provisional admission to a graduate program or provisional readmission to their former program has been granted by the department. Upon successful completion of at least 9 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 12.18] www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/PDF/1218.pdf