

# GRADUATE POLICIES

## Academic Leave of Absence (ALA)

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) Graduate School's Academic Leave of Absence (ALA) policy ([https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/09/UWM-Graduate-Academic-Leave-of-Absence-Emergency-Accommodation\\_2020-05-05.pdf](https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/09/UWM-Graduate-Academic-Leave-of-Absence-Emergency-Accommodation_2020-05-05.pdf)) allows graduate students to temporarily suspend pursuit of their degree goals in order to take care of certain life events. The policy may be most useful for dissertators subject to the continuous registration requirement, but it can stop the clock on time limit to degree for all students in doctoral, master's, and certificate programs. The main goal of the ALA policy is to facilitate retention to graduation, without unduly prolonging time to degree.

## Add/Drop Policy

You may add or drop courses after the stated deadline only under extraordinary circumstances not related to academic performance. You must complete a Graduate School Request for Exception Form (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/03/RFE-fillable-form.pdf>). If you request a drop for medical reasons, you must supply documentation from a physician. Such add/drops require approval of your instructor, your graduate program unit, and the Graduate School.

Courses dropped after the fourth week of classes remain on your record and are noted on transcripts with the W (Withdrawal) symbol.

Refer to the Registrar's Office Website (<https://uwm.edu/registrar/>) for Add/Drop (Change of Registration) instructions (<https://uwm.edu/registrar/students/enrolling/adding-dropping-and-changing-classes/>) and deadlines.

## Appealing Academic Decisions

See Appeals, Grievances, and Exception Requests (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/appeals-and-exceptions/>).

## Audit Courses

You do not receive a grade or earn graduate credit for audited courses. Auditors usually attend a course for the information available, generally without the commitment to carry out the assignments required for a grade. During the first week of classes, check with your instructor for the attendance and coursework standards expected of auditors. Some courses cannot be audited.

Auditing a course has additional consequences for financial aid, maximum credit load and fellowship purposes. Please see specific sections regarding these items.

## Change of Degree Program

If you decide to change from one degree program to another, you must submit a new Degree Application to the Graduate School.

### Pursuing two programs at one time

Unless you are enrolled in a formally approved coordinated degree program, you may not work toward two UWM graduate degrees at the same time. If you are admitted to a second degree program before receiving a graduate degree in the first program, you are considered to

have formally withdrawn from the first program and are no longer eligible for the degree in the first program.

## Continuation

Your continuation in the Graduate School is at the discretion of the Graduate School, the student's graduate program unit and the major professor. The minimum graduation GPA requirement is a cumulative 3.0 (4.0 basis) or better in all work taken toward the degree.

### Academic Warning

You will receive an academic warning if your semester grade point average falls below 3.0.

### Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue

You will receive a "Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue" if your cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0.

- If your semester GPA and cumulative GPA are both below 3.0, the Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue will take precedence over an Academic Warning. You will be prevented from further registration unless you petition the Graduate School and receive a positive recommendation from your graduate program unit.

### Academic Dismissal

The graduate program unit may recommend that you be academically dismissed for poor academic performance, lack of progress toward degree, or failure to meet graduate faculty policy or program requirements. The Graduate School, in consultation with the graduate program, may also initiate a dismissal for these reasons. In all cases, the Dean of the Graduate School makes the final decision regarding academic dismissal.

Recommendation for dismissal may be initiated for, but is not limited to, the following:

- A cumulative graduate grade point average below 3.0.
- Failing the doctoral preliminary examination.
- Failing the dissertation defense.
- Failing to have the doctoral dissertation accepted within the time period specified for deferral status (reverts to failed dissertation defense).
- Failing to successfully defend the doctoral dissertation upon a second attempt within the specified time period.
- Exceeding the time limit for degree completion.
- Accumulating U grades in thesis or dissertation courses.

## Courses

### Undergraduate/graduate

The courses listed for each graduate program in the Bulletin have been approved for graduate credit. Some 300-699 courses carry a U/G credit designation, meaning they have been approved to be offered for both undergraduate and graduate credit. To receive graduate credit, you must have graduate status and meet the special graduate student requirements indicated by the instructor on the syllabus. However, in any given semester a U/G course might be offered for undergraduate credit only. U/G courses being offered for graduate credit are designated with a "G" appended to the course number. You will not receive graduate credit for any course that is not offered for graduate credit or for any U/G course for which you did not register as a graduate student.

### Graduate

All 700-999 courses carry a G credit designation, meaning they have been approved to be offered for graduate credit only. You must have current graduate status to be eligible to earn graduate credit in these courses. Students in other classifications must obtain the instructor's approval to enroll in G courses.

## Credit/No Credit Basis

You may not register for a course on a credit/no credit basis, except when a course is offered only for credit/no credit. (By definition, a grade of C- or above is required to receive credit under this type of registration.)

You can check your grades and other academic information on the PAWS Website (<http://paws.uwm.edu/>).

## Credit Requirements

Credit requirement information can be found on the Graduate School website under Master's Requirements (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/masters-resources/masters-requirements/>) and Doctoral Requirements (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-resources/doctoral-requirements/>). Recipients of Graduate School-administered awards or assistantships should refer to Financing Your Education (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/financial-support/>).

## Dean

Your dean is Mark Harris and he serves in the capacity of Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School; Interim Dean, College of Health Sciences; Professor, Department of Geosciences.

## Exceptions to Graduate School Policy

Exceptions to Graduate School academic policies and procedures may be granted (except in the case of credit overload) if the student and his or her graduate program representative are able to show that circumstances beyond the student's control—illness, family emergency, etc.—prevented the student from complying with the policies. (Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable reason to request an exception.)

Requests for exceptions must be submitted on a Graduate School Request for Exception Form (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/03/RFE-fillable-form.pdf>) prior to the semester in which the rule or requirement applies, if at all possible.

Listed below are common types of exception requests, and the required elements and supporting signature for each type.

### Credit Overload

The maximum credit load for graduate students is 12 credits. Audited courses, Sport and Recreation courses, and zero-credit colloquium/seminar courses are excluded from the total credit count.

Requests to carry an overload will be considered if the student has a strong academic record and no outstanding incompletes. The request must be supported by the student's advisor as well as the graduate program representative.

### Dean's Approval Required to Continue

A graduate student will receive a Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue action if any of the following conditions exist:

- The student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0
- The student is not removed from probation status within three enrolled semesters
- The student does not satisfy course deficiencies within three enrolled semesters.

This action precludes registration for a subsequent semester.

To receive permission to register following this action, students must demonstrate academic improvement and must show that factors that led to the placement of the Graduate Dean's Approval Required to Continue have been negated. The request must include a program of study for the following semester and must be supported by the graduate program representative and the student's advisor.

### Extension of Time Limit

The master's degree must be completed in five years for programs requiring 30 or fewer credits. For master's programs requiring more than 30 credits, the time limit is seven years. This includes capstone requirements such as a successful thesis defense or passing a comprehensive exam.

The doctoral degree must be completed within ten years of initial enrollment in a doctoral program at UWM. This includes successful completion of all coursework, internships, examinations, the dissertation and the dissertation defense.

For students entering doctoral program in the fall of 2000 and later, doctoral preliminary examinations must be passed within five years of initial enrollment.

Requests for extending time limits must include all of the following:

1. An explanation for the delay
2. An explanation of how the factors that caused the delay have been resolved, or what steps are being taken to prevent further delays
3. A schedule for completion of the degree, including anticipated semester of graduation. Master's students writing a thesis and all doctoral students requesting time limit extensions should address the following as appropriate:
  - Is literature review complete?
  - Is data collection complete?
  - Is data analysis complete?
  - Number of chapters written
  - Number of chapters read by Major Professor
  - Tentative defense date
4. A supporting statement from the Major Professor verifying progress-to-date

The request also must be supported by the graduate program representative.

### Late Add/Registration

Student should state whether he or she has been attending class(es). Instructors should verify attendance or confirm that the student may successfully join the class at this time. A completed Change of Registration form, signed by the course instructor(s), should accompany the Graduate School Request for Exception Form (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/03/RFE-fillable-form.pdf>). If the exception is approved, the student is responsible for all late fees in addition to the tuition payment.

## Late Drop/Withdrawal (Past the Deadline)

This type of request will be considered only for reasons unrelated to academic performance. A completed Change of Registration form, signed by the course instructor (for drops), or a completed withdrawal form should accompany the Request for Exception form. In either case, the course instructor(s) should verify successful completion of course requirements to date. The request also must be supported by the graduate program representative.

## Re-entry After Five-Year Absence

Students who want to re-enter a graduate degree program following a 5 year (or greater) absence must be able to demonstrate retention of knowledge from previous coursework taken for the degree. Additionally, instructors must verify that the course content has not changed significantly since the student completed the coursework. Students should list remaining course and degree requirements (e.g., thesis) to be completed for the degree and a timetable for completion. The request must be supported by the student's advisor, who must verify that the timetable is reasonable, and the graduate program representative.

## Other Policy Exceptions

For guidance on required elements to support other types of exceptions, contact the Assistant Dean of Graduate Education at 414-229-6569.

## Full-Time Enrollment

Graduate students enrolled for a minimum of 8 credits per semester or 6 credits during a summer session are considered full time, with the exceptions described below. (Fellowship recipients see Fellowship Compliance.)

UWM teaching and project assistants who are employed for one-third (33%) time or more must enroll for a minimum of 6 credits per semester. They are considered full-time with this minimum enrollment. The Graduate School and/or graduate program unit reserves the option to require a higher credit minimum for those who hold Graduate School awards (see Financial Assistance)

During the semester that you are preparing for doctoral prelims, you may enroll for a minimum of 1 graduate credit and still be considered full time for financial aid or grant purposes. This status is available for one semester only, and does not fulfill residence requirements (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-resources/doctoral-requirements/#a16>). To request this option, you must have already submitted your Application for the Doctoral Preliminary Examination.

Doctoral students (including teaching, research, and project assistants) who have reached dissertator status are required to carry 3 dissertator credits.

## Grade Definitions and Requirements

Grades with associated grade points

Grade	(Points per credit)
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33

C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F+, F	0.00

### Grade Definitions

- **A:** Superior work
- **B:** Satisfactory, but undistinguished work
- **C:** Work below the standard expected of graduate students
- **D/F:** Unsatisfactory work

### Grades without associated grade points

- **K:** Pass
- **E:** Fail
- **S:** Satisfactory
- **U:** Unsatisfactory

### Other course status designations

- **I:** Incomplete
- **PI:** Permanent Incomplete
- **Credit:** C- or above in credit/no credit course
- **No Credit:** Below C- in a credit/no credit course
- **NC:** Not Completed (audit courses only)
- **P:** Progress
- **W:** Withdrawal
- **WR:** Administrative drop (enrollment in course violates permitted number of repeats)

Grades or course status outcomes of **D+**, **D**, **D-**, **F+**, **F**, **E**, **I**, **PI**, **NC**, **U**, **W**, and **WR** may not be used toward meeting degree requirements. The **P** course status designation must be converted to a grade upon the completion of the course requirements.

### S and U grades

**S** and **U** are the only valid grades for master's capstone courses, master's theses, doctoral dissertation courses, and courses for which students register on an audit basis.

## Holds (Service Indicators)

A hold may be placed on your record for the following reasons:

- An unpaid debt to the University.
- Failure to maintain continuous registration (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-resources/doctoral-requirements/#a5>) (dissertators only).
- Failure to show proof of insurance (international students only).
- Official transcript required for admission not received.
- Administrative obligation.

A hold on your record prohibits you from registering for classes, obtaining transcripts, or receiving your diploma. In addition, international students with holds cannot have non-immigrant papers processed by the Center for International Education (CIE).

You can check for holds on your record using the PAWS Website (<http://paws.uwm.edu/>).

## Incomplete Policy

An I (Incomplete) may be assigned by the instructor if you are unable to finish all the course requirements during the original semester of enrollment. An Incomplete course status designation is appropriate only when the following conditions are present:

1. You have done satisfactory work in a substantial fraction of the course requirements prior to grading time and provide the instructor with evidence of potential success in the remaining work.
2. Extraordinary circumstances, not related to performance in the class, such as illness or a family emergency, have prevented you from finishing the course requirements on time.

An Incomplete will not be given to enable you to do additional work to improve a grade. The instructor may deny a request for an Incomplete and assign a grade based on the work completed at that point.

It is your responsibility to initiate a request for an Incomplete. Reasons for requesting the Incomplete must be acceptable to the instructor. If approved, the instructor will indicate the conditions for the removal of the Incomplete, including the date for submitting all remaining work. You are responsible for seeing that the Incomplete is removed by the deadline and that the instructor has reported the grade to the Graduate School.

The instructor may change the I to a grade (including an F) or to a PI (Permanent Incomplete) if the remaining work is not submitted by the deadline for completion.

### Permanent Incomplete

If you do not complete the remaining work within one year of the end of the term of original registration for the course, the Incomplete will be administratively changed to a Permanent Incomplete (PI). (A PI is not computed into the grade point average.). The PI will remain on your record, except in cases where you completed the work, but the instructor failed to file a grade change in time.

If you wish to receive credit for a course in which a you received a not completed, you must register for the course again and satisfy the requirements for the course as set forth under the second registration. You may not register for a course in which an I remains on record.

You may graduate with a course status of PI if all degree requirements have been met. All Incompletes must be changed to grades or PIs before you may graduate.

## Major Professor as Advisor

You must have a major professor from your chosen graduate program unit. Many graduate program units assign a temporary advisor to direct the entering student's work.

The major professor advises on courses and graduate faculty requirements and supervises research. For the master's candidate, the major professor is chair of the master's thesis committee, if a thesis is required. For the doctoral candidate, the major professor serves as the chair of the dissertation committee and of the committee hearing the dissertation defense. All major professors must be members of the UWM Graduate Faculty. Doctoral advisors require approval by the doctoral program unit and the Graduate School.

## Maximum/Minimum Credit Load

You may not register for more than 12 credits in a semester or 9 credits in the eight-week summer session or a total of 12 credits in all sessions between the end of Semester II and the beginning of Semester I. Audit,

sport/recreation, and colloquium seminar credits are not counted when determining a graduate student's credit load; undergraduate credits are counted.

## Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP)

The Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP) is a multi-state tuition reciprocity program that makes attending out-of-state colleges and universities more affordable for non-resident students.

## Minimum Credit Load

Every student who uses University resources must be enrolled at UWM. Minimum registration is 1 credit per semester or summer. If you are a doctoral student with dissertator status, see Doctoral Dissertator Enrollment (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-resources/doctoral-requirements/#a5>) on the Doctoral Requirements page.

A student undertaking research and/or working on a project, paper, or thesis enrolls at UWM according to the amount of time required for the investigation as determined by the instructor and the major professor. You must be registered during the semester in which your degree is awarded.

## Minnesota/Wisconsin Reciprocity Agreement

### Special Note to Minnesota Residents:

A tuition reciprocity agreement exists between Wisconsin and Minnesota. This agreement stipulates that residents of Minnesota can attend Wisconsin institutions in approved programs and be assessed the approved reciprocity tuition rate, plus segregated fees assessed to all students. If you wish to take advantage of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Tuition Reciprocity Agreement (<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pagelD=97>), you should apply for certification as a Minnesota resident to:

State of Minnesota Office of Higher Education Reciprocity Program  
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55108-5227  
651-355-0613 or 800-657-3866  
[www.ohe.state.mn.us](http://www.ohe.state.mn.us) (<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/>)

You may also contact the UWM Office of the Registrar at (414) 229-3796. A certification year runs from July 1 through June 30.

If you are not certified by the date fees are due, you must pay non-resident tuition and fees; the appropriate amount will be refunded upon certification by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

## Minor: Option A (Doctoral Students)

You may supplement the doctoral program by completing a minimum of 8 credits in residence at UWM in a different graduate program, or a different transcript-designated concentration within your program. The minor must be approved by both your program advisor and the graduate representative in the minor program and identified on your program of study. Option A minors are identified on your transcript. You may not earn a graduate certificate and a Minor Option A using the same courses.

## Overloads

Requests to exceed the maximum credit load are considered under the following circumstances:

- You are taking undergraduate certification coursework.
- You are making up deficiencies.
- You have exceptional circumstances resulting in special hardship.

You must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and no outstanding incompletes to be considered for overload approval. You must submit a Request for Exception Form (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/03/RFE-fillable-form.pdf>) along with recommendations from your major professor and your graduate program representative explaining the reasons and justification for the exception. To be considered, your exception request must be submitted to Graduate Student Services before the enrollment period of the semester in question.

If you enroll for more than the maximum credit load without permission, courses will be dropped to reduce your course load to the maximum allowed.

Only individual student requests are reviewed. Overload requests for groups of students are not considered.

## Permanent Incomplete

See **Incomplete Policy** above.

## Re-entering the Graduate School

If you plan to return to your graduate program after an absence of two or more semesters (excluding summer and UWinteriM sessions), you must apply to re-enter. Following are requirements for re-entering students:

- Completion of a semester's work within the past five years.
- A cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0.
- Clearance of academic and administrative holds.
- Being within the time limit for degree completion.
- You may also need the approval of your graduate program unit. Check with your unit about its re-entry requirements.

You can apply via the Panthera Admission Application (<https://graduateschool-apply.uwm.edu/>). A \$25 processing fee is required for re-entry.

## Repeating Courses

You are allowed to repeat a course once in which a grade of B- or lower was earned. Both attempts appear on your transcript and both grades are calculated in the graduate grade point average. Only one attempt may be counted toward meeting degree requirements.

## Time Limit – Master's

If your master's program requires 30 credits or fewer, you must complete all degree requirements within five years of your first enrollment in the program. If your program requires over 30 credits, you must complete all requirements within seven years. Some programs may have shorter time limits.

## Time Limit – Doctoral

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within 10 years of the date you first enrolled in a doctoral program at UWM. This includes all coursework, the dissertation, and examinations required for the degree. Some programs may have shorter time limits. If you entered your doctoral program in the fall semester of 2000 or after, you have five years from your semester of entry to pass the preliminary examination.

## Transcripts

Official graduate transcripts and unofficial copies can be obtained in Mitchell 261 or by completing and submitting an official Transcript Request form. To request a copy of your official transcripts complete the online form (<https://www.credentials-inc.com/CGI-BIN/dvcgitp.pgm?ALUMTROG03896>) and follow the guidelines outlined below.

There is a \$12 fee for official transcripts sent through the mail.

To request an unofficial copy of your transcripts download the unofficial transcript request form (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/03/transcript-request-form.pdf>) and mail it to the address listed on the form. You can also view your unofficial transcripts through PAWS by following the guidelines below.

### Guidelines

1. Official transcripts are now ordered online (<https://www.credentials-inc.com/CGI-BIN/dvcgitp.pgm?ALUMTROG03896>).
2. Transcript requests must come from the student/former student. Requests from a third party will be processed only with written permission from the student/former student.
3. Due to FERPA regulations, the Graduate School cannot send unofficial transcripts electronically.
4. To request unofficial transcript by mail, send completed form.
5. Transcripts will be withheld if any obligations to the University have not been satisfied.
6. Make checks payable to "UWM." UWM does not accept credit card information by fax.

Please call (414) 229-6569 for more information.

### Viewing Unofficial Transcripts Through PAWS

Current students may access unofficial transcripts via PAWS. Directions are as follows:

1. Log into PAWS (<https://paws.uwm.edu/psp/saprod/?cmd=login&languageCd=ENG&>).
2. Under **Academics**, navigate to the dropdown menu.
3. Select **Transcript: View Unofficial**.
4. Click on the arrow next to dropdown menu 5. Under type, select **Graduate Transcript**.
5. Click **Submit Transcript Request**.
6. Check your UWM e-mail for a PDF of your transcript.

## Winter Session

UWInteriM is a three-week session held during winter break. A schedule of classes is available during the fall semester. The following rules apply to graduate students:

- UWinteriM enrollment does not affect time-to-degree calculations.
- Graduation deadlines for fall, spring, and summer semesters are unaffected by UWinteriM enrollment. If you complete your degree requirements (e.g., thesis/dissertation defense, master's comprehensive exam, final course) during UWinteriM, you will graduate in May, but will not have to register during the spring semester.
- UWinteriM classes cannot satisfy enrollment requirements for graduate assistants (RA, TA, PA) or graduate school fellows. Students with teaching assistantships during UWinteriM are not required to register for UWinteriM classes.
- You may not register for more than three credits during UWinteriM.

## Withdrawal

Withdrawal is the formal termination of a student's complete registration in all courses for the semester. To simply stop attending classes does not constitute a withdrawal. Withdrawals are not accepted by telephone. You must fill out a withdrawal form or send a letter by certified mail to give notice to the Graduate School of the withdrawal. The postmark date or the date the withdrawal form is received by the Graduate School becomes the effective date. This date determines the amount of fee/tuition that will be assessed. Check the UWM Website (<https://uwm.edu/registrar/dates-deadlines/>) for withdrawal deadlines and to determine the effect of withdrawal on your fees.

You may withdraw after the deadline only for reasons other than academic difficulty. You must first submit a Request for Exception (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/646/2023/03/RFE-fillable-form.pdf>) to Graduate Student Services. If you request withdrawal for medical reasons, you must supply documentation from a physician.

Withdrawals will be noted on your transcript. Withdrawals after the fourth week of classes remain on your academic record with the course number and title followed by a W symbol.