

**Meeting of the GC Academic Policy Committee
Tuesday, May 5th 2015, 12:30pm–1:50pm**

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre, 6371 Crescent Road

Present: Brian Bemmels, Ljiljana Biukovic, Thomas Chang, Beth Haverkamp, Jenny Phelps, Susan Porter, Lisa Pountney (minutes), Max Read, Wendy Robinson, Larry Walker (Chair), Daniel Weary
Guests: Mike Wolf (Dept. of Chemistry), Tobias Friedel (incoming GSS President)
Regrets: Don Mavinic, Gail Murphy, Clive Roberts
Absent: Colúm Connolly, Michael Richards, Cindy Prescott

1) Introductions and regrets

2) Adoption of the agenda

All } *That the agenda be approved.*

Carried

3) Minutes of the meeting held 14 April 2015*

All } *That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2015 be approved.*

Carried

4) Chair's Remarks

N/A

5) Candidates for degrees

All } *That the candidates for degrees be approved and forwarded to the Senate for approval, and that the Dean, in consultation with the Registrar, be empowered to make any necessary adjustments.*

Carried

6) Business arising from the minutes

a) Review of **G+PS leaves of absence policy** (V-302.1) – proposed revisions attached

This has been a problematic policy for us both in monitoring the different types of leaves and dealing with various provisions of the policy. At the last meeting we were able to deal with a few things; we broadened the definition of a professional leave, and we will now require (if these changes are approved) appropriate documentation for personal leaves. These changes have been implemented in the document circulated to the committee.

The issue we need to discuss today is point 6 in the policy – **use of university facilities or resources**:

6) “While on a leave of absence, graduate students shall not use any of the University's facilities or resources, or in any other way undertake any academic or research work related to the program for which they have taken a leave of absence.”

This has been problematic in part because it’s not current practice and because it’s not exactly what many would intend. Larry has surveyed our comparator Canadian University (U15 – 2 x French) policies with regard to use of their facilities and resources, and presented these findings to the group:

“U13”	academic work	facilities or resources
UBC	no	no facilities or resources
Alberta	—	—
Calgary	not expected	—
Sask’n	—	supervisory processes are suspended
Manitoba	no	—
Western	not expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication retain library and student health services may opt into extended health and recreation services
Waterloo	—	—
McMaster	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot expect supervision not entitled to use facilities
Toronto	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no demands on university resources; library privileges for a fee cannot expect supervision (but students on PRTL or MEDI leave may make arrangements)
Queen’s	no	—
Ottawa	—	no facilities, resources, or supervision (but students on PRTL leave have library privileges)
McGill	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRTL – may request supervision; have access to academic facilities MEDI – no supervision; no access to academic facilities except library
Dalhousie	—	no facilities or resources (including supervision)

When we first raised this, part of our discussion focused on the fact that some people wanted students to be able to access the UBC services and resources that would help them return to their studies. In particular, we also didn't want to penalize students on parental leave if they had time to devote to their studies.

Over the last few months Larry has been meeting with individual units and service providers across campus to establish what is and what is not available to students on leave from UBC, and provided the committee with a summary:

Relevant non-UBC facilities or resources -

- MSP responsible for own coverage
- iMED not applicable ∴ leaves not granted in first term
- extended health/dental assessed in Sept; can arrange coverage with AMS/GSS provider
- Graduate Student Society yes
- Student Legal Fund Society SLFS fee assessed in Sept; if not paid, then not a member
- UPass no – since dependent on registration

UBC facilities or resources -

- ✓ CWL yes
- ✓ Email yes
- ✓ UBCcard yes – but a new card cannot be issued
- ✓ access control yes – but may be restricted by departments
- ✓ parking yes – general student parking but not 'grad student' parking
- ✓ Library yes
- ✓ Ombudsperson yes
- ✓ child care services yes
- ✓ First Nations House of Learning / Longhouse yes
- ✓ Student Development and Services yes (includes the services below, but provided at the units' discretion)
 - Access and Diversity
 - Women Student's Office
 - Student Health Services
 - Centre for Student Involvement and Careers
 - Centre for Community Engaged Learning
 - Counselling Services
 - Go Global: Student Mobility Programs
 - International Student Development
 - International House
 - Academic English Support
- ✗ Housing (including grad colleges) no – only students on MEDI or PRTL leave can remain in housing; students on other types of leave are dealt with on a case-by-case basis (but usually the exception)
- ✗ Athletics and Recreation no – can "opt-in" for student access by paying the A&R fee (\$68.32/term) or can use public access for facilities and programs

Larry reminded the committee that our current policy is not being enforced, and it seems inappropriate to do so. Our recommendation would be to modify paragraph number 6 in the current policy as follows:

While on a leave of absence, graduate students shall not use any of the University's facilities or resources, or in any other way are expected to not undertake any academic or research work related to the program for which they have taken a leave of absence. Access to University facilities and resources, including faculty supervision, while on a leave of absence may be limited. Contact the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for current information in that regard.

Discussion from the committee followed and it was decided that we would change the wording slightly to “Consult the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website for current information in that regard”.

<i>Dan Weary</i>	}	<i>Update the G+PS leaves of absence policy (V-302.1) wording to reflect the changes discussed above and recommend to the Graduate Council.</i>
<i>Brian Bemmels</i>		

Carried

7) New Business

- a) review of **required documentation for admission** – UBC Calendar excerpt attached

Larry introduced this topic of discussion and ran through the Calendar excerpts (provided to committee). The changes that are being proposed are related to the application form. Paper forms are no longer needed as we have a new online application system. For this reason, we have also developed new procedures with regard to how applicants upload their documentation in scanned form for our review and action. The changes proposed will allow what is now a pilot program to become policy.

There are further changes that need to be made to the entry on unconditional and conditional admission. Right now we process a fair number of unconditional admissions because we receive official documents. In the future, most offers will be conditional upon the submission of the official documentation, and the Calendar entry will reflect this.

Discussion from the committee followed:

- Beth commented that calendar doesn't articulate the process for applying, but perhaps we need to reflect more strongly within the policy that official paper copies will eventually be required. Jenny agreed. We'll compose an extra sentence under 'required documentation' that clarifies that if you receive an offer of admission and intend to accept, you will have to submit official documents. The committee was happy with this course of action, and the updated Calendar proposal will be presented to Grad Council in at its next meeting in October.

<i>All</i>	}	<i>Update the required documentation for admission wording in the Calendar to reflect the changes discussed above and recommend to the Graduate Council.</i>

Carried

b) delegation of authority for offering admission – Memorandum of understanding

This document (circulated to the committee) reflects an agreement between particular graduate programs and G+PS regarding the delegation of authority for offering admission. Although not a change of policy exactly, Jenny wanted to raise this so that the committee can develop a clear understanding of this agreement, and to encourage discussion around the new process. This has been approved by the GRASP Steering Committee.

This does represent a very substantial change to how the University manages graduate admissions and the balance of responsibility between graduate programs and G+PS. Jenny kindly requested that the committee review the memorandum when they have time and communicate any input or feedback to her directly.

A few initial questions from the committee were raised around the auditing process, and how specific the criteria should be within this particular document. There was strong support for including quality assurance measures in this documentation. Jenny agreed and suggested that we add some specificity and structure around the quality assurance strategy, including reports to Graduate Council on a regular basis.

**c) review of requirements for fast-track and direct-entry into doctoral programs – UBC
Calendar excerpt attached**

As background information on this item, Larry began by reviewing the ways in which students can enter into a doctoral degree; after a master's, fast-track or direct entry:

Master's admission requirements (if coming from a Canadian or American institution) are as follows:

- academic equivalent of a 4-year bachelor's degree from UBC, and one of:
 - minimum overall average in the B+ range in 3rd- and 4th-year courses
 - academic standing with at least 12 cr. of 3rd- or 4th-year level courses in the A grade range in the field of study
 - alternatively, applicants who do not meet the requirements stated above, but who have significant formal training and relevant professional experience, and/or otherwise possess demonstrable knowledge or expertise that would prepare them adequately for successful study in a specific graduate program, may be granted admission (upon recommendation of the program and approval by G+PS)

Master's admission requirements (if coming from an international institution) are as follows:

- academic equivalent of a 4-year bachelor's degree from UBC
- superior academic standing (minimum academic requirements for graduates from each country – G+PS International Evaluation Manual)
- for applicants from a university outside Canada in which English is not the primary language of instruction:
 - TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB, PTE, CELPIP, CAEL
 - G+PS minimums
 - individual programs may require higher scores

With regard to **doctoral admission requirements, after a master's degree (from a Canadian or American Institution)** the following applies:

- PhD – master's degree with clear evidence of research ability or potential
- DMA – master's degree with outstanding ability in performance or composition
- EdD – master's degree in Education

In terms of **doctoral admission requirements, after a master's degree (from an international institution)** the following applies:

- academic equivalent of a Canadian master's degree
- superior academic standing (minimum academic requirements for graduates from each country – G+PS International Evaluation Manual)
- for applicants from a university outside Canada in which English is not the primary language of instruction:
 - TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB, PTE, CELPIP, CAEL
 - G+PS minimums
 - individual programs may require higher scores

If students want to **fast-track into a doctoral program**, our policy is as follows:

- a bachelor's degree (as basis for admission to master's program)
- one year of study in a master's program
 - with 12 cr. of first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)
 - transfer is normally accomplished after completion of the first year of study at the master's level and will not be permitted after completion of the second year
 - also, for EdD, first-class standing in prerequisite work and 5 years professional experience

In discussions with the Department of Chemistry, we have received proposals to modify the requirements for fast-tracking and direct entry. Larry summarized the proposed changes to the committee:

Proposed modification for fast-tracking:

- one year of study in a master's program
 - with **9 ~~12~~** cr. of first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)
 - transfer is normally accomplished after completion of the first year of study at the master's level and will not be permitted after completion of the second year
 - ***Students entering the doctoral program after partial completion of the master's degree must, during the first two years of study at the graduate level, complete 12 cr. with a first-class average, of which at least 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing, to maintain registration as a doctoral student.***

Mike Wolfe commented that the driving force behind the suggested change (above) is to allow students more flexibility with regard to the timing of their course work. We'd like students to have more time in their first year for research, and by spreading the courses over two years it would help.

Larry continued by summarizing our policy on **direct-entry into a doctoral program**. We've run into issues on this level as our policy and practice don't match:

- in exceptional cases (and upon recommendation of the program and approval by G+PS)
- an honors bachelor's degree with an overall average in the A range, and
- advanced research ability
- to maintain registration as a doctoral student, must, during first year of study, complete 12 cr. with a first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)

The issues with the policies above are as follows:

- "honors bachelor's degree" and "advanced research ability" have not been monitored by SAS
- CHEM: undocumented dispensation to allow an overall B+ average for direct-entry
- honors degree requirement for American and international applicants ?

The Department of Chemistry would like us to revisit the admission requirements for direct-entry as well.

Our current policy is:

to maintain registration as a doctoral student, must, during first year of study, complete 12 cr. with a first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)

Prior to 2006:

to maintain registration as a doctoral student, must, during first year of study, complete 18 cr. with a first-class average (of which 10 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 10 cr. must be of first-class standing)

The proposal from CHEM is to modify the requirement to maintain registration:

to maintain registration as a doctoral student, must, during first **two years** ~~year~~ of study, complete 12 cr. with a first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)

Larry presented the committee with relevant data on doctoral admissions for several UBC Science programs; after master's degree, fast-track, or direct-entry, and then compared this with outcome data on the same students.

To review the issues at hand:

1. **Requirements for fast-tracking:** one year of study in a master's program, with **12** cr. of first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)

Students entering the doctoral program after partial completion of the master's degree must, during the first two years of study at the graduate level, complete 12 cr. with a first-class average, of which at least 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing, to maintain registration as a doctoral student.

2. Requirements for direct-entry:

in *exceptional cases* (...), an *honors* bachelor's degree with an overall average in the **A** range, and *advanced research ability*

3. Requirements to maintain registration as a doctoral student:

during *first year* of study, complete 12 cr. with a first-class average (of which 9 cr. must be at the 500-level or above and at least 9 cr. must be of first-class standing)

Discussion from the committee followed:

- There was lengthy discussion regarding the problematic nature of the honors requirement, what it means for different institutions and the lack of consistency.
- If we do change the policy requirements to completing 12 cr. within two years (instead of one), would it be possible for individual programs to impose more stringent requirements if they would like the 12 cr. completed in the first year?
- We need to consider that in smaller graduate programs not every course is offered every year.

The committee was not able to consider all the unintended consequences within the meeting timeframe, and it was suggested that we raise this issue for broader discussion at a Graduate Council meeting.

d) discussion of the issue of **laddering of credentials**

8) Adjournment

All } That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

*Minutes of previous meetings are available here:

<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/graduate-council/academic-policy-committee-previous-meetings>