

**Meeting of the GC Academic Policy Committee
Wednesday, September 9th 2015, 12:30pm–1:50pm**

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre, 6371 Crescent Road

Present: Larry Walker (Chair), Matthew Evenden, Don Mavinic, Beth Haverkamp, Yousry El-Kassaby, Tobias Friedel, Susan Porter, Jenny Phelps, Zhaoming Xu, Ljiljana Biukovic, Barb Conway, Matthew Lorincz, Kin Lo, Gail Murphy, Daniel Fritz, Sheri Eastman (minutes)

Regrets: Thomas Chang (Barb Conway in lieu), Wendy Robinson (Matthew Lorincz in lieu), Max Read

1) Introductions and regrets

2) Adoption of the agenda

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the agenda be approved.</i>
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Carried

3) Minutes of the meeting held 05 May 2015*

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the minutes of the meeting held on 05 May 2015 be approved.</i>
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Carried

4) Chair's Remarks

Larry expressed an interest in working together and building an enterprise that promotes quality graduate education and research. Collectively we represent all the faculties on campus as well as the Graduate Students Society, and it is particularly important to have their voice present. Our typical process is to pass items to Graduate Council for their consideration and action, after which time these items typically go to the Academic Policy Committee of the Senate for approval.

5) Approval of Candidates for degrees

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the candidates for degrees (September conferral) 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.</i>
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Carried

6) Business arising from the minutes

- a) Required **documentation for admission policy**, previously recommended to Graduate Council – UBC Calendar excerpt attached with proposed changes

Larry reviewed the proposed changes for required documentation which asks for only transcripts from institutions the student has attended for the equivalent of more than one year. The requirement for transcripts from every institution is becoming a burden to applicants and to the administration of the admission process.

Discussion from the committee included clarification of which documents are required for admission and which documents are required for acceptance. It was suggested to add in the possibility an applicant will be asked for all transcripts if deemed necessary for acceptance. There was concern over what happens if a student's GPA changes drastically. Concern was also raised that the reduction in documentation might overlook students who have been asked to withdraw due to academic fraud. Gail cautioned against confusing 'electronic' with 'unofficial' documents.

Jenny proposed to change the wording around the conditional admission indicating that we require all official documents to remove condition. It was suggested to reverse the order and put the description of the conditional offer first. Concerns were raised around potentially losing students with a conditional offer.

It was decided that Jenny will continue to revise and clarify the language so that requirements are clear and send them out electronically for review by the committee members. If any member has concerns about these further revisions, the matter will be brought back for committee discussion and action; otherwise, the proposal will be considered approved and forwarded to Graduate Council.

<i>All</i>	}	<i>Approve the changes subject to subsequent review and approval</i>
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Carried

- b) **Requirements for fast-track and direct-entry into doctoral programs**, referred to Graduate Council for broader discussion; expanded to include requirement for **English Language Proficiency**.

Larry reported that there has been some discussion on this already but no resolution, so it has been sent to Grad Council. In the meantime the English language proficiency issue has come up and Larry proposes to add this discussion to Grad Council.

7) **Doctoral Exams Report for 2014-2015.**

Larry reported an almost 20% jump in doctoral exams this year. He went through the chart and is happy to report that the number of 're-examinations' has settled down from last year to a more typical average. There can be issues around revisions and examiners. In looking at the faculty breakdown of re-examinations, the varying rates within faculty do not necessarily imply varying quality rather varying standards. Larry cautioned that the numbers as a whole are not terribly useful across faculties as they can be interpreted differently. Clusters can arise within individual supervisors. As a whole the number of re-examinations is relatively low.

8) **New Business**

- a) Proposal for revised **Calendar wording** regarding doctoral exams

Larry proposed timeline and wording changes regarding public notification in doctoral dissertations. It was noted that UBC has been applauded for maintaining the public notification process of their defences.

<i>All</i>	}	<i>Recommend the calendar changes to Grad Council</i>
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Carried

b) Discussion of the **requirement to submit dissertation** following examination

Typically doctoral candidates are required to submit their dissertation within one month of their defence. This can be expanded to six months if substantive changes are required and the longer time-frame is recommended by the Examining Committee (and accepted by G+PS). Because a student’s funding stops after submission of the dissertation (and they lose their student status), there is sometimes incentive not to submit promptly. Larry presented both sides of the argument for discussion.

Yes	No
Typically speedy submission	Belief that students are entitled to full value of award regardless of completion date
Tuition assessment	
Degree completion and graduation	For holders of large fellowships, net loss of funding (after considering tuition)
Post-docs and jobs	
Distorts times-to-completion	One-month limit not monitored unless program extension required
Malingering students take resources and ‘slots’	
Students control scheduling of defence	Defence blackout periods (Aug/Dec)

Concern arose over how to enforce this policy and getting “cheap work” out of a student (rather than paying post-doc stipend). The majority of discussion supported maintaining some length of time limit, with plenty of communication and clear policy. Yousry was opposed to a time limit.

<i>All</i>	}	<i>In favour of maintaining the requirement of one month between exam and thesis submission</i>
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Carried

10) Adjournment

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the meeting be adjourned.</i>
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Carried

*Minutes of previous meetings are available here:

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