

<b>FACULTY SENATE ISSUE FORM</b>
Date Submitted:
Title of Issue (a short descriptive title by which the issue may be referenced)
<b>Revisions to the Faculty Handbook's Graduate Program Director Policy</b>
Description of Issue:
The Graduate School is requesting the insertion of two new passages under the section titled Duties and Responsibilities in the Graduate Program Director Policy: 1) Thesis and Dissertation Coordination and 2) Certifying Students for Graduation.
Rational for Submission:
The insertions make explicit two additional duties/responsibilities already being performed by graduate program directors. In addition, the language about certifying students for graduation was requested specifically by the Office of the University Registrar in response to an audit of policies and procedures impacting its operations.
Name: Robert Wojtowicz, submitted on behalf of Provost Austin Agho and the Provost's/Deans Council
Department: Graduate School
Date: 02/27/2020
Signature: 
<b>For Faculty Senate Use Only</b>
Assigned to Committee:
Date Assigned:

# Graduate Program Director

## A. Introduction

The primary role of the graduate program director is to ensure the academic integrity of graduate degree programs in his or her academic program area. First and foremost a graduate program director is charged with determining that policies and procedures outlined in the Graduate Catalog are followed by all program area faculty and students. Second, but of equal import, a graduate program director facilitates faculty engagement around critical program functions such as recruitment, admission, and retention practices and procedures.

## B. Appointment

Many graduate programs are implemented and administered within a single department, while others are multidisciplinary in nature and involve the cooperative efforts of several individual departments or colleges on a shared basis. Because of these variations, some graduate program directors report directly to a particular departmental chair, while others report directly to an individual academic dean. The delineation of administrative authority should be established at the time a program director is appointed and clearly understood by all parties involved. At the time of appointment, graduate program directors and their supervisors should develop a plan for regular consultation and a written position description that provides a clear understanding of the expectations for both parties about their duties and the attendant compensations, along with criteria for the annual evaluation.

The graduate program director should be tenured faculty from the program or department in which the program is located, if applicable, who is certified for graduate instruction at levels I or II (see the policy for Certification of Faculty for Graduate Instruction). The appointment of non-tenured faculty should be made only in exceptional circumstances that are approved by the dean or designee and the provost or designee.

In the case of programs located within a single department, the graduate program director will be appointed by the department chair, after consultation with those faculty certified for graduate instruction in the program and with the approval of the academic dean in whose college the program is offered.

In the case of multidisciplinary programs within a college, the graduate program director will be appointed by the dean of the college that has administrative responsibility for the program, after consultation with the chairs of participating departments and faculty certified for graduate instruction in the program, and deans of other colleges, if necessary.

In the case of multidisciplinary programs that involve more than one college, the graduate program director will be appointed by the provost or designee, after consultation with the chairs of the participating departments and the deans of the participating colleges.

A graduate program director shall serve at the pleasure of the chair or appropriate administrative supervisor and shall ordinarily be appointed to a term of three years with the possibility of renewal. A graduate program director may ordinarily serve no more than two consecutive terms; however, the chair or the appropriate administrative supervisor may reappoint the individual for one additional term subject to the approval of the dean or the next level of administrative supervisor. An appointment exceeding three consecutive terms may be made only in extraordinary circumstances with the additional approval of the provost or designee. The Office of Academic Affairs will be provided with a copy of the appointment letter or memorandum, after approval by the dean or designee for review and record purposes.

### C. **Duties and Responsibilities**

The duties of a graduate program director depend upon a number of factors: program level (master's, education specialist, or doctoral), particular discipline, size of the program, and degree of staff support being some of the most important. While the ultimate responsibility for a graduate program rests with its graduate faculty, who may serve on specific committees or who may otherwise assist in various capacities, managing the following areas of responsibility will be considered the baseline duties for the position:

**Program Marketing and Recruitment** – work with the Graduate School and the Office of Graduate Admissions to plan, initiate and maintain contact with prospects, prepare the content of promotional materials and maintain program website.

**Admission to Program** – work with the Office of Graduate Admissions and the program admissions committee to coordinate application review, oversee admissions decisions, maintain communication with admitted students, determine financial aid offers to candidates, establish program capacity, manage enrollment, and conduct student orientation.

**Advising and Problem Resolution** - mentor and advise students, establish student plans of study, coordinate thesis and dissertation schedules, handle student requests for exemptions and waivers, coordinate graduate assistant evaluations, and certify students for graduation.

**Thesis and Dissertation Coordination** – approve the appointment of faculty to serve on and/or chair thesis and dissertation committees. Such appointments must also be approved by the appropriate dean or designee.

**Continuance** - work with the department chair or appropriate administrative supervisor and the Graduate School to monitor students' academic progress, and work with the program faculty to coordinate the administration of candidacy examinations.

**Certifying Students for Graduation** – certify students for graduation, including making course substitutions and other exceptions to *Graduate Catalog* requirements, in coordination with the Office of the University Registrar.

**Program Policies and Manual** - maintain the program manual and disseminate student guidelines.

**Scheduling and Curriculum Review** – advise department chair or appropriate administrative supervisor on course demands and scheduling each semester and work with the Graduate School to revise and update the Graduate Catalog content, including all curricular changes, new course proposals, and old course deactivations.

**Program Assessment** – work with the department chair or appropriate administrative supervisor, the Graduate School, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment to collect graduate student productivity data, survey student needs and satisfaction, complete annual assessment reports, conduct periodic external reviews, and interact with accrediting bodies and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Additional responsibilities may be assigned by the department chair or dean with appropriate levels of support.

#### **D. Release Time and Remuneration**

All graduate program directors will receive some release time and/or remuneration. The amount of release time and/or remuneration will be determined in consultation with the chair, dean, and the provost or designee, and will vary with the size and scope of the program and the duties established for the particular position as discussed in section C (above).

#### **E. Evaluation of Performance**

The primary person responsible for evaluating the performance of the graduate program director will be the person to whom the program director normally reports as indicated in section A (above). It is expected that a portion of the annual faculty evaluation of the graduate program director will be devoted to the performance in that capacity. The person responsible for the evaluation should seek as much input as appropriate to assist in the evaluation and should consult with the academic dean, particularly when a new

appointment is contemplated.

- Approved by the vice president for academic affairs  
December 5, 1978  
Revised August 8, 1995  
Revised and approved by the president  
December 16, 1997  
Revised August 22, 2003  
Revised July 24, 2006  
Revised November 5, 2010  
Revised December 11, 2017

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