**GRADUATE HANDBOOK TEMPLATE**

Oklahoma State University

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Purpose:** Graduate school represents a new educational experience, and students are faced with a large amount of complex information. A graduate program’s Handbook serves as a resource to help guide students through this experience. Handbooks describe expectations from the point of admission to degree completion and provide information about the program’s policies and procedures. Graduate program handbooks must align with Oklahoma State University and OSU Graduate College policies. Because discipline norms may vary and in some cases the rules and policies of individual programs need to provide further restrictions than those of the Graduate College, a handbook for use by graduate students within each program is a necessity.

To assist graduate programs, the OSU Graduate College has developed a Graduate Handbook Template. Each section of the template begins with a description of the purpose of the section. This is followed by a list of “information to include”, “policy recommendations” and “important links” that programs may wish to include. In some sections, specific language has been provided (*See text boxes*) on issues that require consistency across programs or where policies have recently changed.

All students should receive a copy of their graduate program’s Handbook upon entrance to the program. It is recommended that electronic versions of the Handbook be provided to students in the form of a pdf rather than incorporated into webpages to facilitate revisions needing to be made in only one location. Ideally, the pdf version is easily accessible on the program’s website to inform perspective and current students of the program’s expectations.

Programs should review and update their Handbook annually to ensure the accuracy of information provided to students entering the program.

* Graduate Degree/Certificate Programs:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/degree>

* OSU Guidelines for Best Practices in Graduate Education

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/bestpractices>

* + Graduate Education Environment
  + Graduate Students
  + Graduate Faculty and Advisory Committees
  + Graduate Programs
  + Graduate College

**II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**Purpose:** The overview should clearly articulate the goals and objectives of the program for graduate students. This section should be explicit about expectations that the faculty have for new and continuing students and may provide a description of the program organizational structure and key personnel. This may also be an opportunity to provide a brief historical perspective of the program and information related to program ranking, accreditation and notable accomplishments.

**Information to include:**

* Explain how the training/education provided by the program aligns with the discipline’s norms, goals and practices.
* Explain how the program aligns with the overarching mission of the department/college/university.
* Provide a brief history of the program, such as when the program first began conferring degrees, number of graduates, famous alumni, etc.
* Provide information about program ranking, accreditation and notable accomplishments.
* Make the expectations of the program explicit, including time-to-degree, participation in program/department/school activities, standards for thesis and dissertation proposal and defense presentations, standards of professionalism in the discipline, and generic standards of professionalism.
* Make explicit any expectations about demonstrable mastery of the subject matter and milestones at the different stages of the training program.

**III. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

**Purpose:** This section of the Handbook explains the major elements of the degree program. Admission requirements and an overview of the program components, including required coursework, thesis, non-thesis, minors, degree options, and benchmarks (e.g., exams, doctoral candidacy, internships and practicums) should be included.

**Information to Consider:**

* List the program’s admission requirements.
* Describe the English proficiency requirements for student for whom English is not their native language.
* Explain what is meant by provisional, probationary and conditional admission to the program if it applies. (*Catalog* *Ref*)
* Identify requirements and deadlines for satisfying completing remedial work or other stipulations specified at the time of admission.
* Describe the different options, certificates, minors, interdisciplinary programs
* List the major programmatic requirements, such as required course work, research proposal, thesis/dissertation, qualifying and/or comprehensive exams, and creative component.
* State goals and purpose of the major program requirements.
* Provide a description of the Plan of Study.

**Important Links:**

* English Language Proficiency for Admission <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/application-process-0>
* Graduate College Round-Up website link for the Plan of Study

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/planofstudy>

**IV. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

**Purpose:** After describing the major components of the program in the previous section (Section II), the requirements for successful completion, such as minimum grades and number of attempts on exams, of these components should be specified in this section. It is important to concentrate these requirements into one section of the handbook as much as possible, to minimize the risk of hidden requirements and discrepancies.

**Information to Include:**

* Provide a comprehensive list of requirements for each degree option, including specific course requirements, minimum grades, laboratory rotations, language requirements, research and teaching requirements, publication/submission requirements, and candidacy requirements.
* Explain requirements related to credit hours including number of hours for full-time student status, number of hours to hold a graduate research or teaching assistantship, continuous enrollment and transfer of credit policies *(Catalog Ref)*.
* Explain any internship or residency requirements that exist and any corresponding fees.
* Include a timeline or table that outlines the requirements, their due dates and any time limits.
* Provide a typical year-by-year synopsis of the degree program.
* Define doctoral candidacy and the number of hours required with reduced continuous enrollment *(Catalog Ref)*.
* Explain the process for waiving course requirement, testing out of courses, and substituting courses.
* Provide a checklist of university/college/departmental or school forms.
* Provide links to download Graduate College forms and deadlines.

**Important Links:**

* Graduate College Academic Calendar

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/graduate-college-academic-calendar>

* Forms

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/FormsPage>

**V. SELECTION OF THESIS/DISSERTATION RESEARCH ADVISOR**

**Purpose:** Graduate student success is largely dependent on a positive mentoring experience with the Advisor working in conjunction with the Advisory Committee. It is important for graduate programs to develop policies and procedures to ensure that every student has a faculty Advisor early and that the mentoring relationship is conducive to a successful graduate education experience. Programs should describe the roles and responsibilities in the advisor-advisee relationship that are consistent with best practices in graduate education (*See* ***Oklahoma State University Guidelines for Best Practices in Graduate Education*).**

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Specify the timeline or process for the selection of a permanent advisor.
* Appropriate advising, supervision, and mentoring will be provided to students entering the program prior to the identification of a permanent faculty advisor.
* Programs should be particularly sensitive to the fit of advisor-advisee relationships as they relate to issues such as culture, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.
* Procedures for helping incoming graduate students select a permanent faculty advisor.
* The program will establish guidelines and expectations for successful faculty mentoring.

**Information to Include:**

* Describe the qualifications necessary to serve as a thesis or dissertation advisor and their role and responsibilities. (*Suggested text provided.*)

**Advisor:**  The Advisor’s primary responsibility is as a mentor. As a result, it is expected that the Advisor will establish the closest working relationship with the student. The Advisor must hold an appropriate OSU Graduate Faculty appointment [*defined by the program*], but need not hold an OSU faculty appointment if not serving as Chair. The Advisor guides and counsels the student in the research or scholarly effort, ensuring compliance with applicable research regulations. The Advisor serves as the primary resource for the graduate student in identifying potential committee members for the student’s Advisory Committee. The Advisor is responsible for reporting to the Advisory Committee on the student’s progress. It is the Advisor’s responsibility to mentor the student toward a research, scholarly or creative project that is original and worthy of the degree sought. The Advisor is typically involved in the preparation of scientific or creative presentations, manuscripts for publication, etc. which may be a degree requirement in some graduate programs.

* Describe the role and responsibilities of the advisee.
* Describe the responsibilities of the student, the program, and the advisor when the advisor leaves OSU before the student completes the degree program. (*Suggested text provided.*)

***Student’s Research Advisor Leaves the Institution:***Should a student's Research Advisor leave OSU before the student completes his/her degree, the following steps may be taken after consultation with the Research Advisor and Graduate Program Coordinator:

* For a master’s student or doctoral candidate who need only complete their research project to finish the degree, the student may complete the research project under the direction of the original Research Advisor. If the Advisor is also the Chair of the student’s Advisory Committee, a new Chair would be appointed. The original Research Advisor can continue as a member of OSU’s Graduate Faculty, participate in the student's thesis/dissertation defense, and fulfill his/her obligations to the student.
* For a master’s or doctoral student (defined as not having met the requirements for doctoral candidacy) who is in the early stages of their program and research project, he/she may choose a new Advisor and start a new research project.
* A student may also choose to transfer to the advisor’s new educational institution.

If a student is unable to secure a new Advisor in 30 calendar days, there is no obligation on the part of the program, Graduate College or Oklahoma State University to provide a new one. Without an Advisor the student will not be eligible to continue in the graduate program.

* Provide information about how to select a permanent advisor and how to change advisors.
* Describe the process to follow and the responsibilities of the Graduate Program Coordinator when a student and faculty advisor can no longer work together.

***Student-Advisor Relationship:*** When it is determined that a graduate student and Advisor can no longer work together, and all efforts for conflict resolution within the program have been exhausted, it is the responsibility of the student to identify a new Advisor or change to another degree option or program. The Graduate Program Coordinator can assist with this process, but Oklahoma State University is under no obligation to provide the student a new Advisor. If a new Advisor cannot be identified in 30 calendar days, the student will no longer be eligible to continue in the graduate program.

**Important Links:**

* Graduate Faculty Database:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources>

* **Oklahoma State University Guidelines for Best Practices in Graduate Education**

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/best-practices>

* Best Practices: Advisory Committees and Defenses

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/best-practices>

**VI. THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Purpose:** The Advisory Committee actively participates in the education and training of graduate students. This includes sharing responsibility for reviewing the student’s progress and guiding the student toward completion of their program requirements. Programs will develop policies and procedures to ensure that the student’s Advisory Committee is established early and is composed of members who will provide appropriate mentoring. This section of the handbook should specify the function and composition of the membership of the advisory committee. Programs are encouraged to adopt language provided in the *Best Practices: Advisory Committees and Defenses* for descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the committee chair and members.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* The program should establish a time line for forming an Advisory Committee and filing a Plan of Study that meets the Graduate College deadlines.
* The program will advise graduate students on how to select the members of their advisory committee.
* Describe the Advisory Committee’s role in annual reviews of student progress.

**Information to Include:**

* Describe the function of the Advisory Committee and the roles of its members. (*Suggested text provided.*)

**Roles, Responsibilities and Qualifications of the Chair and Advisory Committee Members:**

**Chair:** The primary responsibility of the Chair of a graduate student’s Advisory Committee is to monitor the progress of the student toward degree completion. The Chair is commonly the research Advisor, but this is not a requirement. The Chair must have a strong familiarity with the academic requirements appropriate to the degree sought. The Chair must hold an appropriate OSU Graduate Faculty appointment, typically a tenure-track appointment in the academic unit in which the graduate degree is housed. The Chair’s duties include convening meetings of the Advisory Committee, as appropriate; ensuring compliance with University and Graduate College policies, procedures and requirements; overseeing the Plan of Study and thesis/dissertation submission processes; and ensuring that the research topic undertaken is appropriate to satisfy degree requirements with the results openly accessible. If the Chair is not also the Advisor, the Chair should serve as a liaison with the Advisor with regard to progress of research in fulfillment of degree requirements.

*(Continued on the following page)*

**Expert Committee Member(s):** The Advisory Committee must include at least one Expert Member whose expertise and counsel serve the graduate student in attaining the research, scholarly, creative or professional preparation goal that is worthy of the degree sought. Expert Members must hold an appropriate OSU Graduate Faculty appointment. Typically, such individuals are faculty members in the student’s graduate program. An Expert Member’s responsibilities include guiding the research, scholarly or creative activities throughout the process, approving the Plan of Study, reviewing draft documents, attending regular meetings of the Advisory Committee, and interacting regularly with Advisory Committee members to facilitate and monitor degree completion progress.

**Outside Committee Member:**The Advisory Committee must also include one Outside Member who serves as the representative of the Graduate College and ensures a high level of integrity in the processes that the Advisory Committee utilizes to review and evaluate the student throughout the graduate program. The Outside Member must be a member of the OSU faculty and Graduate Faculty.  The Outside Member must not be a faculty member from the academic unit or graduate program of either the graduate student, Advisor or the Chair of the Advisory Committee. The Outside Member ensures that appropriate academic standards are applied in evaluating the student, and that the student is dealt with in a fair manner consistent with OSU policies. The Outside member also provides expert advice when appropriate to the student in the conduct of research and writing of the dissertation.

* Provide instruction on how to form an Advisory Committee including the deadlines, number of faculty required, minimum number of faculty from inside the program and number from outside the program, departmental norms about how committee members are to be asked to serve on committees. (*Suggested text provided.*)

***Selection of Advisory Committee Members*:**Recommendation of Advisory Committee members should be a collaborative activity between the graduate student and their Advisor and/or Committee Chair. Although the student has the ultimate responsibility for recommending his/her Advisory Committee membership, his/her Advisor is a valued resource that can provide insight that will help the student make informed decisions. The student should meet with potential Advisory Committee members prior to recommending them to better understand their experience, availability, mentoring style and willingness to serve as an Advisory Committee member.

* Provide information on who can serve as a member of Advisory Committees, including the “outside” member on a doctoral student’s committee and their role and responsibilities.
* Provide information about the reasons for making changes in the advisory committee and the procedures for making these changes, including the importance of informing the Graduate College.

**Important Links:**

Best Practices: Advisory Committees and Defenses:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/best-practices>

* Plan of Study Workshops: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/pos-workshops>
* Plan of Study Portal: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/planofstudy>
* Graduate Faculty Database:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources>

**VII. PROGRAM MILESTONES**

**Purpose:** This section of the handbook should specify the program milestones during a student’s course of study. Advanced training that occurs in the context of graduate education lends itself to the development of individualized plans of study that occur within the framework of meeting the degree requirements. The more individualized nature of graduate education necessitates that students understand the milestones they are expected to reach as they progress through the program. Equally important, the timing of such milestones should be articulated that is in line with timely completion of the degree.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Policy should be in place for all required examinations (e.g., entrance, preliminary, qualifying, comprehensive, candidacy, etc.) outlining the process, expectations for successful completion, and procedures in place for students who do not pass the exam.
* The program should specify and requirement that are outside of the formal coursework, such as seminar presentations, article publications, portfolios, etc.
* The program should specify the requirements for admission to doctoral candidacy.

**Information to Include:**

* Describe expectations related to the research proposal (e.g., specified format, content, presentation) and define the criteria for successful presentation or defense of the proposal.
* If preliminary or qualifying examinations are required by the program, describe the testing process, content (as appropriate), required scores and the timing of such exams.
* Provide an expected timeline for admission to doctoral candidacy for doctoral students.
* Explain reduced continuous enrollment for doctoral candidates and the due dates for candidacy forms in order to qualify for reduced continuous enrollment.
* If comprehensive examinations are a program requirement, provide general guidelines about the examination process, required scores and as appropriate study tips.

**Important Links:**

* Checklist for Doctoral Students:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/doctoral-checklist>

* Checklist for Masters Students:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/masters-checklist>

**VIII. THESIS/DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE**

**Purpose:** The culminating work in doctoral and most master’s programs is the dissertation or thesis. This section of the handbook should specify the policies and procedures to ensure professional standards for the discipline are met in the written thesis/dissertation product and oral defense. Additionally, this section should make explicit the procedures that students follow in writing and defending this work. Programs that offer a non-thesis Master’s degree option should specify those requirements in this section.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Programs should specify when the defense can be scheduled, the timing of the defense, the advertisement of such, and the format for the defense, including a description of the open forum and portion of the defense closed to the public if applicable.
* Specify the role of the outside committee member in the dissertation defense – see OSU Best Practices.
* Programs should provide guidelines for creative components or reports and the process of evaluating.

**Information to Include:**

* Define the nature and scope of the thesis/dissertation
* Provide guidelines about departmental and style requirements for the thesis/dissertation.
* Specify the time lines for submitting the dissertation to the committee, scheduling the defense, announcement of oral defense, etc.
* Describe the format of the defense (e.g., who can attend, student presentation, types of questions and who can ask, how pass/fail is determined, and the number of committee members who must vote to pass the student) or refer to Graduate College policies (*Catalog Ref*).
* Make explicit requirements and/or expectations concerning the publication of the thesis/dissertation.
* Describe expectations related to the culminating work for any non-thesis options, including reports, creative components or professional portfolios.

**Important Links:**

* Thesis/Dissertation Templates:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/thesis-and-dissertation-templates>

* Best Practices: Advisory Committees and Defenses

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/best-practices>

**IX. PROGRAM POLICIES: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

**Purpose:** This section should make explicit program expectations regarding academic performance. A description of academic performance expectations is provided along with a definition of what constitutes satisfactory progress. Policies regarding satisfactory progress and the annual review of graduate students should be specified. This section will also specify the program’s policies regarding probation, extensions, dismissals, and appeals.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Programs will develop policy describing the role and responsibilities of the graduate student, faculty advisor/chair and advisory committee in the annual review process (Templates on Graduate Faculty D2L site).
* Programs should develop policy limiting the number of grades of “C” or lower and outstanding incomplete grades a student can have on his/her transcript (*Catalog Ref*).
* Policy related to probation, dismissals, and extensions should be articulated (*Catalog Ref*).

**Information to Include:**

* Provide an inventory list of the typical documents found in a student’s file.
* Define what is considered “satisfactory progress”.
* Provide information about the annual review process, including the purpose/function of the annual review, the information to be collected, how it is collected, who reviews the information, and how feedback is provided to students.
* Provide criteria used for probation or dismissal from the program due to academic deficiencies, including a defined cumulative GPA, number of grades below a “C”, number of failed attempts to pass qualifying or comprehensive exams.
* Explain the policy for grading comprehensive/qualifying exams and the policy for remediation in the student fails the exam or part of the exam.
* Inform the students of their right to appeal and due process if dismissed due to failure to maintain academic stands. (*Suggested text provided.*)

***Dismissal from the Graduate Program:*** Graduate students may be dismissed from their program for failure to meet academic standards. In such instances, the students will be notified of the intent to dismiss and informed of their rights for due process and appeal (*See section XII. Appeals Processes).* If a student appeals the decision to dismiss, s/he must be allowed to maintain enrollment and continue working toward the graduate degree in the same manner as any other graduate student in the program during the appeals process. Continued enrollment is not required to appeal. Once the decision of the appropriate appeals panel is made, it will be final.

* Notice of Graduate College Leave of Absence Policy
* Explain the procedures for requesting an extension and the requirements for an extension when there has not been a reasonable rate of progress.

**Important Links:**

* Academic Calendar:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/graduate-college-academic-calendar>

* Graduate Student Appeals:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/appeals-policy>

* Leave of Absence Policy:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/leave-of-absence-policy>

**X. PROGRAM POLICIES: INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

**Purpose:** Integrity in research and creative activities is founded on sound disciplinary practices and a commitment to basic values, including honesty, fairness and respect. Students learn to value professional integrity and standards of ethical behavior through interactions with faculty who are modeling this behavior. This section should state the program’s expectations for responsible conduct of research and creative activities of graduate students and present explicit criteria for dismissal when there are documented cases of research misconduct, dishonesty, and violation of professional standards.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* The program will develop a mechanism for communicating standards of professional integrity and responsible conduct of research appropriate for the discipline.
* Programs will inform students of the policies and procedures related to the use of human subjects and animals in research, biosafety as well as the appropriate use of radiation and laser technology.

**Information to Include:**

* Provide instruction on how to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Biosafety Committee, Radiation Safety Committee, and the Laser Safety Program as appropriate.
* Provide a professional code of ethics appropriate to the discipline.
* Inform students about the RCR training provided through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and/or college-approved courses.
* Provide explicit criteria for what constitutes a violation of professional standards. Expectations regarding professional conduct should be set based upon accepted disciplinary standards and when appropriate by standards established by external accrediting agencies.
* Provide explicit criteria for dismissal from the program due to unethical or dishonest behavior while engaged in research, scholarly or creative activities. (*Suggested text provided.*)

***Dismissal from the Graduate Program:*** Graduate students may be dismissed from their program for academic integrity violations, student misconduct or behavior that is deemed an egregious violation of professional behavior. In such instances, the student will be informed by the program of the intent to dismiss and their right for due process and to appeal. If a student appeals the decision to dismiss, s/he must be allowed to maintain enrollment and continue working toward the graduate degree in the same manner as any other graduate student in the program during the appeals process. Continued enrollment is not required to appeal. Once the decision of the appropriate appeals panel is made, it will be final.

**Important Links:**

* Responsible Conduct in Research Overview:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/rcr/rcr-index>

* RCR Core Subject Areas:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/rcr/core-subject-areas>

* RCR Training:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/rcr/training>

* RCR Policy:

<https://stillwater.sharepoint.okstate.edu/Policies/Shared%20Documents/Requirements%20for%20Training%20in%20the%20Responsible%20Conduct%20of%20Research.pdf>

* Appropriate Use of Human Subjects in Research:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/irb/irb-index>

* Appropriate Use of Animals in Research:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/iacuc/iacuc-index>

* Biosafety Program:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/ibc/ibc-index>

* Radiation Safety Program:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/rso/rso-index>

* Laser Safety Program:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/lso/lso-index>

* Professional Society Links Related to Professional Conduct:

**XI. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**Purpose:** This section should make explicit expectations for professional student conduct and guidelines for conflict resolution between graduate students and their advisor or advisory committee. The faculty advisory-graduate student relationship is deemed so important that programs should give special attention to resolving these conflicts as soon as possible. The preferred place for conflict resolution to occur is within the program or academic unit. This section of the handbook should also include information related to the process for handling grievances should a resolution not be reached at the program level.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Programs will establish policies and procedures for the resolution of conflict between a graduate student and his/her faculty advisor or advisory committee. These procedures will be communicated to each graduate student upon entrance to the program. Graduate Program Coordinators typically play a substantial role in resolving conflicts.
* The program will establish procedures for the timely change of the faculty advisor or advisory committee members when this change would serve the progress of the graduate student.

**Information to Include:**

* Provide explicit expectations for graduate student’s professional behavior and criteria for dismissal or sanctions for failure to display such behavior. At the very least, expectations for graduate students should be in line with the OSU Student Code of Conduct but programs are encouraged to provide more explicit expectations of professional conduct appropriate for the discipline.
* Provide guidelines for dealing with conflicts between students and faculty.
* Describe the program’s procedures for handling grievances and appeals.
* Include a clear personnel structure for conflicts that escalates (e.g., Graduate Program Coordinator/Committee, Unit Head, Graduate Dean).

**Important Links:**

* Student Code of Conduct: <https://studentconduct.okstate.edu/code>
* Graduate Student Appeals Policy: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/sites/default/files/appeals_policy.pdf>
* Professional society links related to professional conduct

**XII. APPEALS PROCESS**

**Purpose:** All students should receive proper notification, have the right to be heard, the right to appeal and the right to due process. Programs should provide a section in their handbook that describes the appeals process for academic-related and student conduct-related issues. It is important to distinguish the difference between the academic integrity appeals process, grade appeals in nonresearch-related courses, student conduct, and other appeals of education-related issues. For example, grade appeals, and academic integrity appeals are governed by university policies and procedures that apply to all students, undergraduate and graduate. While appeals processes are in place at the University and Graduate College level, these are intended to be used as a last resort. Graduate programs should develop their own appeals process in effort that most issues can be resolved at that level.

In addition, an appeal may be initiated by an impending graduate program action or by the student. In the case of a potential program action, the program must provide proper notification to the student about the impending action and inform the student about the process for the appeal. This is usually in the form of a printed letter and/or email. While email is an official communication of the University, it is also recommended that a printed letter be provided. For final dismissals, sending a letter with a “signature upon receipt” may be desirable. The appeals process should include the time frame (typically 10 calendar days), content, and information about who will hear the appeal. Most graduate program appeals processes will include two levels of appeal (e.g., graduate program committee and unit head) within the academic program prior to an appeal to the Graduate College under the *OSU Graduate Student Appeals Policy*. An example of a student-initiated appeal process is described in Appendix B.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Develop a process through which students can appeal issues related to grades in research-related courses, satisfactory academic progress to dismissal within their own program. This process should specify who hears these appeals (e.g., graduate program committee, graduate faculty committee or graduate coordinator) and the timeline for filing an appeal. *See Appendix B for an example of a program appeals process.*
* Appeals should include at least one faculty member or committee, followed by the unit head, prior to the *OSU Graduate Council Appeals* process being entered.

**Information to Include:**

* Provide a statement of graduate students’ rights.
* Describe the resolution process for accusations involving Academic Integrity and indicate where additional information about the appeals process can be found (P&P, 2-0822).
* Describe the process for nonresearch course grade appeals (Grade Appeals Board, P&P, 2-0821) and other appeals of non-academic integrity education issues (Graduate Student Appeals Process). Indicate where additional information can be found related to these appeals processes.
* Clearly indicate the point at which the decision is considered final.

**Important Links:**

* Graduate College Best Practices in Graduate Education

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/best-practices>

* Graduate Student Appeals Policy:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/appeals-policy>

* Grade Appeals Policy:

<https://academicaffairs.okstate.edu/content/grade-appeals-board-policies-procedures>

* Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/>

* Student Conduct:

<https://studentconduct.okstate.edu/code>

**XIII. ASSISTANTSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP POLICIES**

**Purpose:** This section should make explicit how graduate research and teaching assistantship are awarded, expectations concerning assistantship responsibilities and performance, and how performance will be evaluated.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Provide a mechanism to inform all graduate students about their health insurance, tuition waiver forms, etc.
* Programs should provide policies related to outside work for pay. Please note, it may not be possible to place significant restrictions on the work a graduate student does outside the University. Please seek legal counsel for such policies prior to implementing them. Typically, there is a statement discouraging outside work for student on an assistantship and requires such arrangements should be discussed with the student’s advisor in advance.
* Programs should have policy for students on assistantships regarding holidays and annual leave.
* Basis of renewal and review and an appeals process.

**Information to Include:**

* Explaining the criteria for awarding, renewing, and terminating graduate assistantships, including length of eligibility, minimum course loads, and the process of performance evaluation.
* Explain the general responsibilities of graduate assistants/associates, and the type of supervision and support they will receive in completing these responsibilities.
* Include general stipend information (e.g., assistant vs. associate).
* Provide information to graduate students about the required tuition waiver form that needs to be filed each semester.
* Explain the English-language proficiency requirements for international students.
* Explain the policy for graduate assistant leave and expectations about vacations and attending professional meetings.
* Explain procedures concerning the use of program or departmental resources such as office space, computers, copy machines, office supplies, keys, labs, mailboxes, travel funds.
* Explain the program expectations regarding participation in teaching workshops or faculty development opportunities through Institute of Teaching and Learning Excellence.

**Important Links:**

* Graduate Assistantships:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/assistantship>

* International Teaching Assistant Test

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/ita>

* Fall/Spring/Summer Enrollment Guidelines:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/enrollment>

* Student Health Insurance:

<http://uhs.okstate.edu/student-health-insurance-plan>

* Tuition Waiver Forms:

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/FormsPage>

**XIV. CRITICAL SKILLS ACQUISITION:**

**Purpose:** Graduate programs should emphasize the critical skills students are expected to acquire during the course of their training and the level of mastery. While students may be introduced to many of these skills in the context of a course, it is important to emphasize that most of these competencies require refinement that occurs outside of the traditional classroom setting. This section of the handbook should provide students with an understanding of the critical skills that they are expected to acquire, opportunities to sharpen those skills and the level of proficiency they are expected to achieve.

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Policy should be developed related to skills that are required for successful completion of the training program, including how these skills will be assessed and opportunity for remediation.

**Information to Include:**

* Specify the level of mastery of analytical or laboratory-based skills that students are expected to achieve by the time they complete the program.
* Clearly describe expectations for students related to the command of the existing literature in their field and ability to develop focused research questions.
* Describe the presentation skills (i.e., oral, written or otherwise) that students are expected to acquire by the time they complete the program, including presentations to professionals within their field, the general public, and the “elevator” (i.e., 3 min) speech.
* Specify the opportunities students will have during their training to develop and refine these oral presentations skills.
* Describe the skills in grant writing that students should expected to acquire during the course of their training and potential opportunities to enhance their skills.

**Important Links:**

* 3 Minute Thesis:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/2016-osu-3mt%C2%AE-college-competition-schedule>

* Grant Writing Courses, Seminars and Workshops:

<http://ucpd.okstate.edu/resources/writing>

**DEPARTMENT/COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

**Purpose:** This section is intended to provide students with a comprehensive list of resources that are available to them through their program, the Graduate College, as well as the University.

**Information to Include:**

**Department or Graduate Program:**

* Departmental or program graduate student organization
* Local and state professional organization
* National professional organizations for graduate students or discipline-specific national professional organizations with student membership options
* Explain procedures concerning the use of program or departmental resources such as office space, computers, copy machines, office supplies, keys, labs, mailboxes, travel funds.

**Graduate College:**

* Graduate College: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/>
* OSU Catalog: <https://registrar.okstate.edu/University-Catalog>
* Academic Calendar: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/graduate-college-academic-calendar>
* Fall/Spring/Summer Enrollment Guidelines: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/enrollment>
* Graduate Assistantships: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/assistantship>
* Graduate College Academic Calendar: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/graduate-college-academic-calendar>
* Graduate Degree/Certificate Programs: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/degree>
* Graduate Faculty Database: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources>
* Graduate Student Appeals Policy: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/appeals-policy>
* Graduate and Professional Student Government Association (GPSGA): <http://temp-gpsga.okstate.edu/content/resources>
* Graduate College Forms: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/FormsPage>
* Graduate Student Appeals: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/appeals-policy>
* Graduation Checklist (Doctoral Degree): <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/doctoral-checklist>
* Graduation Checklist (Master’s Degree): <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/masters-checklist>
* International Teaching Assistant Test: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/ita>
* Leave of Absence Policy: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/leave-of-absence-policy>
* OSU Guidelines for Best Practices in Graduate Education: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/bestpractices>
* OSU Best Practices: Advisory Committees and Defenses: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/best-practices>
* Test of English Language Proficiency: <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/telp>

**University:**

* Career Services: <http://www.hireosugrads.com/StudentsAlumni/>
* Edmon Low Library: <http://www.library.okstate.edu/>
* Family Resource Center: <http://www.reslife.okstate.edu/frc/>
* Health Insurance (Student): <http://uhs.okstate.edu/student-health-insurance-plan>
* Information Technology: <http://www.it.okstate.edu/>
* Institute for Teaching and Learning Excellence: <http://itle.okstate.edu/>
* International Student and Scholars Office: <http://iss.okstate.edu/>
* International Students Arrival and Orientation: <http://iss.okstate.edu/arrival-orientation>
* Office of Multicultural Affairs: <http://icae.okstate.edu/>
* OSU High Performance Computing Center: <http://hpc.it.okstate.edu/>
* OSU Writing Center: <http://osuwritingcenter.okstate.edu/>
* Residential Life: <http://www.reslife.okstate.edu/>
* Responsible Conduct Research Training: <http://compliance.okstate.edu/rcr/training>
* OSU Research Compliance:
  + Appropriate Use of Human Subjects in Research:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/irb/irb-index>

* + Appropriate Use of Animals in Research:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/iacuc/iacuc-index>

* + Biosafety Program:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/ibc/ibc-index>

* + Radiation Safety Program:

<http://compliance.okstate.edu/rso/rso-index>

* + Laser Safety Program: <http://compliance.okstate.edu/lso/lso-index>
* Seretean Wellness Center: <http://wellness.okstate.edu/>
* Services for Students with Disabilities: <http://sds.okstate.edu//>
* Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.okstate.edu/>
* Student Code of Conduct: <https://studentconduct.okstate.edu/code>
* The OSU Student Union: <http://union.okstate.edu/>
* University Counseling Services: <http://ucs.okstate.edu/>
* University Health Services: <http://uhs.okstate.edu/>
* University Parking Services: <http://www.parking.okstate.edu/>

**APPENDIX A: SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

As described in the introduction of this handbook template, graduate school represents a new educational experience. Students are faced with a large amount of complex information and are expected to be more independent. Graduate school can be a stressful experience for students. Programs are encouraged to provide information for their students to help them not only survive but thrive in the in graduate school. A few examples are provided below. In addition to the resources that programs may have that are discipline specific, the Graduate College provides a list of resources that will be available on the graduate faculty D2L website. (Graduate faculty can access this website by logging on to D2L and changing their role from “faculty” to “student”.) Programs are encouraged to visit this website and incorporate materials into this section of their handbook.

* **UCLA Graduate School Survival Guide:** <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/library/survivalguide.pdf>
* **PhDs.org Succeeding in Graduate School:**
  + **How to Succeed in Graduate School: A Guide for Students and Advisors** <http://www.csee.umbc.edu/~mariedj/papers/advice.pdf>
  + **What Predicts Graduate School Success:**

<http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2012/09/cover-success.aspx>

* + **Ten Simple Rules for Graduate Students:**

<http://chem.virginia.edu/graduate-studies/test-links-pg/how-to-succeed-as-a-graduate-student/>

* + **Your First Year in a Ph.D. Program:**

<http://chronicle.com/article/Your-First-Year-in-a-PhD/142953/>

* + **Graduate School Survival Guide:** <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/library/survivalguide.pdf>

* + **The Successful Graduate Student: A Review of the Factors for Success:** <http://www.aabri.com/manuscripts/10569.pdf>
* **A Brief Survival Guide for New Graduate Teaching Assistants at UNC Charlotte:**

<http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/teaching-research-assistants/survival-guide-new-tas>

**APPENDIX B: SAMPLE GRADUATE PROGRAM APPEALS PROCESS**

*Overview:* The purpose of this procedure is to provide current graduate students in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate Program the opportunity to resolve complaints about dismissal from the program, placement on probation, recommended denial of readmission to the program, and other administrative or academic decisions that terminate or impede a student’s progress toward their academic or professional degree goals.

*Process:* The student is required to provide written notification of appeal to the graduate program coordinator within 14 calendar days of the precipitating event that is the subject of the appeal. If the Graduate Program Coordinator is an involved party, the student should seek advice from the unit head or associate dean of graduate studies in their disciplinary college. Notification should include, information on the circumstances of the appeal, specific issues involved, and the remediation action sought. The document should be no more than two pages. Within 7 calendar days of receipt of the notification, any involved parties within the program (e.g., faculty or staff) will be notified and provided a copy of the appeal. The graduate program’s appeals committee will be convened to hear the appeal within a reasonable amount of time, usually 30 days (*see note below)*. At the hearing, the student will have the opportunity to present their case and the same time would be allowed for counterarguments, if warranted. Questions may be asked of either party by members of the appeals committee. At the end of this hearing, the program’s appeals committee will deliberate, and their decision will be considered final at the program level. The student will be notified in writing of the decision and their right to appeal to unit head, followed by the Dean of the Graduate College, if they so choose.

*Enrollment:* Throughout the appeal process the student is allowed to maintain enrollment and continue working toward the graduate degree in the same manner as any other matriculated graduate student in the program. Continued enrollment is not required to appeal within the allowed timeframes.

*Appeals Committee:* The make-up of the graduate program’s appeals committee should be noted here – some programs use their established Graduate Program Committee for all student appeals. In programs that do not have a designated appeals committee, the appeals process should specify the members of the Graduate Faculty who will consider the appeal. For example, this may be an ad-hoc committee appointed by the Graduate Program Coordinator or unit head or it may include all members of the Graduate Faculty in the program.

*Deadlines:* Unless stated otherwise, all deadlines are by 5:00 pm central time on the day of the deadline or the next regular business day (Monday–Friday) when the deadline falls on a weekend (Saturday–Sunday) or OSU official holiday, such as Labor Day. Time frames and deadlines that extend beyond the end of the academic terms (fall and spring semesters and summer sessions) are handled at the discretion of the Graduate Program Coordinator.

**APPENDIX C: PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES**

Introducing graduate students to the professional societies within their discipline is an important aspect of their training. Student membership provides a cost-effective means of beginning to reap the benefits of such organizations, including access to journals and other sources of information, the ability to develop professional networks outside of their institution, and may be important in maintaining professional credentials. Graduate students should be provided with information and links to the different professional organizations within their discipline at the local state, region and nation/international levels. When there is more than one professional organization, students should be encouraged to discuss with their advisor most the appropriate society based on their interests and goals.

**APPENDIX D: TRAVEL TO PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS**

Providing graduate students with information related to travel in the graduate handbook can be an effective and time-saving means communicating the basic information. It should be specified that all travel must be pre-approved by the research advisor or chair of the committee and is contingent on the availability of funds. Key aspects of the travel process are listed below:

* Submitting an out-of-state or in-state travel request form (sample forms may be provided)
* Approval process for travel and for funding
* Making travel arrangements (airline, driving, parking, taxi, train or bus, turnpike tolls etc.)
* Registering for the conference or meeting
* Housing accommodations and meals
* Required documents for reimbursement (sample form may be provided)
* Travel reimbursement programs, such as GPSGA Travel Awards