GUIDELINES FOR TERMINATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students at the University of Nebraska Medical Center are expected to maintain a high level of achievement in their graduate studies. Accordingly, students who do not maintain satisfactory progress may be subject to being placed on probation, being terminated from a degree program, or being denied permission to continue graduate studies in the University. This termination policy shall be applicable for students at any stage of an M.S. or Ph.D. program, regardless of whether or not they have advanced to candidacy. At the time of termination from a graduate degree program and/or dismissal from Graduate Studies, students may reapply for admission to another UNMC degree program or admission as a non-degree seeking (Unclassified) student only with the approval of the UNMC Dean for Graduate Studies, subject to review and investigation of the circumstances as needed. Probation or termination recommendations may be made by the student’s adviser (master’s students or first year doctoral students), the student’s Advisory/Supervisory Committee (master’s/documented students), or their program Graduate Committee, and must be approved by the Graduate Committee overseeing the student’s program. The Graduate Committee overseeing the student’s program must communicate the probation or termination recommendation in writing to the UNMC Dean for Graduate Studies. A copy of the recommendation must be sent to the student. The final decision to terminate a student rests with the Dean for Graduate Studies. Students who appeal will be placed on probation until the conclusion of their appeal under the Graduate Student Grievance Resolution Procedure.

Termination decisions involving violations of criminal law, situations involving threats to persons or property, or an escalating process of improper behavior will be addressed in a case by case manner by the Dean for Graduate Studies in consultation with UNMC Campus Security.

For all graduate students at UNMC, probation or termination recommendations may be made under any of the following conditions:

1. Failure to satisfy Scholarship Requirements (http://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/scholarship-requirements) (detailed elsewhere in the Graduate Studies Catalog);
2. Repeated failure in qualifying examinations, preliminary examinations, comprehensive examinations or final degree examinations;
3. Failure to make reasonable progress in research as determined by the Advisory/Supervisory Committee and documented in the minutes of at least one previous committee meeting;
4. Ethical misconduct or academic dishonesty;
5. Lack of professionalism as defined in the UNMC Code of Conduct (https://wiki.unmc.edu/index.php/Code_of_Conduct); or
6. Failure to satisfy conditions required for removal of probationary status or provisional admission.

Graduate Committees wishing to adopt additional conditions for probation or termination, subject to approval by the Dean for Graduate Studies, must specify these conditions in writing and inform all students affected by these conditions.

Guidelines for submitting a recommendation for termination

Overview of Process for Failure to Satisfy Scholarship Requirements (http://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/scholarship-requirements)

Students who believe that evaluation of their academic progress in a course has been prejudiced or capricious (Condition 1, above) may appeal that grade or other course evaluation as follows:

1. Initially, an attempt should be made to resolve the matter through discussion with the instructor of the course for which the grade was received.
2. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the appeal may be submitted in writing to the chair of the department in which the course was taken.
3. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the appeal may be submitted in writing to the Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee within two weeks following reporting or posting of the grade. This committee may change a student’s evaluation if there is sufficient evidence that the evaluation of a student by a faculty member has been improper. When a student takes a course in a department that is administratively based on another campus, the student must follow the grade appeals procedure for that campus. In cases involving dual-listed courses, appeals should be made through procedures of the academic unit that granted admission to the course.
4. The Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee will be the final authority in resolution of grade appeals, except that either the student or the faculty member issuing the grade may within ten days submit an appeal in writing to the Dean for Graduate Studies setting forth his or her reasons for believing he or she was not accorded a fair hearing. The Dean will review the record and facts of the case and may return the matter to the Committee for reconsideration. The decision of the Dean as to whether the case should be reopened will be final.

Process for Termination due to any Condition except Failure to Satisfy Scholarship Requirements

The following guidelines apply to Conditions 2 through 7 above. In such cases, the program Graduate Committee, either acting alone or upon the recommendation of the student’s Advisor and/or Advisory/Supervisory Committee (if one has been established), will:

1. Where possible and as early as possible, warn the student, in writing, of the situation and deficiency. A detailed explanation of the reason for the warning should be provided.
2. Notify the student at least 1 week in advance of the program Graduate Committee meeting at which termination of the student will be discussed. The student can provide a written statement which will be reviewed at each stage of the termination process. In addition, the student may ask to present her/his case verbally before the committee. The Graduate Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies will consider any extenuating circumstances communicated by the student.
3. Decide the question of dismissal or probation by majority vote of the program Graduate Committee with at least three faculty members participating in the committee’s deliberation, not including the student’s Advisor or Supervisor. The Student Ombudsperson (or his/her faculty designee — without a primary appointment within the student’s department) will attend the program Graduate Committee
meeting as a non-voting observer who is responsible for ensuring the adequate review and explanation of the reasons behind consideration of termination. The Graduate Committee will create a report of the proceedings, and the committee’s decision — including any supporting documentation — will be given to both the Dean for Graduate Studies and the student involved within one week of the Graduate Committee’s decision. The Student Ombudsperson (or designee) will report to the Graduate Dean within 48 hours if there are any concerns with the termination process.

4. The Dean for Graduate Studies will investigate the circumstances and make the final decision (based on the recommendation, supporting documentation of the program Graduate Committee, and the student’s written statement) whether a student should be terminated from UNMC Graduate Studies or placed on probation, and the conditions of probation (if applicable). If the Dean’s decision differs from the Graduate Committee’s recommendation, a response must be sent to the program Graduate Committee within 1 week of the Dean’s final decision.

5. The Dean for Graduate Studies will communicate, in writing, the final decision to the student’s Advisor, Graduate Committee chair and any relevant departments for inclusion in the student’s files within 1 week of the final decision. A written summary of Graduate Committee discussions, votes, and decisions will also be recorded in the student’s departmental and Graduate Studies files.

6. The Dean for Graduate Studies will communicate the decision to the student within 1 week of the final decision.

7. Within the communication of the final decision the Dean for Graduate Studies must inform the student of her/his ability to examine their department files, at their request. Also, students must be informed of their right to appeal the decision under the Graduate Student Grievance Resolution Procedure (http://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/student-grievance-resolution-procedure). Students who appeal will be placed on probation until the conclusion of their appeal under the Graduate Student Grievance Resolution Procedure.

Approved by UNMC Graduate Council 11/06/2014, and amended 03/05/2015.