

QUEENS COLLEGE
of
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**Graduate Student
HANDBOOK**

FROM THE DEAN OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Welcome to graduate study at Queens College! I hope that your experience with us will be one that will be educationally enriching, and while involving hard work, will be enjoyable as well.

The purpose of this “Handbook” is to acquaint you with aspects of our institution and its operation, and to give you guidance in a condensed form for the navigation of procedures that are part of any institution. Please take time to survey the contents of this “Handbook.” At the beginning of your graduate school career some noted events and conditions might seem far removed, but ultimately many will come to have a significant impact on that career. Keep this “Handbook” available for general reference throughout your academic career with us. If there is something that arises that is not covered herein, you should consult the current *Graduate Bulletin* (which gives details concerning each of the individual programs) or contact us at the Office of Graduate Studies (718-997-5190). In any event, when confronted with a question concerning proper procedure, *don't try to make it up as you go along!* Find out what the actual procedure is; this will inevitably save you time, trouble, and possibly money.

Again, welcome! Best wishes for an educational and constructive stay with us. I hope to see you at graduation.

Robert Engel
Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

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1. MAXIMA AND MINIMA

a. Grades and Grade Point Average

Graduate students in all programs are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Listed below are the numerical values associated with each of the letter grades allowable for graduate courses; the cumulative grade point average is calculated by summing the product of the numerical value of each awarded grade and the number of credits associated with it, and dividing the result by the number of credits represented by the courses included. Specifically:

Grade	Numerical Value
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
WU, WF, F	0

Note that unofficial withdrawals (WU) and official withdrawals under conditions of failing performance, as well as grades of “F” contribute to the total GPA for the student.

As an example, consider the record of a hypothetical student who has earned the grade of “A” in two 3 credit courses, “B-” in one 3 credit course, and withdrew unofficially (just left the course without notification and never came back) from a 3 credit course - the hypothetical student’s cumulative GPA would be calculated as:

$$[6(4.0) + 3(2.7) + 3(0)]/12 = 2.675$$

Our hypothetical student would have a cumulative GPA below the minimum required (and would be facing some problems in continuing their graduate program).

Also note that the grades shown above are the only allowable letter grades that may be assigned by the instructor in a graduate course. There are no allowable grades in the “D” category for graduate courses. If an instructor inadvertently assigns such a grade, the Office of Graduate Studies will request of the instructor that it be changed to one that is allowed.

Grades of Pass and Fail (“P” and “F”) are allowable in graduate courses only in those instances where it is specifically noted in the course description in *Graduate Bulletin* as being allowed for that course.

Grades of “INC” (incomplete) and “ABS” (absent) in graduate courses are assigned by the instructor in those instances in which the student has requested additional time to complete the assigned work for the course, and the instructor agrees to an arrangement for completion of that work, or the student has been absent from *only* the final examination and needs no other work to complete the course. From the time of assignment of such a grade, the student has one year to resolve that grade to a regular letter grade. Resolution of such grades beyond that time limit requires permission of both the instructor of record and the Office of Graduate Studies. Students who have been granted such a grade should not register for the course again within the normal time limit for resolution of that grade. Grades of “INC” and “ABS” do not count into the GPA of the student.

Courses transferred to the student’s Queens College graduate transcript, either at the time of entry to the program at Queens College or taken on permit after entering the Queens College program, including those taken at other units of C.U.N.Y., count as credits toward graduation. However, grades are not transferred and are not used in calculating the student’s GPA.

Additional information concerning grades is provided in section 4a, and about transfer credits in section 2 of this Handbook

b. Time to degree

All programs must be completed within the time limits specified for that program in the *Graduate Bulletin*. The time limit for completion of all requirements for the Master of Arts, Master of Arts in Liberal Studies, Master of Arts in the Social Sciences, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Library Science and Master of Science degrees is four years. The time limit for the Master of Science in Education degree is five years. Consult the *Graduate Bulletin* for time limits for the various certificate programs. Further, transfer credits from any other institution that are to be counted toward a degree or certificate program, as well as credits taken while in a non-matriculated student status, must have been completed within the time limit for that program. Requests for extensions of time to complete a program should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Upon consideration of the full situation, the Office of Graduate Studies will notify the student, the program and the Office of the Registrar of the approval/denial of the request.

c. Credits required

The number of credits required for Master's degree programs varies by program and ranges from 30 to 60 credits. The number of credits required for the several certificate programs also varies. Please consult the appropriate listing for your particular program in the *Graduate Bulletin* for the number of credits and specific courses required.

d. Comprehensive examination requirements

Some programs require, in addition to specified course work, taking and passing a comprehensive examination for successful completion of the program. Consult the appropriate listing for your particular program in the *Graduate Bulletin* to determine if such a requirement exists.

e. Thesis requirement

Some programs require the completion of a thesis (performance of the scholarly work, writing the thesis and defense of the thesis) as part of their requirements for attaining the degree. Consult the *Graduate Bulletin* to determine if such a requirement exists for your program.

A student matriculated in a program requiring a thesis for successful completion of that program must submit to the departmental graduate adviser for approval the manuscript in the number of copies required by that program. The student should also consult with the graduate adviser regarding the particular procedure for thesis approval within that program.

The title page of the thesis manuscript must bear the following statement:

“Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of (..title of degree....) in (..Department...) in the Graduate Division of Queens College of the City University of New York, (..date...)”

After the manuscript has been approved by the department, a thesis approval form should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, and the student must arrange for binding. A \$25 binding fee, for which a receipt will be issued, is payable at the Bursar's window. The receipt and two copies of the thesis manuscript must be taken to the Catalogue Department of Rosenthal Library (Room 201). One bound copy of the thesis manuscript is retained by the Library and becomes part of its collection. A second bound copy is sent to the academic department. If desired, a third copy may be submitted which, when bound, will become the property of the student.

2. TRANSFER CREDITS

a. Before taking courses at Queens College

Upon becoming accepted as a matriculated student in a graduate program at Queens College, students may transfer credits to their Queens College graduate transcript for prior work

done at other institutions, and in certain circumstances, from their undergraduate transcript at Queens College. Students wishing to transfer such credits may do so no later than the end of their second semester of registration in the graduate program at Queens College. There are several regulations pertaining to such a transfer of credits.

Without special permission of the Office of Graduate Studies, not more than 12 credits total may be transferred to the graduate transcript at Queens College. *The transfer of such credits must first be approved by the graduate adviser of the program in which the student is matriculated, using the approved Advanced Standing Form available from the Office of Graduate Admissions.* Such credits transferred must have been taken within the time limit specified for the degree or certificate program. These transferred credits *may* have been part of a completed degree program.

When requesting approval of transfer credits, an official transcript from the institution originally awarding the credits must be submitted that certifies to the grade(s) and the completion of the course(s).

Only courses for which the following grades were awarded can be accepted for transfer credit: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-. In those special instances in which a grade of "Passing" (P) was awarded, the credits may be accepted if the Passing grade is equivalent to a letter grade no lower than a B-, and is approved by the program of which the student is making the request.

Several points should be noted here: 1) some graduate programs require that the student have earned a grade no lower than B in courses that are to be transferred (consult the particular listing in the *Graduate Bulletin*); 2) programs are not required to accept courses for transfer - it is at their discretion; 3) transfer credit grades are not used in calculating the GPA of the student.

Credits transferred from a student's undergraduate transcript at Queens College must: 1) be for a valid graduate course; and 2) must not have been part of the requirements for the undergraduate degree, either as a specific course requirement or as a requirement toward the total credits earned for the undergraduate degree.

b. Permit to take courses elsewhere after being at Queens College

Currently enrolled matriculants who wish to take courses at another institution (within or outside C.U.N.Y.) must complete a Permit Form, available at the Office of the Registrar. The Permit Form, with the approval of the program graduate adviser, indicates that the student has permission to take such courses as part of their graduate program. Thus, the Permit Form acts as an agreement to allow a student to transfer a course or courses to their Queens College graduate transcript. There is no guarantee that courses taken at another institution without prior approval as given on the Permit Form will be accepted for credit at Queens College. The student must remember that without special permission not more than 12 credits total may be transferred to the graduate transcript at Queens College. Courses to be transferred must be valid graduate courses, and permission is required to be given by the graduate adviser or Chair of the Queens College parent department of the discipline in which the course is housed.

In order to be eligible for a permit to enroll outside Queens College in a course or courses that pertain to a Queens College graduate degree or certificate program as either prerequisite(s) for a program or as transfer credits to it, the student must:

- 1) be matriculated in the graduate degree or certificate program;
- 2) have obtained the approval of the program graduate adviser for the permit; and
- 3) have registered for and completed at Queens College with a passing grade at least one undergraduate prerequisite course or one graduate course as part of that program. An exception to this requirement occurs if the student is in the first semester of attendance at Queens College and registers for at least one graduate or undergraduate course at Queens College while registering elsewhere for the permit course(s).

Students who wish to register for courses at other units of C.U.N.Y. must:

- 1) complete a Permit Form (including appropriate signatures) and return it to the Queens College Registrar;

- 2) register and pay for all C.U.N.Y. tuition and fees at Queens College in advance of registering at another unit of C.U.N.Y.; and
- 3) complete these requirements before the end of the first week of classes of the semester concerned.

For courses outside C.U.N.Y., students should complete the Permit Form (including appropriate signatures) and submit it to the Office of the Registrar *prior to registering at the host institution*.

Students who take an entire semester's program on permit at an institution other than a unit of C.U.N.Y. must file a graduate reentry application and pay a reentry fee.

No transfer credit may be posted to the student's Queens College transcript unless an official transcript has been submitted certifying the completion of the work with an assigned grade at the host institution.

3. GRADUATION

a. Diploma Card

The procedure whereby a student receives a degree or a certificate must be initiated by the student. The student declares an intention of candidacy for a degree or certificate by filing a Diploma Card with the Office of the Registrar in accordance with the following deadlines:

- 1) for Fall graduation, on or before the preceding November 1;
- 2) for Spring graduation, on or before the preceding March 1;
- 3) for Summer graduation, on or before the preceding July 1.

Graduation Applications may be obtained at the Office of the Registrar. Candidates are encouraged to file a Diploma Card at the time they register for their anticipated last semester in their program at Queens College. A Diploma Card should be filed as long as the student is reasonably certain that all degree requirements will be satisfied by the end of the semester preceding the graduation date. If the student does not complete these requirements, a new Diploma Card must be filed. Graduation Applications received after the deadlines listed above will be processed for the following graduation date.

It should be noted that C.U.N.Y. regulations require that students be registered for the semester in which the degree/certificate is to be granted. This means that if a student has completed all of the requirements listed for their degree/certificate but has not filed a Diploma Card on time, they must continue registration the following semester, either for a course(s) or as a Maintenance of Matriculation student. This is a C.U.N.Y. regulation and is not waivable through any Queens College office.

b. Maintenance of Matriculation

Since C.U.N.Y. regulations require a student to be registered during the semester in which a degree/certificate is granted, and the student may not be required by their program to register for any classes during that semester, registration under the heading of "Maintenance of Matriculation" is provided. For "Maintenance of Matriculation" the student pays a fee (currently \$250 for New York State residents, \$403 for out-of-state students) that allows:

- 1) the student to file for graduation in that semester
- 2) the student to use the facilities of Queens College as would a regularly registered student (library, laboratories, student union, *etc.*)

If not registered for any course, registration under Maintenance of Matriculation is required only for the semester at the end of which the student is actually graduating. (Students may also fulfill the requirement of being a registered student by actually registering for one or more courses.)

The fee for Maintenance of Matriculation is not established by Queens College. It is established by C.U.N.Y., and can not be waived under any circumstances by agents of Queens College. Therefore, make certain that your Diploma Card is filed on time and you have completed all of the requirements for graduation in the proper time period.

4. SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS

a. Appeals to the Committee

A standing committee of the Academic Senate, The Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee is made up of faculty and graduate students representing each division of Queens College. It constitutes a board of final appeals for students requesting relief from scholastic regulations and requirements within the Graduate Division of Queens College. Requests for relief from requirements concerned with graduation, retention in program, fees, time to degree and time for resolution of administrative grades are directed to the Committee through the Office of Graduate Studies. The Committee has delegated some routine permission procedures to the Assistant to the Provost for Graduate Studies; other matters are decided by the entire Committee. Students remaining unsatisfied with a decision by the Assistant to the Provost for Graduate Studies may request review by the entire Committee.

All appeals to the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee must be made in writing. All presentations of information and comments made to the Committee must be made in writing. This includes comments from students, faculty and administrators alike. No oral presentations are accepted.

With regard to appeals of grades, any student who believes they have been awarded an inappropriate grade must follow the following procedure:

- 1) consult with the instructor
- 2) lacking a resolution satisfactory to the student, consult with the Chair of the Department (Chairs may convene a faculty committee or seek outside assistance if they feel it necessary to review the appeal.)
- 3) lacking a resolution satisfactory to the student, appeal in writing to the Office of Graduate Studies (Such a written appeal must detail the reasons why the grade is felt to be inappropriate.)
- 4) lacking a resolution satisfactory to the student, appeal in writing to the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee.

It should be noted that the only basis for appeal to the Office of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee is that the student has been treated in an arbitrary and capricious manner by the instructor. The student must demonstrate that the grade was assigned punitively, unfairly, or on a basis other than impartial academic evaluation. At the departmental level, a grade appeal may be based on the academic quality of the student's work.

Once a grade has been posted on the student's transcript record with the Registrar, it may not be changed without the permission of the Office of Graduate Studies.

b. Withdrawal from classes

Withdrawals from courses during the first eight weeks of the semester require no special approval. During this period, students *must* use the Telephone Registration System, both to drop courses within the first three weeks of classes and to withdraw, receiving a grade of "W" from the fourth through the eighth week of the semester. Beginning with the first day of the ninth week of the semester, in order to withdraw from a course graduate students must complete a Request to Withdraw from a Course form, obtainable from the Office of the Registrar. It must be signed by the course instructor and by the graduate adviser for the student, and be filed in the Office of the Registrar. Beginning with the fourteenth week of the semester, approval of the Office of Graduate Studies must also be entered on this form. In both instances, the instructor must indicate on the form if the student is passing or failing the course at the time of withdrawal. An indication of failure results in a grade indication of "WF" on the student transcript. Note: a "WF" grade has the same effect on the student GPA as a grade of "F" does. Course withdrawals at the graduate level are allowable up to the official last day of classes.

A course dropped within the first three weeks of the semester *may* result in a refund of some portion of the tuition fee. The Activity Fee is is not refundable unless the student has withdrawn from all classes prior to the first official day of classes.

Retroactive withdrawal from a course may be requested only in writing from the Office of Graduate Studies, and only for courses in which an academic grade has *not* been assigned. That is, retroactive withdrawal may be requested only for those courses in which an administrative grade of INC, ABS, PEN or WU has been assigned. The student must justify the request for a retroactive withdrawal from any course. In any event, approval of a request for retroactive withdrawal will result in a notation of “W” on the student’s record.

c. Resolution of INC and ABS grades

A grade of INC must be requested by a student of the instructor prior to the end of the semester in which the course is given. This is a temporary grade awarded by the instructor to indicate that a student has made a satisfactory record in course work, but *for good and sufficient reason* is unable to complete the course at that time. A graduate student receiving such a grade must complete the course work by the end of the following two regular semesters. Requests for extension of time to resolve a grade of INC must be made in writing to the Office of Graduate Studies. If the work of the course is not completed, the grade remains on the transcript without penalty. Students preparing to complete a course in which a grade of INC has been awarded must not register for that course a second time.

A grade of ABS is a temporary grade indicating that the student missed the final examination, which was the *only work in the course that was not completed*. The ABS grade is awarded only when it is expected that the student will be able to achieve a passing grade in the course by taking a subsequent final examination. A graduate student receiving this grade is required, with the permission of the departmental adviser, to take a make-up examination by the end of the following two regular semesters. A fee of \$15 is charged when a special examination is given. Note: a student may not graduate with an unresolved grade of ABS on their transcript.

d. Probation and dismissal

All programs must be completed with a minimum GPA of 3.0. A matriculated graduate student whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation. This student will then have 12 credits of work within which to raise their GPA to 3.0. Failure to do so will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

A matriculated graduate student who is dismissed must remain out of the College for a minimum of one semester. To return, the student must file a formal application for reentry (available from the Office of Graduate Admissions) and pay a non-refundable reentry fee by the appropriate deadline (July 1 for Fall admission; December 1 for Spring admission; May 1 for Summer admission). Requests for reentry are reviewed on an individual basis by the individual program and the Office of Graduate Studies. Students will be notified by mail of decisions concerning their acceptance/non-acceptance of reentry application.

Permission to re-enter following a dismissal may be granted *one time only*.

Students who have completed the total credits required by their degree or certificate program may *not* take additional credits at another institution to raise their GPA. Credits only, and not grades, are transferable to the Queens College transcript. At the completion of the total credits allotted to a program, if a student does not have a GPA of 3.0 or above and wishes to register for additional credits at Queens College to raise their GPA, permission to do so must be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies.

e. Attendance

By registering in a course, the student assumes the obligation to fulfill the requirements set forth for that course by its instructor. Although absence in and of itself shall not affect a student’s grade, students are responsible for such activities as participation in class discussions, laboratory sessions, field trips, *etc.*; the preparation of papers and reports; and the taking of quizzes and examinations, and or all of which may constitute a component in the student’s final grade for the course. In addition to observing the regulation regarding withdrawal from a course,

students are expected as a normal courtesy to inform the instructor of any prolonged absence or of withdrawal.

Students who wish to withdraw officially from a course should refer to section 4b in this document which provides information on the process.

Students who wish to request a grade of *Incomplete (INC)* should refer to section 4c in this document dealing with the process.

5. COMPLAINTS

a. Grades

A student who believes he or she has received an inappropriate grade should take the following steps:

- 1) Consult with the instructor.
- 2) Lacking a satisfactory resolution, consult with the departmental Chair or director of the program in which the course is given. The Chair *may* convene a faculty committee to review the appeal.
- 3) If there is still no satisfactory resolution, appeal to the Office of Graduate Studies for a further review. The appeal must be in writing and must detail the reasons why the student feels the grade to be inappropriate. If the Office of Graduate Studies does not directly send the appeal to the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee, and lacking a resolution satisfactory to the student, the student may further appeal to the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee. Please note: *the only basis for an appeal of an awarded grade to the Office of Graduate Studies (and the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee) is that the student has been treated in an arbitrary and capricious manner by the instructor.* To make such an appeal the student must be prepared to demonstrate, in writing, that the grade was assigned punitively, unfairly, or on a basis other than impartial academic evaluation. (At the departmental level, steps 1 and 2, a grade appeal may be based on the academic quality of the student's work.)

It should also be noted that, other than by decision of the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee on situations that meet the criteria mentioned in step 3 above, *grade changes at the departmental level **must** be submitted with the **approval of the instructor of record and the departmental Chair.*** Grade changes based on the academic quality of the student's work *may not* be changed without specific approval of both the instructor of record (initially reporting the grade) and the departmental Chair at the time of submitting the request for a grade change. Once a grade has been posted on the student's record, any change of grade request must be submitted by the instructor and departmental Chair first to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval prior to being sent to the Office of the Registrar for ultimate posting.

b. Other Matters

Complaints of a variety of types other than grades (e.g. program retention, waivers of time limits, waivers of graduation requirements) are to be directed to the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee through the Office of Graduate Studies. All complaints must be submitted in writing. It is the policy of the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee that complaints from students and responses from faculty/administrators *must be in writing*; oral testimony is not accepted. Students will be notified of the decisions of the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee as soon as possible following their meeting at which the issue was considered.

6. MISCELLANEOUS

a. Immunization

New York State law requires that students born on or after January 1, 1957 be immunized against measles, mumps and rubella before you start school. Students are required to file a Queens College Immunization Form at the Health Service Center (FitzGerald Gymnasium, Room 204 - 997-2760). Failure to file will jeopardize the student's continuation in the graduate program, nor can a student register if the immunization requirement has not been satisfied.

b. Reentry

There is no official leave of absence classification for graduate students; students who do not register for a regular semester (Fall or Spring) after having been registered are considered inactive. Such status is not noted on student records and does not extend the time limit for the degree or certificate. For extensions, see section 1b of this document.

Inactive students who wish to return to Queens College within the same program must file an Application to Reenter with the Office of Graduate Admissions, Jefferson Hall, by the following dates:

July 1 for Fall admission

December 1 for Spring admission

May 1 for Summer admission

A nonrefundable application fee of \$10 is required for filing for reentry. Inactive students whose programs of study began eight or more years before the semester of reentry must also appeal to the Graduate Scholastic Standards Committee through the Office of Graduate Studies for readmission. Information on these appeals procedures may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies.

It is advisable for reentering students to inform their departments and make an appointment with the Graduate Adviser for their program prior to reentry application.

c. Fees and tuition

All tuition and other fees listed here and in the *Graduate Bulletin* and in any registration material issued by Queens College are subject to change. In the event of any increase in fees or tuition charges, payments already made to Queens College will be treated as partial payments and notification will be given to the student of the additional amount due and the time and method of payment. Class schedules should be checked prior to registration for fee changes.

In planning to register for courses, students must be prepared to pay all fees associated with that registration. These include tuition, the activity fee, material and transportation charges, and other fees. Students registering during the early registration period will receive a bill in the mail. This bill must be paid by the Payment Date Due printed on the bill. If payment is not received by the due date on the bill, the student's entire registration will be cancelled by Queens College. Students registering during the regular and late registration periods will be required to pick up a bill at the Bursar's Office. All payments must be made in the Bursar's Office on the day the student picks up the bill. If a student pays by check or money order, the student's social security number must be written on the check or money order. A student who receives a *zero* Balance Due bill will not be required to have it validated at the Bursar's Office. A student who issues a bad check will be liable for tuition and fees in addition to a reprocessing fee. A Stop Payment on a student's check *does not* cancel registration. The student must withdraw officially.

All students are required to pay an activity fee that covers student activities, Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), Student Union, and the like. It does not cover service fees that a student may incur individually, such as fees for program changes, late registration, transcripts, special examinations or parking. *The activity fee or any part of it is not refundable at any time* unless Queens College cancels all courses for which a student has registered or the student formally withdraws from all classes *prior to* the official first day of classes. The only exceptions are:

1) If a student is placed on active military service, partial refunds may be made. Students who are so notified should contact the Registrar's Office immediately.

2) The PIRG fee portion of the activity fee is refundable if application is made to the Queens College PIRG Office, Student Union B22, within three weeks after commencement of classes.

d. Registration holds

Students who have debts (for any tuition, fees, parking violations, breakage, emergency loans, *etc.*) that are past due will have holds placed on registration, transcripts and diplomas. Students who have been placed on probation must consult with their graduate adviser, after

which the graduate adviser will notify the Office of Graduate Studies regarding removal of the registration hold.