



Graduate Program Policies and Procedures

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Policies and Procedures for School of Education (SOE) Graduate Programs

Faculty and students are expected to comply with all BOR and USD policies and procedures. The School of Education (SOE) policies and procedures supplement but do not replace those of the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) or University of South Dakota (USD).

Program Advisor, Thesis and Dissertation Committee Requirements

Upon admission to a graduate program, students should be assigned a graduate program advisor. The name of the graduate program advisor is noted in the Graduate Application Action Form. The program advisor will work closely with the student to select an advisory committee. The program advisor will work on behalf of the advisory committee to advise students in course selection and registration aligned with the program of study, and to administer written and/or oral exams. The advisory committee will also serve as the thesis or dissertation committee. The thesis or dissertation committee members must have Graduate Faculty status. The advisory committee is responsible for approving a program of study, administering written and/or oral examinations and approving theses and dissertations. The advisory committee certifies to the Graduate School that the candidate has met all requirements for an advanced degree. This certification is noted by committee signatures on the student's Application for Degree/Program of Study Form.

The chair of the thesis or dissertation committee need not be a student's program advisor but must be a regular tenure/tenure-track faculty. The chair of the thesis or dissertation committee is responsible for mentoring the student through the proposal, research, final thesis or dissertation and defense and working with the advisory committee to approve the thesis or dissertation.

Note, per graduate catalog, "The Graduation Approval form contains the results of the oral and/or written final evaluation of the graduate student, and thesis or dissertation grades and accepted credit hours. The form is to be retained by the chairperson of the advisory committee until degree requirements are completed, at which time the student's committee members sign and submit the Graduation Approval form to the Graduate School. The deadline for the approval is approximately one week prior to graduation."

Non-thesis committees are comprised of at least three graduate faculty members including the students' major advisor. Adjunct faculty are not to serve on graduate committees.

Thesis committees are comprised of at least three graduate faculty members including the students' major advisor, one member from inside the division, and one member outside the division. One member should chair the committee. The chair does not need to be within the same division as the student. The committee should contain one content expert and one methodology expert (who may be the same person). It is preferable that the chair is the content expert. The thesis chair is the instructor of record for thesis hours. Adjunct faculty are not to serve on graduate committees.

Dissertation committees are comprised of at least four members including one member outside the division. The dissertation advisor must be within the division offering the degree program. The dissertation committee must contain one content expert and one methodology expert (who may be the same person). It is preferable that the dissertation chair is the content expert. The dissertation chair is the instructor of record for dissertation hours. Adjunct faculty are not to serve on graduate committees.

Change of Graduate Program Advisor, Thesis/Dissertation Chair, Advisory Committee

Program Advisor. Because an initial advisor is assigned, a student may determine that a change of advisor is warranted after meeting other program faculty. To change advisors, the student must meet first with their graduate program advisor, then with the preferred advisor and gain approval from both using the form in Appendix A. The student should then meet with the division chair to approve the change. The division chair will have 15 working days to respond to the request to change advisors. Changes may be denied based on the distribution of advisees within programs.

Thesis/Dissertation Chair. A thesis/dissertation chair should only be changed under the most extreme situations including if the chair leaves the university, or if the chair takes a leave of absence. Use the same procedure and form as for a change of graduate program advisor.

Program of Study

Students must complete a program of study within the first semester of graduate work, preferably within the first month. The program of study must match the graduate catalog, from the appropriate year, and identify the advisory committee members. The student, graduate director/coordinator and student's graduate program advisor will retain copies of the program of study for referral at each advising meeting. Substitutions and exceptions must be pre-approved by the Division Chair before submitting to the Graduate dean for pre-approval. Substitutions and exceptions are not taken lightly. They indicate a deviation from a degree plan that could result in a degree that is not representative of the original intent. Substitutions or exceptions to the program of study are not allowed except in the most extreme situations.

Adding and Dropping Courses

In addition to approval by the student's advisor, students must also have approval of the division chair to add or drop courses after the add/drop period. Division chairs can signify their approval by signing in the Dept. Chair box (under Instructor's Signature). Note, this approval is required for all add/drops and not only section changes as indicated on the form.

Incomplete Grades

BOR Policy 2:10 outlines the conditions under which grades of incomplete may be granted. The School of Education does not support grades of incomplete under any other circumstances. The instructor and student must agree on a plan to complete the coursework which must be completed within one calendar year from the last day of the semester in which the course was taken. Use Appendix B to document that all required conditions have been met for an incomplete and to document the plan to complete coursework. Division chairs must sign to acknowledge that conditions are met and plans are in place. Forms will be stored with the instructor and division chair (electronic and/or paper).

Course Registration

Graduate faculty should not register students for courses. Students are responsible for registration through Banner, Registration Self-Service. Students should work with their program advisor and advisory committee for advice on courses toward their programs of study. When releases are needed, students must work with their advisor and/or the instructor of the course for permission to register. Students must complete necessary paperwork and work with the appropriate people to register for classes.

Progress on Dissertation and Thesis

To retain active status and future enrollment in thesis and dissertation sustaining courses, students must show adequate progress. Graduate advisors must communicate with students each semester, and document that communication, regarding expectations for adequate progress. See Appendix A for an optional progress contract.

Graduate programs may choose to disallow dissertation and thesis sustaining courses.

Graduate programs may choose to grade dissertation hours per semester with A, B, D, F grades based on student performance that semester.

Thesis and Dissertation Proposals and Defense

Students may not take more than 9 hours of dissertation credit prior to proposal. All defenses should be publicized in the School of Education, either electronically (*e.g.*, email to all faculty, notice on electronic board) or in print (*e.g.*, flyers). Defenses are open to all graduate faculty to attend. They may be opened to other members with permission of the chairperson of the committee and the student.

Academic Standing, Probation, and Dismissal

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress each term. See the Graduate Catalog for Policies on academic standards and progress, and academic standing, probation, and dismissal. Academic warning, probation and dismissals must be discussed with the division chair prior to notifying students directly. The graduate school, division chair, and SOE Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education must be copied on all student communication.

Non-Curricular Catalog Changes

Changes to non-curricular program information in the graduate catalog require dean approval. Such changes include, but are not limited to, admissions requirements, application deadlines, and performance requirements. Changes must be presented to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education at least two weeks prior to the deadline to submit catalog changes.

Required coursework

All initial graduate programs of study (M.A. or initial Ed.S.) must include EDER 761 - Graduate Research and Design within the first 2 semesters of coursework.

Appendices



Appendix A
School of Education
Change of Advisor/Chair Form

Student name: _____

Date: _____

Division: _____

Program: _____

Expected date of graduation: _____

Change of (check one)

- Graduate Program Advisor *The program advisor will work on behalf of the advisory committee to advise students in course selection and registration aligned with the program of study, and to administer written and/or oral exams.*
- Thesis/Dissertation Chair *The chair of the thesis or dissertation committee need not be a student's program advisor. The chair of the thesis or dissertation committee is responsible for mentoring the student through the proposal, research, final thesis or dissertation and defense and working with the advisory committee to approve the thesis or dissertation. A thesis/dissertation chair should only be changed under the most extreme situations including if the chair leaves the university, or if the chair takes a leave of absence.*

Original advisor or chair: _____

Proposed advisor or chair: _____

Reason for change:

By signing, I signify that I have discussed and approve the change of advisor or chair.

Student signature

Date

Original advisor or chair signature

Date

Proposed advisor or chair signature

Date

Division chair signature

Date

Appendix B
School of Education
Incomplete Grades in Graduate Courses

Student: _____
Course: _____

Instructor: _____
Semester/Year: _____

Part 1: Documentation of Conditions to Grant an Incomplete

All of the following conditions must be met. If any are not met, a grade of Incomplete (I) may NOT be granted.

- The student has encountered extenuating circumstances that do not permit completion of the course.

Explain:

- The student is earning a passing grade at the time the circumstances necessitating the Incomplete occur.
(Anticipated course failure is not a justification for an Incomplete.)
Course grade to date: _____
- The student does not have to repeat the course to meet the requirements.
- The instructor agrees to grant an incomplete.
- The instructor and student agree to a plan to complete the coursework (see Part 2).
- The coursework will be completed within one calendar year of the last date of the semester in which the course was taken.

Part 2: Plan to Complete Coursework

The coursework must be completed within one calendar year from the last day of the semester in which the course was taken. See the graduate catalog for policies on failure to complete by the deadline.

Semester/Year in which course was taken _____

Deadline for completion of work _____

Coursework completed to date is not repeated and the grades for that work will count toward the final course grade, as directed in the syllabus (from the semester in which the course was taken). A syllabus should be attached to this form. Only plan to complete coursework left uncompleted after the time circumstances necessitating the Incomplete occur. The student and instructor agree that the following coursework will be completed by the deadline. Specific deadlines may be imposed for each activity.

List coursework and associated deadlines (if applicable). Use a separate page if needed.

Conditions have been met and we agree upon coursework and deadlines:

Student Signature

Instructor Signature

Date Signed

Date

Confirmed that conditions are met and a plan is in place to complete coursework within one calendar year.

Division Chair Signature

Date

Appendix C
School of Education
Thesis/Dissertation Progress

This form documents expectations for students' adequate progress toward thesis and dissertation completion.

Part 1: Expectations to Be Completed

Student: _____ Thesis/Dissertation Chair: _____

Current Semester: Fall / Summer / Spring Year _____

Expected Semester of Final Defense: Fall / Summer / Spring Year _____

Student and Chair have met to

- Review research accomplishments
- Review the planned scope of the thesis/dissertation
- Discuss the estimated timeline for completing the needed work, and
- Identify and deal constructively with the obstacles to completing the plan.

During this semester, it is expected that the student will complete the following (include individual deadlines, if appropriate; add a second page, if needed)

I understand and agree to the expectations

Student signature

Thesis/Dissertation Chair signature

Date

Date

Part 2: Documentation of Completion of Progress Toward Expectations

Student must complete a 1-2 page outline of

- How expectations (in Part 1) have been met, and any unforeseen circumstances (All circumstances that could hinder progress should be discussed with the chair as soon as they are known or experienced – not at the end of the semester – so that expectations can be amended if warranted.)
- Estimate of % completion of each chapter

Select one of the following:

- Sufficient progress is evident to retain active status and allow future enrollment in dissertation and thesis sustaining courses.
- Insufficient progress was made. The chair, program advisor, program director and division chair will follow policy to arrive at a decision.

By my signature and initials, I attest that (initial all that apply)

Chair Student

____ _____ The thesis/dissertation chair and student have met to discuss progress toward meeting expectations.
____ _____ We agree on sufficiency of progress (failure to initial indicates disagreement).

Student signature

Date

Thesis/Dissertation Chair signature

Date