

**Western Michigan University
Faculty Senate
Memorandum of Action**

MOA – 25/06

Name of Council(s)/Committee(s):

Graduate Studies Council

Approval Date:

27 Feb. 2025

Implementation Date:

Upon Administrative Approval

RECOMMENDATION:

Marcellis Zondag

May 8, 2025

Marcellis Zondag, Chair, Graduate Studies Council

Date

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Amy Naugle

May 8, 2025

Amy Naugle,

WMU Faculty Senate President

Date

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Christine Byrd-Jacobs

May 9, 2025

Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Dean, Graduate College

Date

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Christopher Cheatham

May 20, 2025

Christopher Cheatham, Interim

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Edward Montgomery

May 20, 2025

Edward Montgomery,

WMU President

Date

**Western Michigan University
Faculty Senate
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Revisions of Graduate Program Application and Credit Transfers

RECOMMENDATION

The Graduate Studies Council recommends clarifying five different areas within graduate policies related to graduation and transfer credits. Specifically:

1. Revision Area #1: All students seeking a graduate certificate or degree must formally apply to enter such programs, even if they are obtained en route to another degree. This ensures that all students receiving a given degree or certificate are within all necessary university databases.
2. Revision Area #2: Use of 5000-level courses completed at WMU as an undergraduate, or graduate credits from another institution are limited to 3 credits for graduate certificate programs that require 12 credits and 6 credits for graduate certificate programs that require 15 or more credits; no such credits are allowed to be used within graduate certificate programs of fewer than 12 credits. It also affirms that graduate credits from WMU may be used in more than one graduate certificate, provided the student applies and is accepted into each certificate program. Given the growth in graduate certificates, such clarifications are needed so everyone is “on the same page.”
3. Revision Area #3: The academic regulations/transfer section now includes a “Graduate Certificate Program” subheading, which refers readers back to the more extensive and detailed policy on this issue within the graduation area. This clarification is needed to ensure alignment between various policies on the same issue.
4. Revision Area #4: Within master’s degree programs, add that up to 6 credits of 5000-level credits, taken as an undergraduate student, can be counted in a master’s degree, and the process for doing so. This is needed given the growing use of 5000-level courses being offered for both undergraduate and graduate students.
5. Revision Area #5: New language clarifies that a minimum of 15 credits, excluding 12 dissertation credits, are required for the doctoral degree after earning the master’s en route. This clarification is needed as WMU moves to using Degree Works for graduation audits for graduate students.

RATIONALE/PURPOSE

This MOA clarifies several policies related to graduate programs, addressing issues related to unclear and/or missing information. The revisions offer needed clarification and/or additions while maintaining the integrity of graduate programming at WMU.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE(S) AND ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL(S):

- **Responsible Office:** Graduate College
- **Enforcement Officials:**
 - Graduate Dean and Graduate Advisors within respective departments.
 - WMU Registrar
 - Responsibilities include reviewing and approving transfer credits based on this policy and ensuring compliance during graduation audits.

STAKEHOLDERS

- **Graduate Students, Faculty and Advisors, Graduate Auditors, and the Graduate College:**
All will have a clearer understanding of various graduate program policies.

HISTORY:

- a) The effective date of current version: spring 2025
- b) Date first adopted: N/A
- c) Revision history: N/A
- d) Proposed date of following review: spring 2028

CURRENT POLICY MODIFICATION (additions in bold and deletions with strikethrough):

➤ Revision Area #1

Graduation/University Graduation Procedures

All students must formally apply for admission, and be accepted, into any graduate certificate or degree program before submitting the graduation audit, even those students seeking a graduate certificate or degree en route to another graduate degree.

When a student satisfactorily completes all academic requirements for a degree **or certificate**, fulfills all financial and legal obligations to the University, and meets all relevant processing deadlines, the student is eligible ~~for graduation and~~ to receive the appropriate degree **or certificate**. An eligible student may graduate at the end of a semester or a session (in December, April, June, or August); however, a Commencement Ceremony is held only following fall, spring and summer I. Students will only be allowed to participate in commencement if they are on track to complete their degree requirements by the end of the semester.

➤ Revision Area #2

Graduation/Degree-level Graduation Requirements

Non-degree Graduate Certificate Program

Each certificate program must have a minimum of nine (9) hours, with the required hours for each certificate commensurate with the breadth and depth of the program's topic.

Use of 5000-level courses completed at WMU as an undergraduate, or graduate credits from another institution, are limited to 3 credits for graduate certificate programs that require 12 credits and 6 credits for graduate certificate programs that require 15 or more credits; no such credits are allowed to be used within graduate certificate programs of fewer than 12 credits.

Graduate credits from WMU may be used in more than one graduate certificate, providing the student applies and is accepted into each certificate program.

An outline of the graduate certificate program requirements for each student must be submitted by the graduate advisor or program director to the Office of Graduation Auditing. The graduate certificate program of study will then be audited in the same manner as that used to audit a degree program. For a student concurrently pursuing a degree program and a graduate certificate program, the outline of the graduate certificate program would be submitted separately from the master's, specialist, or doctoral program of study. For a student not pursuing a graduate degree, the outline of the graduate certificate program alone would be submitted to the Office of Graduation Auditing.

A student must apply through the Office of Graduation Auditing to graduate with a graduate certificate.

The following general requirements must all be met:

- Completion of the graduate certificate program requirements, as stated on the program of study, with a "B" (3.0) or better average.
- A grade of "C" or better must be earned in every course listed on the program of study.
- Completion of departmental requirements, if any, of all graduate students in that department.
- A certificate of completion is awarded to students who satisfactorily complete an approved curriculum in a graduate certificate program. The relevant academic unit must regularly admit students to the program.

Courses for the certificate must be completed no more than six years before the conferral of the certificate. Students whose certificate programs are taken primarily through part-time study can request an extension from the graduate dean. Extensions beyond six years may also be granted to other students by the Graduate College dean for legitimate reasons such as illness, injury, or hardship. In such

situations, the student and department must demonstrate how the student will bring up to date the content knowledge from courses taken more than six years before the certificate program's projected completion date.

For more information about the completion requirements for each certificate program, read the program requirements section of the relevant program's listing in this catalog or contact the program's advisor or the department office. (MOA 16/01)

➤ Revision Area #3

**Academic Regulations/Transfer & Other Credit Policies/Transfer Credits
Graduate Certificate Program**

(For details regarding transfer credits for graduate certificates, please refer to the **Graduation/Degree-level Graduation Requirements/Non-Degree Graduate Certificate Program** ~~Graduate Level/Graduate Certificate Program Admission~~ section of the catalog.)

➤ Revision Area #4

Academic Regulations/Undergraduate Credit in a Graduate Program

In certain instances, an advisor may permit a student to include up to six semester hours of 3000- or 4000-level courses **or 5000-level courses taken as an undergraduate student** in a master's provided the student receives written permission from the advisor, the department chair, and the graduate dean (form available on the Graduate College website forms page) then earns a grade of "B" or better. These courses earn undergraduate credit only and are not computed into the graduate grade point average. The criteria for approval are:

1. ~~Offering departments must certify those 3000- and 4000-level courses that may be included in master's degree programs.~~

A graduate faculty member **with graduate faculty status** must teach ~~certified~~ **such** courses **if they are to be accepted** ~~for acceptance~~ in a master's program.

The form to request approval of a graduate student's election to **use courses taken as an undergraduate** ~~course~~ may be obtained from the Graduate College website.

NOTE: students in Accelerated Graduate Degree Programs, as detailed in the "Admission Requirements" of the graduate catalog, are not subject to the six-semester hour limitation.

➤ Revision Area #5

Graduation/ Acquiring a Master's Degree en route to the Doctoral Degree

Students who enter a doctoral program with a bachelor's degree may, upon recommendation of their department, acquire the master's degree by the following means:

1. The student requests the departmental graduate advisor to review the student's program of study to ascertain that it meets the requirements for the master's degree.
2. **The student must apply and be accepted into that master's degree**, and then the graduate advisor or chair submits a program of study demonstrating that the student has met all requirements for the master's degree as defined by the Graduate College and the student's academic unit/department. ~~and submits a letter indicating that the department recommends that the student be awarded the master's degree.~~
3. The student files an application for graduation **with for the** master's degree, initiating the graduation audit which determines the student's eligibility for graduation.
4. A student who receives a master's degree *en route* to the doctoral degree must complete the minimum number of ~~30~~ **15** semester hours of graduate course work, ~~including~~ **excluding** dissertation credits, beyond the master's degree specified by the doctoral program in which the student is enrolled and must meet the additional competencies that distinguish the doctoral degree from the master's degree.
5. A separate application for graduation with a doctoral degree must be filed.

Students who enter a doctoral program holding a master's degree may, upon recommendation of their department, acquire a second master's degree *en route* to the doctoral degree by the following means:

1. Six hours from the first master's program may be applied to the second degree if evaluated and approved by the advisor and the graduation auditor as meeting the general and program requirements for transfer credit to a graduate program.
2. The student requests the departmental graduate advisor to review the student's program of study to ascertain that it meets the requirements for the master's degree.
3. The graduate advisor or chair submits a signed program of study for the master's degree demonstrating that the student has met all requirements for the master's degree as defined by the Graduate College and the student's academic unit/department and appends a letter indicating that the department recommends that the student be awarded a master's degree.
4. The student files an application for graduation with a master's degree, initiating the graduation audit which determines the student's eligibility for graduation.
5. With the approval of the advisor, the semester hours of course work earned and applied to the second master's degree may be applied to the doctoral degree. The student must complete the minimum number of semester hours specified by the doctoral program and must demonstrate that he or she has met the additional competencies that distinguish the doctoral degree from the master's degree.
6. A separate application for graduation with a doctoral degree must be filed.