

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AGENDA FOR THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
March 25, 2026
3:00-4:15 p.m.
[Zoom Link](#)

- I. Call to order**
- II. Approval of the Minutes:** [January 28, 2026](#); [February 25 & March 4, 2026](#)
- III. Opening Remarks & Announcements from the President of the Senate**
- IV. Special Guests & Discussion**
None
- V. Senate Standing Committee Reports**
 - A. Faculty Handbook (Second read and vote)
[Appendix A](#)
 - B. Academic Policies (Action items)
[Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F](#)
 - C. Organization and Operations
 - D. Budget and Resources
 - E. Faculty Matters
 - F. Nominations
- VI. University Standing Committees**
 - A. Policy Management Group Charter
- VII. New Business**
- VIII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty**
- IX. Adjournment**

* Note: For security purposes, all attendees must login using any valid Zoom account to join the meeting. Having trouble joining the meeting with the link above?

- 1. If using GMU Zoom Account (required for all Faculty Senators)
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- e. Enter the Meeting ID (see highlighted above) and click JOIN
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Faculty Handbook Revisions since first read



Section 2.7, paragraph 1

What problems were we trying to solve?

- Provide an overview of the role that each level of review plays in the RRPT process
- Articulate the role of "administrators" and offering their recommendations

Feedback after first read

- Lots of concerns about removing the language "administration should overturn faculty personnel recommendations rarely;" seeing this as greater administrative power instead of a simple clarification of roles as was intended
- Some see connection between this and AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

Changes since first read

- Kept the old language that people were concerned about removing
- Kept the new language that clarifies the process

Motion 1

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the addition of the clarifying language about each level of review in the first paragraph of 2.7 Procedures for Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure.

2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3.1, and 2.7.3.2

What problems were we trying to solve?

- Replaces references to “department chairs” with “LAU administrators” to include other titles for similar roles (e.g., department chair, department head, area chair, program director, school director) throughout the section.
- Clarifies the steps for the 3rd year renewal process for tenure-line faculty.
- Defines “insufficient” as fewer than three faculty.
- Adds consistency by defining who must recuse themselves from voting for all promotion types.
- Removes the option to vote “abstain” in RRPT processes.
- Updates language to account for how our practices work with Interfolio (e.g., how external reviews are added, how letters are sent)
- Specifies that tenured Associate and Full Professors vote on tenure and promotion to Associate Professor and that only tenured Full Professors vote on promotion to Full Professor.
- Cleaned up other minor language and punctuation issues.

2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3.1, and 2.7.3.2

Feedback after first read

- Strong support for removing abstentions from several faculty
- Need to add clarifications for faculty who are absent (e.g., study leaves, FMLA)

Changes since first read

- Added "Absences will be handled according to college/school or LAU bylaws or promotion and/or tenure guidelines "

Motion 2

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve all changes in 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3.1, and 2.7.3.2.

2.7 Procedures for Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure

Recommendations in these matters originate through faculty action in accordance with established procedures; are reviewed by senior academic administrators; and presented to the Board of Visitors. Peer evaluation of the value of scholarly or educational accomplishments is critical and highly valued in making reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure decisions. LAU Administrators and Deans also play an important role in evaluating scholarly and educational accomplishments. The Provost and President review all materials and make a final recommendation to the Board of Visitors, who vote on the final decision.

The administration should overturn faculty personnel recommendations rarely, and only when it is clear that peer faculty have not applied appropriate standards, or when the University's long-term programmatic needs are an overriding consideration. Only in extraordinary circumstances and for clearly stated reasons should administrators substitute their own judgment of the value of scholarly or educational accomplishments for judgments made by faculty.

Reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure recommendations are based upon an evaluation of performance over the faculty member's total period of service at George Mason University ([Sections 2.4-2.5](#)). Scholarly achievements prior to joining the George Mason University faculty weigh less heavily in these evaluations, but are also considered. These evaluations differ from the annual review ([Section 2.6.1](#)) in their emphasis on lasting contributions, consistency of performance, and flexibility.

The terms "reappoint" or "reappointment" in this Handbook mean offering a term faculty member a contract for an additional term, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

"Renew" or "renewal" in this Handbook means offering a tenure-track faculty member a contract for an additional term on the tenure track, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

Faculty member duties and responsibilities that will be evaluated must be included in the appointment contract. If subsequent contracts or assignment letters are issued, the duties and responsibilities may be changed in consultation with the faculty member.

All faculty who are candidates for a change in appointment status are evaluated by faculty in the local academic unit. The processes and procedures by which they are evaluated are established by the bylaws or standing rules of the LAU and must be consistent with the procedures in this Handbook.

Local academic unit bylaws or standing rules may provide for faculty to participate in evaluation committee meetings electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear

each other simultaneously. For all voting that pertains to changes in appointment status, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

Faculty members and administrators may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom they have, or have had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see [Section 2.3.1.1](#)).

2.7.1 Procedures for Reappointment

Term faculty will be evaluated annually for reappointment by following the procedures defined by the local academic unit bylaws or standing rules, which should be consistent with the procedures defined in the Faculty Handbook.

Term faculty on single-year contracts will be evaluated annually, and term faculty on multi-year contracts will be evaluated in the final year of their contract appointment.

Instructors or assistant professors may receive a one, two or three-year reappointment. Senior and master/principal instructors, or associate and full professors may be reappointed to contracts of up to five years. After three single-year appointments, term faculty who meet satisfactory annual performance standards will normally be recommended for a multi-year appointment. Continuing to issue one-year contracts for a faculty member over many years is discouraged.

Term faculty on single-year appointments are evaluated according to the criteria in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures in [Section 2.5](#). Criteria for reappointment will focus on demonstrated performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. The local academic unit recommendation is sent to the Dean. Based on that recommendation and programmatic needs, the Dean will make the decision to reappoint, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the initial contract, or usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts.

Term faculty who are on or being recommended for multi-year reappointments are evaluated according to the criteria in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures in [Section 2.5](#). Criteria for reappointment will focus on demonstrated performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. The local academic unit recommendation is sent to the Dean. Based on that recommendation and programmatic needs, the Dean will make recommendations to the Provost whether to reappoint and contract length. If the Dean's recommendation differs from that of the local academic unit, then the Dean should submit a brief justification for a different decision. All multi-year reappointments must be approved by the Provost. Any decision to reappoint a term faculty member who was previously on a multi-year contract to a single-year contract must include a written justification for the change.

Final determination on multi-year appointments for up to three (3) years are made by the Provost. Contract terms greater than three (3) years require the approval of the President or designee. Notification to term instructional faculty members will be sent, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their initial contracts, and usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts. Notification to term

research and term clinical faculty members will be sent, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their contracts.

2.7.2 Procedures for Renewal

Faculty appointed to a tenure-track position receive an initial three-year term (see [Section 2.1.2](#)). Tenure-track faculty will be evaluated for renewal during the third year of their initial appointment using the following procedure:

1. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated by ~~either~~ the first-level ~~or second-level~~ promotion and tenure committee, ~~the LAU administrator, and the Dean~~ (see [Section 2.7.3](#)) according to the criteria in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures in [Section 2.5](#). Tenure-track renewals will use the same procedures for review and voting outlined in 2.7.3.2 for these three steps; colleges and schools may also require a second-level committee review if specified in their bylaws.

The Dean will submit a recommendation for renewal or non-renewal to the Provost by March 15th. Based on this evaluation, the Provost will act on the recommendation for renewal or non-renewal by April 15th. Faculty members will be advised of their renewals or non-renewals by May 1st of the third year of their initial appointments. Faculty members receive their renewal contracts no later than May 24th of the evaluation year.

2. If the decision is for renewal, then the faculty member's contract normally will be renewed for three years, and the next full evaluation will be for tenure consideration. Under exceptional circumstances, a faculty member may be renewed for only one year, in which case another evaluation will be conducted the following year. Renewal of a contract resulting from the evaluation in the fourth year of service will be for two years, and the next full evaluation will be for tenure consideration.

3. In the event of non-renewal, the faculty member will be offered a terminal, one-year term appointment following the decision for non-renewal contingent on the faculty member having submitted an appropriate and timely dossier for the purpose of seeking tenure-track contract renewal. Contracts for faculty members who choose not to be evaluated will end on the last day of the term specified in the current contract.

4. If a faculty member is not renewed, the appeal procedure outlined in the Faculty Handbook [Section 2.8](#) may be used.

2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure

The processes for promotion of term and tenured faculty, and tenure for tenure-track faculty are initiated by the local academic unit with the faculty member's concurrence. Self-nomination is also permitted.

2.7.3.1 Procedures for Promotion of Term Faculty

A term faculty member may be considered for promotion, normally after five years of service in the current rank. Term faculty who meet the LAU criteria for promotion may be considered early; however, typical candidates for promotion have a minimum of three years teaching,

research, or clinical work at George Mason University. Promotion may occur within the period of a multi-year contract. Upon promotion, a new contract will be issued ([Section 2.7.1](#)).

Term faculty members will be considered for promotion by a local academic unit committee according to the criteria for evaluation in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures for evaluation in [Section 2.5](#). Members of the committee are those faculty who are eligible to vote on promotion of term faculty, normally tenured and term faculty above the rank of assistant professor. Term faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on the evaluation committee if there ~~are fewer than three~~ ~~is an insufficient number of~~ eligible or qualified term faculty in the local academic unit. Colleges and schools may elect to include a second level review. The composition of the promotion committee and the procedures used are to be specified in the LAU bylaws or standing rules.

Faculty members and administrators may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom they have, or have had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see Section 2.3.1.1); these faculty will be recorded in the vote as recusals. Absences will be handled according to college/school or LAU bylaws or promotion guidelines. All other eligible faculty must vote yes or no; abstentions are not permitted.

The recommendation for promotion is sent from the committee to the Dean. The Dean's recommendation for promotion is due to the Provost by November 1st. By the end of fall semester (no later than December 15th), the Provost will notify the faculty member, in writing, of a decision with accompanying justification, whether or not to recommend promotion.

Term faculty who are promoted will be announced to the Board of Visitors.

Term faculty who are denied promotion are eligible to be considered for promotion in subsequent promotion cycles.

2.7.3.2 Procedures for Promotion and Tenure of Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty

The Provost establishes the annual schedule for promotion and tenure review. Dossiers are to be prepared in accordance with the format provided by the Provost and the Dean. The candidate is responsible for assembling the contents of the dossier. The [LAU local-unit](#) administrator is responsible for facilitating the inclusion of ~~inserting the~~ external reference letters into the assembled dossier. Each formal internal evaluation letter is included in the dossier before sending it to the next level of review.

At any time in the promotion/tenure review process before a decision is made by the Provost, a faculty member may withdraw from candidacy by so stating in writing to the Dean and the Provost. After withdrawal from candidacy, there is no further review of the dossier. Candidates who withdraw from the review process in a mandatory decision year for tenure will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next academic year with workload expectations determined by the unit's workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty.

If a faculty member is (or is to be) appointed to primary affiliation in more than one local academic unit, a recommendation for promotion and/or tenure may be initiated by any of the

units. A separate evaluation leading to a recommendation and decision will be made by each unit. An action by one local academic unit does not obligate another local academic unit to act similarly. It is required, however, that in each evaluation process the promotion and tenure committee must solicit and consider evaluations from the other units. All evaluations become part of the candidate's dossier.

In all cases of promotion and/or tenure, there are two levels of faculty review. At both levels, evaluations are carried out only by tenured faculty in accordance with [Section 2.4](#) and [Section 2.5](#). In addition to considering the candidate's dossier, faculty committees on promotion and tenure examine and include in the dossier, all relevant written evidence and testimony offered to them by members of the academic community and others with direct knowledge of the candidate's professional qualifications and achievements. Committees may provide in their bylaws or standing rules for faculty to attend meetings using an electronic connection. For all voting pertaining to promotion and tenure, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

Faculty members and administrators may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom they have, or have had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see [Section 2.3.1.1](#)); these faculty will be recorded in the vote as recusals. Absences will be handled according to college/school or LAU bylaws or promotion and/or tenure guidelines. All other eligible faculty must vote yes or no; abstentions are not permitted.

The purpose of the first-level review is for the candidate to be evaluated by colleagues who are in the best position to have observed the candidate's performance in teaching and service and who are best able to professionally evaluate the candidate's research/scholarship and publication record. Accordingly, the first-level review is undertaken by faculty in the candidate's local academic unit, which must have published bylaws or standing rules that govern renewal, promotion, and tenure procedures ([Section 1.3.3](#)).

In departmentalized colleges/schools (see [Section 1.3.5](#)), the first level of review is departmental.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are subdivided into programs or other divisions, the first level of review is carried out by faculty appointed to program(s) or division(s) to which the candidate belongs. Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there are fewer than three -is an insufficient number of qualified tenured faculty in the candidate's affiliated program(s)/division(s). Program or division faculties cannot exist solely to make personnel evaluations.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are not further subdivided, the first-level review is carried out by all eligible tenured faculty in the candidate's college/school. Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there is an insufficient number of are fewer than three eligible or qualified tenured faculty in the college/school. Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor.

The purpose of the second-level review is to evaluate all the candidates for promotion and/or tenure in the school/college and to make a recommendation to the Dean. The second level of

review is carried out by a committee of tenured faculty. The committee members are elected by the college/school in accordance with its bylaws or standing rules ([Section 1.3.3](#)). Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor. -The second-level review committee can include members from outside the college/school who are elected in the same manner as other members of the second-level review committee.

At no time shall a faculty member evaluate a candidate at both the first and second levels of review. Faculty eligible for the first level review cannot withhold their participation at the first level to participate in the second level review.

The School of Law is exempt from the provisions specified in the above paragraphs, but it is not exempt from the requirement for two-level peer review.

The procedure for considering promotion and tenure cases is as follows:

1a. Departmental review is initiated by the local first-level promotion and tenure committee, which may be a committee of the whole. The committee communicates the results of its review to the tenured members of the department who then vote. ~~Normally,~~ Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor. ~~Other voting combinations may be specified in the bylaws or standing rules.~~ The ~~department chair~~LAU administrator does not vote with the tenured faculty. The committee transmits the departmental recommendation and accompanying justification, including the division of the vote, to the ~~department chair~~LAU administrator. The ~~department chair~~LAU administrator transmits to the second-level review committee: (1) the candidate's dossier and related materials; (2) the recommendation of the departmental committee with appropriate justifications; and (3) the ~~chair~~LAU administrator's own recommendation and justification, if the ~~chair~~LAU administrator is tenured and, in Professor cases, holds the rank of Professor. If the ~~chair~~LAU administrator is not tenured or at the appropriate rank to make a recommendation, the ~~chair~~LAU administrator submits a summary of the promotion/tenure proceedings. Notification of the recommendation of the local academic unit and copies of the accompanying justifications are sent promptly to the candidate and to the faculty who participated in the deliberations before the dossier is sent to the second-level committee.

The candidate is evaluated by the second-level review committee, which must have published procedures that govern its deliberations. The procedures must include a method for communication between the committee, the candidate, the ~~department chair~~LAU administrator, and the first-level review committee. ~~Normally,~~ Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion to the rank of Professor. ~~Other voting combinations may be specified in the college/school bylaws or standing rules.~~

The committee ~~submits its recommendation~~ forwards its recommendation along with all preceding reports and recommendations to the Dean. Notification of the recommendation of the second-level review committee is sent to the faculty who participated in the deliberations

at the first level of review and to the candidate and LAU administrator. ~~Copies of the statement of justification are sent promptly to the candidate and the department chair.~~

~~If the second-level review committee's recommendation differs from that of the first-level review committee, the second-level review committee's recommendation and accompanying justification are sent to the first-level review committee.~~

1b. The process is analogous in non-departmentalized units, except that the role assigned to ~~department chairs~~ the LAU administrator is omitted.

2. All materials are reviewed by the Dean of the candidate's college/school. The dossier and the recommendation of the Dean are forwarded to the Provost. Notification of the recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review and a copy of the accompanying justification is promptly sent to the candidate and the local unit administrator (the latter copy to be retained in the candidate's permanent file).

If the Dean's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in the recommendation, which is sent to the candidate, to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process, and to the Provost.

3. The complete dossier is reviewed by the Provost. The Provost may consult with other academic administrators who have direct knowledge of one or more aspects of the candidate's professional performance. The Provost makes a recommendation as to whether promotion or tenure should be granted. Notification of the Provost's recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review, and a copy of the accompanying justification is sent to the Dean, the candidate and the local unit administrator. The justification shall be retained in the candidate's personnel file.

If the Provost's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in writing and sent to the candidate and to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process.

4. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion be granted, the candidate's dossier, with all previously generated recommendations, is forwarded to the President. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the President.

5. The President makes a recommendation as to whether tenure or promotion should be granted. If the President recommends tenure or promotion be granted, such recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Visitors. If the President recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the Board of Visitors.

6. Tenure, and promotion to the rank of associate professor or professor for tenured faculty, can only be conferred by the Board of Visitors. If the Board of Visitors decides to grant

promotion or tenure, the candidate will be notified in writing by the Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

7. If either the Provost or the President recommends that tenure or promotion not be granted, the candidate will be notified of the decision on or before May 1. Upon receiving notice of the Provost's or President's decision, the candidate may:

- a. accept the decision; or
- b. appeal the decision according to the procedure described in [Section 2.8](#).

In the event tenure is not granted in a faculty member's final year on the tenure-track, the faculty member will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next academic year with workload expectations determined by the unit's workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty.

8. Tenure and promotion are never granted by default.

2.7.4 Tenure-Track Contract Extension

Extension of a tenure-track contract is granted when circumstances arise that may interfere substantially with a faculty member's ability to pursue their professional responsibilities (teaching, research/scholarship, service) while on the tenure track. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member who has received an extension or extensions will be considered using the same tenure criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school.

Length and frequency

Tenure-track contract extensions are granted in one-year increments. Two extensions are normally the maximum that will be granted for any combination of circumstances. The Provost may approve exceptions to this limit. However, in no case will a candidate receive more than three extensions. Tenure-track study leaves are independent of these extensions, but should generally not immediately follow a tenure-track contract extension.

Procedure for request and approval

The faculty member's request, in writing, to the local academic unit head must clearly state the circumstances that justify an extension of the tenure-track contract. The recommendation of the local academic unit head is forwarded to the Dean, if applicable, who forwards a recommendation to the Provost for final approval.

Medically-related extensions will correspond with the [Department of Labor Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#), [University Policy 2215](#) (Family Medical Leave), [University Policy 2230](#) (Faculty Paid Parental Leave), [University Policy 2232](#) (Sick Leave Policy for Faculty under the Traditional Sick Leave Plan), and/or [the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program \(VSDP\)](#).

Circumstances

1. The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child

A faculty member who becomes a parent should request the tenure-track contract extension within one year of the child's arrival in the family and prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. Multiple births or multiple adoptions at the same time result in the same one-year extension as single births or adoptions.

2. Serious health condition

A tenure-track contract extension may be requested based on a serious personal health condition or a serious health condition of a member of the faculty member's immediate family. A serious personal health condition or serious health condition within the immediate family will be defined according to the FMLA criteria for family and medical leave. Human Resources must receive written certification by the primary treating physician. The request for extension must be made within three months of Human Resources & Payroll's certification of family and medical leave.

3. Military Service

In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), a tenure-track faculty member who is also a member of the U.S. military and is called to active duty will be granted a tenure-track contract extension. The extension will last for the duration of the active duty assignment, rounded to the nearest year, but will not exceed the extension period provided by USERRA. For example, an active duty assignment lasting between 4 through 15 months will earn a one-year extension, 16 through 27 months will earn a two-year extension. The faculty member should make the request as early as possible before entering active duty and prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

4. Other Extraordinary Circumstances

Tenure-track faculty members who engage in important public or University service may request a tenure-track contract extension. The request should be made prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. If there are circumstances beyond the faculty member's control that prevent them from fulfilling the professional responsibilities required for tenure consideration, the faculty member may request a tenure-track contract extension. The request should be made prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

Section 2.2

What problem were we trying to solve?

- Adds all term faculty ranks and expands language for tenure-line faculty, providing brief profiles for each.

Feedback after first read

- Strong support for these changes from many CHSS faculty
- A couple of questions about the language, “They are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.”

Changes since first read

- No change. Please note that the ethical conduct section was intentionally put in 2.2 as an expectation rather than in 2.4 as an evaluation criteria.

Motion 3

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the changes to 2.2 Faculty Ranks.

Current	Proposed
<p>2.2 Description of Faculty Ranks</p> <p>Faculty are either appointed or are promoted to an academic faculty rank. Appointments should be made at the appropriate rank and account for years of professional, teaching, or other experience as judged by the appointing local academic unit and subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. Faculty are promoted in rank according to the procedures in Section 2.7.</p>	<p>2.2 Description of Faculty Ranks</p> <p>Faculty are either appointed or are promoted to an academic faculty rank. Appointments should be made at the appropriate rank and account for years of professional, teaching, or other experience as judged by the appointing local academic unit and subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. These descriptions are broad overviews of expectations at each rank; faculty are promoted in rank according to the criteria in Section 2.4 and the procedures in Section 2.7.</p>
<p>2.2.2 Assistant Professor</p> <p>An assistant professor normally holds the terminal degree in the discipline or field and gives promise for making significant contributions to teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and/or clinical work.</p> <p>2.2.3 Associate Professor</p> <p>A faculty member must meet the University's established criteria for advancement to the rank of associate professor as specified in Section 2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure and in</p>	<p>2.2.1 Tenure-Line Faculty</p> <p>2.2.1.1 Assistant and Pre-Tenure Associate Professors</p> <p>Assistant and pre-tenure Associate Professors hold a terminal degree in the discipline or field of study and show promise for making significant RSCA contributions to and impact in their fields. These faculty members are learning about effective teaching and mentoring practices in their discipline(s) or field(s) and developing and strengthening their skills to facilitate student success. Assistant and pre-tenure Associate Professors primarily serve their Local Academic Units (LAUs) and establish a track record of service to their profession. They are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.</p> <p>2.2.1.2 Tenured Associate Professors</p> <p>Tenured Associate Professors have achieved a critical milestone in an academic career. This rank signifies that a faculty member has successfully completed their probationary period and established a strong record</p>

Section 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty. New faculty who are appointed to the rank of associate professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications that meet local academic unit and Faculty Handbook criteria for the rank.

2.2.4 Professor

A faculty member must meet the University's established criteria for advancement to the rank of professor as specified in [Section 2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure](#) and in [Section 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty](#). New faculty who are appointed to the rank of professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications that meet local academic unit and Faculty Handbook criteria for the rank.

of independent accomplishment and impact in RSCA. Faculty members at this rank maintain impactful RSCA contributions and contribute to the university's overall teaching mission through effective, impactful teaching, active mentoring and advising, and substantive curricular and programmatic contributions. Tenured Associate Professors take responsibility for service and shared governance within the university (across all levels) and within their profession(s) and demonstrate promise for sustained contributions. They are expected to uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

George Mason University recognizes that Associate Professors must be afforded the opportunity to prioritize their RSCA and teaching and learning activities to build a case for promotion to professor while also developing and refining their leadership competencies.

2.2.1.3 Tenured Professors

Tenured Professors are recognized for their established expertise in their discipline(s) or field(s) of study and have achieved national – and often international – stature. Faculty at this rank engage in sustained, impactful RSCA and provide substantive leadership in their profession(s), possibly including new collaborations across disciplines and fields of study. Tenured Professors demonstrate ongoing growth as educators, make sustained contributions to student learning and teaching effectiveness, and provide pedagogical leadership within and/or beyond the university. They provide service and leadership to the institution (e.g., playing key roles in university governance, assuming substantial service responsibilities) and in their professional field(s) of study (e.g.,

2.2.5 Distinguished University Professor

From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty people of great national or international reputation. The rank of Distinguished University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. Distinguished University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost.

Distinguished University Professor appointments are normally reserved for **full** professors. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.

leadership positions in professional organizations or scholarly journals). Faculty at this rank serve as mentors to students as well as to faculty and staff colleagues. As experienced faculty, they are expected to contribute regularly to the intellectual life of the university and serve as exemplars of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.1.4 Distinguished University Professor

From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty people of great national or international reputation. The rank of Distinguished University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. Distinguished University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost.

Distinguished University Professor appointments are normally reserved for tenured **Professors and are limited to no more than 10% of all tenured Professors**. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.

2.2.1 Instructor and Professor of Practice

Term faculty without the terminal degree in the field may be appointed as Instructor. An instructor holds the master's degree or equivalent academic and/or professional qualifications and gives promise for making contributions in the area of their primary assignment focus. An instructor may be appointed or promoted in rank (Section 2.1.3) by meeting local academic unit criteria for the rank.

2.2.2 Term Faculty

2.2.2.1 Instructional Assistant Professors and Instructors

The Instructional Assistant Professor (for those with a terminal degree) and Instructor (for those without a terminal degree) ranks signify that the faculty member shows promise for making significant contributions and has demonstrated the potential for continued growth.

Instructional Assistant Professors and Instructors contribute to the university's overall teaching and student success mission through effective teaching and mentoring practices in their discipline(s) or field(s), as well as by developing and strengthening their skills to facilitate student learning. While not the primary focus, some level of professional and scholarly activity may be undertaken, including efforts to stay current in the field, participate in professional development, or engage in similar activities. Faculty at this rank are contributing citizens to service activities within the LAU, subject to workload policies and/or agreements. Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.2 Research Assistant Professors

Research Assistant Professors show promise for making significant RSCA contributions to and impact in their discipline(s) or field(s). Roles for these faculty may be defined by external funding requirements. Faculty at this rank may

mentor graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as part of their workload. They may contribute service to the profession (e.g., manuscript reviewing, participation in professional societies). Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.3 Instructional Associate Professors and Senior Instructors

The Instructional Associate Professor (for those with a terminal degree) and Senior Instructor (for those without a terminal degree) ranks signify that a faculty member has established a record of high-quality, impactful work and has demonstrated the potential for continued growth and contributions.

Instructional Associate Professors and Senior Instructors contribute to the university's overall teaching and student success mission through effective teaching, active mentoring and advising, and - in some cases – curricular, programmatic, or leadership contributions. While not the primary focus, some level of professional and scholarly activity may be undertaken, including efforts to stay current in the field, participate in professional development, or engage in similar activities. Faculty at this rank are active citizens of the university which typically involves participating in service activities within the LAU, college, and/or university, subject to workload policies and/or agreements. Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to

uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.4 Research Associate Professors

Research Associate Professors are defined by a record of independent, high-quality RSCA. These faculty members demonstrate significant contributions to their field, as evidenced by the appropriate measures of their discipline(s) or field(s) of study and a strong professional reputation. Direct teaching responsibilities are often minimal or non-existent, although faculty at this rank may mentor graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as part of their research program. Active service to the profession (e.g., manuscript reviewing, participation in professional societies) and contributions to the university's research infrastructure (e.g., serving on relevant committees) may be undertaken. Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.5 Instructional Professors and Principal Instructors

The Instructional Professor (for those with a terminal degree) and Principal Instructor (for those without a terminal degree) ranks signify a faculty member has established a record of achievement and leadership. The expectation is to demonstrate sustained effectiveness and impact.

Instructional Professors and Principal Instructors demonstrate ongoing growth in their contributions to student learning and

teaching effectiveness as evidenced by contributions to instructional quality across the institution. This includes course design and assessments that engage learners, curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, and contributions to the university's overall teaching mission. While not the primary focus, some level of professional and scholarly activity may be undertaken, including efforts to stay current in the discipline(s) or field(s), participate in professional development, or other activities. Faculty at this rank are active citizens of the university, contributing to LAU, college, and university committees, subject to workload policies and/or agreements. In some cases, they serve in important and impactful leadership roles. As experienced faculty, they are expected to contribute regularly to the intellectual life of the university and serve as exemplars of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.6 Research Professors

Research Professors are recognized by external colleagues for their established expertise in their field(s) of study and will have achieved national stature due to the impact of their RSCA, as evidenced by the appropriate measures of their discipline(s) or field(s) of study. Direct teaching responsibilities are often minimal or non-existent, although faculty at this rank may mentor graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as part of their research program. Research Professors may hold leadership positions within their professional community, such as serving on editorial boards or organizing disciplinary conferences, in addition to active service to the profession (e.g., manuscript reviewing, participation in professional societies). Contributions to the university's research infrastructure (e.g., serving on relevant committees) are often expected. As

Term faculty, with or without a terminal degree, who possess the expertise, achievements, and experience to provide professional instruction in a manner that brings relevance and distinction to the local academic unit and the University may be appointed as Professor of Practice.

experienced faculty, they are expected to serve as exemplars of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.7 Professor of Practice

Term faculty, with or without a terminal degree, who possess the expertise, achievements, and experience to provide professional instruction in a manner that brings relevance and distinction to the local academic unit and the University may be appointed as Professor of Practice.

2.2.6 Distinguished Service Professor

Distinguished Service Professors are recognized as individuals whose careers have had a major impact on their field or on the university community that goes well beyond ordinary levels of service. Normally, such individuals are recommended by a Dean and appointed by the Provost.

Such appointments are normally reserved for full professors.

The criteria for granting the rank of distinguished service professor includes extraordinary level of impact, sustained contributions to the good of the university and the academic unit, and/or significant contributions to the field that extend beyond the boundaries of the university.

2.2.3 Distinguished Service Professor (honorific title)

Distinguished Service Professors are recognized as individuals whose careers have had a major impact on their field or on the university community that goes well beyond ordinary levels of service. Normally, such individuals are recommended by a Dean and appointed by the Provost.

The criteria for granting the rank of Distinguished Service Professor includes extraordinary level of impact, sustained contributions to the good of the university and the academic unit, and/or significant contributions to the discipline(s) or field(s) that extend beyond the boundaries of the university. Faculty who are granted this honorific title retain their current rank.

2.2.7 Emeritus Faculty

Upon retirement from George Mason University, full-time Associate and Full Professors with ten or more years of continuous academic service may be recommended to the Board of Visitors for election to the honorary rank of Emeritus/Emerita in recognition of outstanding dedication to the university. A letter reviewing the candidate's history of teaching, research and scholarship, and service at Mason is normally initiated by the individual's LAU. The letter is forwarded to the LAU Dean, the Provost and the President for accompanying recommendations.

2.2.4 Emeritus Faculty

Upon retirement from George Mason University, full-time term or tenured Associate Professors and Professors with ten or more years of continuous academic service may be recommended to the Board of Visitors for election to the honorary rank of Emeritus/Emerita in recognition of outstanding dedication to the university. A letter reviewing the candidate's history of teaching, research and scholarship, and service at George Mason is normally initiated by the individual's LAU. The letter is forwarded to the LAU Dean, the Provost, and the President for accompanying recommendations.

2.2.8 Administrators Holding Faculty Rank

Each person appointed to an administrative/professional faculty position is assigned an academic rank. **Initial appointment will normally be at the rank of Instructor. Individuals holding a terminal degree may be appointed at the rank of Assistant Professor. An academic unit and the Provost may together confer academic rank beyond Assistant Professor when appropriate. As exceptions, certain senior administrative positions will be assigned the rank of at least Associate Professor in keeping with the executive status of their position. Assignment of rank must be in accordance with *The Commonwealth of Virginia's Consolidated Salary Authorization for Faculty Positions in Institutions of Higher Education, 2001-2002.* (The assignment of rank to administrative/professional faculty does not confer, nor does time assigned to administrative/professional duties contribute to, tenure.)**

Instructional faculty who are appointed to administrative/professional faculty positions, if tenured, retain their tenured status while so serving.

Faculty who are not tenured have no automatic right to return to their previous instructional, research, or clinical faculty position.

2.2.5 Administrators Holding Faculty Rank

Each person appointed to an Administrative/Professional faculty position is assigned an academic rank. **Faculty rank for Administrative/Professional Faculty is further detailed in the Administrative/Professional Faculty Handbook.**

Instructional faculty who are appointed to Administrative/Professional faculty positions, if tenured, retain their tenured status while so serving.

Faculty who are not tenured have no automatic right to return to their previous instructional, research, or clinical faculty position.

Section 2.4: Expanded Definitions

What problem were we trying to solve?

- Updates the titles of the categories of evaluation and includes expanded, contemporary definitions of the work included in each category.

Feedback after first read

- Some concerns about “student success” being equated with student outcomes other than learning (DFW rates, graduation rates, job placement rather than learning and mastery of subject).
- Lots of positive responses to Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity updates (CVPA, CHSS, Research Council, etc.).
- One person concerned that some service might be excluded with the language “active participation is necessary, but not sufficient.”

Changes since first read

- Changed “Teaching and Student Success” to “Teaching and Learning” throughout 2.2., 2.4, and 2.7
- The "necessary but not sufficient" sentence was removed in two places, and “active participation” was added to the service items that involved committee participation

Motion 4

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the expanded definitions in 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty.

Section 2.4: Holistic Portfolio

What problem were we trying to solve?

- Removes “genuine excellence” and “high competence” silos and shifts to an expectation for "overall excellence."

Feedback after first read

- Many faculty across colleges and schools expressed strong support for the overall excellence approach.
- Some see this as more honestly representing what is expected for tenure and promotion, while one person expressed concern that this might be “demoting teaching.”
- One note that the language here was written very carefully to not constrain colleges/schools/LAUs along with a reminder that units have room and directives to establish their own guardrails.

Changes since first read

- No additional changes made; however, note the additional motion to address the need for time for implementation.

Motion 5

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the holistic portfolio evaluation approach in 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty.

Motion 6

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve that the revisions to section 2.4 in the Faculty Handbook will go into effect on July 1, 2028.

Why? Gives colleges/schools and LAUs two years to update their RRPT guidelines.

2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty

Recommendations on changes of faculty status are in large measure a faculty responsibility. The faculty's role in these personnel actions is based upon the essentiality of its judgment to sound educational policy, and upon the fact that scholars in a particular field have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues. An additional reason for the faculty's role in these matters is the general competence of experienced faculty personnel committees with a broader charge that encompasses the evaluation of teaching and service. Implicit in such competence is the acknowledgment that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments.

Faculty are evaluated when they are candidates for a change in faculty status: reappointment, renewal, promotion, or conferral of tenure ([Section 2.7](#)). Candidates will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching; research and scholarship, both theoretical and applied; and service (as defined in [Sections 2.4.1-2.4.3](#)). Only these criteria, as further developed and published by the local academic unit, and approved by the Provost, may be used in evaluations of faculty. Peer review plays a central role in the evaluation of individual achievement in each of these areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of faculty achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University.

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Faculty are evaluated when they are candidates for a change in faculty status: reappointment, renewal, promotion, or conferral of tenure ([Section 2.7](#)). Candidates will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching **and learning**; research, scholarship, **and creative activity**, both theoretical and applied; and service **and leadership** (as defined in [Sections 2.4.1-2.4.3](#)). **All evaluations should consider the candidate's adherence to professional ethics (see [Section 2.10.2](#)). For faculty with administrative responsibilities, the impact of those responsibilities should be considered proportional to workload (2.4.4).** Only these criteria, as further developed and published by the local academic unit, and approved by the Provost, may be used in evaluations of faculty. Peer review plays a central role in the evaluation of individual achievement in each of these areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of faculty achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University.

Faculty are not expected to have equal commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas. Levels of expectation will vary with the type of decision.

Initial tenure-track and term appointments will, to some extent, recognize perceived potential rather than achievement. Reappointment, renewal, appointment without term or promotion in rank will be based on achievement rather than potential.

Term faculty candidates for promotion to associate professor or to senior instructor must demonstrate at least high competence in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of service. The standards that must be met in the primary area and in service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

Term faculty candidates for promotion to professor or to master instructor must demonstrate genuine excellence in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of continuing service. The standards that must be met in the primary area and in service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

Tenure-track candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor without term must exhibit genuine excellence either in teaching or in research/scholarship. High competence must be exhibited in both areas. Furthermore, candidates must provide evidence that their contributions in their area(s) of genuine excellence have had some significant impact beyond the boundaries of this University. If the primary strength

Faculty are not expected to have equal commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas. Levels of expectation will vary with the type of decision.

The standards as outlined below will be developed by the LAU and must comply with Faculty Handbook guidance and are approved by the Provost. Faculty are to be evaluated on the quality and impact of their contributions; evaluations should account for differences in assigned workload and other responsibilities as informed by college/school and LAU policies.

Term Faculty: Term faculty candidates for promotion must demonstrate overall excellence and appropriate impact in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of contributions to service.

Tenure-Track Faculty: Tenure-track candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor without term must present a dossier that demonstrates overall excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA) and teaching and learning. With respect to RSCA, candidates must provide evidence that their contributions have had a significant impact on their fields. With respect to teaching and learning, candidates must provide evidence of developing and

is teaching, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have influence beyond the immediate classroom; if in research/scholarship, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have significant influence on colleagues at other institutions in this country, and where applicable, abroad. They must also show evidence of service. The standards that must be met in teaching, research/scholarship, and service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost. Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University over an extended period.

Tenured candidates seeking promotion to the rank of professor without term must maintain high competence in teaching, research/scholarship, and service while also maintaining genuine excellence in teaching or research/scholarship. In addition, evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the University must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure or promotion to the rank of associate professor without term. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation in the primary field, based on consequential achievements in teaching, research and scholarship, or professional activities directly related to teaching and research and scholarship. The standards that must be met in teaching, research/scholarship, and service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

All evaluations should consider the candidate's adherence to professional ethics (see [Section 2.10.2](#)).

strengthening their teaching and mentoring skills to facilitate student learning. They must also show evidence of contributions to service. Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University as a lifetime appointment.

Tenured Faculty: Tenured candidates seeking promotion to the rank of professor without term must maintain a dossier that, taken as a whole, demonstrates overall excellence when considering all three domains of faculty contributions: RSCA, teaching and learning, and service and leadership. Evidence of impact must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure and/or promotion to the rank of associate professor without term. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation for overall excellence based on consequential achievements in RSCA, teaching and learning, and/or professional activities directly related to RSCA and teaching and learning.

2.4.1 Teaching

Effective teaching is demonstrated through a combination of course and curricular materials, learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments designed to promote student learning; through review of those materials, outcomes, assignments, and assessments by knowledgeable peers and colleagues; through student evaluations of their learning experiences; and through engaging in professional/teaching development activities.

Examples of contributions to teaching include:

- Development and implementation of new courses, curricula, and programs (face-to-face, online, or hybrid);
- Use of research-based, innovative, inclusive, and/or high-impact teaching and assessment practices;
- Development of instructional materials, including appropriate use of emerging and digital technologies;
- Training and supervision of teaching (graduate) and/or learning (undergraduate) assistants;
- Course coordination for courses with multiple sections;
- Mentoring students, both undergraduate and graduate;
- Clinical and field supervision of students;
- Student academic advising;
- Mentoring faculty colleagues;
- Participating in educational development activities to strengthen knowledge, skills, and/or abilities.

2.4.1 Teaching and Learning

Contributing effectively to our educational mission is the responsibility of all faculty members. All faculty are expected to:

- Adapt to the evolving needs of students and the workplace in an increasingly complex technological landscape
- Engage in teaching and learning strategies that equitably support and engage students in learning, often informed by evidence-based or research-based teaching and learning strategies rooted in our disciplines and professional communities.

Effective teaching requires the demonstration of an intentional commitment to and refinement of teaching practices that lead to student engagement, learning, and success. In many cases, faculty members will provide leadership for: curricula, including the integration of high-impact practices that foster student learning and educational innovations; supporting colleagues in becoming more effective educators; and engaging in activities that have impact beyond one's own classrooms. Effective teaching is typically demonstrated through a combination of:

- Course design, teaching materials, and assessments designed to promote student learning;
- Ongoing review of those materials and assessments by knowledgeable peers and colleagues;
- Student evaluations of/ feedback about their learning experiences; and

- Faculty self-assessments that demonstrate growth, continuous course improvement, and engagement in professional/teaching development activities.

Evidence of impact, significance, and/or innovation may include but are not limited to:

- Development and/or implementation of courses, curricula, and programs across modalities;
- Use of research-based, innovative, inclusive, and/or high-impact teaching and assessment practices;
- Development of instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, case studies, online study guides), including appropriate use of emerging technologies;
- Training and supervision of teaching (graduate) and/or learning (undergraduate) assistants;
- Course coordination, including providing instructor support, for courses with multiple sections;
- Chairing or co-chairing undergraduate or graduate student thesis, portfolio, comprehensive exam, or dissertation committees or other significant student mentoring that leads to student success;
- Clinical and field supervision of students;
- Student academic advising and/or mentoring;
- Mentoring faculty colleagues in course development, design, teaching, digital pedagogy, and/or assessment;
- Participating in professional development activities to strengthen teaching and learning (e.g., workshops, programs, credentials); and
- Leading professional development activities to strengthen teaching and learning (e.g., workshops, programs, credentials).

	<p>Each local academic unit (LAU) must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact with respect to teaching and learning that reflects the above definitions. Faculty are evaluated on the quality and impact of their contributions; evaluations should account for differences in assigned workload and other responsibilities.</p>
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2.4.2 Research and Scholarship

Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study, or to the integration of the discipline with other fields, or by the application of discipline- or field-based knowledge to the practice of a profession.

Examples of evidence for research and scholarship include:

- Publications (peer and non-peer reviewed), including journal articles, books, book chapters, monographs, etc.;
- Sponsored research activity and grant and contract awards;
- Conference and other scholarly presentations (peer-reviewed and invited);
- Original artistic work, software and media, exhibitions, and professional performances;
- Intellectual property, patents, and evidence of relevant entrepreneurial activities;
- Other evidence indicating scholarly recognition and reputation.

2.4.2 Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA)

Excellence in RSCA builds on a faculty member's academic and/or professional expertise and is demonstrated by original contributions to:

- An individual discipline or field of study;
- Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary knowledge;
- The application or translation of discipline- or field-based knowledge to policy, industry practice, or professional practice;
- The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL); and/or
- Public and community-engaged scholarship.

Evidence of impact, significance, and/or innovation may include but are not limited to:

- Publications (peer and non-peer reviewed), including journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, reports, briefs, textbooks, and monographs;
- Original artistic work, software, media, exhibitions, and professional performances;
- Other scholarly works that are single-authored, co-authored, edited, and co-edited;
- Sponsored research activities;
- Academic and professional conference and other scholarly presentations (peer-reviewed and invited);
- Scholarly digital projects, including explicitly Open Educational Resources (OERs),

	<p>websites, digital platforms and tools, and multimodal work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual property, patents, and evidence of relevant entrepreneurial activities; • Professional activities that evidence leadership and/or strength of expertise (e.g., editorships, organizing special sessions/workshops, invitations for activities that make other significant contributions); • Professional efforts to connect different public constituencies with university scholars (e.g., testifying before legislative bodies, research that informs practices/policies of local/regional/international/other communities, museum exhibits, media interviews or appearances, other activities considered to be the work of public intellectuals); • Other evidence that indicates scholarly recognition and reputation; and • Fostering student scholarly identity and success, for example through funding students on RSCA projects, engaging undergraduate or graduate students in RSCA work that leads to co-authorships (e.g., publications, conference proceedings, presentations). <p>Each local academic unit (LAU) must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact in RSCA that reflects the above definitions. Emphasis on the quality, significance, and impact of the work, not simply the quantity, is strongly encouraged. Faculty should be encouraged to develop an RSCA portfolio that is forward-thinking and innovative and codifies the legitimacy and expertise of the faculty member in a particular domain.</p>
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2.4.3 Service

Service, which may include leadership responsibilities, is demonstrated by faculty participation in governance, and operational or development activities in the local academic unit, the University, or the profession. Required service in the local academic unit includes, but is not limited to, such activity as attendance at faculty meetings and participation in faculty personnel matters and curriculum development. Other examples of service to the LAU include student advising, developing or supporting co-curricular experiences for students, and mentoring colleagues.

Professional service is demonstrated by contributions to recognized societies and associations that promote research and scholarship and by consultancies and cooperative projects that make the faculty member's discipline or field-based knowledge and skills available to individuals, groups or agencies outside the University.

2.4.3 Service and Leadership

Faculty are expected to engage in institutional service, institutional leadership, and/or professional service and leadership. Service and leadership strengthen the institution and faculty professional communities and includes engagement in faculty governance.

Institutional service activities include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Active participation in faculty personnel matters (e.g., recruitment activities, search committees, RRPT activities);
- Active participation on instructional (e.g., accreditation, curricular, Academic Program Review) and research committees at the LAU, college/school, and/or university levels;
- Supporting student success efforts through designing and/or facilitating co-curricular experiences for students, student advising, and/or career coaching;
- Faculty mentoring, such as supporting and advising faculty peers about RSCA or career planning;
- Serving on undergraduate or graduate student thesis or dissertation committees;
- Engagement in community outreach and/or student recruitment activities;
- Coordinating and/or participating in engagement activities (e.g., public lectures/panels, workshops, reading groups, learning communities); and
- Engaging in professional development opportunities to strengthen leadership capacity.

Leadership is demonstrated by making significant and consequential contributions to the local academic unit, the University, professional societies and associations, and local/regional/national/international communities. Examples include, but are not limited to, chairing or co-chairing committees for the local academic unit; leading and/or actively contributing to university-wide initiatives; serving in leadership roles for professional societies and organizations; serving in significant editorial roles; leading invited or peer-reviewed workshops; leading community-based activities related in some way to expertise; and mentoring faculty colleagues in formal programs.

Each local academic unit must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for institutional and professional leadership and engagement.

Institutional leadership involves taking a proactive role in the work of a group/committee/unit to build and sustain important institutional functions that allow the work of the university to mature and progress. Impact may be demonstrated by showing significant, sustained contributions towards implementing strategies that advance the broader institutional mission within the LAU, college/school, and/or George Mason University. These activities include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Chairing or co-chairing committees at the LAU, college/school, and/or university levels;
- Serving as a faculty representative on the Board of Visitors (BOV), the Faculty Senate, university standing committees, ad hoc taskforces and working groups, and other university-wide initiatives;
- Leading or coordinating faculty engagement and mentoring activities (e.g., public lectures/panels, workshops, reading groups, learning communities, mentoring programs);
- Developing and/or implementing new programs and curricula; and
- Enhancing the reputation of George Mason University through special appointments and/or sustained community engagement, outreach, and/or media appearances.

Professional service and leadership are the work of developing the community of scholars within the discipline(s) or field(s) of study. Service and leadership to the profession may include, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Participation in professional peer-review processes (e.g., RRPT, professional organization conference planning, grant proposal review, manuscript and book review for academic presses and journals);
- Service on and/or leadership for editorial boards, advisory boards, or with scholarly presses;
- Service on and/or leadership for national advisory boards and foundations and/or national review panels;
- Leadership of professional organization standing committees (e.g., organizing panels, developing programs, hosting major conferences);
- Serving on a jury panel for a regional, national, or international professional awards competition or grant review; and
- Participation in professional organization ad-hoc committees.

Each LAU must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact on institutional and professional service and leadership that reflect the above descriptions. They should also reflect a holistic perspective of contributions that account for where faculty might be in their career lifecycle. Service and leadership expectations should be articulated in workload policies and agreements.

2.4.4. Administrative Responsibilities

Many faculty assume administrative responsibilities as part of their terms of employment. Evaluation of faculty performance of these responsibilities must be included in the annual review and any consideration of change of faculty status. The criteria for successful performance must be given to the faculty member in writing.

2.4.4. Administrative Responsibilities

Many faculty assume administrative responsibilities as part of their terms of employment. Administrative leadership is taking on a role and set of responsibilities that enable the work of a functional unit of the university (e.g., chair, associate chair, program director, graduate or undergraduate director, center director, course coordinator, advisor). These roles fulfill a specific set of responsibilities, are typically designated as fulfilling a defined workload, and are often – but not always – compensated. If a faculty member does not hold an administrative position and/or their contract does not indicate that they hold an administrative role, then they will not be evaluated in this area.

Each college/school and LAU must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact with respect to administrative responsibilities, as appropriate. The criteria for successful performance must be given to the faculty member in writing. If administrative responsibilities are part of a faculty member's workload, then their administrative impact should be considered in annual reviews and RRPT reviews by the appropriate supervisory structure. Similarly, expectations for impact across all areas of evaluation should be proportionally modified to account for administrative workload in annual reviews and RRPT evaluations.

1.3.1 The General Faculty and 2.1.4 Part-Time Appointments

What problems were we trying to solve?

- Clarify who is eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate.
- Remove the word "term" from part-time faculty, as there are part-time faculty who are tenure-line faculty.
- Gives part-time faculty voting rights as members of the General Faculty.

Feedback after first read

- Concern about removing reference to any George Mason University will exclude Mason Korea faculty
 - **Contextual information:** Mason Korea faculty are not employees of George Mason University, but of Mason-Korea LLC (which is a legal requirement) and are already not included in the General Faculty. Mason Korea faculty have a separate (though closely aligned and very similar) faculty handbook that applies to them.

Changes since first read

- No changes made

Motion 7

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the changes to 1.3.1 The General Faculty and 2.1.4 Part-Time Appointments.

1.3.1 The General Faculty AND 2.1.4 Part-Time Appointments

Background/Context:

- The Faculty Senate Charter defines the General Faculty and eligibility for election to the Senate, and our Handbook is currently out of alignment with those definitions. Full-time and part-time faculty are eligible to serve in the Senate, but adjunct faculty are not.
- There are some part-time faculty who are tenured and some who are term instructional faculty. We are removing the language that limits this to instructional term faculty to align with current practice. Since the Senate Charter allows part-time faculty to be elected to the Faculty Senate, and because part-time faculty are part of the General Faculty, we recommend that they also be able to vote.
- It is important to note that adjunct faculty are not part-time faculty. Part-time faculty are sometimes full-time faculty who have (often temporarily) moved to a reduced load to accommodate personal situations or because part of their time is being bought out by another agency. Other part-time faculty are hired into part-time faculty roles from the beginning of their contract because they have employment elsewhere (e.g., judges) but are being hired with a portfolio of responsibilities similar to the responsibilities of full-time faculty. There are currently 61 part-time faculty and 1680 full-time faculty at GMU. Adjunct faculty are hired to teach courses on a course-by-course basis.

Redlined language

1.3.1 The General Faculty

The General Faculty consists of all faculty who have full-time instructional, research, or clinical appointments ~~and all faculty who have part-time instructional appointments at any~~ George Mason University ~~campus~~. The General Faculty participates in governance at the university level.

Meetings of the General Faculty are scheduled by the President of the University, who serves as presiding officer. If at least 10% of the voting membership petitions for a called meeting of the General Faculty, the President is obliged to schedule it within thirty days, or within ten days if the purpose of the call is to consider modification of the authority the General Faculty has granted the Faculty Senate; or reversal of specific decisions of the Senate; or amending the Senate charter. All members of the General Faculty have voting rights on matters that pertain to the General Faculty. All members of the University community may attend meetings of the General Faculty and participate in the debate of matters that come before it. The General Faculty may meet electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear each other simultaneously, seek recognition, vote, and exercise other rights.

Without relinquishing the generality of its powers, The General Faculty delegates by Charter to the Faculty Senate the responsibility for shared academic governance at the university level. Only those faculty who have instructional appointments – tenured, tenure-track, term, or ~~adjunct part-time~~ – may be elected to the Faculty Senate.

2.1.4 Part-Time Appointment

~~Term~~ Faculty who are appointed to less than full-time positions are called part-time faculty. Their assignments may include research, service, clinical practice, administrative program development, or instructional responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of specific courses. Part-time ~~term~~ faculty positions are governed by the same appointment, rank, and title requirements as full-time ~~term~~ faculty positions. The Provost is the final approval level for part-time faculty appointments. Part-time faculty are ~~not~~ voting members of the General Faculty.

Related Passages:

Faculty Senate Charter, I.C.

C. Qualifications of Elected Senators Elected Senators shall be members of the constituent Faculties they represent. A faculty member is eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate if the faculty member holds

1. A full-time instructional tenured, tenure-track, or term appointment with at least one year's full-time service at George Mason University; or

2. A part-time instructional appointment with at least one academic year of continuous service, and completion of at least two Full Time Equivalents in appointments at George Mason University.

2.1.5 Adjunct Appointment

Adjunct Faculty are employees appointed to fulfill the teaching and advising responsibilities associated with a specific course (or a set of specified courses) in a specific semester.

Adjunct Faculty are not voting members of the General Faculty and are not covered by the provisions of this Handbook.

2.1.6 Postdoctoral Research Fellows and Research Staff

Postdoctoral Research Fellows are employees governed by the Postdoctoral Research Fellows Policy. Postdoctoral Research Fellows are not covered by the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.

Research Staff are employees governed by the Research Staff Policy. Research Staff are not covered by the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.

Section 1.3.2 The Faculty Senate

What problem were we trying to solve?

- Solve conflict Faculty Handbook, Bylaws, and Roberts Rules about who can speak in the Faculty Senate
- Adds “to the extent permitted by the Senate bylaws” to allow the Senate President to call on anyone to speak"

Feedback after first read

- None

Changes since first read

- No additional changes made

Motion 8

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the changes to 1.3.2 The Faculty Senate.

Proposed revision to Faculty Handbook § 1.3.2 concerning Faculty Senate participation by non-senators

George Mason University Faculty Handbook - July 1, 2025, § 1.3.2 The Faculty Senate	Proposed revision
<p>The Senate meets at least monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Meetings of the Senate are open to all members of the university community, who may speak to any item of business on the agenda. Only members of the Senate, however, may introduce motions and vote. The Faculty Senate deliberates in a respectful and open manner, consistent with existing principles of university discourse.</p>	<p>The Senate meets at least monthly during the fall and spring semesters. To the extent permitted by the Senate bylaws, meetings of the Senate are open to all members of the university community, who may speak to any item of business on the agenda. Only members of the Senate, however, may introduce motions and vote. The Faculty Senate deliberates in a respectful and open manner, consistent with existing principles of university discourse.</p>

Explanation

The current language of the Faculty Handbook is inconsistent with the current Faculty Senate bylaws, which restrict speaking privileges to “any person recognized by the President” and which provide for the possibility of closed sessions. Changing the language would make the handbook consistent not only with current bylaws but also with any future changes concerning non-member participation.

Section 2.10.5 Faculty Responsibility Under the Honor Code

What problem were we trying to solve?

- Updates language to reflect that the Honor Code has been replaced with Academic Standards
- Update the title of the section to "Faculty Responsibility Under the Academic Standards Code"

Feedback after first read

- Uncertainty about what it means for faculty to "adhere" to the Academic Standards policy when it is primarily focused on student behaviors
 - **Contextual information:** There is a section in the Academic Standards policy that specifically outlines the responsibilities of faculty.

Changes since first read

- Changed “adhere” to “uphold” for clarification

Motion 9

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the changes to 2.10.5 Faculty Responsibility Under the Honor Code.

Rationale for revisions: We have replaced the Honor Code with the Academic Standards Code, so this updated language brings the handbook in alignment with current policy.

2.10.5 Faculty Responsibility Under the ~~Honor~~ Academic Standards Code

~~Since the founding of the University, the Honor Code has been and remains a part of the educational process at George Mason. Although the students are primarily responsible for preserving and enforcing the code, the faculty share common interests with the students in matters of academic integrity.~~

The Academic Standards Code affirms our collective commitment to foster an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence at George Mason University. Faculty are expected to uphold the Academic Standards Code and to apply the highest ethical standards in teaching, research, and scholarship.

~~Faculty are expected to have a strong commitment to the Honor Code, and to support and to encourage students in their pursuit of its goals.~~

Section 2.1.3 Term Appointments

What problem were we trying to solve?

- The Term Faculty Committee has unanimously recommended that we replace the title “Master Instructor” with “Principal Instructor” to eliminate historical connotations of the word “master,” especially in southern states. This same shift is also happening in other industries, such as real estate and software development, for similar reasons.
- The title "Master Instructor" was replaced with "Principal Instructor" in 2.1.3, 2.2, and 2.7.

Feedback after first read

- None

Changes since first read

- No additional changes made

Motion 10

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the replacement of "Master Instructor" with "Principal Instructor" in 2.1.3, 2.2, and 2.7.

2.1.3 Term Appointments

Background/Context for new changes

The Term Faculty Committee has unanimously recommended that we replace the title “Master Instructor” with “Principal Instructor” to eliminate historical connotations of the word “master,” especially in southern states. This same shift is also happening in other industries, such as real estate and software development, for similar reasons.

Background/Context for first set of changes (already approved on November 12 by Faculty Senate- final paragraph):

- It has sometimes been unclear whether faculty who began at GMU as term faculty who then were hired into tenure-track positions were able to include their full body of scholarly and teaching accomplishments in their dossier for tenure consideration.
- It has also been unclear whether term faculty who were hired into tenure-track roles needed to wait the full six-year period to go up for tenure.
- Section 2.1.2 grants all faculty with prior service or unusually strong performance the opportunity to be considered for tenure and promotion early, and section 2.7 specifies that RRPT recommendations should be based on an evaluation of performance over the total period of service at Mason as well as consideration of all scholarly achievements. This revision simply clarifies that those policies also apply for faculty who began their careers as term faculty at Mason, just as they do for faculty who began their careers elsewhere, to remove the ambiguity that was at times being read into 2.1.3.

Redlined Language

2.1.3 Term Appointments

Full-time faculty on fixed-term, non-tenure-track appointments are known as Term Faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on teaching are appointed as instructional faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on research are appointed as research faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on clinical practice are appointed as clinical faculty. While term faculty may identify with a primary focus, their assignments may include a blend of teaching, research, service, clinical practice, administrative, or leadership responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of their primary focus. The faculty member’s specific responsibilities will be stipulated in the appointment contract or assignment letter.

Instructional term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructional Assistant Professor, Instructional Associate Professor, or Instructional Professor. Research term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Research Assistant Professor,

Research Associate Professor, or Research Professor. Clinical term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, or Clinical Professor.

Instructional term faculty without a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructor, Senior Instructor, ~~MasterPrincipal~~ Instructor; or Professor of Practice. Clinical term faculty without a terminal degree may hold the rank of Clinical Instructor, Clinical Senior Instructor, or Clinical ~~MasterPrincipal~~ Instructor. Research term faculty without a terminal degree are Research Staff (Section 2.1.6).

Term faculty on single-year appointments whose permanent employment is with another organization hold title with the prefix "Visiting."

Term faculty appointment contracts are issued for a single-year or for multiple years, up to a maximum of 5 years. For initial appointments for faculty with terminal degrees, the maximum contract length for assistant professors is three years and for associate and full professors it is five years. For initial appointments for faculty without terminal degrees, the contract length is one year. If a multi-year appointment is offered to a faculty member whose position relies entirely or partially on non-state appropriated funding, then a multi-year contract may be established subject to the continuing availability of funding throughout the contract period. Exceptions to either contract length or terminal degree requirements must be approved by the Provost.

Contracts automatically expire at the end of the contract period, and although a faculty member may be reappointed (Section 2.7.1), there is no guarantee or right to reappointment from one contract to the next, whether single-year or multi-year.

With the prior approval of the Provost, term faculty with the terminal degree may be considered for a tenure-track or tenured appointment as a result of a search (Section 2.3.2.1) or, rarely, by a direct appointment (Section 2.3.2.2). ~~Service on a term appointment, whether or not externally-funded, may be applied to tenure consideration only if specified in the initial tenure-track letter of appointment. Term faculty who are hired into tenure-track faculty positions will have the same timeline for renewal, promotion, and tenure as all other newly hired tenure-track faculty (Section 2.1.2), but time as a term faculty member does not count as part of the time to renewal and tenure. However, term faculty hired into tenure-track positions have the same opportunity for early tenure consideration, as defined in Section 2.1.2. Scholarly achievements and performance as a term faculty member will be evaluated for tenure consideration consistent with Section 2.7.~~ Term faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion in rank, normally after five years of service.

Commented [LB1]: Faculty Senate has approved this red language

Preparing a Motion by Committee

Faculty Senate Document Preparation Template

1. Document Title

Faculty Senate Motion 2026: Revisions to AP.1.1

Prepared by: Academic Policies Committee

Date Submitted: March 18, 2026

Document Version: Final

2. Number of Motions in This Document

This document contains 1 motion.

1. Motion 1:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- The addition of a new section on Student Status to AP.1.1 and renumbering following sections accordingly.

This policy adds an explanation of when a student is considered active vs. inactive.

2. Motion 2:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- Moving the paragraph immediately preceding the current AP.1.1 to AP.1.4 Registration Procedures.

This moves information to its proper place in the document.

3. Motion 3:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- Edits to AP.1.4 Registration Procedures
This update aligns language with current practice.

Motion 1: Add AP.1.1 Student Status; incrementing subsection numbering.

Add the following new subsection to AP.1

AP.1.1 Student Status

An active student is an individual who has registered for classes during the current academic term; OR is an individual who is on an approved leave of absence, approved study elsewhere, or an academic suspension.

Degree-seeking students become inactive in the term immediately following a term where they do not register for classes and are not on an academic suspension, an approved study elsewhere, nor an approved leave of absence. An inactive student status governs any and all enrolled programs for the student.

Students who are inactive for one or more semesters and who wish to resume their studies at George Mason should consult AP.1.7 Re-Enrollment After Previous Attendance or AP.6.4.3 Permission to Re-Enroll. The university will attempt to communicate with inactive students through their official George Mason email address but reserves the right to contact inactive students through any previously provided contact information including permanent address, mailing address, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Increment sub-policies of AP.1 by 1 (e.g. original AP.1.1 Calendar becomes AP.1.2 and so on, through AP.1.9)

Motion 2: Move Registration Procedure Information

Currently located before 1.1 Academic Calendar; move to beginning of AP.1.4 Registration Procedures

Registration for the next semester or summer term begins after mid-semester of fall or spring semesters and is opened to various groups according to priority (graduate students, seniors, juniors, and so on). The Office of the University Registrar assigns each student a time ticket, which is a specific date and time after which a student

may register. The time ticket is based on the number of credits earned. Thus, the time ticket will not be the same for all students within a particular priority group. Students should consult the Office of the University Registrar and Patriot Web for information about their registration date and time.

Motion 3: Edit/Update Registration Procedure Information

After moving, make the following clarifications to the beginning of AP.1.3 Registration Procedures

Registration for the next semester or summer term begins after mid-semester of fall or spring semesters and is opened to various groups according to priority (graduate students, seniors, juniors, and so on). The Office of the University Registrar assigns each student a time ticket, which is a specific date and time after which a student may register. The time ticket is based on **the student level for Graduate and Non-Degree students**, or the number of credits earned. Thus, the time ticket ~~will~~ **may** not be the same for all students within a particular priority group. Students should consult ~~the Office of the University Registrar and~~ Patriot Web for information about their registration date and time.

Patriot Web will list specific ~~course~~ **class** information before priority registration each semester. ~~Courses~~ **Classes** listed may be canceled for insufficient enrollment. George Mason reserves the right to change the class schedule and adjust ~~the~~ individual section enrollment as necessary.

Preparing a Motion by Committee

Faculty Senate Document Preparation Template

1. Document Title

Faculty Senate Motion 2026: Revisions to AP.1.8

Prepared by: Academic Policies Committee

Date Submitted: March 18, 2026

Document Version: Final

2. Number of Motions in This Document

This document contains 1 motion(s).

1. Motion 1:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- The addition of military service as an acceptable reason for an extended leave of absence.
- Students both in the US and at Mason Korea may need to take a leave of absence; this policy update makes it easier for such student to return to study after military service.

3. Motion Text

Motion 1: Add Military Service to AP.1.8

AP.1.8 Undergraduate Leave of Absence

All undergraduate students who are planning an absence from George Mason must submit [a formal request for Leave of Absence](#) to the [Office of the University Registrar](#).

Students do not need to complete the Leave of Absence form for **the sole purpose of** participating in a George Mason University sponsored study

abroad program or participating in a fully approved study elsewhere experience.

Eligibility Requirements

A student must:

- Be eligible to register for classes
- Be a degree-seeking undergraduate student
- Be registered during the semester immediately prior to the beginning of the Leave of Absence
- Have no holds (e.g., disciplinary, financial, etc.) which would restrict registration
 - The maximum time allowed for a Leave of Absence is two years, **unless the Leave of Absence includes military service**. A new admission application will be required if a student is away for more than two academic years **for reasons other than military service**. Re-admission is not guaranteed.
 - **Students who have a leave of absence under the military activation policy are entitled to reinstatement to their program of study (if available), without having to reapply for admission if (1) they return to the University after a cumulative absence of not more than five years, and (2) they provide notice of intent to return to the University not later than three years after the completion of the period of service. See the [Office of Military Services](#) for additional information.**
 - Prior approval is required. Advisors approve one-semester requests. Advisor and Dean approval is required if the leave of absence requested is for more than one semester.
 - Students are not permitted to study elsewhere while on a Leave of Absence.
 - A student who was admitted as a new first semester freshman or transfer student but did not attend will not be eligible for a Leave of Absence. Instead, he or she must contact Undergraduate Admissions.
 - A student who was re-admitted but did not attend will not be eligible for a Leave of Absence. He or she must contact Undergraduate Admissions.

- Requests for extensions on a previously submitted Leave of Absence require submission of a new Leave of Absence form.

Preparing a Motion by Committee

Faculty Senate Document Preparation Template

1. Document Title

Faculty Senate Motion 2026: New Catalog Section - AP.8 Non-Degree Academic Credentials

Prepared by: Academic Policies Committee

Date Submitted: March 18, 2026

Document Version: Final

2. Number of Motions in This Document

This document contains 1 motion.

1. Motion 1:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- Add new policy section AP.8 Non-Degree Academic Credentials to the catalog.
- George Mason University has been offering various forms of non-degree credentials, including digital badges, micro-credentials, and stackable certificates, for several years through academic units and the Office of Continuing and Professional Education. AP.8 formalizes these existing practices into a comprehensive institutional policy that ensures compliance with SACSCOC accreditation standards and SCHEV guidance, both of which require institutions to establish clear governance structures, transparent student information, and quality assurance processes for all credential types.

This policy provides necessary clarity by distinguishing between credit-bearing credentials (which are subject to full accreditation standards and appear on transcripts) and noncredit credentials (which are issued as digital badges). It establishes faculty qualifications and assessment requirements appropriate to each credential type, clarifies approval pathways through program, college, and university governance, and defines roles and responsibilities across academic units, CPE, the Provost's Office, and the Registrar. AP.8 is intended to position the university to continue expanding these focused learning pathways as opportunity permits, while maintaining academic quality and accountability.

3. Motion Text

Motion 1: Add AP.1.8

AP.8 Non-Degree Academic Credentials

Policy Scope

This policy governs only **non-degree** conferring credentials (NDCs): credit-bearing and noncredit academic credentials developed and awarded by George Mason University academic units and/or Office of Continuing and Professional Education (CPE). It does not apply to degrees, minors, concentrations, or academic certificates governed under AP.5 and AP.6.

Definition

Non-degree conferring credentials (NDCs) are awarded for completing academic programs that teach focused knowledge or skills competencies. These credentials comprise more than a single course but less content than a full degree; credentials may be composed of for-credit or not-for-credit classes and structured learning experiences. The academic quality standards for non-degree credentials align with George Mason's standards for other institutional credentials, with rigor appropriate to each credential type and purpose, as defined in this policy.

AP.8.1 Categories of Non-Degree Credentials

George Mason University offers NDCs in two categories: credit-bearing and non-credit. All approved credentials must clearly publish eligibility requirements, completion criteria, credit/noncredit status, transcript eligibility, stackable pathways, and whether credits may transfer to other institutions in program materials and institutional registries per accreditation transparency requirements.

AP.8.1.1 Credit-Bearing Academic Credentials

Credit-bearing credentials are earned upon the completion of specified university credit-bearing courses.

Credit Requirements: Credit-bearing credentials range from requiring 3 to 15 credits and must be completable in two semesters or less. Credentials must use a specified curriculum (not menu-style course options) within existing academic program discipline areas with available faculty resources and may not duplicate names of existing degree or certificate programs.

Approval: Proposals must be reviewed and approved through established curricular governance pathways at the program, college/school, and university levels. Credit-bearing credentials follow the same academic standards, assessment, SACSCOC accreditation standards, and quality assurance.

processes as traditional academic programs. Where applicable, credit-bearing credentials are subject to accreditation substantive change notification requirements. Programs comprised of non-degree conferring credentials (including micro-credentials) are not reviewed by SCHEV.

Degree Applications and Transferability: Credits may count toward certificate or degree requirements only if approved as part of their published existing degree requirements and electives. If multiple credit-bearing credentials can be taken together and combined into a certificate or degree ("stackable credentials"), that information should be published, and advisors must be available to explain the

process and procedures for using stackable credentials to complete a degree program. All time limits and other relevant academic policies apply; see AP.4.2.1 for limits on how many credits may be counted for both non-degree programs and toward degree components. Transfer of credit-bearing credentials to other institutions is subject to receiving institution policies.

Flexibility for Professional Requirements: Credentials required to align with specific professional licensure, certification, or industry standards may depart from standard parameters with documented justification and Dean approval.

AP.8.1.2 Noncredit Academic Credentials

Noncredit academic credentials document competency achievement or program completion, but do not earn academic credit. These credentials are not subject to SACSCOC substantive change requirements but must maintain published institutional policies regarding purpose, characteristics, and student rights. Academic credentials documenting competency achievement or program completion that do not carry academic credit and are not recorded on the university transcript.

Credential Types:

- Competency-Based Credentials: Competency-based credentials must require performance-based assessment demonstrating mastery of defined learning outcomes. Assessment evidence must be documented and retained per university guidelines.
- Program Completion Credentials: The program must document satisfactory participation or completion based on attendance and instructional hours but does not require direct competency assessment. Faculty and staff professional development credentials within George Mason may be issued for university training programs and follow the same noncredit credential requirements.

Approval: Proposals that originate in academic units require approval by the Dean of the college or school in which the LAU is housed. Proposals that originate in other units require approval of the Vice President/Provost of that unit. All noncredit academic credentials must be approved by the Continuing and Professional Education Office. Credentials must meet George Mason's standards for skill development and learning outcomes, assessment appropriate to the credential type, and industry or professional alignment.

Issuance: All noncredit credentials are issued as digital badges through the university credentialing platform and include appropriate disclaimers indicating noncredit status and ineligibility for transcript notation.

Credit Conversion and Prior Learning: Noncredit credentials do not automatically convert to academic credit. Students may petition to apply documented learning from noncredit credentials (from George Mason or other institutions) toward academic credit through George Mason's prior learning assessment procedures, subject to faculty review and institutional credit limits. Acceptance of external noncredit credentials follows existing transfer credit policies.

AP.8.2 Academic Quality Standards

Outcomes: All credentials must focus on clearly defined, measurable skill development or learning outcomes with specific earning criteria documented through deliverables, assignments, or performance artifacts, aligned with academic, professional, or industry standards appropriate to the credential type.

Assessment: Credit-bearing credentials require performance-based (or competency-based) assessment meeting the same rigor as equivalent credit courses. Performance-based assessment requires students to apply their knowledge and skills by solving real-world problems or creating, performing, or producing artifacts that demonstrate specific competencies in authentic contexts. Noncredit competency-based credentials require demonstrated mastery of defined outcomes, with assessment evidence documented and retained for quality review. Participation-based credentials document completion based on attendance and instructional hours and must specify completion criteria.

Faculty and Instructor Qualifications: Credit-bearing credentials must be taught by faculty meeting the same qualifications required for equivalent credit courses. Noncredit credential instructors must have documented qualifications appropriate to the subject matter.

Delivery Modality: All delivery formats (in-person, online, hybrid) must provide equivalent learning experiences with consistent outcomes and appropriate student support services.

Periodic Review: The office of the Provost conducts reviews of all credentials to assess compliance and continuation recommendations.

Student Appeals: Students enrolled in credit-bearing credentials may appeal assessment decisions or credential denial through existing academic grievance procedures to the Office of the Provost.

AP.8.3 Oversight and Compliance

Academic units hold primary responsibility for credit-bearing credentials and appoint a faculty lead to oversee program delivery and assessment. The Office of the Provost oversees compliance for all

credential types. The Office of the University Registrar maintains official academic transcript records for credit-bearing credentials and verifies achievements and credential status.

Tuition and fees for credit-bearing credentials are assessed at the standard per-credit rate. Credit-bearing credentials may be eligible for financial aid subject to enrollment status and federal/state requirements; eligible programs are listed separately by the Office of Student Financial Aid. Noncredit credential fees are established by the sponsoring unit and approved by the Office of the Provost. Administrative fees for credentialing platform access and badge issuance are assessed per the university fee schedule.

Preparing a Motion by Committee

Faculty Senate Document Preparation Template

1. Document Title

Faculty Senate Motion 2026: Add New A.P.9 Academic Standards to Catalog

Prepared by: Academic Policies Committee

Date Submitted: March 18, 2026

Document Version: Final

2. Number of Motions in This Document

This document contains 3 motions.

1. Motion 1:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- Add new policy section AP.9 Academic Standards to the catalog.
No new policy is being proposed: the vote is to add existing policy to the catalog.
This moves all of the Academic Standards policy language into the catalog and all of the procedures language into a procedures document on the Academic Standards website. Currently, part of the policy is in the catalog (does not include sanctions), and a different (revised) version of the policy that includes sanctions plus all procedures lives on the Academic Standards website. These conflicting versions of the policy create confusion, and by not including the sanctions in the catalog policy, there is sometimes confusion about whether they are required sanctions or merely a suggestion.

2. Motion 2:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- **Proposed revision 1:** The current policy requires faculty to report suspected violations by the deadline for that semester's grades or within two months of the initial discovery of the alleged violation. The Academic Standards Committee proposes changing this timeframe to six weeks.
Why? There have been several cases where faculty are finding violations in September but not reporting them until after the final exam is given, so students do

not have an accurate understanding of how they are doing in the class or whether their behavior violated the academic standards policy until months afterward. In other cases where faculty find academic standards violations at the very end of the semester, they might need a bit of time to reach out to and talk with the student before submitting the case, even if grades are due.

3. Motion 3:

- Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approve the following changes:
- **Proposed revision 2:** The current policy gives undergraduates at least 1 year and 59 credits of completed coursework before violations become level 2 violations based on experience within the academic environment and gives graduate students (except doctoral students) a semester of graduate study before violations are classified as level 2 violations. The Academic Standards Committee recommends changing this so that all violations by undergraduates who have 60 or more credits of completed coursework and all violations by graduate students are considered level 2 violations.

Why? The training will become required for all students starting next fall and is already part of the orientation materials, so we will be doing a better job of ensuring awareness about the policy. This also ensures greater consistency for students with experience in the academic environment (e.g., a student who was a senior and then becomes an MA student didn't get less experience in the academic environment between those degrees).

3. Motion Text

Motion 1: Add AP.9 Academic Standards to the Catalog

AP.9 Academic Standards

AP.9.1: Academic Standards

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, co-authored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations can be found at the [Academic Standards website](#). Consequences of violations may include grade sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Mason has an office that addresses issues related to research misconduct. Those incidents are investigated through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. For more information, see [University Policy 4007](#) or contact the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance via their website at [Office of Research Integrity and Assurance](#).

AP.9.2 Violations

Unauthorized Assistance

Unauthorized assistance in an academic context means using, accessing, or providing assistance to others when such assistance is not permitted per the university, course, or assignment instructions/policy. Unauthorized assistance may also include submitting academic work that was created, in whole or part, using unauthorized material. Certain departments may include requirements that go beyond what is mentioned, including a prohibition of sharing files, and the requirement to keep work secure. Examples of unauthorized assistance include but are not limited to:

- Benefitting or attempting to benefit from unauthorized assistance
- Providing unauthorized assistance
- Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence software, generative or otherwise
- Submitting work that was done, in part or whole, by someone else

- Compensating someone else to do work and/or academic outsourcing
- Making an unauthorized record of (e.g. photo, screenshot, download) and/or posting (such as on a public website or in group messenger apps) exams or academic content
- Submitting work as one's own that was obtained from unauthorized websites
(Including Quizlet, Chegg, Course Hero, etc.)

Fabrication

Fabrication in an academic context refers to providing false information in completing academic work. Examples of fabrication include but are not limited to:

- Providing a false excuse for missing a test, assignment, or class
- Fabricating or providing false sources, data, information, documents, and/or official correspondence. This may include, but is not limited to, referencing material that does not appear in the indicated source
- Providing false or altered documents in response to an Academic Standards violation

Plagiarism

Plagiarism in an academic context refers to using other individuals' ideas or words without appropriate attribution or credit. It also includes reusing one's own work that has already been submitted for a class or published without permission from the current instructor and/or without proper citation. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Submitting another's work as your own, either in whole or in part
- Misrepresenting authorship (i.e. leaving author names off a document or giving authorship credit that is not warranted)
- Failure to attempt to cite sources using required citation standards, including both in-text/in-presentation citations and full reference lists
- Using portions of one's old work for new assignments without advance permission from the current course instructor and appropriate attribution. (self-plagiarism)

Plagiarism does not include mistakes in the format of a citation if the student has indicated the materials quoted or relied upon and the source of the materials.

AP.9.3 Student Responsibilities

Students must abide by the academic standards defined in this policy and by the institution. This includes adhering to course-specific policies regarding scholarship and

academic work. Students who are found in violation of Academic Standards are subject to sanctions by the University.

Students who are referred to the Office of Academic Standards are subject to the following honesty statement throughout the entire case resolution process, including any appeal process:

George Mason University students pledge to conduct themselves in accordance with the Academic Standards the institution upholds. It is expected that all information presented in this process is true and correct. George Mason University students who willfully and knowingly provide false information in the process will be referred again to the Office of Academic Standards. Students who admit to a violation of a university policy unrelated to Academic Standards will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Any student referred for violating Academic Standards is not allowed to drop or withdraw from the course until the case is resolved. If a student is found in violation of the Academic Standards policy, they cannot withdraw from or drop the course in question.

AP.9.4 Faculty Responsibilities

Reporting

All suspected violations in any semester must be reported to the Academic Standards Office by the deadline for that semester's grades or within 2 months from initial discovery of alleged misconduct. Professors who require an extension on reporting due to material collection must contact the office directly for guidance.

It is the professor's responsibility to provide all the material necessary to support the referral. The Academic Standards Office does not investigate cases and does not gather materials to support referrals. If the office receives material that are not sufficient to understand or identify the nature of the alleged violation, the professor will be notified and given the opportunity to amend their submission with materials that provide a clearer view of the allegations. Faculty must submit the requested materials within five business days of the Academic Standard's Office request for additional information. If additional information is not provided to support the allegation, the referral may be dismissed without a hearing.

The Academic Standards Office reserves the right to dismiss referrals without a hearing when (1) the materials provided do not clearly outline the alleged violation, (2) there is insufficient material to support the allegation, or (3) the referral is not made in a timely manner.

Grade Updates

The professor is responsible for updating the student's grade after the case is referred to the academic standards office is complete, including any relevant appeal period. The professor will be notified after the resolution of the case regarding the grade assigned according to the university sanctioning matrix. If a case is not resolved by the time grades are due, the professor shall insert a grade of HC into Banner. Upon resolution of the case, the professor will work with their department and the Registrar's Office to complete the necessary paperwork to update the student's grade.

Educational Requirements

While cases are being investigated, faculty are expected to continue to teach referred students and assign earned grades to any submitted assessments/assignments as long as the student is enrolled in the class. Should the student be involved in another alleged violation, the faculty member should refer the student through the referral portal on the Academic Standards website. Even after a sanction that results in a failure of the class, faculty are also expected to teach referred students and assign earned grades to any submitted assessments/assignments as long as the student is enrolled in the class.

AP.9.5 Sanctions

Mason uses an institutional sanctioning matrix to assign grade-related sanctions, educational sanctions, and potential institutional separation depending on the violation level. The sanctioning matrix is the definitive document outlining what sanctions, including grade sanctions, will occur if a student is found in violation of the institution's Academic Standards and will not be deviated from.

Level Definitions

Level 1 Violations

Level 1 violations are defined as incidents that are not considered egregious as defined below. A referral will be sanctioned according to the Level 1 Sanction matrix if all the following conditions are met:

- The violation is not considered egregious.
- The individual has no previous record with the university of violating academic standards or a former academic integrity violation.
- The student is either an undergraduate with fewer than 60 credits, or less than one year of coursework at Mason OR
- A non-Doctoral (e.g., JD, PhD, EdD, etc.) graduate student in their first semester of study

Level 2 Violations

Level 2 violations are defined as being of a more serious nature and merit a more severe institutional response. A referral will be sanctioned according to the Level 2 sanctions if at least one of the following conditions is met:

- The violation is **egregious, as determined by the Academic Standards Office**. Examples of egregious violations may include
 - A substantial or significant portion of the assignment was copied, plagiarized, and/or the result of cheating
 - Fabricated evidence (e.g., submitted edited screenshots as evidence for a grade adjustment, fake doctor's notes, falsified internship updates, impersonation, falsified evidence submitted as part of an academic standards case)
 - Fabricated project data
 - Providing or attempting to provide financial compensation in exchange for academic work (e.g., contract cheating)
 - Failure to include a co-author on a manuscript submitted for presentation or publication
 - Multiple, separate violations related to the same assignment
 - The violation had an impact on individuals who were not involved in committing the offense, such as a collaborative project
 - Violations involving elements of professional credentialing
- The individual has a previous record of violating academic standards or academic integrity.
- The student has sufficient experience within the academic environment that a violation would be considered more serious.
 - Undergraduates that have been at Mason for at least a year beyond their 1st semester of Graduate study
 - Any violation committed by a Doctoral or other post-graduate (e.g., PhD, JD, EdD) student

Typical Academic and Educational Sanctions

Violations of Academic Standards are sanctioned using a common matrix. Sanctions include both educational and administrative components. The sanctioning matrix is the definitive document outlining the minimum mandatory sanctions, including grade sanctions, that will be imposed if a student is found to have violated the institution's Academic Standards.

Student violations of Academic Standards are sanctioned according to following matrix:

Academic Standards Sanctioning Matrix			
	Violation Number**	Undergraduate Student	Graduate Student
Level 1	1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0% on the assessment and an additional letter grade reduction in the final course grade Educational Interventions* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0% on the assessment and an additional letter grade reduction in the final course grade Educational Interventions*
Level 2	1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure of relevant Course or Assessment (comprehensive exams, dissertation, thesis, etc.) Educational Interventions* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure of relevant Course or Assessment (comprehensive exams, dissertation, thesis, etc.) Educational Interventions*
	2nd	Suspension for one semester	Suspension for one semester
	3rd	Suspension for one year	Permanent dismissal
	4th	Permanent dismissal	

* *Educational Interventions may include online learning modules, visits to the Writing Center, or other programs to assist the student in understanding and remediating the violation. These will be determined by the Office of Academic Standards.*

** The violation number includes all violations of Academic Standards and the Honor Code.

Exceptions to the Sanctioning Matrix

In some cases, violations of Academic Standards rise to a level that warrants a pause or removal from studies on the first violation. Examples of violations that can lead to suspension or permanent dismissal on the first violation include, but are not limited to, contract cheating, dishonesty on credentialing exams, improper use of restricted lab facilities, and other exceptionally egregious violations.

AP.9.6 Record Keeping and Reporting

An academic standards referral is part of a student’s educational record and is subject to guidelines put forth by the Library of Virginia ([GS-111](#)) and laws and statutes put forth by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Please note that the retention length in Virginia is a minimum suggestion and maximum retention length may vary from institution to institution; Academic Standards records at George Mason University are kept for ten years. Educational records are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (F.E.R.P.A.). As such, only the student has the right to access them. A student may sign a waiver allowing access to a third party for a specified time. Without a waiver, the Academic Standards office does not share information with anyone who does not have an educational need to know.

The records of any student found to have not violated academic standards or whose case is dismissed will not be reportable.

Resolutions that result in altered grades and/or educational sanctions do not have transcript notation. However, a resolution that results in a suspension or permanent dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript with an academic standards designation. A transcript notation will be made if a student withdraws from the university while under investigation for academic dishonesty.

If a student applies for a graduate program, internship, or job that requires a background or records check, OAS will not share information protected by F.E.R.P.A. without a signed waiver from the student.

Record retention schedules adhere to all federal, state, and institutional regulations and cannot be amended or altered by the Academic Standards Office or George Mason University.

Motion 2: Revisions to reporting timeline requirements

Original Text

All suspected violations in any semester must be reported to the Academic Standards Office by the deadline for that semester's grades or within 2 months from initial discovery of alleged misconduct. Professors who require an extension on reporting due to material collection must contact the office directly for guidance.

Revised Text

All suspected violations ~~in any semester must~~ should be reported to the Academic Standards Office ~~by the deadline for that semester's grades or within 2 months~~ within six weeks from initial discovery of alleged misconduct. ~~Professors~~ Individuals who require an extension on reporting due to material collection must contact the office directly for guidance.

Motion 3: Level 2 violations for all graduate students and undergraduates who have completed 60 credits or more of coursework

Original Text

Level 1 Violations

Level 1 violations are defined as incidents that are not considered egregious as defined below. A referral will be sanctioned according to the Level 1 Sanction matrix if all the following conditions are met:

- The violation is not considered egregious.

- The individual has no previous record with the university of violating academic standards or a former academic integrity violation.
- The student is either an undergraduate with fewer than 60 credits, or less than one year of coursework at Mason OR
- A non-Doctoral (e.g., JD, PhD, EdD, etc.) graduate student in their first semester of study

Revised Text

Level 1 Violations

Level 1 violations are defined as incidents that are not considered egregious as defined below. A referral will be sanctioned according to the Level 1 Sanction matrix if all the following conditions are met:

- The violation is not considered egregious.
- The individual has no previous record with the university of violating academic standards or a former academic integrity violation.
- ~~The student is either an undergraduate with fewer than 60 credits, or less than one year of coursework at Mason OR~~
- ~~A non-Doctoral (e.g., JD, PhD, EdD, etc.) graduate student in their first semester of study~~

Original Text

Level 2 Violations

(final bullet point)

- The student has sufficient experience within the academic environment that a violation would be considered more serious.
 - Undergraduates that have been at Mason for at least a year beyond their 1st semester of Graduate study
 - Any violation committed by a Doctoral or other post-graduate (e.g., PhD, JD, EdD) student

Revised Text

- The student has sufficient experience within the academic environment that a violation would be considered more serious.
 - Undergraduates ~~that~~ who have ~~been at Mason for at least a year~~ and 60 or more credits of completed coursework
 - Graduate students ~~beyond their 1st semester of Graduate study~~

PMG Cover Sheet

Policy name and number: Graduate Faculty Status and Master's Thesis and Dissertation Committees

- AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis
- AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo
- AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee
- AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration
- AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo
- AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty Status

Responsible office or committee: Graduate Division, Office of the Provost

Type of policy:

- University Catalog
- University Policy
- Faculty Handbook
- Code of Student Conduct
- Other policy or guidelines (e.g., graduate hiring guidelines, etc.)

University Policy Type (if a numbered University Policy)

- Academic Policies
- Computing
- Financial
- General Policies
- Human Resources
- Research
- Risk, Safety, & Resilience
- Student Policies

Policy proposal type:

- New policy
- Substantial revision
- Minor revision
- Renewal with no changes
- Rescind policy

Emergency approval requested:

- Yes (must include compelling reason in the "why" paragraph below)
- No

If you are submitting a revised policy, you should submit them with changes tracked in a Microsoft Word document.

Why is this policy or revision being proposed?

There are several reasons for the proposed changes to *AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis*; *AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo*; *AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee*; *AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration*; *AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo*; and *AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty Status*, including a forthcoming change to the graduate grading scale and the need for clarification regarding Graduate Faculty Status.

- 1) Changes to the Graduate Grading scale, including the addition of a Satisfactory Withdrawal (SW) grade, require updates to *AP.6.9.3* and *AP.6.10.6*. The proposed revisions add the SW grading option for Master's Thesis courses and Dissertation courses (998, 999).
- 2) The current language surrounding Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) (*AP.6.9.3*, *AP.6.10.5*, *AP.6.13*) is confusing. The proposed revisions provided clearer definitions, including what is currently known as "legacy" status which does not exist administratively; that term has been replaced by a clearer and simpler process.
- 3) The remaining proposed revisions are intended to reduce duplication and communicate policy through clear, direct language.

In addition, *AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo* and *AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo* have been updated to reflect new Academic Standards policy.

Who has been involved or consulted with in the creation/revision of this policy already?

Graduate Division, College/School Associate Deans (or equivalent), Office of University Registrar, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee, Policy Management Group.

Questions and feedback raised in and after PMG (to be added after PMG review):

Signature Routing Form

(to be created by PMG co-chairs for numbered University Policies only)

Reviewers & date of review:

- **Policy Management Group** 1/27/26
- **Graduate Council** On agenda — 2/25/26
- **Faculty Senate**
- **University Counsel** under review
- **Compliance and Ethics** 2/2/26

Senior approving officials- signatures and dates

- **Signature 1**
- **Signature 2**

GRADUATE FACULTY STATUS REVISIONS

FEBRUARY 2026

AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours in the first term of their Master's thesis research course and maintain continuous enrollment, excluding summer, each term until the thesis is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library with the exception of terms in which a student is on a Graduate Leave of Absence. Master's students enrolled for 1 credit of a Master's thesis research course may be considered in status (either full-time or half-time) if the following requirement is met: the student, advisor, and program director/chair must certify each semester that the student has completed 3 credits of Master's thesis work and is working full-time or half-time on the thesis using the process provided by the [Office of the University Registrar](#) prior to the first day of classes for the term. See AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Status Classification for more information.

Students who plan to complete their thesis in the summer term must register for at least 1 credit of the Master's thesis course in that term. Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for thesis submission but do submit successfully before the next term begins do not have to register for the Master's thesis course in the next term. Such students must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred. Students completing a Master's thesis should obtain a copy of George Mason's *Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide*.

For further information on grading notations in Master's thesis courses, academic standing, and impact on program requirements, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales, AP.3.3 Additional Grade Notations, and AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing.

Committee Size and Composition

The Master's Thesis Committee provides guidance and oversight of the student's thesis research, writing, and defense. The Thesis Committee Chair is primarily responsible for directing the student's research and writing activities. The Thesis Committee is composed of at least 3 faculty, at least 1 of whom must be from the student's department or program, who hold Graduate Faculty Status (See AP.6.13) and possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study. The Thesis Committee Chair must also have a full-time appointment. Faculty who do not hold Graduate Faculty Status may serve as additional members, beyond the 3, provided they are Affiliate Faculty (See Faculty Handbook 2.1.7) and hold expertise relevant to the student's field or study. The student is responsible for keeping all committee members informed of the scope, plan, and progress of the research as well as the writing of the thesis.

The Committee formation process requires the approval of the student, all committee members, and the department chair or program director and must be completed before the student registers for the Master's thesis research course. A committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval process required by the student's degree program.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's thesis committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's thesis work until completion, including the summer term if a student is expected to graduate during that term.

AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo

Master's students may be required to complete a thesis. All theses must be successfully submitted to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). A Master's student who completes a Project may be required by their degree program to submit it to MARS.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All thesis submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the [UDTS website](#).

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their thesis in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the thesis. For example, if equations or special symbols or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered, then those corrections alone are permitted.
2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the thesis and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school, and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their thesis, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10

years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's thesis chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the college/school must approve the student's petition in writing in accordance with UDS procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university website whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDS. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new thesis release date by UDS. Once the embargo period has passed, the thesis will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the thesis's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDS procedures, that may include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university websites the process for initiating an embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDS will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new thesis release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDS Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee provides guidance and oversight of the student's dissertation research, writing, and defense. This committee may also function as the program committee, facilitating the design and approval of the student's program of study, conducting required examinations, and/or regularly assessing the student's progress and accomplishments. It is encouraged for at least 1 member to come from outside the department or program faculty.

Committee selections are initiated by the student after consultation with their proposed Dissertation Committee Chair. The committee formation process requires approval of the student, all committee members, and the department chair or program director. A

committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval process required by the student's degree program.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's dissertation progress until completion, including the summer if a student is expected to graduate during that term. Individuals who become unable to serve in their roles must notify the Dissertation Committee Chair, the student, other committee members, and the relevant department chair or program director as soon as possible.

Committee Size and Composition

Committee Size: Doctoral candidates must have a Dissertation Committee made up of a Chair (Member #1) and at least 2 other members (Member #2; Member #3). Graduate Faculty Status (see AP.6.13) is required at the time of committee formation for any position requiring Graduate Faculty Status.

Committee Chairs: Faculty members at George Mason University may serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs (Member #1) as long as they hold Graduate Faculty Status, have a full-time appointment in the student's department or program, and possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study. If a Dissertation Committee Chair leaves the university, retires, or becomes otherwise unavailable to serve as Chair during the student's course of study (e.g., extended medical leave, unable to continue while on parental leave or study leave), a new Dissertation Committee Chair must be confirmed. It is expected that a new committee will be formed within one semester of a Dissertation Committee Chair becoming unavailable. The previous individual may continue their committee service as a Dissertation Committee Co-Chair if they hold the necessary status.

Committee Co-Chairs: Some programs may permit a Dissertation Committee Co-Chair. The only requirements for service as Dissertation Committee Co-Chair are George Mason Graduate Faculty Status and expertise relevant to the student's field of study. A Co-Chair designee may count as Member #2 or Member #3 if they meet all Member requirements.

Committee Members: Member #2 of the dissertation committee is required to be full-time George Mason Faculty, hold Graduate Faculty Status, and have expertise relevant to the student's field of study. Member #3 of the Dissertation Committee is required to hold Graduate Faculty Status and have expertise relevant to the student's field of study. Member #4 and any additional Committee members, as required by the program or requested by the student, must have expertise relevant to the student's field of study and hold Affiliate Faculty Status (See Faculty Handbook 2.1.7) if external to the university.

Changes to Dissertation Committee: Students may request changes to the composition of their Dissertation Committee at any time. Changes involving the Dissertation Committee

Chair or Co-Chair require the approval of the Program Director and all committee members. Changes only involving committee members other than the Chair or Co-Chair require approval of the Dissertation Committee Chair and the Program Director.

Individual programs may have more restrictive policies. If so, those restrictions apply. Students are referred to their degree program for more information. If changes in faculty status result in a Dissertation Committee member who no longer meets the established minimum requirements for the university or program, no additional degree milestones may be completed or approved until the Dissertation Committee has been reformed or membership requirements have otherwise been met.

Committee Structure

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
Chair (Member #1; required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason Faculty with a full-time appointment in the student's academic program Graduate Faculty Status Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #2 (required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason Faculty with a full-time appointment in any academic program Graduate Faculty Status Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #3 (required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason Graduate Faculty Status Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #4 (if required by program or requested by student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason Affiliate Faculty Status (if external)

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise related to student's field of study
Co-chair (if present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Graduate Faculty Status • Expertise related to student's field of study
Additional members (if present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Affiliate Faculty • Expertise related to student's field of study

AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration (998, 999)

All registration for doctoral dissertation research (999) must be planned with the Dissertation Chair and approved by the dean or director of the school, college, or institute. Dissertation research (999) is open only to doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy.

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits of 999 in their first term of dissertation research. After that term, students must enroll for at least 1 credit of 999 per term (excluding summer), unless on a Graduate Leave of Absence, until they have completed the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999 required by the university and their degree program, the dissertation is complete, and the dissertation has been successfully submitted to the library. See AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Classification for more information.

Students must be registered for at least 1 credit of 999 in the term in which they defend their dissertation, including summer. Individual doctoral programs may require continuous registration beginning with doctoral dissertation proposal (998). Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for dissertation submission but do submit successfully before the next term begins do not have to register for 999 in the next term but must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred.

It is the student's responsibility to complete registration for 998 or 999, as applicable, prior to the first day of classes for the term. If this date is missed, students must still enroll in these courses via Add or Late Schedule Adjustment procedures and are subject to Late

Registration fees. Failing to register on time in a particular term does not alter the requirement for continuous registration in 999.

For further information on grading notations in Master's thesis courses, academic standing, and impact on program requirements, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales, AP.3.3 Additional Grade Notations, and AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing.

AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo

Doctoral students are required to submit their dissertations to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). Doctoral students must also complete a Survey of Earned Doctorates.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All dissertation submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with this policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the [UDTS website](#).

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their dissertation in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the dissertation. For example, if equations or special symbols or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered then those corrections alone are permitted.
2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the dissertation and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their dissertation, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10 years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's dissertation chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the

college/school must approve the student's petition in writing and in accordance with UDTs procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university webpage whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDTs. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new dissertation release date by UDTs. Once the embargo period has passed, dissertations will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the dissertation's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTs procedures that may include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university website the process for initiating and embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTs will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new dissertation release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDTs Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty Status

To serve in required positions on master's thesis (AP.6.9.3) or dissertation committees (AP.6.10.5), faculty must hold Graduate Faculty Status at George Mason. Individuals attain Graduate Faculty Status through their rank as tenured or tenure-track George Mason faculty members or through a nomination process. Graduate Faculty Status applies across the institution. The Office of the Provost coordinates nominations for Graduate Faculty Status and maintains the corresponding list of approved individuals.

George Mason tenured and tenure-track faculty are automatically granted Graduate Faculty Status upon employment. They maintain that status throughout their employment as tenure-line faculty unless explicitly designated otherwise. Administrative service does not affect the active Graduate Faculty Status of tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Each program or department that administers graduate degrees may, at its discretion and at any time, nominate individuals who hold a terminal degree and have suitable academic training and research experience for Graduate Faculty Status. These individuals may be

George Mason employees or individuals external to the university who hold Affiliate Faculty Status. Graduate Faculty Status will be granted for a term of three years unless explicitly designated for a shorter period of time.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty who leave the institution due to retirement or separation will continue to maintain Graduate Faculty Status for a period of 3 years unless it is rescinded. Term faculty with Graduate Faculty Status will retain that status until the end of the Graduate Faculty Status approval term. Faculty who leave the institution need Affiliate Faculty Status to serve on a thesis or dissertation committee. Individuals who are within a year of their Graduate Faculty Status expiring may be renewed.

Programs or departments, with approval of their Dean, may rescind Graduate Faculty Status for individuals they nominated. Individuals may resign from Graduate Faculty Status and such resignations are considered permanent.

PROPOSED GRADUATE FACULTY STATUS REVISIONS [TRACKED CHANGES] FEBRUARY 2026

AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis

When a thesis proposal has been approved by the appropriate unit, the program director/chair sends the collegiate dean or director a copy of the thesis proposal, including the approval signatures of the master's thesis committee members. Students may enroll in thesis research (799) at the beginning of the next semester. Students must register for a minimum of three credit hours in their first semester of 799. After that semester, students must enroll for at least one credit of 799 per semester, unless on a Leave of Absence, until the thesis is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library. Such students enrolled for one credit of 799 may be considered in status (either full-time or half-time), if the following requirement is met: the student, advisor, and program director/chair must certify each semester that the student is working full-time or half-time on the thesis, using the form provided by the [Office of the University Registrar](#) prior to the first day of classes for the semester. See [AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Status Classification](#) for more information. **Please note: Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment in**

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours in their first term of 799. Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment in 798 and 799, excluding summers, each term until the thesis is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library, with the exception of terms in which a student is on a **Leave of Absence. Students who are completing their thesis in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of 799 in the summer.** Graduate Leave of Absence. This includes any student not in attendance at Mason who wishes to take an exam or is preparing a thesis under the active supervision of a member of the faculty. Such students enrolled for 1 credit of 798 or 799 may be considered in status (either full-time or half-time) if the following requirement is met: the student, advisor, and program director/chair must certify each semester that the student has completed 3 credits of 798 or 799 and is working full-time or half-time on the thesis using the process provided by the Office of the University Registrar prior to the first day of classes for the term. See [AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Status Classification](#) for more information.

Students who plan to complete their thesis in the summer must register for at least 1 credit of 799 in the term. Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for thesis submission but do submit successfully before the next semester begins do not have to register for 799 in the next semester. Such students must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred. If satisfactory progress is being made, students registered in 799 are graded IP until work is complete; at that time they are graded S/NC. If progress is unsatisfactory in a semester, a grade of NC will be assigned. When the thesis is completed, a final grade of S or NC is assigned, and previous IP grades are updated by the Office of the University Registrar to reflect the final S or NC grade. If the student voluntarily resigns or is terminated due to time limit, the grade of NC will be assigned. NC credits do not count toward minimum program requirements for 799. Insufficient 799 progress in a semester may impact international student eligibility for Optional Practical Training.

Students should confirm their local academic unit's policy regarding the impact of an NC on eligibility for termination (See AP.6.6.2).

Students selecting the thesis option should obtain a copy of Mason's *Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide*. Students may register in 799 only after their thesis proposal has been submitted and approved as prescribed in the guide. **Any student not in attendance at Mason who is preparing a thesis under the active supervision of a member of the faculty or wishes to take an exam must maintain continuous registration in 799 for at least 1 credit per semester.**

If satisfactory progress is made in a term, students registered in 798 or 799 are graded IP until the work is complete. A final grade of S or SW counts toward minimum program requirements; a final grade of NC does not count toward minimum program requirements. For further information on grading notations for 798 and 799, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales and AP.3.3 Additional Undergraduate and Graduate Grade Notations.

Students completing a Master's Thesis should obtain a copy of George Mason's *Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide*.

Committee Size and Composition

The master's thesis committee ~~The Thesis Committee~~ provides guidance and oversight of the student's thesis research, writing, and defense. The Master's Thesis Committee is composed of at least three members of the graduate ~~3~~ faculty, who hold Graduate Faculty Status (See AP.6.13), at least ~~one~~ 1 of whom must be from the student's department or program. Faculty who ~~are do~~ not members of the graduate faculty or other appropriate persons ~~hold Graduate Faculty Status~~ may serve as additional members ~~beyond the 3~~ provided they are ~~affiliate faculty~~ Affiliate Faculty (See AP.2.1.7) and hold expertise relevant to the ~~student's~~ student's field or study.

Committee members are appointed by the chair or director of the academic unit or program, or designee, after consultation with the student's advisor and the student.

The committee

The ~~Committee~~ formation process requires the approval of the student, all committee members, and ~~their~~ the department chair or program director ~~and must be completed before the student registers for 799~~. A committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval workflow required by the student's degree program.

Only a member of the graduate faculty ~~Faculty members at George Mason University~~ with a full-time appointment ~~at George Mason University~~ may serve as the thesis chair. ~~Thesis Committee Chairs as long as they hold Graduate Faculty Status and possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study~~. The ~~thesis committee chair~~ Thesis Committee Chair is primarily responsible for directing the candidate's research and writing activities. The student is responsible for keeping all committee members informed of the scope, plan, and progress of the research as well as the writing of the thesis.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's thesis committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's thesis work until completion, including the summer term if a student is expected to graduate during that term.

AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo

Master's students may be required to complete a thesis. All theses must be successfully submitted to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). A Master's student who completes a Project may be required by their degree program to submit it to MARS.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All thesis submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the [UDTS website](#).

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their thesis in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the thesis. For example, if equations or special symbols or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered, then those corrections alone are permitted.
2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the thesis and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school, and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their thesis, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10 years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's thesis chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the college/school must approve the student's petition in writing in accordance with UDTS procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university website whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDTS. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new thesis release date by UDTS. Once the embargo period has passed, the thesis will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the thesis's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTS procedures, that may

include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university websites the process for initiating an embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTS will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new thesis release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDTS Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee provides guidance and oversight of the student's dissertation research, writing, and defense. This committee may also function as the program committee, facilitating the design and approval of the student's program of study, conducting required examinations, and/or regularly assessing the student's progress and accomplishments. It is encouraged for at least 1 member to come from outside the program faculty. ~~It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's committee will be available throughout the student's degree until completion. Individuals who become unable to serve in their roles should notify the Dissertation Committee Chair, the student, other committee members, and the relevant program director as soon as possible.~~

Committee selections are initiated by the student after consultation with their proposed Dissertation Committee Chair. The committee formation process requires ~~the~~ approval of the student, all committee members, and ~~their~~ department chair or program director. A committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval workflow required by the student's degree program.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's dissertation progress until completion, including the summer term if a student is expected to graduate during that term. Individuals who become unable to serve in their roles should notify the Dissertation Committee Chair, the student, other committee members, and the relevant program director as soon as possible.

Committee Size and Composition

Committee Size: Doctoral candidates must have a Dissertation Committee made up of a Chair (Member #1) and at least ~~two~~2 other members (Member #1,2; Member #2; Active 3). Graduate Faculty ~~status~~Status is required at the time of appointment for any position requiring Graduate Faculty ~~status~~.Status (see AP.6.13).

Committee Chairs: Full-time facultyFaculty members at George Mason University may serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs (Member #1) as long as they ~~are members of the hold~~ Graduate Faculty; ~~they are members of the core faculty for Status, have full-time appointments in~~ the student's ~~degree~~academic program, and ~~they~~ possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study. Full-time

term or administrative / professional faculty members at George Mason University may serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs as long as they are members of the Mason Graduate Faculty. Graduate Faculty status is detailed in AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty.

If the Chair of a Dissertation Committee Chair leaves the university, retires, goes on leave (that removes them from full-time status), or becomes otherwise unavailable during the student's course of study, (e.g., administrative leave, extended medical leave, unable to continue while on parental leave or study leave), a new Dissertation Committee Chair must be appointed. It is expected that a new committee will be formed within one semester of a Dissertation Committee Chair becoming unavailable. The previous individual may continue their committee service as a Dissertation Committee Co-~~chair~~Chair if they hold the necessary status.

Committee Co-~~chairs~~Chairs: Some programs may permit a committeeDissertation Committee Co-~~chair~~Chair. The only requirement for service as Dissertation Committee Co-Chair is George Mason Graduate Faculty Status and expertise relevant to the student's field of study. The Co-~~chair~~Chair designee may count as Member #12 or Member #2 if they meet all requirements3.

Committee Members on Dissertation Committees: Member #12 of the dissertation committee is required to be full-time George Mason Faculty, a member of Mason's hold Graduate Faculty Status, and hold have expertise and credentials relevant to the student's field of study.

Member #23 of the dissertation committeeDissertation Committee is required to be a member of Mason's hold Graduate Faculty Status and hold have expertise and appropriate credentials relevant to the student's field of study.

Member #3, ~~if 4~~ and any additional Committee members, as required by the program or requested by the student, must be a member of Mason's Graduate Faculty, and hold expertise relevant to the student's field of study. It is encouraged for this member to come from outside the program's core faculty:

Additional members may be added to the committee, provided they are affiliate faculty and hold have expertise relevant to the student's field of study and hold Affiliate Faculty Status if external to the university. See AP.2.1.7 for further information.

All committee members are required to hold suitable academic training and research experience as well as an appropriate terminal degree. This credentialing is established through the attainment of Graduate Faculty status, detailed in AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty. Only individuals that hold Graduate Faculty status are eligible to approve degree milestones, such as the comprehensive exam, advancement to candidacy, and the final dissertation defense.

Changes to Dissertation Committee: Students may request changes to the composition of their Dissertation Committee at any time. Changes involving the chair or co-chair, including moving a committee member into or out of a chair or co-chair role, Dissertation Committee Chair or Co-Chair require the approval of the Program Director and all committee members. Changes only involving committee members other than the Chair or Co-Chair require at least the approval of the committee chairDissertation Committee Chair and the Program Director.

If changes in faculty status result in a committee thatDissertation Committee member who no longer meets the established minimum requirements for the university or program, no additional degree milestones may be completed or approved until the Dissertation Committee has been reformed or membership requirements have otherwise been met.

Additional Requirements

Individual programs may have more restrictive policies. If so, those restrictions apply. Students are referred to their degree program for more information.

Committee Structure

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
Chair (<u>Member #1</u> ; required member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Full-time</u>George Mason Faculty <u>with a full-time appointment in the student's academic program</u>• <u>Mason</u> Graduate Faculty <u>Status</u>
•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Member of the program's core faculty</u>• Expertise related to student's field of study
Member # <u>12</u> (required member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Full-time</u>George Mason Faculty <u>with a full-time appointment in any Mason LAU academic program</u>1. <u>Mason</u> Graduate Faculty <u>Status</u>
•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Expertise related to student's field of study</u>
Member #2 (required member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Mason</u> Graduate Faculty
	1. <u>Expertise related to student's field of study</u>
Member #3 (if required by program)	1. <u>George</u> Mason Graduate Faculty <u>Status</u>
--	1. <u>Expertise related to student's field of study</u>
Co-chair (if present)Member #4 (if required by program or requested by student)	1. <u>Mason</u> Graduate faculty <u>George Mason Affiliate Faculty Status (if external)</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Expertise related to student's field of study</u>

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
Additional members Co-chair (if present)	1. • George Mason Affiliates Graduate Faculty Status
2.	1. • Expertise related to student's field of study
Committee Structure Additional members (if present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Affiliates Faculty • Expertise related to student's field of study

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AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration (998, 999)

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits of 999 in their first semester (excluding summers) of dissertation research. After that semester, students must enroll for at least one credit of 999 per semester, unless on a Leave of Absence, until they have completed the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999 required by the university and their degree program, and the dissertation is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library. See [AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Classification](#) for more information. If satisfactory progress is being made, students registered in 998 or 999 are graded IP until work in 998 or 999, respectively, is complete; at that time they are graded S/NC. If progress is unsatisfactory in a semester, a grade of NC will be assigned. When the dissertation is completed, a final grade of S or NC is assigned, and previous IP grades are updated by the Office of the University Registrar to reflect the final S or NC grade. If the student voluntarily resigns or is terminated due to time limit, the grade of NC will be assigned. NC credits do not count toward minimum program requirements for 999. Insufficient 999 progress in a semester may impact international student eligibility for Optional Practical Training. Students should confirm their local academic unit's policy regarding the impact of an NC on eligibility for termination (see [AP.6.6.2](#)).

All registration for doctoral dissertation research (999) must be planned with the [dissertation director](#) [Dissertation Chair](#) and approved by the dean or director of the school, college, or institute. Dissertation research (999) is open only to doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy. Once enrolled in 999, students must maintain continuous registration in 999 each semester until the dissertation is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library, excluding summers and terms in which the student is on a Leave of Absence. Students who defend in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of 999 in the summer. Individual doctoral programs may require continuous registration beginning with 998. Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for dissertation submission, but do submit successfully before the next semester begins, do not have to register for 999 in that next semester, but must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred.

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits of 999 in their first term of dissertation research. After that term, students must enroll for at least 1 credit of 999 per term (excluding summer), unless on a Graduate Leave of Absence, until they have completed the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999 required by the university and their degree program, the dissertation is complete, and the dissertation has been successfully submitted to the library. See AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Classification for more information.

Students must be registered for at least 1 credit of 999 in the term in which they defend their dissertation. Individual doctoral programs may require continuous registration beginning with doctoral dissertation proposal (998). Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for dissertation submission but do submit successfully before the next semester begins do not have to register for 999 in the next term but must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred.

It is the student's responsibility to complete registration for dissertation proposal (998)998 or research (999), as applicable, prior to the first day of classes for the semesterterm. If this date is missed, students must still enroll in these courses via Add or Late Schedule Adjustment procedures and are subject to Late Registration fees. Failing to register on time in a particular semesterterm does not alter the requirement for continuous registration in 999.

If satisfactory progress is made in a term, students registered in 998 or 999 are graded IP until the work is complete. A final grade of S or SW counts toward minimum program requirements; a final grade of NC does not count toward minimum program requirements. For further information on grading notations for 998 and 999, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales and AP.3.3 Additional Undergraduate and Graduate Grade Notations.

AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo

Doctoral students are required to submit their dissertations to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). Doctoral students must also complete a Survey of Earned Doctorates.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All dissertation submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with this policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the UDTS website.

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their dissertation in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the dissertation. For example, if equations or special symbols

or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered then those corrections alone are permitted.

2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the dissertation and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their dissertation, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10 years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's dissertation chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the college/school must approve the student's petition in writing and in accordance with UDTS procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university webpage whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDTS. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new dissertation release date by UDTS. Once the embargo period has passed, dissertations will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the dissertation's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTS procedures that may include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university website the process for initiating and embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTS will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new dissertation release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDTS Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty [Status](#)

[There are two types of graduateTo serve in required positions on thesis \(AP.6.9.3\) or dissertation committees \(AP.6.10.5\), faculty must hold Graduate Faculty Status at George Mason University; active and legacy, graduate faculty.](#) Individuals attain [active graduate statusGraduate Faculty Status](#) through their rank as tenured or tenure-track [George](#) Mason faculty members or through a

nomination process. ~~Once active, graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#) applies across the institution. ~~The process to nominate individuals for Graduate Faculty Status is coordinated through the Office of the Provost and a list of active graduate faculty~~ [individuals with Graduate Faculty Status](#) will be maintained by the Office of the Provost.

Mason tenured and tenure-track faculty are automatically granted ~~active graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#) upon employment. They maintain that status throughout their employment as tenure-line faculty, unless explicitly designated otherwise. Administrative service does not affect the active ~~graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#) of tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Each local academic unit that administers graduate degrees may, at its discretion and at any time, nominate individuals ~~that~~ [who](#) hold a terminal degree ~~and have suitable academic training and research experience~~ for ~~active graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#). These individuals may be ~~George~~ Mason employees or individuals external to the university. ~~Through this process, active graduate faculty status who hold Affiliate Faculty Status. Graduate Faculty Status will be granted for a term of three years unless explicitly designated for a shorter. The process to nominate individuals for active graduate faculty status is coordinated through the Office period of the Provost. Individuals, who are within a year or less of their active graduate faculty status expiring, may be renewed through the same process. Local academic units, with approval of their Dean, may rescind graduate faculty status for individuals that they nominated. time.~~

~~If active graduate faculty status lapses due to retirement, separation, or expiration of a term of active graduate faculty status, the individual may move into legacy graduate faculty status. As a legacy graduate faculty member, the individual maintains their ability to serve on student committees on which they are already a member, but they may not be added to new committees (or re-added to existing committees if removed). In cases of separation of tenured and tenure-track faculty, the terms of the separation will indicate if the individual receives legacy graduate faculty status. In cases of individuals nominated for graduate faculty status, the nominating local academic unit determines their eligibility for legacy graduate faculty status at the time of nomination. Local academic units may impose additional restrictions on eligibility for legacy graduate faculty status.~~

~~Individuals may, at any time;~~

~~Tenured and tenure-track faculty who leave the institution due to retirement or separation will continue to maintain Graduate Faculty Status for a period of 3 years unless it is rescinded. Term faculty with Graduate Faculty Status will retain that status until the end of the Graduate Faculty Status approval term. Faculty who leave the institution need Affiliate Faculty Status to serve on a thesis or dissertation committee. Individuals who are within a year of their Graduate Faculty Status expiring may be renewed.~~

~~Local academic units, with approval of their Dean, may rescind Graduate Faculty Status for individuals they nominated. Individuals may resign from graduate faculty status, active or legacy. Graduate Faculty Status and such resignations are considered permanent. Individuals in legacy graduate faculty status are removed from status once the students whose committees they serve on have either (i) graduated, (ii) resigned, (iii) been terminated, (iv) become inactive, or (v) have reformed their committees without the individual in question.~~

PMG Cover Sheet

Policy name and number: **Previously Earned Graduate Credit**

- AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit
- AP.6.5.1 Graduate Transfer Credit Earned at an External Institution
- AP.6.5.2 External Exam Credit
- AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason
 - AP.6.5.3.1 Graduate Credit Earned in Degree-Seeking Status
 - AP.6.5.3.2 Graduate Credit Earned in Non-Degree-Seeking Status
 - AP.6.5.3.3 Graduate Credit Earned in Undergraduate Status (Non-Accelerated Programs)

Minor updates to related Academic Policies as necessitated by changes to AP.6.5:

- AP.6.4.1 Non-Degree Status Students
- AP.6.5.4 Permission to Study Elsewhere
- AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees
 - AP.6.7.1 Application and Admission
 - AP.6.7.2 Coursework Requirements
 - AP.6.7.3 Timeline Requirements
- AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates
- AP.6.9 Requirements for Master's Degrees
 - AP.6.9.6 Individualized Dual Master's Degree Programs
- AP.6.10 Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Responsible office or committee: Graduate Division, Office of the Provost

Type of policy:

- University Catalog
- University Policy
- Faculty Handbook
- Code of Student Conduct
- Other policy or guidelines (e.g., graduate hiring guidelines, etc.)

University Policy Type (if a numbered University Policy)

- Academic Policies
- Computing
- Financial
- General Policies
- Human Resources
- Research
- Risk, Safety, & Resilience
- Student Policies

Policy proposal type:

- New policy
- Substantial revision
- Minor revision
- Renewal with no changes
- Rescind policy

Emergency approval requested:

- Yes (must include compelling reason in the “why” paragraph below)
- No

If you are submitting a revised policy, you should submit them with changes tracked in a Microsoft Word document.

Why is this policy or revision being proposed?

In Fall 2024, George Mason implemented a significant revision to graduate credit application policies by eliminating the former Reduction of Credit (ROC) category and consolidating all previously earned graduate credit under a single Transfer of Credit (TOC) framework. Historically, ROC applied only to credits from a previously conferred degree while TOC applied to eligible graduate coursework not used toward a conferred degree.

Although this consolidation simplified the policy structure, implementation revealed operational and definitional challenges. Multiple types of previously earned credit are currently being processed through the “transfer” mechanism, even when they are not typically considered transfer credit. Additionally, workflow changes following the policy merger shifted processing responsibilities, creating inconsistencies in how credits are reflected in the degree audit and requiring additional unit-level intervention.

The proposed revisions aim to clarify the policy by more clearly defining the distinct categories of previously earned graduate credit that may be applied to a degree. Rather than relying on internal processing mechanisms to determine classification, the revised structure focuses on transparent, academically grounded distinctions. This will improve shared understanding among faculty, staff, and students; support consistent application across units; and create a more seamless and sustainable process moving forward.

The remaining proposed revisions are intended to reduce duplication and communicate policy through clear, direct language. Please note: Links to Academic Policies mentioned in this policy will be added at the final stage of the process.

Who has been involved or consulted with in the creation/revision of this policy already?

Graduate Division, College/School Associate Deans (or equivalent), Office of University Registrar, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee, Policy Management Group.

Questions and feedback raised in and after PMG (to be added after PMG review):

Signature Routing Form

(to be created by PMG co-chairs for numbered University Policies only)

Reviewers & date of review:

- **Policy Management Group** Upcoming — 2/24/26
- **Graduate Council** Upcoming — Introduced on 2/25/26
- **Faculty Senate** Anticipated March 2026
- **University Counsel** Anticipated March 2026
- **Compliance and Ethics** Vin Lacovara, Institutional Compliance Leader, 2/25

Senior approving officials- signatures and dates

- **Signature 1**
- **Signature 2**

PREVIOUSLY EARNED CREDIT REVISIONS

AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit

Previously earned graduate-level credit may be applied toward a George Mason graduate degree or certificate. Such credit may originate from external institutions, external examinations, or coursework completed at George Mason University prior to admission to the current program.

AP.6.5.1 Graduate Transfer Credit Earned at an External Institution

Relevant graduate course credits earned at an institution accredited by a George Mason-recognized U.S. institutional accrediting agency, international equivalent, or at another institution and recommended for graduate credit by the American Council on Education may be transferred and applied towards George Mason graduate degree or certificate programs.

This may include credits used for a previously conferred graduate degree or certificate. More than half of the required minimum credits applied to the George Mason degree must be earned at George Mason. Graduate credits earned at an external institution count towards credit hours only and are not included in the calculation of the George Mason grade point average (GPA).

Students must supply official transcripts and other information as requested, including an official transcript evaluation and translation for transcripts from outside the United States if not supplied during the admission process. The student's program is responsible for reviewing transcripts or other requested information to determine, in compliance with academic policies, whether credits are applicable to current graduate program requirements and eligible for transfer. Appeals of adverse decisions are not reviewed beyond the college or school's leadership unit and their published criteria.

Provisionally admitted students must fulfill the conditions of their admission and have the provisional qualifier removed from their records before graduate credit earned at an external institution will be processed.

The applicability of previously earned credit depends on factors including, but not limited to, source, age, grade, academic level, and alignment with program requirements. All students applying previously earned graduate credit must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the degree or certificate program. Students must meet institutional and any applicable unique credit requirements for their graduate program. Individual programs may have more restrictive policies and requirements. This policy does not supersede the requirements under University Policy 3007 Dual Degree Program Arrangements. See also AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree.

Requests to apply previously earned graduate credit to a degree or certificate program must be submitted within the following timeframes and must be approved and recorded prior to the student applying for graduation from the graduate degree or certificate program:

- 1 semester after admission to a certificate program;
- 1 year after admission to a master's degree program; or

- 2 years after admission to a doctoral program.

All previously earned credit requests must be:

- listed as a graduate-level course on the student's official transcript;
- earned as an admitted degree or non-degree status student;
- graded a minimum of B- or higher; and
- earned within 10 years of admission to the George Mason degree or certificate program unless an exception is approved by the student's school or college.

Courses graded "pass/fail" or "satisfactory/no credit" are acceptable if the grade is pass or satisfactory. Courses that follow another non-standard grading format will be evaluated by the student's program on a case-by-case basis. Extension and in-service courses not applied to a graduate degree or certificate program are not eligible.

AP.6.5.2 External Exam Credit

Degree credit for satisfactory completion of an external exam is limited to those exams and achievement levels specifically approved by the Graduate Council.

AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason

The applicability of previously earned graduate-level credit depends on factors including, but not limited to, source, age, grade, academic level, and alignment with program requirements. All students applying previously earned graduate credit must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the current degree or certificate program.

All previously earned credit must be:

- listed as a graduate-level course on the student's official transcript;
- earned as an admitted degree-seeking or non-degree status student;
- graded a minimum of B- or higher; and
- earned within 10 years of admission to the George Mason degree or certificate program unless exception is approved by the student's school or college.

Courses graded "pass/fail" or "satisfactory/no credit" are acceptable if the grade is pass or satisfactory. Courses that follow another non-standard grading format will be evaluated by the student's program on a case-by-case basis. Extension and in-service courses not applied to a graduate degree or certificate program are not eligible.

Students must meet both institutional and applicable unique credit requirements for their graduate program. Individual programs may have more restrictive policies and requirements. This policy

does not supersede requirements under University Policy 3007 Dual Degree Program Arrangements. See also AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree.

AP.6.5.3.1 Graduate Credit Earned in Degree-Seeking Status

Graduate-level credits previously earned at George Mason in graduate degree-seeking status will be included in the calculation of the graduate cumulative GPA for subsequent George Mason graduate programs. These credits will apply to subsequent equivalent graduate program requirements and be included in the calculation of the degree GPA for a subsequent George Mason graduate program unless excluded from the degree audit program requirements by the subsequent program. If a program does not approve the application of credits, they must submit a request for exclusion of previously earned credits from the program requirements within one year of the student's enrollment as an admitted student in the subsequent program.

AP.6.5.3.2 Graduate Credit Earned in Non-Degree-Seeking Status

Graduate credits previously earned at George Mason in non-degree-seeking status may be applied to graduate program requirements with program approval. Approved requests must be applied prior to applying for graduation from the specific graduate degree or certificate program. No more than 12 non-degree credits may count towards a George Mason degree or certificate. Applied credits are included in the calculation of the graduate cumulative and program GPA. See AP.6.4.1 Non-Degree Student Status for more information.

AP. 6.5.3.3 Graduate Credit Earned in Undergraduate Status (Non-Accelerated Programs)

Graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate student may apply towards a George Mason graduate degree or certificate program with program approval. See AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates. This does not apply to students enrolled in a Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's (BAM) Degree program (See AP.6.7).

No more than 12 graduate course credits may count towards both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree or certificate program. Approved requests must be applied prior to applying for graduation from the specific graduate degree or certificate program.

RELATED PREVIOUSLY EARNED CREDIT POLICIES

AP.6.4.1 Non-Degree Student Status

Students may pursue graduate study in non-degree status at George Mason. Such students who wish to pursue a degree or certificate program are encouraged to apply for program admission as soon as possible. All program admission requirements must be met.

All students must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the degree or certificate program. A maximum of 12 non-degree credits can be applied toward a degree or certificate. Graduate credits taken in non-degree status may not count towards more than two George Mason degree and/or certificate programs. See AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason.

AP.6.5.4 Permission to Study Elsewhere

Students enrolled in a degree program may take graduate courses at another accredited institution and apply these credits to a master's or doctoral degree with prior approval. Approval must be secured in writing from the director of the graduate program and the dean or director of the school, college, or institute, and submitted to George Mason's Office of the University Registrar before registering at the other institution. Upon completion of the course, students must arrange for an official transcript to be submitted to Mason so that the credits may be transferred into their George Mason degree program. These credits are subject to all the other conditions given above for transfer credit, including limits on numbers of credits that can be taken elsewhere. Note that credits accepted for transfer do not compute into any George Mason GPA. Permission to take a course elsewhere does not exempt a graduate student from satisfying the degree requirements.

Enrolled, degree-seeking graduate students may be eligible to take a limited number of courses through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. See [AP.1.4.2 Permission to Study Elsewhere](#) for more information. Credits earned through the consortium are considered resident, not transfer, credits, and are therefore not subject to transfer of credit conditions or limitations.

AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees

George Mason offers combined bachelor's and accelerated master's degree programs for academically strong undergraduate students committed to advancing their education in a specialized field of study. Accepted students may obtain both a bachelor's and a master's degree after satisfactory completion of at least 138 credits (total number may vary based on requirements of both the undergraduate and graduate programs).

Once matriculated into the master's program, students are assessed graduate tuition and are subject to all graduate academic policies as detailed in the University Catalog. Students receiving, or planning on receiving, financial aid in their undergraduate or intended accelerated master's degree program should consult with the [Office of Financial Aid](#) to determine any financial impact prior to application.

Accelerated pathways totaling less than 150 credits must cover all competencies in both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. In cases where pathways allow for the substitution of undergraduate elective credits by graduate-level elective credits, the graduate-level elective credits must align with the requirements of the graduate program while maintaining the breadth of knowledge imparted by the undergraduate degree program.

See AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates for undergraduate students who want to enroll in graduate courses and are not in an accelerated pathway. Each pathway must offer a curated list of courses in the University Catalog that are consistent with the requirements of this policy and maintain the integrity of both the undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Completion of the accelerated master's degree requires that all university requirements for the master's degree are met, including the institutional credit requirement, the unique credit requirement, and graduate time limit to degree requirement.

AP.6.7.1 Application and Admission

Application to the accelerated master's degree program pathway should be made once the student has earned at least 60 credits. The graduate application fee is waived. Acceptance into the degree pathway program is competitive and must be approved by the designated administrator(s) or equivalent within both the student's undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

AP.6.7.2 Coursework Requirements

After acceptance and successful completion of 75 undergraduate credits, accelerated master's pathway students shall complete a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 12 credits of approved advanced standing graduate courses in their field of study. Approved advanced standing credits apply to both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Advanced standing credits apply to the undergraduate degree as graded credits and count towards the undergraduate cumulative GPA. Advanced standing credits apply to the master's degree as credit hours only and are not included in the graduate GPA. All required graduate course prerequisites must be completed prior to enrollment in the advanced standing course.

Moreover, accelerated master's pathway students may earn up to 6 additional reserve credits of graduate coursework while in undergraduate status. Eligible reserve credits apply to the master's degree program as graded credits and count towards the graduate cumulative and program GPA, but do not apply to the undergraduate degree program. Students must earn a minimum grade of B- in each approved graduate course, although programs and/or colleges or schools may require a higher minimum to proceed in the accelerated degree pathway. Any grade that does not meet the minimum grade in an approved advanced standing or reserve graduate course will not apply towards the intended graduate degree. It will only display on the undergraduate degree transcript and will count toward the undergraduate GPA.

Accelerated master's pathway students who do not attain a final 3.00 cumulative GPA in their undergraduate degree may have their admission to the master's program revoked at the discretion of the college or school. Accelerated master's pathway students who do not successfully transfer into the master's program may file a new admissions application to a master's program and, after admission and enrollment, eligible credits for any graduate

coursework previously taken as an undergraduate student may be applied towards the new master's program with permission of the program and in alignment with applicable policies and procedures.

No more than 12 graduate credits may count towards both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree or certificate. See AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason for further information.

AP.6.7.3 Timeline Requirements

Accelerated master's pathway students must apply to graduate and have their undergraduate degree conferred in the semester during which their final undergraduate degree requirements are fulfilled. Advanced standing and reserve graduate credit courses must be completed by the term of undergraduate graduation specified on their transition form for the accelerated degree program. Students must submit their transition form to their undergraduate program by the last day to add classes of their final undergraduate semester. Transition forms must be timely approved and submitted by the school or college.

Students are expected to enroll in the related master's program in the academic term immediately following undergraduate degree conferral. Students who do not enroll in that term may request a 1-semester deferral of admission, subject to the constraints of their master's program and timely filing of an updated transition form. Such deferrals must be approved by the graduate program director. Students must also adhere to all timelines specified in AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason and AP.6.9.2 Time Limit.

Students who do not adhere to the timeline requirements outlined above may lose eligibility for admission to the master's program through the accelerated degree program pathway. In such cases, students may submit a new application for general admission to the master's program. Following admission and enrollment, students may request to apply any graduate coursework completed as an undergraduate to the new graduate program.

AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates

Candidates must satisfy all applicable university requirements and all requirements established by the graduate certificate program faculty. Individual departmental graduate certificate requirements are listed under their academic departments in this catalog. Note that the following are university minimum requirements; individual programs may have higher standards and/or more restrictive requirements.

- **Admission.** Program acceptance is subject to all applicable admissions requirements.
- **Credit Hours.** Graduate certificate programs require a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 graduate credits.

- **Credit Level.** Only graduate-level courses, including previously earned credits, may apply toward the graduate certificate.
- **Institutional Credit.** More than half of the minimum required credits applied to the certificate must be earned at George Mason. In the case of a certificate offered through consortia arrangement, at least one-third of the credits applied to the certificate must be earned at George Mason.
- **Quality.** Candidates must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 in coursework presented on the certificate application for graduation. The GPA calculation excludes previously earned credits from an external institution. See AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit.
- **Unique Credit.** Certificate students who satisfy the degree requirements of more than one certificate at Mason may apply coursework from multiple certificates towards a Mason master's or doctoral degree program. No credits can be applied to more than two certificates and/or degrees. The graduation application for any graduate certificate must include a minimum of 12 credits that apply only to that certificate and not to another certificate.

AP.6.9 Requirements for Master's Degrees

Candidates must satisfy all applicable university degree requirements and all requirements established by the master's program faculty. Individual departmental degree requirements are listed under the respective master's programs in this catalog. Programs may impose more stringent requirements.

- **Admission.** Candidates must have been officially admitted into degree status.
- **Credit Hours.** Candidates must earn a minimum of 30 graduate credits. Previously earned coursework may be applied towards this. See AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit.
- **Credit Level.** Only graduate level courses may apply toward the degree.
- **Institutional Credit.** More than half of the required minimum credits applied to the degree must be earned at George Mason. Or, in the case of programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortium arrangements, at the participating institutions, at least one-third of the credits applied to the master's degree must be earned at George Mason.
- **Thesis/Project Limits.** A maximum of 6 credits of master's thesis research or master's project may be applied to the degree.

- **Quality.** Candidates must have a minimum degree GPA of 3.00 in coursework when submitting an application for graduation.
- **Unique Credit.** At least 6 credits of the master's degree program must be applied only to that degree meaning they cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of another degree or certificate program. This requirement does not apply to doctoral students pursuing an embedded master's degree under AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree.

AP.6.9.6 Individualized Dual Master's Degree Programs

George Mason graduate students have the option to pursue two master's degrees simultaneously. Graduate students who wish to pursue two degrees and/or certificate programs outside of a dual master's arrangement as stated herein are referred to University Policy 3007, AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates, AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree, and AP.6.11 Requirements for Specialist Degrees.

For purposes of administration, if a different rate of tuition is assessed for each program, the student will be assessed at the higher rate. The program with the higher rate will be considered the primary program. The 6-year time limit for completion of each program component of the dual master's programs derives from the admission date for that program component. Students will have a cumulative GPA while pursuing both programs. A degree for each program component shall be conferred upon completion based upon student application for graduation and students shall have a degree GPA for each program component. See AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing for more information.

Previous George Mason credits that were subsequently applied towards the initial program in this arrangement will be removed from the student's record upon matriculation into the second program.

Students are not eligible to pursue two master's degrees until they have completed one semester in their initial master's program. Additional requirements:

- **Admission.** A full admissions application must be submitted for both programs. Students must apply and be accepted to the second master's degree within one year of matriculation in the initial program. The application must include a written statement explaining the intellectual or pedagogical purpose behind the degree program, and the academic symmetries that exist between the fields of study.
- **Shared Credit.** An Individualized Dual Master's Degree Program of Study form, approved by directors of both programs, must be submitted to the [Office of the University Registrar](#) upon matriculation in the second program. This will determine the maximum number of credits and specific courses that may be shared across programs. Credits that are shared between programs may need an approved

Substitution/Waiver form signed by the appropriate college or school's leadership unit.

- **Unique Credit.** A restricted number of credits may be shared across certain dual degree programs. See University Policy 3007 to determine the maximum number of credits that may be shared across master's degree programs. Credit may be shared across two George Mason programs only. See University Policy 3007 for more information on credit-sharing limitations.

AP.6.10 Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Candidates must satisfy all applicable university degree requirements and all requirements established by the doctoral program faculty. Programs may impose more stringent requirements. Departmental degree requirements are listed under the respective doctoral programs in this catalog.

- **Admission.** Students must have been fully admitted into degree status.
- **Credit Hours.** Candidates must earn a minimum of 72 graduate credits. Previously earned coursework may be applied towards this. See AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit.
- **Credit Level.** Only graduate courses may apply toward the degree.
- **Institutional Credit.** More than half of the required minimum credits for the doctoral degree must be earned at George Mason. Or, in the case of programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortium arrangements, at the participating institutions, at least one-third of the credits applied to the doctoral degree must be earned at George Mason.
- **Quality.** Candidates must have a minimum degree GPA of 3.00 in coursework presented on the degree application.
- **Unique Credit.** At least 24 credits of the doctoral degree program must be applied only to that degree meaning they cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of another degree or certificate program.
- **Advancement to Candidacy.** Candidates must meet the written and/or oral doctoral candidacy requirements set by the candidate's degree program.
- **Dissertation.** Candidates must complete a minimum of 12 credits of doctoral proposal (998) and doctoral dissertation research (999), including at least three credits of 999. A maximum of 24 credits of 998 and 999 may be applied to the degree.

- **Defense.** Candidates must pass a final public defense of the doctoral dissertation.

PREVIOUSLY EARNED CREDIT REVISIONS (02/10/26) [TRACKED CHANGES]

AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit by Exam

Previously earned graduate-level credit may be applied toward a George Mason graduate degree or Transfer certificate. Such credit may originate from external institutions, external examinations, or coursework completed at George Mason University prior to admission to the current program.

AP.6.5.1 Graduate Transfer Credit by Earned at an External Exam Institution

Relevant graduate course credits earned at an institution accredited by a George Mason-recognized U.S. institutional accrediting agency, international equivalent, or at another institution and recommended for graduate credit by the American Council on Education may be transferred and applied towards George Mason graduate degree or certificate programs.

This may include credits used for a previously conferred graduate degree or certificate. More than half of the required minimum credits applied to the George Mason degree must be earned at George Mason. Graduate credits earned at an external institution count towards credit hours only and are not included in the calculation of the George Mason grade point average (GPA).

Students must supply official transcripts and other information as requested, including an official transcript evaluation and translation for transcripts from outside the United States if not supplied during the admission process. The student's program is responsible for reviewing transcripts or other requested information to determine, in compliance with academic policies, whether credits are applicable to current graduate program requirements and eligible for transfer. Appeals of adverse decisions are not reviewed beyond the college or school's leadership unit and their published criteria.

Provisionally admitted students must fulfill the conditions of their admission and have the provisional qualifier removed from their records before graduate credit earned at an external institution will be processed.

The applicability of previously earned credit depends on factors including, but not limited to, source, age, grade, academic level, and alignment with program requirements. All students applying previously earned graduate credit must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the degree or certificate program. Students must meet institutional and any applicable unique credit requirements for their graduate program. Individual programs may have more restrictive policies and requirements. This policy does not supersede the requirements under University Policy 3007 Dual Degree Program Arrangements. See also AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree.

Requests to apply previously earned graduate credit to a degree or certificate program must be submitted within the following timeframes and must be approved and recorded prior to the student applying for graduation from the graduate degree or certificate program:

- 1 semester after admission to a certificate program;

- 1 year after admission to a master's degree program; or
- 2 years after admission to a doctoral program.

All previously earned credit requests must be:

- listed as a graduate-level course on the student's official transcript;
- earned as an admitted degree or non-degree status student;
- graded a minimum of B- or higher; and
- earned within 10 years of admission to the George Mason degree or certificate program unless an exception is approved by the student's school or college.

Courses graded "pass/fail" or "satisfactory/no credit" are acceptable if the grade is pass or satisfactory. Courses that follow another non-standard grading format will be evaluated by the student's program on a case-by-case basis. Extension and in-service courses not applied to a graduate degree or certificate program are not eligible.

AP.6.5.2 External Exam Credit

Degree credit for satisfactory completion of an external exam is limited to those exams and achievement levels specifically approved by the Graduate Council.

AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason

Relevant graduate credits earned from an institution accredited by a Mason-recognized accrediting agency, earned at another institution and recommended for graduate credit by the American Council on Education, earned as a former Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degree student, or earned at Mason in non-degree graduate student status may be transferred towards doctoral or master's degree or certificate program requirements in accordance with the requirements set forth below. Transferred graduate courses earned at another institution count only as credit hours and are not included in the calculation of the Mason cumulative or degree GPA.

3 Graduate credits earned at Mason in graduate status can be used to fulfill a subsequent Mason graduate degree or certificate program requirement, as specified in the University Catalog. If shared with a subsequent graduate program, these credits are included in the calculation of the cumulative and degree GPA, and do not require a transfer of credits. Any request for exclusion of such credits must be submitted by the local academic unit (LAU) within one year of the student's enrollment as an admitted student in the subsequent graduate program. Doctoral students must still provide a program of study. See AP.6.10.3 for further information. **Credit Earned at George Mason**

This policy does not supersede the applicability of previously earned graduate-level credit depends on factors including, but not limited to, source, age, grade, academic level, and alignment with program requirements under University Policy Number 3007 Dual Degree Program Arrangements which includes dual master's and dual (secondary) master's/doctoral program arrangements.

Mason undergraduate. All students attempting to earn Mason graduate course credit for use towards a applying previously earned graduate program are referred to AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees or AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates, as appropriate.

In all transfer of credit applications:

- graduate credits may not count towards more than two earned Mason degrees and/or certificates.
- no more than 12 graduate credits may count towards both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree or must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the current degree or certificate program.
 - no more than 12 non-degree credits may count towards a Mason degree or certificate.

AP.6.5.2.1 General Requirements

The credits accepted for transfer may include those used for a previously earned degree or certificate program. In all cases, students must meet the institutional credits requirement and any applicable unique credits requirement for their program.

The transfer credit(s) All previously earned credit must have been:

- listed as a graduate-level course on the institution where the student took the courses, student's official transcript;
- earned as an admitted degree-seeking or as a non-degree status student;
 - graded a minimum of B- or higher; and
- earned within ten 10 years prior of admission to first enrollment as an admitted student in the specific George Mason degree or certificate or degree program unless exception is approved by the student's school or college.

Courses graded 'pass/fail' "pass/fail" or 'satisfactory' "satisfactory/no credit" credit are acceptable for transfer credit if the grade is pass or satisfactory. Graduate courses from another university Courses that follow another non-standard grading format will be evaluated by the student's program on a case-by-case basis to meet Mason graduate degree requirements.

Any transfer of credits to a Mason graduate degree or certificate should occur no later than:

- One semester after admission to the specific Mason certificate program; or
- One year after admission to the specific master's degree program; or
- Two years after admission to the specific doctoral program.

In all cases, the transfer of credits must be completed prior to the student applying for graduation from the specific graduate certificate or degree program. Application of transferred graduate credits toward required degree or certificate credits requires the approval of the LAU. The LAU, in compliance with all applicable academic policies, will determine if the credits are relevant and applicable to the current degree program or certificate. Transfer credit can only be given for

those credits that are applicable toward a comparable degree or certificate at the institution that offered the courses. Extension and in-service courses not intended by the institution offering the courses to be applied to a graduate degree or certificate program are not eligible for transfer credit toward graduate degree or certificate programs at Mason.

Note that LAUs may have more restrictive policies and requirements. Appeals of transfer of credit decisions are not reviewed beyond the college or school's leadership unit.

AP.6.5.2.2 Transfer of Credits earned at another institution

The number of transferred credits earned at another institution cannot exceed one credit less than half of the maximum number of credits required by the doctoral or master's degree or certificate program.

Students must supply official transcripts and other information as requested. Official transcripts are required before any transfer of credits can be approved by the LAU. For transcripts from outside the United States, students must supply an official transcript evaluation and an official translation for transcripts not in English if these documents were not supplied in the admission process. The acceptance of transfer credits from students who are admitted provisionally are not considered until they have fulfilled the conditions of their admission, and the provisional qualifier has been removed from their records.

AP.6.5.2.3 Other Provisions

All students transferring credits must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the certificate or degree program.

Doctoral students completing a secondary master's degree must indicate on their program of study which courses apply to the doctoral degree.

For further information, as applicable, see [AP.6.10 Requirements for Doctoral Degrees](#), [AP.6.9 Requirements for Master's Degrees](#), [AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates](#) and/or [AP.6.4.1 Non-degree Student Status](#). Students must meet both institutional and applicable unique credit requirements for their graduate program. Individual programs may have more restrictive policies and requirements. This policy does not supersede requirements under University Policy 3007 Dual Degree Program Arrangements. See also [AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree](#).

AP.6.5.3.1 Graduate Credit Earned in Degree-Seeking Status

Graduate-level credits previously earned at George Mason in graduate degree-seeking status will be included in the calculation of the graduate cumulative GPA for subsequent George Mason graduate programs. These credits will apply to subsequent equivalent graduate program requirements and be included in the calculation of the degree GPA for a subsequent George Mason graduate program unless excluded from the degree audit program requirements by the subsequent program. If a program does not approve the application of credits, they must submit a request for exclusion of previously earned credits from the program requirements within one year of the student's enrollment as an admitted student in the subsequent program.

AP.6.5.3.2 Graduate Credit Earned in Non-Degree-Seeking Status

Graduate credits previously earned at George Mason in non-degree-seeking status may be applied to graduate program requirements with program approval. Approved requests must be applied prior to applying for graduation from the specific graduate degree or certificate program. No more than 12 non-degree credits may count towards a George Mason degree or certificate. Applied credits are included in the calculation of the graduate cumulative and program GPA. See AP.6.4.1 Non-Degree Student Status for more information.

AP. 6.5.3.3 Graduate Credit Earned in Undergraduate Status (Non-Accelerated Programs)

Graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate student may apply towards a George Mason graduate degree or certificate program with program approval. See AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates. This does not apply to students enrolled in a Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's (BAM) Degree program (See AP.6.7).

No more than 12 graduate course credits may count towards both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree or certificate program. Approved requests must be applied prior to applying for graduation from the specific graduate degree or certificate program.

RELATED PREVIOUSLY EARNED CREDIT POLICIES (02/10/26) [TRACKED CHANGES]

AP.6.4.1 ~~Non-degree~~ Degree Student Status

Students may pursue graduate study in non-degree status at [George Mason](#). Such students who wish to pursue a degree or certificate program are encouraged to apply for [program](#) admission ~~to a degree or certificate program at George Mason~~ as soon as possible. All program admission requirements must be met.

~~If the student intends to apply eligible graduate credits earned in a non-degree status from George Mason or another institution towards a George Mason degree or certificate, the credits must be approved on a Transfer of Credit form. A maximum of 12 credits taken in non-degree status can be applied toward a degree or certificate program. However, all~~ All students must enroll in at least one credit after admission to the ~~degree or certificate or degree~~ program. ~~A maximum of 12 non-degree credits can be applied toward a degree or certificate.~~ Graduate credits taken in non-degree status may not count towards more than two ~~earned~~ George Mason certificates ~~degree~~ and/or ~~degrees~~ certificate programs. See [AP.6.5.2 Transfer of Credits](#) for further requirements. [AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason](#).

AP.6.5. ~~34~~ 3 Permission to Study Elsewhere

Students enrolled in a degree program may take graduate courses at another accredited institution and apply these credits to a master's or doctoral degree with prior approval. Approval must be secured in writing from the director of the graduate program and the dean or director of the school, college, or institute, and submitted to [George Mason's](#) Office of the University Registrar before registering at the other institution. Upon completion of the course, students must arrange for an official transcript to be submitted to Mason so that the credits may be transferred into their [George Mason](#) degree program. These credits are subject to all the other conditions given above for transfer credit, including limits on numbers of credits that can be taken elsewhere. Note that credits accepted for transfer do not compute into any [George Mason](#) GPA. Permission to take a course elsewhere does not exempt a graduate student from satisfying the degree requirements ~~given below~~.

Enrolled, degree-seeking graduate students may be eligible to take a limited number of courses through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. See [AP.1.4.2 Permission to Study Elsewhere](#) for more information. Credits earned through the consortium are considered resident, not transfer, credits, and are therefore not subject to transfer of credit conditions or limitations.

AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees

~~The university~~ [George Mason](#) offers ~~a number of~~ combined bachelor's and accelerated master's degree programs for academically ~~strong~~ undergraduates with a commitment ~~undergraduate students committed~~ to ~~advance~~ advancing their education in a specialized field of study. ~~Admitted~~ Accepted students may obtain both a bachelor's and a master's degree after satisfactory completion of at least 138 credits (total number ~~of~~

~~required credits depends on the~~ may vary based on requirements of both the undergraduate and graduate programs).-

Once matriculated into the master's program, students are assessed graduate tuition and are subject to all graduate academic policies as detailed in the University Catalog. Students receiving, or planning on receiving, financial aid in their undergraduate or intended accelerated master's degree program should consult with the Office of Financial Aid to determine any financial impact prior to application.

AP.6.7.1 Application and Admission

~~Application to accelerated master's degree programs should be made once the student has earned at least 60 credits. The graduate application fee is waived. Admission is competitive and must be approved by the designed administrator(s) or equivalent within both the student's undergraduate and graduate degree programs.~~

AP.6.7.2 Coursework Requirements

~~After admission and successful completion of 75 undergraduate credits, accelerated master's students shall complete 3 to 12 credits of approved advanced standing graduate courses in their field of study. These approved advanced standing credits apply to both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. All required graduate course prerequisites must be completed prior to enrollment. Moreover, accelerated master's students may earn up to 6 additional reserve credits of graduate coursework while still in undergraduate status. These reserve credits apply to the master's degree program, but do not apply to the undergraduate degree program. Students must earn a minimum grade of B- in each approved graduate course, although LAUs may require a higher minimum. Students who earn unsatisfactory grades in any approved graduate course or who fail to attain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average by the time of undergraduate degree conferral may not be admitted to the master's program through the accelerated degree program pathway. Students may file a new admissions application to the master's program and, after admission and enrollment, request a transfer of credits for any graduate coursework previously taken as an undergraduate student. See AP.6.5.2 for further information.~~

Accelerated pathways totaling less than 150 credits must cover all competencies in both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. In cases where pathways allow for the substitution of undergraduate elective credits by graduate-level elective credits, the graduate-level elective credits must align with the requirements of the graduate ~~level~~ program ~~while maintaining the~~ while maintaining the breadth of knowledge imparted by the undergraduate degree program.-

See AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates for undergraduate students who want to enroll in graduate courses and are not in an accelerated pathway. Each pathway must offer a curated list of courses in the University Catalog that are consistent with ~~thesethe~~ requirements of this policy and ~~that maintain the~~ maintain the integrity of both the undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Completion of the ~~bachelor's~~ accelerated master's degree requires that all university requirements for the master's degree are met, including the institutional credit requirement, the unique credit requirement, and graduate time limit to

degree requirement. ~~For more information on undergraduate students who want to enroll in graduate courses, see AP.1.4.4 Graduate Course Enrollment by Undergraduates.~~

AP.6.7.1 Application and Admission

Application to the accelerated master's degree program pathway should be made once the student has earned at least 60 credits. The graduate application fee is waived. Acceptance into the degree pathway program is competitive and must be approved by the designated administrator(s) or equivalent within both the student's undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

AP.6.7.2 Coursework Requirements

After acceptance and successful completion of 75 undergraduate credits, accelerated master's pathway students shall complete a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 12 credits of approved advanced standing graduate courses in their field of study. Approved advanced standing credits apply to both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Advanced standing credits apply to the undergraduate degree as graded credits and count towards the undergraduate cumulative GPA. Advanced standing credits apply to the master's degree as credit hours only and are not included in the graduate GPA. All required graduate course prerequisites must be completed prior to enrollment in the advanced standing course.

Moreover, accelerated master's pathway students may earn up to 6 additional reserve credits of graduate coursework while in undergraduate status. Eligible reserve credits apply to the master's degree program as graded credits and count towards the graduate cumulative and program GPA, but do not apply to the undergraduate degree program. Students must earn a minimum grade of B- in each approved graduate course, although programs and/or colleges or schools may require a higher minimum to proceed in the accelerated degree pathway. Any grade that does not meet the minimum grade in an approved advanced standing or reserve graduate course will not apply towards the intended graduate degree. It will only display on the undergraduate degree transcript and will count toward the undergraduate GPA.

Accelerated master's pathway students who do not attain a final 3.00 cumulative GPA in their undergraduate degree may have their admission to the master's program revoked at the discretion of the college or school. Accelerated master's pathway students who do not successfully transfer into the master's program may file a new admissions application to a master's program and, after admission and enrollment, eligible credits for any graduate coursework previously taken as an undergraduate student may be applied towards the new master's program with permission of the program and in alignment with applicable policies and procedures.

No more than 12 graduate credits may count towards both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree or certificate. See AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason for further information.

AP.6.7.3 Timeline Requirements

Accelerated master's pathway students must apply to graduate and have their undergraduate degree conferred ~~from their undergraduate program~~ in the semester during which their final undergraduate degree requirements are fulfilled. Advanced standing and reserve graduate credit courses must be completed by the ~~semester or~~ term of undergraduate graduation specified on their ~~transition form for~~ transition form for the accelerated degree program. Students ~~in the accelerated programs~~ must submit their ~~transition form to~~ transition form to their undergraduate ~~local academic unit~~ program by the last day to add classes of their final undergraduate semester. Transition forms must be timely approved and submitted by the ~~student's intended graduate program, school or college.~~

Students ~~should~~ are expected to enroll in the related ~~master's~~ master's program in the academic ~~semester or summer session that term~~ immediately ~~follows the term of~~ following undergraduate degree conferral. ~~If students elect to delay enrollment in the chosen master's program, they can defer for up to one semester following the~~ Students who do not enroll in that term of undergraduate degree conferral may request a 1-semester deferral of admission, subject to the constraints of their master's ~~program and timely filing~~ program and timely filing of an updated transition form. ~~Such~~ Such ~~deferrals must~~ deferrals must be approved by the graduate program director. Students must also adhere to all timelines specified ~~in AP.6.5 and AP.6.9.2. Students who fail to follow the above in~~ AP.6.5.3 Graduate Credit Earned at George Mason and AP.6.9.2 Time Limit.

~~Students who do not adhere to the~~ Students who do not adhere to the timeline requirements ~~shall not be admitted~~ outlined above may lose eligibility for admission to the master's program through the accelerated degree program pathway. ~~Students~~ In such cases, students may ~~file~~ submit a new ~~admissions~~ admission application for general admission to the master's program ~~and, after.~~ Following admission and enrollment, ~~students may request a transfer of credits for to~~ students may request a transfer of credits for to apply any graduate coursework ~~previously taken completed~~ previously taken completed as an undergraduate ~~student.~~ See AP.6.5.2 for further information to the new graduate program.

AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates

Candidates must satisfy all applicable university requirements and all requirements established by the graduate certificate program faculty. Individual departmental graduate certificate requirements are listed under their academic departments in this catalog. Note that the following are university minimum requirements; individual programs may have higher standards and/or more restrictive requirements.

- Admission. Program acceptance is subject to all applicable admissions requirements.

☒ **Credit Hours.** Graduate certificate programs require a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 graduate credits.

☒ **Credit Level.** Only graduate-level courses, including previously earned credits, may apply toward the graduate certificate.

• ~~Credits can be transferred into a graduate certificate program. See AP.6.5 Credit by Exam or Transfer for further information.~~

• **Institutional Credit.** More than half of the minimum required credits applied to the certificate must be earned through direct instruction at George Mason.

☒ In the case of a certificate offered through consortia arrangement, at least one-third of the credits applied to the certificate must be earned through direct instruction at George Mason.

☒ **Quality.** Candidates must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 in coursework presented on the certificate application for graduation, which may include no more than 3 credits of C. The GPA calculation excludes transfer credits brought in through AP.6.5 Credit by Exam or Transfer. The GPA calculation excludes previously earned credits from an external institution. See AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit.

• ~~Certificate students are subject to graduate termination policies.~~

☒ **Unique Credit.** Certificate students who satisfy the degree requirements of more than one certificate at Mason may apply coursework from multiple certificates towards a Mason master's or doctoral degree program. No credits can be applied to more than two certificates and/or degrees. The graduation application for any graduate certificate must include a minimum of 12 credits that apply only to that certificate and not to another certificate.

• ~~Program acceptance is subject to all applicable admissions requirements.~~

AP.6.9 Requirements for Master's Degrees

Candidates must satisfy all applicable university degree requirements and all requirements established by the master's program faculty. Individual departmental degree requirements are listed under the respective master's programs in this catalog. Programs may impose more stringent requirements.

- Admission. Candidates must have been officially admitted into degree status.
- Credit Hours.-Candidates must earn a minimum of 30 graduate credits, which Previously earned coursework may be decreased on the basis of suitable, approved transfer work. (applied towards this. See AP.6.5 Credit by Exam or Transfer) AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit.
- Credit Level.-Only graduate level courses may apply toward the degree.

- Institutional Credit.- More than half of the required minimum credits applied to the degree must be earned at [George Mason](#). Or, in the case of programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortium arrangements, at the participating institutions, at least one-third of the credits applied to the master's degree must be earned ~~through direct instruction~~ at [George Mason](#).
- Thesis/Project Limits.- A maximum of 6 credits of master's thesis research (~~799~~) or master's project may be applied to the degree.
- Quality. Candidates must have a minimum [degree](#) GPA of 3.00 in coursework ~~presented on the degree when submitting an application, which may include no more than 6 credits of C- (Grades of C+, C-, or D do not apply to graduate courses. The GPA calculation excludes all transfer courses and Mason non-degree studies credits not formally approved for the degree.)~~ graduation.
- Unique Credit. At least 6 credits of the master's degree program must be applied only to that degree, ~~i.e., meaning~~ they cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of another degree or certificate program. This requirement does not apply to doctoral students ~~also~~ pursuing an embedded master's degree under AP.6.9.5 [Embedded Master's Degree](#).

AP.6.9.6 Individualized Dual Master's Degree Programs

George Mason [graduate](#) students have the option to pursue two master's degrees simultaneously. [Graduate students who wish to pursue two degrees and/or certificate programs outside of a dual master's arrangement as stated herein are referred to University Policy 3007, AP.6.8 Requirements for Graduate Certificates, AP.6.9.5 Embedded Master's Degree, and AP.6.11 Requirements for Specialist Degrees.](#)

For purposes of administration, if a different rate of tuition is assessed for each program, the student will be assessed at the higher rate. The program with the higher rate will be considered the primary program. The ~~six~~6-year time limit for completion of each program component of the dual master's programs derives from the admission date for that program component. ~~Students will have a cumulative GPA while pursuing both programs.~~ A degree for each program component shall be conferred upon completion based upon student application for graduation. ~~Students and students~~ shall have a degree GPA for each program component. [See AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing for more information.](#)

~~Students in dual master's degree programs are not eligible for transfer of credits based on a previously earned relevant post-baccalaureate degree earned prior to admission. Any transfer of credits that was granted upon admission to the initial program~~ [Previous George Mason credits that were subsequently applied towards the initial program in this arrangement](#) will be removed from the student's record upon matriculation into the second program.

Students are not eligible to pursue two master's degrees until they have completed one semester in their initial master's program. ~~Interested students should know:~~[Additional requirements:](#)

- **Admission.** A full admissions application must be submitted for both programs. Students must apply and be accepted to the second master's degree within one year of matriculation in the initial program. The application must include a written statement explaining the intellectual or pedagogical purpose behind the degree program, and the academic symmetries that exist between the ~~underlying~~ fields of study.
 - ~~A restricted number of credits may be shared across dual degree programs. See University Policy 3007 to determine the maximum number of credits that may be shared across component degree programs.~~
- ☐ **Shared Credit** ~~may be shared across two Mason programs only. Credit may never be applied to three or more Mason programs. See University Policy 3007 for more information on credit-sharing limitations. An Individualized Dual Master's Degree Program of Study form, form, approved by directors of both programs, must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar upon matriculation in the second program. This will determine the maximum number of credits and specific courses that may be shared across programs. Credits that are shared between programs may need an approved Substitution/Waiver form signed by the appropriate Academic Affairs Office college or school's leadership unit.~~
- **Unique Credit.** ~~A restricted number of credits may be shared across certain dual degree programs. See University Policy 3007 to determine the maximum number of credits that may be shared across master's degree programs. Credit may be shared across two George Mason programs only. See University Policy 3007 for more information on credit-sharing limitations.~~

AP.6.10 Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Candidates must satisfy all applicable university degree requirements and all requirements established by the doctoral program faculty. [Programs may impose more stringent requirements.](#) Departmental degree requirements are listed under the respective doctoral programs in this catalog. ~~Programs may impose more stringent requirements.~~

- **Admission.** Students must have been fully admitted into degree status.
 - ~~Credit Level. Only graduate courses may apply toward the degree.~~
 - ~~Credit Hours. Candidates must earn a minimum of 72 graduate credits, which. Previously earned coursework may be decreased on the basis of suitable, approved transfer work. (See AP.6.5 Credit by Exam or Transfer)~~
- **Unique Credit.** ~~At least 24 credits of the doctoral degree program must be applied only to that degree, i.e., they cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of another~~

~~degree or certificate program towards this. See AP.6.5 Previously Earned Graduate Credit.~~

- Credit Level. Only graduate courses may apply toward the degree.
- Institutional Credit.- More than half of the required minimum credits for the doctoral degree must be earned at George Mason. Or, in the case of programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortium arrangements, at the participating institutions, at least one-third of the credits applied to the doctoral degree must be earned ~~through direct instruction at~~ George Mason.
- Quality. Candidates must have a minimum degree GPA of 3.00 in coursework presented on the degree application.
- Unique Credit. At least 24 credits of the doctoral degree program must be applied only to that degree meaning they cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of another degree or certificate program.
- Advancement to Candidacy.- Candidates must meet the written and/or oral doctoral candidacy requirements set by the candidate's degree program.-
- Dissertation.- Candidates must complete a minimum of 12 credits of doctoral proposal (998) and doctoral dissertation research (999), including at least three credits of 999. A maximum of 24 credits of 998 and 999 may be applied to the degree.
- Defense.- Candidates must pass a final public defense of the doctoral dissertation.
 - ~~Quality. Candidates must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 in coursework presented on the degree application, which may include no more than 6 credits of C. (Grades of C+, C-, or D do not apply to graduate courses.) The GPA calculation excludes all transfer courses and Mason extended studies or non-degree credits not formally approved for the degree.~~