

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL BYLAWS

First Revision: 18 May 2001

Second Revision: 15 May 2002

Third Revision: 21 May 2002

Fourth Revision: 28 May 2002

Fifth Revision: 29 May 2002

Sixth Revision: 17 September 2002

Seventh Revision: 10 April 2013

Eighth Revision: 12 February 2014

Ninth Revision: 15 June 2019

Tenth Revision: 2 December 2020

Eleventh Revision: 1 December 2021

Twelfth Revision: 22 February 2023

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I. MISSION AND PURPOSE OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL AND DEFINITIONS

A. Mission

The mission of the Graduate Council is to ensure the quality of Northeastern's graduate programs.

The Graduate Council, in its bylaws, establishes guidelines for the standards of new programs and expectations of existing ones.

B. Functions

The University Graduate Council is a sub-committee of the Faculty Senate that makes recommendations regarding the adoption of general academic policies and regulations with respect to the creation and governance of graduate programs. Specifically, the Council:

1. reviews and recommends for adoption general academic policies and regulations for the creation and governance of graduate programs at Northeastern University;
2. reviews proposals for graduate curriculum changes and makes recommendations regarding the proposals' adoption to the Faculty Senate. Such proposals can include, but are not limited to, any of the following items:
 - a. create, change, or delete courses, curricula, degree and certificate programs
 - b. eliminate overlapping courses
3. serves as a forum to address concerns that may arise involving courses or programs offered or proposed.

II. THE GRADUATE COUNCIL

A. Membership

The Graduate Council will consist of two representatives from each College: a faculty representative and the Associate Dean responsible for graduate studies. Representatives from the Registrar's Office and the Library shall serve as non-voting members.

1. The faculty representative will be a full-time, benefits-eligible faculty member at the University. They will be elected by the faculty of the respective College under the auspices of the Faculty Senate. To be eligible to serve in this capacity, the faculty member will be actively engaged in graduate teaching and/or research.
2. The term of service for the faculty representative is three years. To ensure continuity, three members of the Council are replaced each academic year. Members are eligible to be re-elected for one additional, consecutive term of service.

3. The Provost or their designee will be an ex-officio member and will chair the Graduate Council. The Chair will be a non-voting member of the Graduate Council, except in those instances when their vote is required to break a tie. Other ex-officio, non-voting members (e.g., representatives of Registrar's Office, Library, PhD Network) may be included at the discretion of the chair. For a meeting occurrence when the Chair cannot be present, they may appoint an acting chair to preside over that meeting. This shall be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.
4. The Chair will appoint a Secretary of the Graduate Council who will record the minutes and correspond with Council members under the Chair's direction. The "Secretary" is not a member of the Council and need not be a faculty member.

Maintaining the membership roster and ensuring that vacancies in the Graduate Council are filled in a timely manner is the responsibility of the Senate Agenda Committee (SAC). During the spring semester of each year the SAC must inform each college of any expiring appointments and ensure that a replacement is chosen in a timely manner.

B. Procedures

1. Meetings

At a minimum, the Graduate Council will meet once per month during the academic year, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Prior to the start of the academic year, the Chair of the Graduate Council will distribute to all Colleges a list of dates when the Council will meet so that matters coming to the Council can be planned accordingly.

Additional meetings of the Council may also be called at the request of any three members of the Graduate Council. This request is to be addressed to the Chair.

Academic certificate and degree proposals shall be circulated to the Deans, the Associate Deans for Graduate Studies and the members of the Graduate Council at least ten (10) business days prior to the Council meeting at which the proposal will be discussed.

The agenda for each meeting of the Council shall be distributed to Council members and Associate Deans responsible for graduate affairs prior to the meeting.

A quorum will consist of two-thirds (12) of the voting members. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

2. Guidelines for Proposals of New Programs

The Graduate Council will establish guidelines for program proposals and these guidelines will be available on the Provost's and Registrar's websites.

3. Amendments to the Bylaws

Amendments to the Graduate Council Bylaws will be circulated at least ten (10) business days before the meeting of the Graduate Affairs Committee and the Graduate Council for comment. Amendments to the bylaws are subsequently sent to the Faculty Senate for review and approval.

4. Repository of Graduate Council Records

The Graduate Council will maintain a repository of agendas, proposals, and resulting minutes, including a record of votes and other important archival information on the Graduate Council's activity. This repository will provide a permanent record of the business of the Graduate Council, and it will be maintained by the Office of the Provost.

III. APPROVAL OF NEW AND REVISED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

A. Process for Consideration

1. New Programs

The process for proposing and approving new graduate programs at Northeastern University is outlined in the New Degree Program Proposal Guidelines document, which is available on the Registrar's website. Permission to proceed with a new graduate program proposal must first be granted by the relevant College Dean and secondly by the Provost. After these two approvals have been granted, preparation of a full proposal for a new graduate program may commence. In the case of university-wide academic programs, proposals may be initiated at the Provost's Office level.

Proposals for new PhD and non-research doctorate programs must identify an alternative academic credential that may be considered for conferral in those cases when the requirements for the PhD degree are not fulfilled, if such an alternative is appropriate.

2. Revisions to Existing Graduate Programs

For proposals that involve changes to existing programs, including but not limited to name changes, curricular modifications, credit requirements and other substantive changes, the Graduate Council will consider such changes as follows:

The Graduate Council will consider and vote on all program name changes and significant curricular modifications. Significant curricular modifications include: changes to the core requirements of the degree program; the addition or removal of courses that are reflected in transcriptable credentials (e.g., major, minor or concentration); the addition or removal of courses outside the program's home college from program core requirements or elective lists; and changes to the number of credits required to complete the degree.

The Graduate Council will be informed of any significant changes to elective lists that do not involve courses from outside the program's home college, or changes to non-

transcriptable credentials within a graduate program (e.g., specializations). These actions will be included as administrative items on the Graduate Council agenda.

The Graduate Council will consider new courses and substantive changes to individual courses brought forward through the curriculum workflow system (Courseleaf or successor system) and placed into either a consent or extracted for regular agenda deliberation.

Revisions not explicitly covered by III.A.2 shall be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Provost or their designee.

B. Levels of Approval

1. Program, Departmental, and School Approvals

The approval process at the program, department and School levels, as appropriate and specified in Section III.A, is specific to those respective units, but must include a positive vote of the faculty at one or more of these levels in order for the proposal to be forwarded to the college level. In the case of university-wide academic programs, proposals may start the approval process at the Graduate Council. At all stages of approval, the vote count and date of the vote(s) shall be recorded in Courseleaf (or successor system).

2. College Approval of Final Program Proposal

College approval of the final proposal to establish a new graduate program is required using a college faculty-approved process. Section V provides further guidance for approval of interdisciplinary programs. During the regular academic year, approval or denial of a proposal at any level of college consideration, with a brief justification, should be issued to the unit that generated the proposal within forty-five calendar days of submission of the proposal.

The College Dean or Graduate Associate Dean is responsible for transmitting the college-approved proposal to the Provost's Office. If overlap with one or more colleges is anticipated, the deans should discuss at this time so that any objections are heard and possibly remediated before submission. The Provost should be made aware of these discussions.

3. University Approval Process for New Programs

The department chair and the graduate coordinator (depending on the program unit structure) of the proposing unit shall present the program on behalf of the unit(s) at the Graduate Council meeting in which the proposal is considered. The College-approved proposal is reviewed and voted upon by the Graduate Council and reviewed by the Provost's Office. Provided that the vote of the Graduate Council is positive and the Provost's Office approves the proposal, it is then forwarded to the Faculty Senate with a recommendation.

At each stage of the approval process, the record of the actions at all previous stages, including the votes, shall accompany the proposal through comments in Courseleaf (or successor workflow system). It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Graduate Education or unit proposing the new degree to monitor the progress of the proposal.

Before the proposal is sent to the Senate, the chair of the Graduate Council will consult with the Provost and relevant Dean(s) regarding the proposal and finalize any remaining details. This review should take place within 10 calendar days of the proposal having been reviewed and voted upon by the Graduate Council. If the Provost approves the program proposal in its final form it is forwarded to the Faculty Senate for review and recommendation.

The new program proposal is reviewed by and voted upon by the Faculty Senate, and if approved, forwarded to the Provost for consideration and, upon approval, to the Board of Trustees for consideration and vote.

A negative decision at any stage of review precludes the program proposal from further consideration in its current form.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM SUSPENSION, REINSTATEMENT AND ELIMINATION

A. Definition of Suspension

The purpose of suspension is to allow a unit to remedy problems within a program or to consider the program for elimination at a later date. If a program is in suspension, it means that the unit may no longer recruit or accept students into that specific program. Suspending admissions to a program and suspending a program are identical actions. Students already in the program must be allowed to complete the program within a reasonable period of time and the unit must make provisions to educate the students in a manner consistent with the curriculum in effect when the students entered the program.

B. Proposal for Suspension or Elimination of a Program

A recommendation for suspension or elimination of a program should address the following information:

1. The reasons for the specific request, accompanied by data, including enrollment data.
2. Plan for students currently in the program to complete their program of study.
3. Impacts of the suspension or elimination on faculty affiliated with the program.
4. Impacts on courses included in other programs' curricula.
5. In the case of suspension, a statement of conditions necessary for reinstatement.

Proposals should follow specific guidelines provided on the Registrar's website.

C. **Procedures for Suspension and Reinstatement of a Program**

A proposal to suspend a program may be initiated by the faculty of the department in which the program resides, by the Dean of the parent College, or by the Provost. If the faculty of the department or unit initiates the suspension, the faculty of the College in which the program resides as well as the faculty of the unit that houses the program must vote to approve the suspension. The Provost and the Chair of the Graduate Council must be notified in writing with reasons for the suspension. The reasons for the suspension must accompany the form.

A program that has been placed on suspension may be proposed for reinstatement. Reinstatement shall be proposed by the department, Dean or Provost who proposed the suspension of the program. The faculty of the department or unit and the faculty of the College within which the program resides must vote to approve the reinstatement. The Provost and Chair of the Graduate Council must be notified in writing of the reinstatement and of the reasons for it.

A program may also be proposed for suspension or reinstatement by the Provost, the Dean of the College in which the program resides, or the faculty of the unit in which the program resides. A procedure analogous to the procedure for elimination, found in Section VI.D. below, shall be followed except that in this case, action by the Faculty Senate is final. No action by the President or Board of Trustees is needed. The recommendation for reinstatement must demonstrate that the conditions set in the original recommendation for suspension have been satisfied. In this case, the reinstatement must be voted on by the same bodies that voted on the suspension.

A program that has been suspended for five years shall be considered for elimination using the procedure described in Section VI.D below.

D. **Procedures for Elimination of a Program**

A program may be recommended for elimination by vote of the faculty of the unit offering the program. It may also be recommended for elimination by the Dean of the College in which the program resides or by the Provost. The recommendations should follow the guidelines listed below.

1. The proposal shall be considered and voted upon by the faculty of the department/unit in which the program resides.
2. The proposal shall be considered and voted upon by the faculty of the College in which it resides.
3. The proposal shall be transmitted to the Graduate Council, which may choose to study the request or appoint an ad hoc committee to do so. If an ad hoc committee is established, it will convey its recommendation to the Graduate Council.

4. The Graduate Council will convey the proposal and their recommendation to the Faculty Senate, which shall consider it and vote upon it. If the Senate does not approve the proposal, it shall not go forward.
5. If the Senate approves the proposal, it shall be transmitted to the Provost.
6. At each stage the record of the actions at all previous stages, including the votes of relevant governing committees, shall accompany the proposal. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Graduate Education to monitor the progress of the proposal.