

GRADUATE COUNCIL GUIDEBOOK

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MISSION

The mission of the Graduate Council is to provide timely, responsible, and evidence-based advice and assistance to graduate programs and the Graduate School, helping to ensure continuous improvement of the graduate education experience for students and a supportive academic environment for graduate faculty.

GRADUATE COUNCIL

Purpose

The Graduate Council is responsible for providing and periodically revising basic educational philosophy for graduate programs, for ensuring the maintenance of high standards in the graduate programs offered and for proposing and recommending to the UTC full faculty new graduate programs. The Graduate Council reviews new courses to be offered for graduate credit as well as other changes in the content of individual graduate programs. The Graduate Council is responsible for ensuring that general admission policies as established by the Board of Trustees and specific policies approved for individual graduate programs are maintained. The Graduate Council hears graduate students petitions and grade appeals and makes recommendations for resolution. The Graduate Council informs the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on graduate curricular issues and other substantive changes and reports its curriculum and standards actions to the Dean of the Graduate School, who reports to the Provost, with recommendations for implementation or appropriate disposition.

Officers

The elected officers of the Graduate Council will be a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson position. The Vice-Chairperson (also designated as Chairperson-elect) will serve as the Chairperson of the Graduate Council following his/her year of service as the Vice-Chairperson. In the event that the Vice-Chairperson for a particular year cannot serve as Chairperson the subsequent year, the Vice-Chairperson elected during the spring elections will automatically assume the Chairperson position and election of a Vice-Chairperson will occur in a timely manner.

Election and Term of Services

A Vice-Chairperson election will be held each spring, at an April meeting. Voting can be conducted by show of hands, voice vote or paper ballot, at the discretion of Graduate Council membership. All Graduate Council members will be eligible for election as the Vice-Chairperson. An *ad hoc* nominating committee will establish a ballot for the Vice-Chairperson election. Any Graduate Council member elected to serve as Vice-Chairperson must agree to serve a total of two years, i.e., one year as the Vice-Chairperson and a second year as Chairperson. Officers will assume their elected positions in May.

Membership and Program Representation

Each graduate degree program shall appoint one representative who is a voting member of Graduate Council. Except in special circumstances (approved by the Graduate School), this representative shall be an active Graduate Program Director for their respective degree program.

Anticipated changes to graduate degree program representation on Graduate Council shall be communicated to the Graduate School by the April meeting of the Graduate Council each spring. Efforts may be made by the Graduate School to ensure no more than half of existing Graduate Council membership changes from one academic year to the next. Also, to ensure continuity in Graduate Council operations, all members are expected to serve two-year minimum terms, with the option of renewal and no term limits. When graduate degree program representation changes, it is the outgoing Graduate Council member's and/or the respective department head's responsibility to ensure the incoming representative is properly and fully transitioned into the role (with sufficient background knowledge of active points of discussion and important issues that may be relevant to that respective graduate degree program).

Ex officio: The dean of the Graduate School, the dean of the Library, the director of the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning, the registrar, a representative from the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Institutional Research (OPEIR), a representative from the Provost's office, and the president of the Graduate Student Association.

Administrative support for Graduate Council is provided by the Graduate School.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Graduate Council meets the fourth Thursday of each month from mid-August through April. The meeting time is generally at 3:15 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

MEETING PROCEDURES

Quorum

Conducting official business of Graduate Council requires more than half of the voting membership be present at a meeting.

Virtual Meetings

The decision to conduct meetings virtually, or to conduct business by electronic means will be made by the Council Chairperson.

Voting

All members of the Graduate Council are eligible to vote on items before the Council. Issues will be decided upon by majority rule. The Council Chairperson may determine how voting will occur. A member of Graduate Council may send a proxy to represent the respective program in their absence. Inasmuch as proxies may vote at meetings where they represent a Council member (whether face-to-face or virtual), proxies may not vote electronically (when the vote does not take place during a meeting).

Rules of Order

Meetings will be called to order by the Council Chairperson. Business will be conducted in an orderly manner and will follow the spirit of Robert's Rules of Order.

An agenda shall be published and made available to all members 72 hours in advance of any regularly scheduled meeting. Items to be discussed must be on the agenda or presented by a standing committee. Items not on the agenda and brought up in a meeting will be placed on the agenda for a following meeting or referred to a standing committee.

Major items of business (as determined by the Council Chairperson) for approval and/or recommendation require two readings and votes by the Council. Any item of business presented to the Council by a standing committee will have had the first reading and vote in the standing committee, such that the presentation to and vote by the Council will constitute the second reading. The Council may vote to approve, reject, or table any item.

Items of business for approval and/or recommendation by an ad hoc committee will require two readings and votes by the Council. An ad hoc committee recommendation is not considered a first reading.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing all proposals for new programs and courses, modifications to programs and courses, and any deletions. The committee is composed of at least five Council members. The Council Chairperson may appoint individual members to serve on the Curriculum Committee to increase membership. Individuals on the Graduate Council who do not volunteer to serve on a standing committee will be expected to serve on the Curriculum Committee or another committee as determined by the Council Chairperson. The committee evaluates proposals for adherence to the Graduate Curriculum and Courses Proposal format, justification for a new or modifications to a program or course, and for post-baccalaureate rigor. The committee presents a recommendation to the full Graduate Council for action. Approved proposals are forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School and then the Provost (or their designee) for administrative approval (items may require external review and approval before final action). Curriculum proposals are submitted through Curriculog (<https://utc.curriculog.com/>). There are additional resources and links to self-service training on the faculty tab of MyMocsNet (<https://mymocs.utc.edu/web/mymocsnet/faculty>). This committee handles most business through electronic means and only convenes face-to-face meetings as necessary.

Best Practices and Policy Committee

The Best Practices and Policy Committee (BPPC) of the Graduate Council serves to evaluate current and proposed changes in Graduate School policy and practices, and brings suggestions and recommendations to Graduate Council for further deliberation and action. The committee is composed of at least five Council members. Requests for study of existing policy and practice or recommendation for a new policy or practice can be initiated by members of Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School, or from other faculty, staff and students of UTC. Suggestions and recommendations for changes in policy and practice must be brought to the Graduate

Council through a Council member. This committee meets the first and third week of each month from September through April.

Composition of the BPPC:

The Chairperson of the BPPC will be the Chairperson-elect (Vice-Chairperson) of the Graduate Council. Ideally, BPPC composition will include a representative from each college, as well as a representative from:

- a non-thesis graduate degree program,
- a thesis requiring graduate degree program,
- the Ph.D. or Ed.D. degree programs,
- a clinical doctorate, and
- the Graduate Student Association, usually the president.

Additional members may be added by Graduate Council as deemed necessary and appropriate. The Dean of The Graduate School will serve in an *ex officio* capacity.

Graduate Appeals Committee

The Graduate Appeals Committee is led by the Chairperson of the Graduate Council and is composed of at least five additional Council members. In cases where the Chairperson of the Graduate Council or any sitting member of the Graduate Appeals Committee may have a conflict of interest when serving, the Vice-Chairperson of the Council will serve as the Chairperson and the sitting member will recuse themselves from serving.

Student petitions for readmission, late candidacy, extension of candidacy, course waiver/substitution, request to take excessive hours and requests for second extensions of IP grades will be heard at the program level. The Graduate Appeals Committee will hear appeals of decisions made at the program level. The recommendation of the Graduate Appeals Committee is forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School for final action. All program decisions, whether being appealed or not will be forwarded to the Dean for final action.

In cases where a grade appeal is submitted, the following procedure must be followed. A subcommittee formed of the Graduate Appeals Committee members will serve as the Grade Appeals Committee. If/when three members of the Graduate Appeals Committee are unable to serve in a timely fashion on a needed Grade Appeal Committee, members of the Graduate Council will be solicited to serve. Thus, the Grade Appeals Committee will be composed of the Chairperson of the Graduate Council and at least three additional members. The Dean of the Graduate School serves in an *ex officio* capacity.

The Grade Appeal Committee hears presentations from the student and the faculty member who issued the grade. After both parties have had 15 minutes each to provide pertinent information and respond to questions, they are excused, and the Grade Appeal Committee will make a determination. The committee may recommend that 1) the grade previously assigned be upheld; or 2) the faculty member be asked to change the grade; or 3) the grade of I be assigned until completion of specified requirements agreed upon by faculty and student. The determination of the Grade Appeal Committee is provided to the Dean of the Graduate School, who communicates the final decision to the student, the instructor, the instructor's department head, and the appropriate academic dean. Refer to the UTC Graduate Catalog for the specific appeal process.

This committee meets on an “as needed” basis.

AD HOC COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Ad hoc committees or task forces may be requested by the Council or the Dean of the Graduate School to evaluate, investigate, and/or develop recommendations regarding various matters that are not routinely dealt with by a standing committee. Ad hoc committees and task forces will have narrowly defined topics to address limiting the scope and timeframe of their activity. Ad hoc committee composition should, at a minimum, adequately represent the academic colleges and membership can be based on appointment or volunteering. In cases where a particular expertise is needed, a graduate faculty who is not a member of Graduate Council may be requested to serve.

OTHER REPORTING GROUPS

Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association President is an *ex officio* member of Graduate Council and reports activities of the Graduate Student Association Advisory Council meetings, concerns of graduate students, and events being planned by the Graduate Student Association.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Mission Statement

The mission of The Graduate School is to provide rigorous advanced instruction, applied research opportunities, financial support, and other support services for graduate students. The Graduate School upholds high program and academic standards in serving the needs of the region, state, and nation.

Administration

The Dean of the Graduate School serves as the primary administrative officer for matters pertaining to graduate education, admissions, and oversees daily operations of all Graduate School functions. The Dean of the Graduate School is an *ex officio* member of Graduate Council and serves as the administrator advisor to the Graduate Student Association.