

To: Dr. Christine Haynes, Chair of Graduate Council

From: Dr. Katherine Hall-Hertel, Associate Dean of the Graduate School

Date: October 31, 2017

RE: Changes to Graduate Transfer Credit and Graduation Policies

As with many policies, these issues are intertwined. It is difficult to change one policy without also modifying another. Please consider this proposal to revise multiple graduate academic policies related to transfer credit and graduation. The outlined changes are intended to reduce confusion for students and faculty, and to grant greater flexibility to graduate programs.

1. Modification of transfer credit policy regarding “C” grades

Location in Catalog: Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Registration/Transfer Credit

Current catalog copy:

6. The grade in any course accepted for transferred credit must be A or B, as defined by UNC Charlotte (a 3.0 or above on a 0.0-4.0 grade point scale). **Coursework that has been graded on a Pass/No Credit or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis will not be accepted for transfer.** In some cases, the Graduate School will allow completed thesis credit (graded on a Pass/No Credit scale) to be transferred into a doctoral program. It should be noted that, although the credit for a course may transfer, the grade would not be used to calculate the graduate GPA at UNC Charlotte.

Proposed catalog copy:

6. Any course considered for transfer credit which was completed at another university must have been passed with a grade of “B” or better, as defined by UNC Charlotte (a 3.0 or above on a 4.0 grade point scale). Coursework that has been graded on a Pass/No Credit or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis will not be accepted for transfer. It should be noted that, although the credit for a course may transfer, the grade will not be used in the calculation of the cumulative graduate-level GPA at UNC Charlotte.

Typically, “C” grades earned in coursework completed at UNC Charlotte are not permitted to transfer between programs. However, exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis with approval of the graduate program. **Under no circumstances will a grade of “C” earned in coursework at another institution be accepted for transfer credit.**

This proposed change removes the restriction that graduate-level courses taken at UNC Charlotte for which the student earned a grade of “C” cannot be moved from one program to another. Although “C” grades in graduate-level coursework fail to demonstrate satisfactory mastery of the course material (“marginal”), we do allow “C” grades to count towards program requirements. This change gives faculty and program administrators the flexibility to determine whether the transfer of a “C” grade from one UNC Charlotte program to another is appropriate.

We reviewed policies at a number of other institutions. The distinction between internal and external transfer credit is common. Grades for coursework taken at UNC Charlotte which are transferred from one program to another automatically count in the calculation of the cumulative (overall) GPA in Banner, as well as the program-specific GPA in DegreeWorks.

Grades for courses taken at other institutions do not; when transferring credit from another university, students only receive credit for the hours. Given this, the minimum acceptable grade for external transfer credit should remain a “B” (3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale). Without this minimum standard, it would be possible for a student to meet the program requirements with what would otherwise be a <3.0 GPA.

2. Modification of graduation policy regarding “C” grades

Location in Catalog: Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Master’s Degree Requirements/Minimum Hours and Quality

Current catalog copy:

*A student is expected to satisfactorily complete a minimum of 30 to 60 credit hours of approved graduate level courses, depending upon his/her individual program, with an overall GPA of 3.0 or above in courses on the degree plan of study. Grades in all courses attempted, whether or not on the plan of study, will remain on the transcript and will be included in the calculation of the student's GPA as it is reported on the transcript. **No more than six hours evaluated as C may be counted toward the minimum hours required for the master's degree.***

Proposed catalog copy:

A student is expected to satisfactorily complete a minimum of 30 to 60 credit hours of approved graduate level courses, depending upon his/her individual program, with a GPA of 3.0 or above in courses on the degree plan of study. Grades in all courses attempted, whether or not on the plan of study, remain on the transcript and will be included in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA as it is reported on the transcript. Courses graded as “C” on the degree plan of study must be offset by an equal number of graduate-level credits graded as “A”. Some programs may have stricter requirements regarding the applicability of “C” grades towards degree completion. Please reference the program-specific entries of this *Catalog*.

Students and faculty should refer to the Academic Suspension & Termination policies in this *Catalog* regarding the accumulation of marginal “C” grades.

Only the degree requirements for master’s degrees actually specify a limit on the number of “C” grades that may be applied towards a program (no more than 6 credits). This rule does not exist in the *Catalog* for graduate certificates or doctoral programs, even though we have interpreted it to apply to all programs. Given this, we propose the removal of this policy effective 2018/19. Students will still be required to earn a 3.0 GPA on the courses which make up the plan of study, and students will still be suspended for accumulation of three (3) grades of “C” across all graduate-level work (unless the student’s graduate program has stricter grade requirements). However, in rare cases this change would allow a student to graduate with three (or more) “C” grades. The purpose here is to make the policy consistent for all graduate students.

The 6 credits graded as “C” rule seems redundant given the minimum GPA policy and the academic suspension/termination policy. It also seems to cause confusion when it comes to transferring credits from one graduate program to another. Individual graduate programs would retain the ability to restrict the number of “C” grades that are acceptable within their program. However, in all circumstances any “C” grades must be offset by an equal number of credits graded as “A” in order to maintain a 3.0 GPA.