

**GRADUATE COUNCIL
NEW/CHANGE POLICY PROPOSAL**

It is required that you follow this format when presenting a new Graduate Policy or change in a Graduate Policy for review and approval by the Graduate Council.
Please submit the typed original with all required signatures to the Graduate Council.

Form functionality most compatible using Adobe Acrobat 9 and newer.

New Policy/Policy Change:

This is a policy change for non-degree seeking student registration. The rationale for changing the policy is to confirm that the University has the right to deny admission/registration to an individual wishing to take courses as a non-degree seeking student. The updated policy confirms that non-degree seeking students must meet the same standards/requirements for course participation as degree seeking students. This clarification is important to demonstrate that there are no alternative pathways around the University's academic program admission requirements. This policy change is not meant to limit non-degree seeking student registration but it is meant to encourage these students to register as a degree seeking student as soon as possible if they are ultimately seeking a degree program. The policy is also meant to maintain high quality courses that are attractive to qualified individuals who want to enroll as non-degree seeking students and degree seeking students.

See Attached.

Department or other unit proposing the new policy/policy change: Admissions

Contact Person: Becky Copper-Glenz

This policy is: ☐ New ☒ Change to a current policy

Briefly describe new policy or change to existing policy as it will appear in university catalog (if a policy change please provide current and proposed versions):

Definition - A graduate non-degree seeking student has a completed bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited university who is not applying for a degree program but wishes to enroll in University graduate courses.

Enrollment and Registration

- ☒ Enrollment as a non-degree student is not guaranteed and may be subject to approval.
- ☒ Applicants who have been denied admission to a degree program may not register as a non-degree seeking student without approval from a department chair and school dean and must complete and submit a student petition form for review.
- ☒ Course registration is on a space-available basis.
- ☒ Coursework taken as a non-degree student will not count towards a degree program at Fitchburg unless student is admitted to an academic program and the coursework meets the GPA requirements and has been completed within the statute of limitations for that degree. Up to 12 semester credit hours earned as a graduate non-degree student may be applied toward a graduate degree within the statute of limitations for that degree (provided that a grade of "B" [3.0] or better has been achieved).

Academic and Student Policies

Non-degree students must adhere to the same academic and student code of conduct policies that apply to degree-seeking students (e.g., application, deadlines, fees, drop/add, withdrawals, refund policies, grading, retention policies, etc.).

Admission

Students who subsequently decide to pursue a degree must submit the appropriate admission application. Enrollment as a non-degree student does not guarantee admission to the University as a degree-seeking student. All information used to make an admission decision must be received by the published deadline.

Programs Not Eligible for Non-Degree Seeking Registration

Non-degree seeking registration options are not available for the online accelerated degree programs. Students must be admitted into the program in order to enroll in these courses.

Rationale and expected outcomes for new policy or change to existing policy:

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There will be written policy to refer to in the future if students who have been denied admission register as non-degree seeking students and the University decides to drop the student from a course.

There will be written policy to refer to if there is a code of conduct issue in a class or other issues that would require the university to withdraw/dismiss a student from a course.

There will be written policy to confirm that there are no alternatives to the University admission policy. Students who are not admitted may not earn a degree.

Will assist with encouraging students who want to seek admission to a degree program to do so ASAP.

Implementation plan (what semester will new policy/policy change begin; will change be phased in; attach suggested execution)

This will be in effect beginning fall 2018.

A line will be added to all of the student/academic dismissal letters to let students know that they cannot register as a non-degree seeking student without special permission. A registration hold will be placed on all students who have been dismissed by the graduate admissions office.

GCE will also use the report to retrieve the names and emails of non-degree seeking students and communicate with them more frequently to encourage them to apply for admission if they are seeking a degree and reach out directly to non-degree seeking students who have accumulated a larger number of credits.

A line will be added to the registration confirmation email that directs students to the non-degree seeking policy in the catalog for reference.

Attach any letter (s) of support from professional agencies or others within or outside the university.

☒ Reviewed by Dean: Dr. Becky Copper Glenz

Print Form

Required Signatures—Graduate and Continuing Education New Policy/Policy Change Approval

New/Changed Policy Initiator: Benny Copper-Glenz Date: 3-20-18

Graduate Council Chair: Renée M. Scappone Date: 4-3-18
(Indicates Graduate Council approval)

President: Paul S. Depina Date: 5/5/18

Fitchburg State University

Policy Proposal – Change to Non-Degree Seeking Student Registration policy.

See Chart Below

Current Policy	Proposed Changes
<p>Graduate Catalog</p> <p>Admissions Category Title –“Courses Taken At Fitchburg State Prior to Admission”</p> <p>Twelve semester hours of Fitchburg State University credit taken within a year prior to the student’s admission may be applied to the degree program with the approval of the program chairperson. No more than six semester hours of course work at the 6000 level may be applied toward a degree program. This does not apply to those students who wish to enroll in the Online/Accelerated MBA, the Online/Accelerated Non-Licensure M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Management, or the Online/Accelerated Non-Licensure M.Ed. in Curriculum and Teaching. Students must be admitted in order to enroll in the online accelerated courses for those programs.</p>	<p>Summary of Changes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep the policy in Admissions but change the category title to “Non-degree Seeking Students” . <p><u>Rationale</u> - The policy is broader than just courses taken prior to admission.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Add definition of a non-degree seeking student. <p><u>Rationale</u> – Definitions/understandings vary. This will allow for a consistent definition that has been defined by the University.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Rather than saying a student can only apply credits earned as a non-degree seeking student if they were taken within one year prior to admission we are changing this to by stating that students can apply those credits as long as the courses were taken within the statute of limitations for the program. <p><u>Rationale</u> – We are making this change to match the current practice. Some programs change standards after a certain amount of time and the courses may not be applicable after 5 or more years so we wanted to keep this open a bit while confirming the courses may not be good to count towards a degree indefinitely.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Add a statement that registration is not guaranteed and may be subject to approval. <p><u>Rationale</u> – To confirm that the University has the right to deny a registration from a non-degree seeking student and registration is not guaranteed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Add that students who have been denied admission to a degree program can only register as a non-degree seeking student with special permission. <p><u>Rationale</u> – To prevent a backdoor option to the required admissions process while still allowing an opportunity for a student take classes if needed as a non-degree seeking student if approved to do so by the University/Department pending review of the student’s unique circumstances.</p>

	<p>6. Add that non-degree seeking students are held to the same rules/policies as all students.</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> – This just puts into writing and confirms the assumption that all non-degree-seeking students are subject to the same University rules/policies and regulations.</p> <p>7. Add language to confirm that registration as a non-degree seeking student does not guarantee admission and that non-degree students must still meet the posted application deadlines to apply for a degree program.</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> – This confirms that registration in a course does not equal admission into a program and that students who wish to apply to a degree program must still go through the formal admissions process and follow the admission requirements/deadlines.</p>
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Catalog Language

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- Course registration is on a space-available basis.
- Coursework taken as a non-degree student only counts towards a degree program if the student is admitted an academic program at the University, the coursework meets the GPA requirements and has been completed within the statute of limitations for that degree. Up to 12 semester credit hours earned as a graduate non-degree student may be applied toward a graduate degree within the statute of limitations for that degree (provided that a grade of "B" [3.0] or better has been achieved).

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