

Graduate New/Change Policy Proposal

Department/Committee Information

The main contact person for the Graduate Curriculum Committee should fill out this form.

Requestor Name: * Amber Deschenes

Members of the Graduate Curriculum Committee:

Department / Unit Developing: * Other

Chair of Department for Policy: * Becky Copper Glenz Chair Email: * < Dr. Copper Glenz> bcopper@fitchburg.edu

Academic Dean of Department or Program for the Policy: * Becky Copper Glenz Academic Dean E-mail: * < Dr. Copper Glenz> bcopper@fitchburg.edu

Program Chair The Program Chair for this request is among the people listed above.

- * Yes
 No

Policy Information

This proposal is to a Policy that is:

- * New Policy
 Policy Change

Describe the New Policy or Policy Change:

* Change to Leave of Absence 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):

* CURRENT VERSION:

Matriculated students who do not register for classes for two full academic years (2 fall terms, 2 spring terms, and 2 summers) must request a leave of absence by writing to the dean of graduate and continuing education. Without an approved request, a student is dismissed from the degree program and must follow readmission procedures. Please note that an approved leave of absence does not extend the 6-year limit for completion of a graduate degree.

PROPOSED VERSION:

Academic Policy and Procedure: Category Title – Leave of Absence

Matriculated students who do not plan to register for classes for an extended period of time may request a leave of absence by completing the online form and submitting it to their Academic Advisor and Dean of The School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education for approval. Without an approved request, a student can be dismissed from the degree program for inactivity and must follow readmission procedures. An approved leave of absence can extend the 6-year limit for completion of a graduate degree to no more than 2 additional years in total. Although a student may be approved for up to 2 LOA's while in the program, any approved extension on the 6-year limit must fall within 2 years or under in total so a second LOA may not be approved pending time to completion for the student.

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

* (1) Keep the policy in Academic Policies and Procedures but change the category title to "Leave of Absence Policy".

Rationale - The topic is a lot easier to search for if it has a separate category.

(2) An approved leave of absence can extend the 6 year time limit for no more than 2 additional years with approval from The School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education.

Rationale - This will encourage students to request the leave instead of just stop taking classes when there is a situation that warrants this. This will also cut down on the amount of petitions filed to extend the time limit on programs.

(3) Leave of Absence are available for consideration only to Graduate and Continuing Education students in good standing (minimum 3.0 GPA)

Rationale - LOA is meant to assist students in good standing that need to step out of the program for personal reasons.

(4) Students may request no more than two (2) Leave of Absences (LOA) total in the duration of their program and not to exceed 1 full academic year each

Rationale – LOA is meant to assist students towards the completion of their degree program and provide a mechanism for them to step out for special circumstances. We still need to maintain a limit on the time to completion to align with curriculum updates and changing course requirements within the discipline.

(5) LOA requests must be submitted no later than two (2) weeks prior to the fall, spring or summer semester for which follows the LOA semester.

Rationale – This provides enough time for filing an LOA and informing all required parties of such.

(6) Students should consult with their program advisor to determine if the leave of absence (LOA) is appropriate. The Dean of The School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education makes the final decision to approve or deny a request for a Leave of Absence.

Rationale – The advisor can help to determine if the situation warrants an LOA or if the student should choose an alternative. Also helps to make sure all administrative parties are in agreement as to the reason the student is requesting the Leave.

(7) Registration information will be sent to the Fitchburg State University email account prior to the start of the next registration period and approximately two weeks prior to the term the student is scheduled to return.

Rationale - Assists in making sure the student is set and ready to return and coordinates their schedule in advance to the start of the semester.

(8) In order to remain active in the program before the Leave expires, the student must enroll in courses for the upcoming semester. Should the student not register once the Leave expires, the student will become inactive at the University and will need to apply for re-admissions in order to resume his/her program of study.

Rationale – Confirms the student follows directions and is aware of the repercussions if they do not.

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

We hope to implement this updated policy effective Fall 2022 semester

Attach suggested execution or other supporting files not included in your text above.

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

Signatures

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Amber Deschenes

11/29/2021

Requester Signature:

Date

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Becky Copper Glenz

11/29/2021

Department Chair Approval:

Date

Academic Dean Signature:

Date

SGOCE Dean Signature:

Date

Approval of the Graduate Council

Date

Approval of the President

Date

Notification

Reviewed by the Registrar:

Reviewed by the Library:

SGOCE Admin. Assistant
Signature

Electronically signed by Denise Bertrand on 11/29/2021 2:03:05 PM