Academics at Iowa State for Graduate Students

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Graduate College Handbook

The Graduate College Handbook is an ever-changing document due to updates in university policies and programs. This version will contain the latest updates of the Handbook so you can have easy access to the most current information.

- Graduate College Handbook - June 2012
- List of Handbook Changes
- List of Top 9 Frequently Asked About Graduate Policies
Administration of Graduate Education

- Office of the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Office of the Provost
- Graduate College—oversees quality, monitors student progress
  - Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate College
  - Graduate Faculty—teach courses, mentor students, conduct research
  - Graduate Council—approves policies; advises dean
- Academic Colleges
- Departments—Administrative unit (hires graduate assistants)
- Majors—academic unit that oversees degree programs
  - Director(s) of Graduate Education (DOGE)
  - Graduate Secretaries/Administrative Support/Student Services
Earning a Graduate Degree

- Academic major—over 120 at ISU
- Master’s degrees (some with thesis, some with creative components/activities, some coursework only)
- PhD degrees—always requires a dissertation
- Program of study (POS) committee—monitors/oversees progress
  - Major professor plus other members
  - 5 people for PhD, 3 for Master’s
- New students may have adviser before major professor
- Program of Study—contract between the student and committee/Graduate College defining required courses and activities
Earning a Graduate Degree (cont.)

- Coursework
  - Graduate courses—courses numbered 5xx or 6xx.
  - Nonmajor graduate courses (300/400 level outside your major and labeled in the catalog).
- Research credits (599s or 699s)—not counted in GPA.
- Graduate Assistantships—departments, research labs
- GPA—(Grade Point Average)—must maintain 3.0 GPA to remain in good academic standing and avoid probation and potential loss of tuition scholarship for graduate assistants.
Pitfalls to Avoid

- Late submission of committee and POS forms
- Dropping a course too late, or not at all
- Adding a minor too late
- Timing of preliminary and final examinations (doctoral students)
- Not contacting committee members early enough
- Making assumptions and not asking or checking the Handbook
Classroom Environment

- Lectures, discussions, seminars, independent study, laboratory classes, fieldwork, computer-based instruction, etc.
- Learner-centered environment
- Classroom participation required or heavily recommended
- Syllabus—outline of the requirements for the course
- Grading—tests, homework, projects, papers, classroom participation—usually noted in the class syllabus
- Many classes are more informal; professor may prefer being addressed by her/his first name. Watch how others behave.
Standards of Academic Conduct

- Ownership of knowledge
  - Important value in U.S.
  - Must give credit to authors of sources

- Academic misconduct—a very serious concern
  - Plagiarism—using ideas and words without giving credit
  - Cheating—usually means using unauthorized sources or getting assistance on a test, a paper, or an assignment
    - Understand from syllabus or teacher what is allowed on a paper/project
  - Academic misconduct can result in expulsion. Ask questions if you are unsure what these terms mean.

- Effects of expulsion and suspension on F-1/J-1 Status
Tips to Survive Graduate Education

• Find mentor (from your country or U.S.) to help you learn about our educational system.

• Make friends to help you adjust, to improve your English, and to understand U.S. education.

• Use the International Students and Scholars Office often (for questions, for activities, and if you just feel overwhelmed; their advisers can help).

• Get to know the graduate secretary in your program.

• Attend social events in your program to meet other graduate students.

• Ask questions. Then ask more questions.

• You’re not alone, so don’t be discouraged. There will be ups and downs. You are talented and special and wouldn’t be here if you weren’t.

_TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!_
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English Proficiency

- TOEFL
- English Placement Test
  - English 99, 101 series
  - Exempt (by TOEFL score, U.S. degree)
  - Diagnostic test first class day
- SPEAK-TEACH
  - For those wishing to be teaching assistants
  - English 180 classes