

# Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Related Policies: Program Update Process and Template

## Background

A series of new policies were approved by the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) on October 11, 2013 and the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) on October 24, 2013. Although prompted by the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) institutional accreditation criteria, these policy changes are one of the many ways in which our campus ensures the integrity of its degrees and the quality of the student experience.

## Implementation Steps

1. **Review Resources in [Graduate School Admin KnowledgeBase \(GSAdminKB\)](#)** – These KB resources include the approved policy vote items, “Frequently Asked Questions”, data resources, and more. The information and data resources provided will help assess which policy areas and programs are in need of attention or are already in compliance. In many cases, programs simply need to articulate their practices into stated policies. The KB will continue to be updated as clarifications are needed.
2. **Schools/Colleges Determine a Governance Body to Review Policy Compliance**– Most schools/colleges will use existing governance mechanisms such as school/college Academic Planning Councils (APCs) or Curriculum Committees to review program curricular changes triggered by the new policies. Most programs/departments will use their local governance mechanisms such as executive or curriculum committees to approve curricular changes before advancing the changes for approval at the school/college level.
3. **Schools/Colleges Determine a Template to Use for Policy Compliance** –Schools/colleges are welcomed to use the attached template with their graduate programs to facilitate the process of reviewing compliance with new policies. The template serves as a baseline for the information required to ensure policy compliance. If schools/colleges wish to supplement this form with other school/college curricular approval practices, they are welcomed to do so. The template is designed to allow programs to include all degree levels of a single program on one template. However, multiple templates can be used for a single program, if preferred. Graduate programs should retain copies of completed templates to facilitate required updates for the Graduate Catalog due May 1, 2014.
4. **Schools/Colleges Determine a Process to Review Policy Compliance** – School/College APCs and curricular committees have the best knowledge and expertise to determine what is appropriate for the programs within their own school/college; we imagine each school/college will determine ways to make the process as efficient as possible. For example, they might assign "degrees of review" to the completed templates: little for small changes, mid-range review of medium changes, and high-level review for more substantive changes. The resources in the Graduate School KB may be helpful with this assignment of review categories as some programs may already be in compliance through current practices or policies. In these instances, they simply need to affirm these policies or articulate practices into stated policies. Other programs may require greater attention.
5. **Schools/Colleges Determine Internal Deadlines for Completion and Review of Program Templates** -- The GFEC is requesting schools/colleges to provide a brief summary of compliance of their graduate programs with the new policies along with the collection of completed templates from their graduate programs. The summaries will be presented to the GFEC as information items and should be submitted by schools/colleges on or before April 2, 2014. Thus, schools/colleges should determine an internal deadline for their programs' policy compliance in advance of this date. For example, schools/colleges may want programs to submit their completed templates to their school/college curricular governance body sometime between January – March 2014.
6. **Schools/Colleges Submit Policy Compliance Summaries to the Graduate School on or before April 2, 2014** – Schools/colleges may submit compliance summaries and completed templates of their graduate

degree programs via paper or electronically (electronic submission is preferred) to the Assistant Dean of Academic Assessment and Funding, Kelly Haslam. The submission summaries and templates can be all at once or in batches.

7. **GFEC Reviews School/College Policy Compliance Summaries** – The GFEC will review policy compliance summaries as information items as they are received. If there are concerns, feedback will be provided back to the school/college.
8. **Programs Prepare for Policy Effective Dates (see Communication Implementation Checklist on final page of Template)** – Programs should align themselves with all new policies for students at all graduate degree levels (master’s and doctoral) effective Fall 2014 except where noted below.
  - Any student entering or readmitted to a graduate program on or after Fall 2014 must adhere to the above requirements.
  - Currently enrolled master’s students have the option to complete their degree under the prior policy requirements if they can complete all degree requirements and are awarded the degree before Fall 2016.
  - Students enrolled in an MFA, specialist certificate, or doctoral degree prior to Fall 2014 have the option to complete their degree under the prior policy requirements.
  - A student who chooses to stop out of their degree program for a semester or more will return under the new policy requirements.
  - Appeals will be considered in exceptional cases.

Effective implementation of new policy requirements will receive ongoing attention through institutional program review (due every 5 years for new programs and every 10 years for all other programs).

#### Brief Description of New Policies

Please note that graduate programs always have the latitude to have more rigorous requirements than the Graduate School’s baseline or standard requirements. There are five new policies; see [GFEC Policy Vote Items and FAQ’s](#) for complete details.

1. **Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement** – The minimum number of graduate-level credits (from courses numbered 300 or above) taken as a graduate student at UW-Madison.
2. **Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement** – The minimum number of credits to complete the degree taken while a graduate student at UW-Madison or through approved prior course work (see #4 below).
3. **Minimum Graduate Course Work (50%) Requirement** – At least 50% of credits applied toward the program’s graduate degree credit requirement must be courses designed for graduate work as defined in the [GFEC Policy Vote Items and FAQ’s](#).
4. **Prior Course Work** – Programs may decide to accept course work completed outside of the student’s graduate career at UW-Madison (graduate course work from another institution; course work taken as a UW-Madison undergraduate or university special student) when those courses are rigorous and meet the expectations of graduate work for the degree. See [GFEC Policy Vote Items and FAQ’s](#) for specific parameters for each category of prior course work.
5. **Maximum Credits per Term** – Non-dissertator students are allowed to enroll for maximum of 15 credits per term. Dissertators must continue to enroll in exactly 3 credits related to their dissertation.

# Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Related Policies: Program Update Template

**Program (Major) Name:** IGPNS – Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Nutritional Sciences

**1. Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement (as per CSREES Review 2001):**

The Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement requires at least 16 credits for master’s degrees, 24 credits for MFA/specialist certificates, and 32 credits for doctorate degrees. Programs may require a higher Graduate Residence Credit minimum. If you have different credit requirements for different tracks of students at the same degree level, please note that accordingly.

<b>Name of degree level and any applicable options/tracks</b>	<b>Residence Credit Requirement</b>
M.S. – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	16 credits minimum
Ph.D. – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	32 credits minimum

**2. Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement (as per CSREES Review 2001):**

The Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement requires at least 30 credits for master’s degrees, 42 credits for MFA/specialist certificates, and 51 credits for doctorate degrees (may include master’s, minor, and dissertator credits). Programs may require a higher Graduate Degree Credit minimum. If you have different credit requirements for different tracks of students at the same degree level, please note that accordingly.

<b>Name of degree level and any applicable options/tracks</b>	<b>Degree Credit Requirement</b>
M.S. – requirements are the same for all emphasis groups	30 credits minimum
Ph.D. – requirements are the same for all emphasis groups	51 credits minimum

**3. Minimum Graduate Course Work (50%) Requirement (as per CSREES Review 2001):**

The Minimum Graduate Course Work Requirement states that at least 50% of credits applied toward the program’s graduate degree credit requirement must be with courses designed for graduate work. Graduate course work can include UW-Madison courses (including but not limited to online, thesis/research, independent study, and practicum/internship credits) that satisfy one of the following guidelines:

- numbered 700 and above;
- numbered 300-699 that are specifically designed for graduate students in a graduate program;
- numbered 300-699 that assess graduate students separately from undergraduate students; or
- numbered 300-699 that have a graduate student enrollment >50% in any given semester.

Programs may be more restrictive with how they define graduate-level work (than the above parameters). Please provide the program’s policy around this requirement. If you have different requirements for different tracks of students at the same degree level, please note that accordingly.

<b>Name of degree level and any applicable options/tracks</b>	<b>Graduate Course Work Requirement</b>
M.S. – requirements are the same for all emphasis groups	Half of degree course work (15 credits out of 30 total credits) must be completed in courses numbered 700 and above, &/or in courses numbered 400-699 that are specifically designed for graduate students in a graduate program. In unique circumstances a limited number of 300-level classes may be taken if prior approval of the IGPNS Certification Committee is obtained.
Ph.D. – requirements are the same for all emphasis groups	Half of degree course work (26 credits out of 51 total credits) must be completed in courses numbered 700 or higher, &/or in courses numbered 400-699 that are specifically designed for graduate students in a graduate program. In unique circumstances a limited number of 300-level classes may be taken if prior approval of the IGPNS Certification Committee is obtained.

#### 4. Prior Course Work Requirements:

The Prior Course Requirements state a student's program may decide to accept coursework completed outside of the student's graduate career at UW-Madison when those courses are rigorous and meet the expectations of graduate work for the degree. The chart below summarizes the policy and its intersection with other policies:

	**Prior Graduate Course Work from Other Institution(s)	**Course Work from Undergraduate Career at UW-Madison	**Transfer from University Special Student Career at UW-Madison
Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement	No	No	*Allowed up to 15 credits numbered 300 or above if difference in tuition is paid.
Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement	*Allowed	*Allowed up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above	
Minimum Graduate Course Work (50%) Requirement	*Allowed	*Allowed up to 7 credits numbered 700 or above	*Allowed up to 15 credits numbered 700 or above if difference in tuition is paid.

\* Fulfillment of requirements is allowed only if approved by the student's graduate program up to any stated maximum.

\*\* Course work earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree or course work earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Programs may be more restrictive regarding the type and number of prior course work credits that are allowed to fulfill requirements. Please provide the program's policy around this requirement. If you have different requirements for different tracks of students at the same degree level, please note that accordingly.

Name of degree level and any applicable options/tracks	Prior Course Work Requirements: Grad Work Other Institutions; UW-Madison Undergraduate; and UW-Madison University Special
M.S. – requirements are the same for all emphasis groups	<b>Grad Work Other Institutions:</b> With Certification Committee approval, students are allowed to count up to 14 credits of graduate course work from other institutions. Course work earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.
	<b>UW-Madison Undergraduate:</b> With Certification Committee approval, students may count up to 7 credits from a UW-Madison undergraduate degree, numbered 400 and higher, toward the M.S. degree, provided that the course satisfies a requirement within the student's Core Curriculum or IGPNS Emphasis Group. Course work earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.
	<b>UW-Madison University Special:</b> With Certification Committee approval and payment of the difference in tuition (between special and graduate tuition), students are allowed to count no more than 14 credits of course work taken as a UW-Madison special student, provided the course satisfies a requirement within the student's

	Core Curriculum or IGPNS Emphasis Group. Course work earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.
Ph.D. – requirements are the same for all emphasis groups	<b>Grad Work Other Institutions:</b> With Certification Committee approval, students are allowed to count up to 19 credits of graduate course work from other institutions. Course work earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.
	<b>UW-Madison Undergraduate:</b> With Certification Committee approval, students are allowed to count up to 7 credits from a UW-Madison undergraduate degree, numbered 400 and higher, toward the Ph.D. degree, provided the course satisfies a requirement within the student's Core Curriculum or IGPNS Emphasis Group. Course work earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.
	<b>UW-Madison University Special:</b> With program approval and payment of the difference in tuition (between special and graduate tuition), students are allowed to count no more than 19 credits of course work taken as a UW-Madison special student, provided the course satisfies a requirement within the student's Core Curriculum or IGPNS Emphasis Group. Course work earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**5. Maximum Credits per Term (as per IGPNS Handbook):**

<b>Name of degree level and any applicable options/tracks</b>	<b>Maximum Credits per Term</b>
M.S. – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	12 credits per semester (Fall and Spring) and 2 credits per 8wk Summer Session
Ph.D., non-dissertator – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	12 credits per semester (Fall and Spring) and 2 credits per 8wk Summer Session
Ph.D., dissertator – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	3 credits per semester (Fall, Spring, Summer session)

**6. Effective Dates:**

The GFEC approved the following implementation effective date parameters:

- Any student entering or readmitted to a graduate program on or after Fall 2014 must adhere to the above requirements.
- Currently enrolled master’s students have the option to complete their degree under the prior policy requirements if they can complete all degree requirements and are awarded the degree before Fall 2016.
- Students enrolled in a MFA, specialist certificate, or doctoral degree prior to Fall 2014 have the option to complete their degree under the prior policy requirements.
- A student who chooses to discontinue their degree program for a semester or more will return under the new policy requirements.

Please provide the program’s policy around these parameters. If you have different requirements for different tracks of students at the same degree level, please note that accordingly.

<b>Name of degree level and any applicable options/tracks</b>	<b>Effective Dates</b>
M.S. – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	There is no change from current policy. New master’s students must adhere to new program requirements effective Fall 2014. Currently enrolled master’s students have the option to complete their degree under the prior requirements if they graduate before Fall 2016 and are continuously enrolled.
Ph.D. – requirements are the same for all options/tracks	There is no change from current policy. New doctoral students must adhere to new program requirements effective Fall 2014. Currently enrolled doctoral students have the option to complete their degree under the prior requirements if they are continuously enrolled.

**7. Communication Implementation:**

Please check and insert any relevant notations to each of the following communication steps necessary for appropriate and full implementation of the new policies.

X We have or will notify prospective and incoming students about these ~~new~~ policy requirements so they can make informed decisions regarding enrollment.

**Notes: this is not a new policy for IGPNS but clarification of existing policy.**

X We have or will notify current students about these ~~new~~ policy requirements so they understand how they may or may not be impacted.

**Notes: this is not a new policy for IGPNS but clarification of existing policy.**

X We have or will update our Fall 2014 (or 2014-15) program handbook and website where appropriate with these ~~new~~ policy requirements prior to the start of the Fall 2014 term.

**Notes: this is not a new policy for IGPNS but clarification of existing policy.**

X We will be ready to update the Graduate Catalog with these and any other program requirements during the update cycle set to occur between November 2013-April 2014. Please retain a copy of this form as a reference.

**Notes: this is not a new policy for IGPNS but clarification of existing policy.**

**8. Notes (Optional):**

Please provide any additional information relevant to your program below or as an attachment.

**This is not a new policy for IGPNS but clarification of existing policy, as per the "IGPNS Current Program Document", Appendix C.23. in 2001 CSREES Review and Certification Procedures and Handbook for IGPNS.**