Academic Policies and Procedures
Graduate Program &
Post-Baccalaureate Certificates

Policy/Procedure

All students enrolled in graduate-level courses at Dickinson College are responsible for understanding and following all academic policies and degree requirements in effect during the semester the student matriculated. Students matriculate by applying for and starting an academic semester as a Certificate or degree-seeking student. Students who begin taking classes in the summer will be considered as matriculating in the fall semester.

This information is intended to describe the graduate program policies. It should not be construed as a contract between the student and the college. Dickinson College reserves the right to change any of the policies and procedures contained herein and to apply these changes to any or all of its students as it sees fit. The college may also choose to add or delete course offerings or degree programs at any time.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Current and newly admitted graduate students may register for classes online during the registration period which begins in October/November for the spring semester and in March/April for the fall semester. Students with an outstanding obligation to the college may have a hold placed on their account which would prohibit registration. Reasons for holds include, but are not limited to: unpaid tuition or fees, library fines, and final transcripts not submitted. It is the student's responsibility to satisfy the obligation with the office that placed the hold before being allowed to register.

Students may make changes in their course registration up through the first week of the semester, referred to as the add/drop period. No change in registration is official until the student has made the change using the online registration system or confirmed the change with the Registrar's Office. Starting a course after the first few days of classes is usually not advisable. Students are expected to be properly registered for courses beginning on the first day of the semester. Those who fail to do so by the end of the add/drop period will be administratively withdrawn.

Students are responsible for selecting the courses in which they enroll and for the election of courses which will satisfy the requirements for the Certificate or Master's degree.

Applicants who have been denied admission to a graduate program may take classes as a non-degree student with the permission of the Graduate Program Director on a course-by-course basis.

CALENDAR

Courses are offered in two semesters, each totaling 15 weeks (including classes, a brief reading period, and final examinations). The fall semester begins in late August and concludes prior to the holidays. An abbreviated summer session may also be offered.

CLASS SIZE

All courses in the program will typically be limited to 30 students to allow for flexibility in pedagogy. This also provides students with adequate opportunities to interact with the professor and other students.

COURSE LOAD AND CREDIT

Courses offered in the Master's Program will earn three semester credits each. In keeping with federal regulations, each course will meet for 15-week semesters and require nine hours each week, at least one hour of which will be scheduled so that students meet online at specific times for live instructions, student presentations, or other real-time activities. Courses that meet for three hours of synchronous instruction will be designed to include six hours of out-of-class student work. Seminars that meet one hour per week for synchronous instruction will be designed to include eight hours of out-of-class student work. The nine-week summer session would include a minimum of one hour and forty minutes of synchronous instruction along with 13 hours and 20 minutes of out-of-class student work per week.

The normal semester hour workload for students varies between three and nine credit hours. Students with fewer than nine credit hours are classified as part-time.

Masters students must complete degree requirements no later than five years from when they start earning credit, unless the period is extended through student petition. Petitions are approved by the Graduate Program Director.

WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE WITH A "W" GRADE

A student may petition to withdraw from a course until eleven college business days prior to the last day of classes. The option to withdraw from a course and the use of "W" grade requires approval from the Graduate Program Director.

GRADING

Professors generally evaluate student achievement by the traditional means of written comments on papers and exams as well as by assigning letter grades. They are also available to students for individual conferences, to answer questions or discuss complaints, and to talk further about some important matter raised in class. At the end of each semester final grades are reported to the Registrar's Office and become part of the student's permanent record. Once a grade has been reported to the Registrar's Office, it may not be changed unless the change has been requested by the instructor and approved by the Graduate Program Director. Students who believe a final grade may be inaccurate should begin by contacting the professor as soon as possible and no later than the last day of the subsequent semester. If the professor confirms that a calculation or data entry error has occurred, the professor will submit a grade change request to the Graduate Program Director.

A through F Grading

All courses are offered for a letter grade unless otherwise listed in the Bulletin or in the course offerings online.

The letter grades reflect the achievement of Dickinson students in the following manner: A, exceptionally high level of achievement; B, good level of achievement; C, satisfactory level of achievement; F, failure. Plus (+) and minus (-) are gradations of the letter grade scale.

The following system of grades and associated quality points is used to indicate the quality of academic work for graduate students:

Regular Letter Grades

A	Excellent	4.00
A-		3.67
B+		3.33
B	Good	3.00
B-		*2.67*
C+		2.33
C	Fair	2.00
F	Failure	0.00

Special Grades

I	Incomplete
TR	Transfer Credit
W	Withdrawal

Individual faculty members may choose to use single letter grades and not award plus/minus grades.

Incomplete Grades

A grade of "incomplete" may be reported only in cases in which illness or other serious situation has prevented the student from completing the work for the semester. No incomplete is in effect until a form has been filed with the Registrar that states the reasons under which it has been granted, contains an evaluation of the student's work to the date of the incomplete, and is approved by the professor of the course and Graduate Program Director. This form will also document the work to be completed and deadline for doing so. All incomplete grades must be resolved by the last day of the subsequent semester.

Repeat Policy

Students earning a grade of F may repeat the course for credit. Both the original grade and the new grade are calculated in the average. All grades continue to appear on the student's academic record regardless of course repetition.

Contesting a Grade

The college protects students from capriciousness or prejudice in grading. Students have the right to request a written explanation of a grade in a course. Students need to compare the

explanation to their own records to be sure there is no miscalculation or other discrepancy that would lead to the next step of a discussion to rectify the situation.

Students who, after requesting and receiving from the faculty member a detailed explanation of a grade, believe that an assigned grade represents unfair or capricious grading should contact the Graduate Program Director, who will investigate the charge and report findings to the Provost/Dean of the College for further action.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Graduate students must maintain a minimum of 3.00 (“B”) cumulative grade point average to be in good academic standing.

Academic Probation

Students who fall below good standing are placed on probation for their next active semester. A minimum probationary average is set to raise the student’s grade point average to 3.00 and return the student to good academic standing by the end of the semester. A student who does not achieve the minimum probationary average will be required to withdraw from the college.

Graduate students earning final grades of “F” and a 0.00 cumulative GPA at the end of their first semester of enrollment will be dismissed from the college, except for graduate students enrolled in only one course, who may be placed on probation at the discretion of the Graduate Program Director.

A student must be in good standing to be eligible for graduation.

Dismissal for C Grades

You may earn only one C grade while a graduate student at Dickinson College. If you earn at least two of these grades you will be dismissed from the college.

Notice and Appeal

Students who are academically dismissed will be notified in writing by the Registrar's Office. Students who wish to appeal for immediate reinstatement to active status must submit a written petition to the Graduate Program Director. This statement must include a candid assessment and reflection of the poor academic performance as well as a detailed plan to be implemented to improve academic performance to levels expected by the college should the student be permitted to return. Appeals must be filed within 30 days of receiving the notice of academic dismissal. The Graduate Program Director has sole discretion in determining if an appeal shall be allowed after this timeframe.

Upon review of the student's submission, the Graduate Program Director may deny the appeal and continue the required withdrawal, or approve the student's return to active status on academic probation and require the implementation of some or all of the steps outlined in the student's plan.

TRANSCRIPTS

The transcript is a reflection of a student's academic performance at an institution. It contains coursework that is officially recognized and integral to the academic program.

Transcripts are considered official only if they are: 1) printed on secure paper with the official seal of the college as the watermark, signed by the Registrar and embossed with the raised seal, or 2) delivered as a digitally signed PDF through the National Student Clearinghouse.

CHANGES IN STUDENT STATUS:

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

From time to time, students may need to take time away from their graduate studies under circumstances where they wish to maintain their status as enrolled students, eligible to return to active status without applying for readmission. Subject to compliance with the procedures set forth below, Dickinson College will grant qualifying students leaves of absence.

Students who find it necessary to take a temporary break in their academic studies for various reasons can request a Medical Leave of Absence, Family Leave of Absence or Other Leave of Absence (see explanation of each below) through the Graduate Program Director. The student must provide appropriate documentation in either case along with a written request, including the anticipated amount of time off and return. Once a student receives approval for the leave of absence, their time-to-degree will be suspended until they return to their program. A withdraw grade ("W") will be assigned to all registered courses if the student leave occurs during the semester after the add/drop period. Leaves of absence can be granted for up to one year at a time. If additional time is needed, it must be requested prior to the end of the approved leave.

Graduate students cannot register for courses during the established period of the leave of absence. All current college policies will be enforced regarding total withdrawal as it concerns tuition and fee billing, financial aid, etc. Retroactive leave requests are not allowed and will not be considered.

Medical Leave of Absence

Medical Leave of Absence allows a graduate student to request time off or withdraw from all courses in which they are currently enrolled in order to receive necessary medical care for a physical or emotional/psychological illness. Supporting medical documentation is required from a medical or mental health provider, indicating the anticipated amount of time off and date of return. This information should be provided to the Graduate Program Director.

Family Leave of Absence

Family Leave of Absence allows a graduate student to request time off or withdraw from all courses in which they are currently enrolled in order to provide care and support for a family member. Supporting documentation is required from the family member's care provider, indicating the anticipated amount of time off and date of return. In the case of the bereavement time for a spouse or child, documentation that verifies the death (e.g., a funeral program, death notice, obituary, etc.) and the nature of the student's relationship to the deceased will be required. This information should be provided to the Graduate Program Director.

Other Leave of Absence

There are other events which may cause a graduate student to request a leave of absence. Some examples include changes in employment status, military deployment, etc. The appropriate documentation should be submitted along with the student's request to the Graduate Program Director.

WITHDRAWALS

The college withdrawal policy provides graduate students who are unable to complete a semester with the option of withdrawing from all classes, ie. from the college, for that semester.

Questions about the financial impact of withdrawal should be addressed to the Student Accounts Office.

Voluntary

A student may withdraw voluntarily with "W" grades being recorded for all registered courses, if the withdrawal is made between the day after add/drop through the last day of classes. If withdrawal is made during the reading or final examination periods, earned grades will be recorded. Students should contact the Registrar's Office to obtain the appropriate form.

Required

Dickinson College reserves the right, at any time, to require withdrawal from the college of any student whose academic performance or personal conduct on or off the college campus is, in the sole judgment of the college, unsatisfactory or detrimental to the best interests of the college. A withdrawal grade ("W") will be assigned to all registered courses for the semester from which the student is withdrawn.

Students who do not meet the minimum qualitative standards may be required to withdraw (see Academic Expectations).

Dismissal

A student required to withdraw for a second time for academic reasons is dismissed from the college without the privilege of readmission at any time.

Administrative

Students who fail to register by the end of add/drop and who do not inform the Registrar's Office of their plans will be administratively withdrawn. Such students may apply for readmission for the subsequent semester.

EXPULSION

A student who is expelled from the college does not have the privilege of readmission at any time.

READMISSION

Any formerly matriculated student who wishes to re-enroll must file a Readmission Application. Students who attended another college while withdrawn from Dickinson must have the “Request for Certification for Students Seeking Readmission” completed by an official at the prior college and submitted directly to the Registrar’s Office. Such applications should be submitted to the Registrar prior to May 15 for the fall semester and prior to November 15 for the spring semester. The Graduate Program Director will be consulted and the student's record while previously enrolled at Dickinson will be considered in the decision.

If the student was required to withdraw for non-academic reasons, the application process will normally require additional documentation. Any conditions set forth by the college when the withdrawal became effective must be satisfied by the time of reapplication.

Students who are dismissed for academic reasons may not apply for readmission for at least one year following dismissal. Students who are dismissed may not take classes as a non-degree graduate student. Readmission is never guaranteed following academic dismissal. It may only be granted if the student presents compelling evidence of a fundamental change that will allow them to perform academically at the level needed to graduate.

A student who is readmitted must meet the requirements for the degree in effect at the time of readmission.

A student who is absent from the college for at least three years, and who is readmitted and successfully completes the equivalent of at least two semesters of work on campus, may petition the Graduate Program Director to have course credits toward graduation and cumulative grade point averages based only on work accomplished after the second matriculation. "Successful completion" will mean the attainment of at least a 3.00 average, or a higher probationary average.

CREDIT FOR COURSE WORK AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Course work submitted by transfer students is evaluated by the Registrar in consultation with the Graduate Program Director. In general, coursework taken at accredited colleges or universities that parallels the curriculum at Dickinson is transferable provided grades of B or better (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) have been earned. Course work will be evaluated according to the following criteria: (1) must be listed on an official transcript of an accredited institution; (2) must be a minimum of 3 credit hours; (3) must indicate a grade of B or better (3.0 on a 4.0 scale); (4) must have parallel content. A maximum of nine credits, ie. three courses, may be accepted for transfer toward the Master’s degree. A maximum of six credits, ie. two courses, may be accepted for transfer toward a Certificate.

Grades earned at another institution will not count in a student’s cumulative grade point average.

CONVERSION TO DEGREE STATUS

Students must apply through the Office of Admissions for Certificate or Master’s degree-seeking status upon completing six credits (ie. two courses) when pursuing a Certificate, or 12 credits (i.e. 4 courses) when pursuing a Master’s degree. If approved, coursework completed at Dickinson will be accepted toward the degree.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Graduate students are considered students for the purpose of determining applicability of various Dickinson policies and procedures. The primary, but not sole policy governing students is the *Community Standards & Procedures* which describe the standards for conduct and honesty at Dickinson College. Other policies relevant to students can be found in the Campus Policy Manual. The college statement on cheating and plagiarism can be found in this publication in the printed and online versions. See the *Community Standards and Procedures*. If anything in the *Community Standards and Procedures*, Campus Policy Manual or any other Dickinson policy conflicts with this graduate policy, the language in this policy controls.

Related Information

History/Revision Information

Responsible Division/Office:	Academic Affairs
Effective Date:	February 11, 2021
Last Amended Date:	February 22, 2021
Next Review Date:	March 1, 2021
Also found in:	College Bulletin