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Policy Summary
Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements

Policy Purpose
This policy governs pre-baccalaureate credits; credits in common; transfer credits; and use of 4000-level coursework

Policy Location
http://z.umn.edu/gradcreditdegree

Effective date
September 2011

Highlights
- Colleges and graduate programs will wish to collaborate regarding their roles in the review and approval processes related to this policy
- No final review of students’ Graduate Degree Plans will be done by Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) aside from required PeopleSoft data elements
- Graduate programs may establish program-specific criteria more stringent than – but consistent with – this U-wide policy

College Responsibilities
- Establish, communicate and execute the college’s role related to the Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements policy
- Ensure that any program-specific criteria are consistent with U policy

Program Responsibilities
- Determine whether to establish program-specific criteria more stringent than – but consistent with – the U-wide policy
- Communicate to the college any program-specific criteria related to this policy
- Publicize U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific criteria related to this policy
- Advise students to ensure compliance with U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific policies
- Review/take action on students’ Graduate Degree Plans to ensure compliance with U-wide and, if applicable, program-specific policies
- Establish and publicize procedures for reviewing/taking action on students’ requests for exceptions to program-specific policies

Graduate School Responsibilities
- Adjudicate academic student complaints related to this policy that are not successfully addressed at the local (program/college) level
- Coordinate the consultative process for formal review of the Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements policy

Graduate Student Responsibilities
- Plan their coursework and (if applicable) thesis credits in accordance with the U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific criteria related to this policy
- Submit their Graduate Degree Plan for review and approval in a timely manner

Academic Support Resources Responsibilities
- Create and implement online process to replace the existing Graduate Degree Plan form
- Maintain the existing Graduate Degree Plan form until transition to an online process is implemented

Revised: January 31, 2013
CHANGES TO THE POLICY - WHAT'S DIFFERENT

- Plan A thesis (8777) and doctoral dissertation (8888) credits may be used toward either the Plan A or PhD, but not both; may be used to meet the Plan B master's project credit requirement
- Plan B project credits may only count towards Plan B master's degree requirements
- Maximum of 12 graduate course credits can transfer from a non-degree status (master's and doctoral)
- Maximum of 9 graduate course credits of 4000-level coursework (master's and doctoral)
- Doctoral students must take a minimum of 12 graduate course credits at the University of Minnesota
- Graduate course credits earned while enrolled in one University graduate program may be applied to another University graduate program -- number of credits applied is at the discretion of the program to which the student is applying

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER

COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each college is responsible for:
1. Establishing, communicating, and executing the college’s role related to the Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements policy
2. Ensuring that any program-specific criteria are consistent with U policy

1. Establishing, communicating, and executing the college’s role related to the Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements policy

Graduate programs have the authority to accept or reject any graduate course credits that can be applied to a student's Graduate Degree Plan based on the criteria established by this U-wide policy. Exceptions to accept/reject graduate credits that do not meet U-wide policy criteria are not considered.

Things to consider:
- While this U-wide policy states that decision-making authority is within the purview of the graduate programs, colleges and programs may determine that some level of collegiate involvement is advantageous.
  - It is important to note that no final review of students’ Graduate Degree Plans will be done by Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) aside from required PeopleSoft data elements.
  - Ensuring accuracy of the student’s Graduate Degree Plan at the time it is approved by the program is a key factor in minimizing – if not eliminating entirely – last-minute policy compliance problems at the time of the student’s degree clearance.
  - How will the college and its programs collaborate to determine whether, in what ways, and for what purpose the college will be involved? How will those decisions be communicated to stakeholders?
- **Involvement could be, for example**
  - Graduate programs sharing their students’ approved Graduate Degree Plans with the colleges so the colleges can
    - Spot check – or review all – submitted Graduate Degree Plans to ensure compliance with U-wide policy, and
      - follow-up with the graduate program if any Graduate Degree Plans are out of policy compliance; collaborate on resolution
      - use routine spot checks/reviews to monitor trends in programs’ decisions
  - Colleges assisting graduate programs as needed with regard to policy implementation/compliance

2. **Ensuring that any program-specific criteria are consistent with U-wide policy**

**Things to consider:**

- Graduate programs have the authority to adopt program-specific criteria more stringent than – but consistent with – this U-wide policy.
- **It is the college’s responsibility to know their programs’ criteria so that**
  - The college can collaborate with the graduate program, as needed, to ensure program-specific criteria are within compliance of U policy
  - The college is familiar with the programs’ criteria
    - Particularly useful when the college plays a role in the review of students’ Graduate Degree Plan forms
    - Useful when the college assists graduate programs with policy-related problem solving

**Program Responsibilities**

Programs are responsible for:

- Determining whether to establish program-specific criteria more stringent than – but consistent with – the U-wide policy
- Communicating to the college any program-specific criteria related to this policy
- Publicizing U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific criteria related to this policy
- Advising students to ensure compliance with U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific policies
- Reviewing/taking action on students’ Graduate Degree Plans to ensure compliance with U-wide and, if applicable, program-specific policies
- Establishing and publicizing procedures for reviewing/taking action on students’ requests for exceptions to program-specific policies
1. Determining whether to establish program-specific criteria more stringent than – but consistent with – the U-wide policy

Note: Graduate programs have the option to establish more stringent criteria regarding

- Maximum number of “credits in common” between master's-level degrees (U policy: 8-credit maximum)
- Maximum number of graduate-level non-degree seeking/non-admitted status credits (U policy: 12-credit maximum)
- Maximum number of 4xxx-level course credits (U policy: 9-credit maximum)
- Minimum percentage of U coursework applied to master’s degree (U-policy: 60% minimum)
- Minimum number of U course credits to be applied to doctoral degree (U-policy: 12-credit minimum)

1A. “Credits in common”

Note: “Credits in common” maxima (also referred to as “double counting credits”) does not apply to common course credits between a master’s and doctoral degree; thesis credits; or officially recognized dual/joint master’s degrees with U-approved maxima above 8 common credits.

Things to consider:

- U policy: 8-credit maximum
- Maximum number, whether U’s limit or program specific, applies to all master's students in the program
- If program restricts to fewer than 8 common credits
  - How many?
  - Why?
- How might accepting fewer common credits impact students?
  - Academically (e.g., depth/breadth of knowledge; time-to-degree)?
  - Financially (e.g., tuition/fees; potential for lost income due to longer time-to-degree)?
  - Other?
- How might accepting fewer common credits impact the graduate program and/or college?
- While exceptions to the U’s 8-credit maximum cannot be granted, it is within graduate program’s authority to consider exceptions to their own (more stringent) maximum
  - What circumstances, if any, might argue for an exception to the program-specific maximum?
    - What does the program identify as “exceptional circumstances”?
    - How might the program’s criteria for exceptions impact the student’s academic and non-academic needs?
    - What are the program’s non-negotiable priorities/expectations?
    - How might exceptions impact the program’s priorities/expectations?

1B. Maximum number of graduate level, non-degree seeking/non-admitted status credits

Things to consider:

- U policy: 12-credit maximum
- Maximum number, whether U's limit or program specific, applies to all master’s and doctoral students in the program
• If program restricts to fewer than 12 such credits
  o How many?
  o Why?
• How might accepting fewer than 12 such credits impact students?
  o Academically (e.g., depth/breadth of knowledge; time-to-degree)
  o Financially (e.g., tuition/fees; potential for lost income due to longer time-to-degree)
  o Other?
• How might accepting fewer than 12 such credits impact the graduate program and/or college?
• While exceptions to the U’s 12-credit maximum cannot be granted, it is within graduate program’s authority to consider exceptions to their own (more stringent) maximum
  o What circumstances, if any, might argue for an exception to the program-specific maximum?
    ▪ What does the program identify as “exceptional circumstances”?
    ▪ How might the program’s criteria for exceptions impact the student’s academic and non-academic needs?
    ▪ What are the program’s non-negotiable priorities/expectations?

1C. Maximum number of 4xxx-level course credits

Things to consider:
• U policy: 9-credit maximum
• Maximum number, whether U’s limit or program specific, applies to all master’s and doctoral students in the program
• If program restricts to fewer than 9 4xxx-level course credits
  o How many?
  o Why?
• How might accepting fewer than 9 4xxx-level credits impact students?
  o Academically (e.g., depth/breadth of knowledge; time-to-degree)
  o Financially (e.g., tuition/fees; potential for lost income due to longer time-to-degree)
  o Other?
• How might accepting fewer than 9 4xxx-level credits impact the graduate program and/or college?
• While exceptions to the U’s 9-credit maximum cannot be granted, it is within graduate program’s authority to consider exceptions to their own (more stringent) maximum
  o What circumstances, if any, might argue for an exception to the program-specific maximum?
    ▪ What does the program identify as “exceptional circumstances”?
    ▪ How might the program’s criteria for exceptions impact the student’s academic and non-academic needs?
    ▪ What are the program’s non-negotiable priorities/expectations?

1D. Minimum percentage of graduate course credits taken at the U (master’s only)

Things to consider:
• U policy: A minimum of 60% of the graduate course credits included on a master's Graduate Degree Plan must be taken at the U
- Minimum percentage, whether U’s minimum or a more stringent program-specific minimum, applies to all master's students in the program
- If program implements a more stringent minimum percentage of required U course credits
  - What minimum will be established?
  - Why?
- How might requiring more that 60% U credits impact students?
  - Academically (e.g., depth/breadth of knowledge; time-to-degree)
  - Financially (e.g., tuition/fees; potential for lost income to due to longer time-to-degree)
  - Other?
- How might requiring more U credits impact the graduate program and/or college?
- While exceptions to the U's 60% minimum cannot be granted, it is within the graduate program’s authority to consider exceptions to their own (more stringent) minimum
  - What circumstances, if any, might argue for an exception to the program-specific minimum?
    - What does the program identify as “exceptional circumstances”?
    - How might the program’s criteria for exceptions impact the student's academic and non-academic needs?
    - What are the program’s non-negotiable priorities/expectations?

1E. Minimum number of graduate course credits taken at the U (doctoral only)

Things to consider
- U policy: 12-credit minimum
- Minimum number of credits, whether U’s minimum or a more stringent program-specific minimum, applies to all doctoral students in the program
- If program implements a more stringent minimum of required U graduate course credits
  - What minimum will be established?
  - Why?
- How might requiring more that 12 U graduate course credits impact students?
  - Academically (e.g., depth/breadth of knowledge; time-to-degree)
  - Financially (e.g., tuition/fees; potential for lost income to due to longer time-to-degree)
  - Other?
- How might requiring more U graduate course credits impact the graduate program and/or college?
- While exceptions to the U’s 12-credit minimum cannot be granted, it is within the graduate program’s authority to consider exceptions to their own (more stringent) minimum
  - What circumstances, if any, might argue for an exception to the program-specific minimum?
    - What does the program identify as “exceptional circumstances”?
    - How might the program’s criteria for exceptions impact the student’s academic and non-academic needs?
    - What are the program’s non-negotiable priorities/expectations?

2. Communicating to the college any program-specific criteria related to this policy

Things to consider:
- Graduate programs have the authority to determine whether they wish to adopt program-specific criteria that are more stringent than this policy
- Graduate programs are responsible for apprising their college regarding these criteria decisions, so that:
1. The college can collaborate with the graduate program, as needed, to ensure program-specific criteria are within compliance of U policy
2. The college is familiar with the programs’ criteria
   - Useful if the college adopts a role that includes review of students’ Graduate Degree Plan forms
   - Useful when the college assists graduate programs with policy-related problem solving

3. Publicizing U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific criteria related to this policy
   
   Things to consider:
   - **How will the program publicize?**
     - Student handbook
     - Program web site
     - Graduate program orientations/workshops
     - Other?
   - **Who in the program will be responsible for updating communications?**
   - **Who is/are the contacts in the program when questions arise?**
     - Adviser
     - DGS
     - PLC
     - Other?
   - **What additional related information, if any, should be included in communications?**

4. Advising students to ensure compliance with U-wide and, if applicable, program-specific policies
   
   Things to consider:
   - **Programs are responsible for**
     - knowing the U-wide policies and any program-specific policies related to the application of graduate credits to degree requirements
     - advising their students to ensure policy compliance
     - being familiar with the processes related to the application of this policy to students’ Graduate Degree Program Plans
     - being familiar with the individual(s) within the program and college to contact when the need for policy interpretation and/or problem solving arises

5. Reviewing/taking action on students’ Graduate Degree Plans to ensure compliance with U-wide and, if applicable, program-specific policies
   
   Things to consider:
   - A review/final action on students’ Graduate Degree Plans will no longer be provided by Graduate Student Services (GSSP), aside from required PeopleSoft data elements.
   - The level of involvement by the college with regard to review/final action, which should be determined collaboratively by the college and its programs, may vary. Graduate programs therefore, may hold primary/total responsibility for ensuring policy compliance with regard to this policy.
In addition to reviewing Graduate Degree Plans for compliance with program-specific policies (see #1, Establishing, communicating, and executing the college's role related to the Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements policy), students’ Graduate Degree Plans must be reviewed to ensure compliance with the following U-wide criteria:

5A. Reviewing/approving thesis credits: Master’s (8777)

Things to consider:
- U policy allows for use of doctoral thesis credits (8888) from the same program as the student's master's degree to meet the Plan A master's 10-thesis credit requirement; however
  - “double counting” of doctoral thesis credits (8888) to meet both the Plan A and doctoral thesis credit requirement is not allowed.
- No exceptions can be considered.

5B. Reviewing/approving thesis credits: Doctoral (8888)

Things to consider:
- U policy allows for the use of master's thesis credits (8777) from the same program as the student's doctoral degree to meet the doctoral 24-thesis credit requirement; however
  - “double counting” of master's credits (8777) to meet both the doctoral and Plan A master's thesis credit requirement is not allowed.
- No exceptions can be considered.

5C. Reviewing/approving master's Plan B project credits

Things to consider:
- U policy allows for the use of master's thesis credits (8777) from the same program as the student's master's Plan B to meet the Plan B project credit requirement; however
  - “double counting” of master's thesis credits (8777) to meet both the Plan B project and master's Plan A thesis credit requirement is not allowed.
- U policy allows for the use of doctoral thesis credits (8888) from the same program as the student's master's Plan B to meet the Plan B project credit requirement; however
  - “double counting” of the doctoral thesis credits (8888) to meet both the Plan B project and doctoral thesis credit requirement is not allowed.
- Plan B project credits cannot be applied toward the master's Plan A or doctoral thesis credit requirement
- No exceptions can be considered.

5D. Reviewing/approving application of graduate course credits from within the U

Things to consider:
- It is within the graduate program’s purview to determine whether/how many graduate course credits a student earned while enrolled in a different U graduate program can be applied toward its degree requirements
o Restricted to use of course credits; application of thesis credits from one graduate program to a different graduate program’s requirements is not allowed.

5E. Reviewing/approving transfer of graduate course credits from outside the U

It is the program’s responsibility to ensure that students’ Graduate Degree Plans do not include courses that fall outside the parameters established by this U policy

Things to consider:
- All students:
  o U policy precludes the acceptance of the following non-U course credits:
    ▪ Not earned from an institution accredited to offer graduate-level degrees
    ▪ Coursework earned from international institutions’ programs that are not comparable to the graduate degree program of a regionally accredited US institution
    ▪ Graduate-level coursework taken prior to award of the baccalaureate degree
    ▪ No exceptions can be considered
- For master’s students:
  o A minimum of 60% of the course credits included on a master’s student’s Graduate Degree Plan must be taken at the U
  o No exceptions can be considered
- For doctoral students:
  o Graduate programs will work with students on an individual basis to determine whether/how many eligible graduate course credits taken elsewhere can be included on the doctoral Graduate Degree Plan
  o A minimum of 12 graduate course credits must be taken at the U

6. Establishing and publicizing procedures for reviewing/taking action on students’ requests for exceptions to program-specific policy
- Note: Graduate programs have the option to
  o establish more stringent criteria regarding the maximum number of “credits in common” between master’s-level degrees; the maximum number of graduate-level non-degree seeking/non-admitted status credits; and the maximum number of 4xxx-level course credits, the minimum percentage of U graduate course credits used to meet master’s degree requirements, the minimum number of U graduate course credits applied toward the doctoral degree, and
  o consider exceptions to program-specific criteria.
  o No exceptions to other U requirements included in this policy can be considered.
- “Credits in common” requirement
  o When one of the master’s programs accepts up to 8 common credits, and the other has a more stringent requirement
    ▪ The more stringent “common credit” requirement is honored, unless the two programs agree to a compromise
    ▪ What circumstances, if any, might argue for a program to allow more than its program-specific minimum in this instance?
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate students are responsible for:

- Planning their coursework and (if applicable) thesis credits in accordance with the U-wide and (if applicable) program-specific criteria related to this policy
- Submitting their Graduate Degree Plan for review and approval in a timely manner

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate School is responsible for:

- Adjudicating academic student complaints related to this policy that are not successfully addressed at the local (program; college) level
- Coordinating the consultative process for formal review of the Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements policy

ACADEMIC SUPPORT RESOURCES RESPONSIBILITIES

- Creating and implementing online process to replace the existing Graduate Degree Plan form
- Maintaining the existing Graduate Degree Plan form until transition to an online process is implemented
### Policy Compliance Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Statement</th>
<th>Exception?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate credits taken before award of baccalaureate degree cannot be counted</td>
<td>No¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toward graduate degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Credits in common” (master’s-level programs only) – Max of 8 graduate course</td>
<td>No²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credits counted in common between two U master’s degrees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Credits in common” (master’s-level programs only) – Programs can establish a</td>
<td>Yes. Within the program’s purview to exceed its program-specific max, but not to exceed 8 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>max less than eight common credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max number of graduate level, non-degree seeking/non-admitted status credits –</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>master’s: 12 credits; doctoral: 12 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max graduate level, non degree seeking/non-admitted status credits (master’s and</td>
<td>Yes. Within the program’s purview to exceed its program-specific max, but not to exceed 12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctoral) – Programs can establish a max less than 12 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max number of 4xxx-level courses – master’s: nine credits; doctoral: nine credits</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max number of 4xxx-level courses (master’s and doctoral) – Programs can establish</td>
<td>Yes. Within the program’s purview to exceed its program-specific max (not to exceed nine credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a max less than nine credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s thesis credits (8777) from the same program as the student’s doctoral</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degree can be used toward doctoral 24-thesis credit requirement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral thesis credits (8888) from the same program as the student’s master’s</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degree can be used toward the Plan A master’s 10-thesis credit requirement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Double counting” of master’s thesis credits (8777) to meet both the Plan A and</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctoral thesis credit requirements is not allowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ U-approved joint/dual degree programs may have maximum common credits in excess of the 8 afforded by this policy.

² U-approved integrated bachelor’s/master’s programs are exempt from this restriction, but must adhere to established program-specific limits regarding the inclusion of undergraduate-level credits toward master’s degree requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Double counting” of doctoral thesis credits (8888) to meet both the doctoral and Plan A thesis credit requirements is not allowed</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s thesis credits (8777) from the same program as the student’s master’s Plan B can be used toward the Plan B project credit requirement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral thesis credits (8888) from the same program as the student’s master’s Plan B can be used toward the Plan B project credit requirement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Double counting” of master’s thesis credits (8777) to meet both the Plan A thesis and Plan B project credit requirements is not allowed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Double counting” of doctoral thesis credits (8888) to meet both the doctoral thesis and Plan B project credit requirements is not allowed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan B project credits cannot be used to meet Plan A or doctoral thesis credit requirements</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of graduate course credits earned in a different U graduate program toward degree requirements</td>
<td>N/A³ – Within the program’s purview to determine whether/how many graduate course credits from a different U graduate program can be applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis credits from a different U graduate program, or from a different institution, cannot be applied toward requirements</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate course credits earned from a non-U graduate program are eligible for transfer only if taken at an institution accredited to offer graduate-level degrees</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate course credits earned from an international institution’s graduate program are eligible for transfer only if the program is comparable to the graduate degree program of a regionally accredited US institution</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer limit (master’s only) -- A minimum of 60% of the graduate course credits included on a master’s Graduate Degree Plan must be taken at the U</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Except between two U master's-level degrees, which limits the number of credits-in-common to eight

Application of Graduate Credits to Degree Requirements
Revised: 1.31.13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer limit (master’s only) -- Programs can establish a minimum percentage higher than 60%</td>
<td>Yes. Within the program’s purview to grant exception to its program-specific policy, but still must be in compliance with U’s minimum of 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of graduate courses (doctoral only) – Graduate programs will work with doctoral students on an individual basis to determine whether/how many course credits can be transferred from outside the U</td>
<td>N/A – Within the program’s purview to determine whether/how many eligible graduate course credits from a outside the U can be transferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required minimum number of graduate course credits taken at the U (doctoral only): 12</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required minimum number of graduate course credits taken at the U (doctoral only) – Programs can establish a higher minimum number of required U course credits</td>
<td>Yes. Within the program’s purview to grant exception to its program-specific minimum, but still must be in compliance with the U’s 12-credit minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>