

# **Bylaws of The Graduate Council of JMU**

## **The Graduate Council**

### **Overview**

The Graduate Council is the chief policy-formulating and advisory body for The Graduate School. Its duties are to formulate, review, and approve or recommend for approval policies and other items concerning the conduct of graduate study at James Madison University, and to provide leadership in advocating for graduate education and scholarship of the highest caliber. The Graduate Council actions are reported to the graduate faculty, to college deans and to appropriate administrators of the University.

The primary aim of including the Graduate Council in the organization of JMU is to facilitate graduate program faculty participation in the establishment of university policies and procedures.

The Graduate Council adds value to graduate education at JMU by:

- working with faculty in collegiate units across the University to strengthen and ensure the quality of graduate programs;
- advocating for resources to support programs and students;
- promoting and supporting interdisciplinary graduate programming;
- advocating for quality in the graduate student experience;
- facilitating support for faculty development and scholarship;
- interpreting all graduate regulations and policies associated with graduate programs; and
- envisioning and initiating appropriate change for the future.

The Graduate Council, under its authority, allows graduate programs wide latitude in setting specific requirements and policies for admissions, language competence, courses, research, and other matters pertaining to its graduate degrees. Within this framework, the graduate faculties of departmental and interdepartmental programs establish their own requirements for individual programs of study within the requirements set forth by The Graduate School (TGS). The Graduate Council also is charged with making recommendations for the development and implementation of operational guidelines, resources, and procedures of TGS that will ensure a high quality of graduate programs and students

### **Responsibilities of the Graduate Council**

The Graduate Council is specifically charged with:

- communicating policy on issues affecting graduate education;
- monitoring and advocating excellence in graduate education;
- setting the broad framework for all graduate study;
- making recommendations on policies with regard to graduate

- degrees and any changes or additions to such policies;
- making recommendations on procedures regarding student appeals

Specifically, the Graduate Council approves the following:

- New program proposals
- Deletion of graduate programs
- Standards for graduate faculty
- University-wide graduate policies
- Graduate courses

### **Membership of the Graduate Council**

- The Graduate Council shall be chaired by the dean of) The Graduate School (TGS). (Note. The titles “Chair” and “dean of TGS” shall be used interchangeably throughout these by-laws.)
- The Graduate Council membership shall include the Dean of TGS as Chair, the Associate Dean as co-chair, the Assistant Dean as secretary, a representative (preferably the graduate program coordinator/director) from each recognized graduate program, a representative from the JMU library system, two graduate student representatives, and a representative from the Office of Academic Affairs. The Dean, Associate and Assistant Dean of TGS serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members.
- New and returning Graduate Council members assume their responsibilities on the first day of the fall semester.
- Guests may attend Graduate Council meetings with prior notification to the dean of TGS. Meeting space may limit the number of guests permitted.

### **Responsibilities of Graduate Council Members**

#### **Members of the Graduate Council are responsible for:**

- Attending all Council meetings or for sending an appropriate replacement.
- Participating in Council committees
- Representing the opinions of the members’ constituency to the Council
- Communicating the decisions and discussions of the Council to the members’ constituency

### **Executive Committee**

There shall be established an Executive Committee made up of graduate program directors appointed by the dean to represent each college and the dean, associate dean, and assistant dean of TGS. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by the dean of TGS. The Executive Committee may be called upon between meetings of the full Council and during the summer months to provide advice to the Dean and to aid

in urgent decision-making when the full Graduate Council cannot be gathered. Executive Committee meetings will be in addition to the regularly scheduled Council meetings.

### **Graduate Council meetings**

The dean of TGS must call a meeting at least once a month during the academic year, September through April. A meeting may be canceled if there is no business; however, in no case may two consecutive meetings be canceled. A year-end graduate council retreat shall be scheduled each year in the month of May.

Special meetings of the Graduate Council may be called according to the following provisions:

- By the Chair of the Graduate Council.
- By request of the President or Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- By petition of 1/3 of the voting membership of the Graduate Council in which the reasons for the calling of a special meeting are clearly stated. Special meetings will be called as soon as is practicable after such requests or petitions are received.

### **Meeting Procedures**

1. Rules of Order. Except in emergencies, normal parliamentary procedure will be used at Graduate Council meetings in accordance with the latest, revised set of *Roberts' Rules of Order*. A member of the Council will be chosen as the *Robert's Rules of Order* parliamentarian to arbitrate any discussion regarding the application of the *Rules*. The order of business will typically be expected to be conducted by consent agenda, with discussion only if an objection is raised or if the need for discussion is requested in advance.
2. Agenda items. Any member of the Graduate Council or non-Council members of the graduate faculty may submit items for the agenda one week prior to the Council meeting. Those wishing to place an item on the agenda must submit their request in writing directly to the Dean of TGS. The agenda for each regularly scheduled meeting will be made available to all members of the Council via electronic mail at least two days prior to the date of the meeting.

Non-members of the Council who state in writing (including electronic mail) their intention to speak to an issue may do so but may not vote. Such speakers shall submit a request to the Chair of the Council at least two days prior to the meeting. The Chair may establish a time limit at the beginning of each Council meeting at which there will be a non-member speaker.

Generally, no matter shall be presented to the Graduate Council for discussion, consideration, or action unless notice thereof has been circulated among its members at least two days prior to the meeting. Any matter may be brought before the Council without prior notice if a majority of those voting consent.

The Chair of the Graduate Council may refer any matter to an appropriate committee or sub-committee of the Council for investigation and recommendation. Such recommendations shall be reported on the agenda of the Council as committee reports and recommendations for adoption by the Council. At the discretion of the Chair, proposals for matters not requiring review by a committee of the Council may be placed directly on the agenda. Any matter may be referred or returned to a committee by a majority vote of the Graduate Council.

3. Approvals. Proposals for Council approval (new programs, program revisions, changes in rules and procedures) should be presented by the proposer and reviewed by the Graduate Council. Proposals for other approvals may be received from any member of the graduate faculty.
4. Minutes. Minutes of meetings shall be posted to the TGS website within 15 working days following a regular or special meeting. In addition, the minutes of the previous meeting will be sent electronically to all ex-officio and full members of the Council along with the next meeting agenda.

### **Voting Procedures and Eligibility**

Agenda items requiring vote by the Graduate Council will be decided by ballot, voice vote, or show of hands, at the discretion of the chair or the request of any Council member. A voting member may assign his or her proxy to the chair or another voting member or appoint an alternate to attend the Council meeting and vote in his or her place. A written (or electronic mail) proxy must be received by the chair or another voting member prior to the meeting. Notification of the assignment of an alternate must be received by the Secretary in writing (or electronic mail) prior to the meeting.

Voting members of the Graduate Council are one representative from each graduate program typically the program director. A graduate program shall be defined as one having a separate SCHEV CIP Code. Other voting members are the graduate student representatives. The dean, associate dean, and assistant dean, will not be voting members of the Council. At any Graduate Council meeting, a request by a Graduate Council member for a secret ballot must be granted.

Votes taken at a Council meeting will be considered official if there is a quorum present. A quorum is defined as at least half of the voting members being present

at the meeting. If a quorum is present, a simple majority of the voting members present will decide on the issue under consideration.

### **Electronic Votes**

Electronic voting will be used for more routine Council matters and for time sensitive situations when there is no time to call a special Council or Executive Committee meeting. The same quorum rule shall be in effect. An electronic vote is not official unless at least half of the voting membership votes. If the vote is official, a simple majority of the members voting will decide on the issue under consideration.

### **Executive decision**

Since there will be no official meetings during the months of June, July and August, the dean of TGS shall be empowered to make executive decisions on matters of a routine nature only, e.g. course changes, minor catalog changes, etc. during this period. If a major policy decision is necessary, the dean of TGS shall call upon the services of the Executive Committee, call for a special meeting of the full Council, or call for a special electronic vote. The same procedures apply to special meetings and electronic votes as in the usual voting procedures.

### **Duties of the Graduate Council Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary**

- Duties of the Chair
  - Presides at meetings of the Graduate Council.
  - Prepares, with the assistance of the Co-Chair and the program representatives, the agenda for regular and special meetings of the Graduate Council.
  - Distributes, with the assistance of the Secretary, the agenda of a meeting to the Graduate Program directors at least two days prior to the meeting.
  - Determines the time and place of meetings of the Council.
  - Requests reports on specific issues/items.
  - Appoints ad-hoc committees
- Duties of the Co-Chair
  - Presides in the absence of the Chair at Graduate Council meetings.
  - Assists the Chair in preparation of agenda items for meetings of the Graduate Council.
  - Performs other duties as the Chair may request or as may be appropriate in the temporary absence of the Chairperson.
- Duties of the Secretary
  - Assumes the duties of the Co-Chair in the absence of the Co-Chair
  - Records the minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Council.

- Assists the Chair in the distribution of the agenda of meetings of the Graduate Council to members of the Council.
- Publishes and distributes the minutes of meetings of the Graduate Council to members of the Council.

### **Graduate Faculty Membership Categories**

**Graduate Faculty** – A full member of the Graduate Faculty is a member of the full-time faculty of the university who is authorized to teach at the 500-level and above; chair and serve on comprehensive assessment, thesis and dissertation committees; supervise practica and internships; and take on other responsibilities of graduate programming as assigned by the academic unit head. A faculty member may be recommended for appointment to the Graduate Faculty to teach graduate courses at the university if he/she meets the following criteria:

- Possession of appropriate terminal degree in their teaching field.
- Evidence of current scholarly productivity (within the last six years) as appropriate for his/her field; and
- Evidence of successful teaching and/or administration at the graduate level within the last six years, or other relevant contributions to graduate education, and
- Meet any additional academic unit criteria on file with The Graduate School for the academic unit.

**Graduate Instructor** – A Graduate Instructor is a member of the full-time university faculty who meets some but not all of the mandatory criteria for Graduate Faculty. Graduate Instructors can be authorized to perform the following activities as assigned by the academic unit head: teach at the 500-level and above; serve on comprehensive assessment, thesis and dissertation committees but not chair them; supervise practica and internships; and take on additional responsibilities of graduate programming. A faculty member may be recommended for appointment as Graduate Instructor to teach graduate courses if he/she meets the following criteria:

- Possession of at least an appropriate master's degree in his/her field, preferably working toward appropriate terminal degree;
- Evidence of current scholarly productivity and/or appropriate professional experience (within the last six years) as appropriate for his/her field; and
- Meet any additional academic unit criteria on file with The Graduate School for the academic unit.

**Adjunct Graduate Faculty** – An Adjunct Graduate Faculty is an individual who is not a member of the full-time faculty of the university but who meets the mandatory criteria for Graduate Faculty. Adjunct Graduate Faculty can be authorized to perform the following activities as assigned by the academic unit head: teach at the 500-level and above; serve on comprehensive assessment, thesis and dissertation committees but not chair them; supervise practica and

internships; and take on additional responsibilities of graduate programming. A faculty member may be recommended for appointment as an Adjunct Graduate Faculty to teach graduate courses at the university if he/she meets the following criteria:

- Possession of the appropriate terminal degree in her/his teaching field;
- Evidence to the appropriate academic unit head of current scholarly productivity (within the last six years) as appropriate for his/her field;
- Evidence to the appropriate academic unit head of successful teaching and/or administration at the graduate level within the last six years, or other relevant contributions to graduate education; and
- Meet any additional academic unit criteria on file with The Graduate School for the academic unit.

**Adjunct Graduate Instructor** – An Adjunct Graduate Instructor is an individual who is not a member of the full-time faculty of the university and who meets some but not all of the mandatory criteria for Graduate Faculty. Adjunct Graduate Instructors can be authorized to perform the following activities as assigned by the academic unit head: teach at the 500-level and above; supervise practica and internships; and take on additional responsibilities of graduate programming. Adjunct Graduate Instructors are not authorized to serve on comprehensive assessment, thesis and dissertation committees. A faculty member may be recommended for appointment as an adjunct graduate instructor if he/she meets the following criteria:

- Possession of at least an appropriate master's degree in his/her field;
- Evidence to the appropriate academic unit head of scholarly productivity and/or appropriate professional experience (within the last six years) as relevant for his/her field; and
- Meet any additional academic unit criteria on file with The Graduate School for the academic unit.

**Emeritus Graduate Faculty** - A faculty member who retires from the university may be recommended for continuation of graduate faculty status if he or she meets the following criteria:

- The faculty member held graduate faculty status on the date of retirement.
- As an exception to the criteria for graduate faculty status, emeritus graduate faculty members are not expected to maintain scholarly productivity.
- The faculty member must maintain emeritus status at the university.
- The faculty member must meet any additional academic unit criteria on file with The Graduate School for the academic unit.

**Adjunct Clinical Graduate Instructor** – An individual may be recommended for appointment as an adjunct clinical graduate instructor to supervise practica and internships for students at the university if he/she meets the criteria on file with The Graduate School for the academic unit.

## **Adoption, Implementation and Amendment Process**

Adoption and Implementation. These By-Laws will become effective upon approval by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members of the Graduate Council. The implementation of these Bylaws shall occur immediately upon their approval by the Graduate Council membership.

Amendment Process. The by-laws may be amended at any meeting of the Graduate Council by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members of the Graduate Council. Members of the Graduate Council must have had a copy of the proposed amendment at least two weeks in advance of the vote.

Original By-Laws approved by the Graduate Council February 17, 2005

Revised: May 20, 2011 approved by the Graduate Council