

## **Graduate Student Dismissal Policy TULANE UNIVERSITY**

**OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DOCUMENT:** Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**COORDINATING DEPARTMENTS:** n/a

**ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE:** January 17, 2020

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2020

**LAST REVIEWED DATE:** January 17, 2020

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** n/a

**APPROVED BY:** Graduate Council

**WHO NEEDS TO KNOW THIS GUIDANCE:** Faculty, Staff, and Students in Graduate Programs; School Administrators

**WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS GUIDANCE:** <https://ogps.tulane.edu/graduate-policies>

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The Tulane University Graduate Student Dismissal Policy is defined as an involuntary termination of graduate studies on the basis of academic or research performance. It is not intended to replace the university policies surrounding dismissal for student conduct violations. The purpose is to clarify the rights and responsibilities of students and departments in the event that a student's academic or research performance does not meet acceptable standards to continue in their program. This policy applies to students pursuing PhD and research-based master's degrees such as the MA, MFA, MLA, and MS. Students in professional programs, including but not limited to the JD, MD, MPH, and MSW programs, should consult with their respective school and handbook for the relevant dismissal policy. Students who are unclear as to whether they fall under this policy should also consult their handbook and their school to determine if this policy is applicable.

### **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

Graduate students are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0. Courses in which a student earns a grade of C+ or lower cannot be counted towards either a master's degree or PhD. If a student receives two B- grades, or one grade below B-, the student is placed on probation and considered for dismissal by the school in consultation with the department at the conclusion of the semester in which the nonpassing grade or the second B- occurred. Ordinarily, the department will recommend that a student with two grades of B- or lower be dropped from the graduate program. Minimum academic performance and/or unsatisfactory performance may also lead to the withdrawal of financial support.

Students may also be dismissed for failure to meet departmental milestones, such as finishing coursework, securing placement in a lab or research group, passing qualifying or cumulative exams, defending a prospectus, and/or defending a thesis or dissertation within the time frames established and published by the department or school.

### **ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS**

All students should receive written reviews of their progress at least once per year and meet with their advisor to discuss their experience within their graduate program. This review should include an overview of coursework, if applicable, and research progress. If the department does not have a template for the written record of these meetings, they can adopt the template found on the OGPS website at [ogps.tulane.edu/graduate-policies](https://ogps.tulane.edu/graduate-policies).

## **GENERAL NOTES ABOUT THE PROBATION AND DISMISSAL PROCESS**

All communication about probation and/or dismissal should be sent in a manner that verifies that the student received it. This can include emails with a read receipt, certified mail, Maxient, or other electronic systems which clearly indicate that the intended recipient received the communication. The dean of the school or their designee, the graduate admission officer of the school, the director of graduate studies of the department or program, and the head of the department or program should be copied on this communication.

International students may have visas that are impacted by probation or dismissal. If an international student is at risk for probation or dismissal, please contact the Office of International Students and Scholars for guidance regarding any additional concerns that the student's visa status might present.

If a student being considered for probation or dismissal receives a stipend, the stipend will be automatically discontinued if they are dismissed. This change will be in effect within one pay cycle of the final decision being issued.

## **TIMELINE FOR DISMISSAL PROCESS**

*This timeline is not absolute and exceptions may be made; however departments should strive to adhere as closely as possible to it, particularly at the end of the Spring semester and for mid-semester milestone-based dismissals.* Substantial deviations from the dismissal process timeline must be approved by the dean of the school or their designee. All decisions about student probation or dismissal should be made in conjunction with the student's advisor or principal investigator and the department or program's director of graduate studies (or equivalent). Between the Fall and Spring semesters, it may not be possible to reach a final decision about a student's continuation in their program within the time frame given below. In those cases, the department or program's director of graduate studies (or equivalent) should notify the student within one week of when the milestone is not met or when final grades are due that their status will be reviewed. This notification should indicate all possible outcomes of the review, and include information about when the faculty will review the student's status in the program.

If a student is put on academic probation, they should be notified within one week of when the milestone is not met or when final grades are due for the semester in which the nonpassing grade or second B- occurred. They should be notified in writing of all the terms of their probation, including but not limited to, remedial coursework, make up exams, additional advising meetings, and any other standards the department and their advisor deem necessary to adequately improve the student's performance. At the end of the semester on probation, the student should be notified, in writing, if they have successfully moved off probation, will continue on probation, or will not be invited back to continue in the program.

If a student will not be invited to continue in the following semester, or their funding/fellowship will be withdrawn, they should be notified in writing within one week of when the milestone is not met or when final grades are due for the semester in which the nonpassing grade or second B- occurred.

If a student receives a grade of incomplete (I) in one or more classes, their status for the following semester may be difficult to determine. The student should be notified of all possible outcomes when the grade of I is issued. All effort should be made to make any decision about probation or dismissal as soon as all work has been submitted, and to inform the student of their status in a timely manner.

## **THE APPEAL PROCESS**

This timeline is not absolute and exceptions may be made; however departments should strive to adhere as closely as possible to it. Deviations from the dismissal appeal process timeline must be approved by the dean of the school or their designee.

If a student has been dismissed for academic reasons, they have the right to appeal that decision. Within five business days of receiving the decision from their advisor or director of graduate studies, the student should file a written appeal with the chair of their department or the director of their program. In the event that the chair or director is also the student's advisor, the student may direct their appeal to the dean or dean's designee within their school, who will appoint a tenured faculty member to oversee the departmental appeal process.

The written appeal must detail the reasons that the student believes they have made adequate progress towards the completion of their degree. It is distinct from any appeal the student might file regarding an individual course grade that has contributed to their dismissal.

After receiving the appeal, the department/program will review the student's transcripts, annual reviews, research materials, and any other relevant information. This review may be conducted by the chair or program director, the director of graduate studies, their appointee within the department or program, or the dean's appointee in the aforementioned case. Said faculty member should review the appeal and return a decision within five business days. If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached by the department, they may appeal to the dean or dean's designee within their school within five business days of receiving the decision. The dean or their designee will review the appeal and the department/program's decision and return a decision within five business days. If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached by the school, they may appeal to the provost or provost's designee. The provost or their designee will review the appeal and the decisions made by the department and school and return a decision within five business days. The decision of the provost is final.

## **PROBATION AND DISMISSAL**

Students who are placed on academic probation are ineligible to obtain a letter of good standing or study at another institution and transfer the credit to Tulane University. Students who have been academically dismissed from Tulane University are not allowed to re-enroll, but may apply for another graduate program at the university. Academic dismissal is noted permanently on the student's transcript.