The Jackson College of Graduate Studies

The Jackson College of Graduate Studies (JCGS) at the University of Central Oklahoma is dedicated to providing leadership and support in the development of high quality graduate programs to serve the needs of students, faculty and the university community as they compete in a global society. The JCGS collaborates with the five UCO academic colleges and the Forensic Science Institute, in offering six Master’s degrees covering 35 Graduate Degree Programs with 58 different major areas of study serving over 1,800 students. In 2004, UCO celebrated its 50th year of offering graduate studies.

The JCGS supports the concept of shared governance and collaborates with the Graduate Faculty and the Graduate Council.

The Graduate Faculty [Amendment Effective July 1, 2016]

The Graduate Faculty serves in a consultative role to the JCGS and Graduate Council. The Graduate Council must approve new non-tenure track associate members of the Graduate Faculty before the final printing of the semester schedule in which new members wish to teach. Faculty who are not members of the Graduate Faculty may not teach graduate courses unless approved by the Graduate Dean to do so for one semester on an emergency basis.

There are two membership levels in the Graduate Faculty: Full Members and Associate Members.

“Full Members of the Graduate Faculty. The Graduate Council automatically grants Full Graduate Faculty membership to full-time or part-time faculty members holding terminal degrees in their fields. These faculty may be tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure track, or lecturers. Retired UCO Full Graduate Faculty members retain their status. Faculty who retire from other institutions are also eligible for UCO Graduate Faculty status under the same terms of qualification as UCO retired faculty.

Associate Members of the Graduate Faculty. The Graduate Council may, in certain cases, grant Associate Graduate Faculty membership to those who do not hold terminal degrees. These faculty may be tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure track, or lecturers. Adjuncts may be associate members if approved by the Graduate Council. Associate Graduate Faculty serve terms of one to five academic years, or until they earn their terminal degrees, whichever comes first. Associate Graduate Faculty members automatically become Full Graduate Faculty members upon completion of their terminal degrees. Each academic year, before the first graduate class which these faculty teach, department chairs who wish to allow non-terminal degree holding faculty members to serve as Associate Graduate Faculty must submit their recommendations for these associate memberships. These recommendations must comment on the following criteria:

1. Professional qualification, and
2. Superior teaching ability and innovation, and
3. Active participation in research leading to publications and/or other appropriate scholarly/artistic activities and/or activities, performances, or exhibits commended by professionals in the candidate’s field of study.” [Amended, Spring 2016.] ....”
Retired UCO Associate Graduate Faculty members retain their statuses with the same term limitations. The terms of those who retire prior to July 1, 2013, shall run until July 1, 2014. The terms of those who retire after July 1, 2013, shall run to the first July 1 after their effective retirement dates.

Faculty who retire from other institutions are also eligible for UCO Associate Graduate Faculty status under the same terms of qualification as UCO retired faculty.

Staff, including those with teaching duties, are not eligible for Graduate Faculty Membership without first having obtained a one-semester or one-year waiver from the Graduate Dean.

Expectations of the Graduate Faculty (Full and Associate Members) include the following:

1. Maintain their current credentials in the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. Teach courses open to graduate students.
3. Seek undergraduate students of outstanding ability and encourage them to pursue graduate study.
4. Conduct graduate classes and seminars which stimulate creativity and contribute to the growth and development of independent scholarly attitudes and performance.
5. Participate in research and/or creative activity which has intrinsic scholarly or artistic value and which will motivate the students to similar endeavors.
6. Mentor students and supervise research/artistic projects of graduate students.
7. Encourage informal activities among students leading to scholarly or artistic production.
8. Maintain standards of student performance to prepare graduates for the professional and scholarly responsibilities of an educated person in a free society.
9. Review the reports of the Graduate Council and the various committees of the JCGS and determine the general direction of the college.

The Graduate Faculty shall meet at least once each year, generally during the month of April. A quorum for transacting business shall be the number present at the meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Dean of the JCGS, whenever Graduate Faculty action is needed. A special meeting must be called if ten percent of the Graduate Faculty so petition.

Regulations on Thesis Advisers and Thesis Reviews

1. Thesis Topic and Major Professor. As required by individual departments, the student chooses the topic and a major professor who serves as chair of the thesis committee. The chair must be a member of the student’s department and must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty. The chair is usually someone with whom the student already has a working relationship.
2. Thesis Advisers Guidelines
   A. Although programs and departments requiring or allowing theses have a responsibility to direct those theses, no individual faculty member shall be required to direct any specific student or thesis.
B. The thesis advisor should be committed to the education and training of the graduate student as a future member of the research or artistic community.

C. The thesis advisor should be knowledgeable of the requirements and deadlines of his/her graduate program as well as those of the Graduate College and advise the student throughout the process.

D. At the outset of the process, the thesis advisor should require the student to produce a written description of their proposed project—a prospectus, a project outline, or a sample chapter—in order to determine the viability of the project and to ascertain how the advisor can best serve the student.

E. The thesis advisor should meet one-on-one with the student on a regular basis. The advisor should provide timely feedback on the student’s work to facilitate ongoing progress on the thesis.

F. The thesis advisor should help the graduate student to select a thesis committee.

G. The thesis advisor should provide a learning environment for his/her graduate student that is intellectually stimulating and supportive.

H. The thesis advisor should consistently enforce standards of rigor and academic conduct that model the best practices in research and scholarship in their discipline for the graduate student.

I. When the thesis advisor, in conjunction with other committee members, determines that the thesis project is ready to be publically defended, it is his/her job to arrange a time and place for the committee to meet for the defense and to make sure that the student has satisfied all of the requirements of the Department and the Graduate College, including the submission of a Thesis Defense Scheduling Form, which includes an abstract of the thesis, to the Graduate Office. If a thesis project is not deemed ready by the thesis advisor in time for a scheduled defense, the advisor has the right and responsibility to delay the thesis defense until the student has revised the thesis to meet the advisor’s standards. [Amended, Spring 2017.]

3. Thesis Committee Membership and Selection. Upon the advice of the committee chair, the student then chooses two other committee members, typically from inside the same department, or in the case of interdisciplinary work from related fields, as those faculty members will know the subject matter best. All thesis committee members must be Graduate Faculty members, or be approved by the Graduate College. There must be at least three signing members on each thesis committee. At least two of the three members on the thesis committee should be from the department of the student.

4. Outside Member of the Committee (optional). At the invitation of the student and the thesis committee chair, and with the approval of the Graduate Dean (obtained by the committee chair in advance of the thesis defense), students may choose an outside committee member, providing that that individual holds a terminal degree. The student is encouraged to do so if the topic so warrants. That outside member if chosen then becomes a full member of that thesis committee, and reads and critiques the drafts, attends the thesis defense, and signs the thesis document. [Amended, Spring 2017.]

5. Scheduling the Defense. Students must complete their theses within two academic years (two fall and two spring semesters) beginning with enrollment in the first thesis course. At least two
weeks prior to the proposed defense date, the chair of the thesis committee contacts the
Graduate College and arranges for a thesis defense date

6. Appointing a Graduate Council Representative. At the same time that the Graduate College sets
a date for the defense, the graduate dean, or the thesis defense committee chair with the
concurrence of the graduate dean selects a non-voting Graduate Council Representative from
outside the department to attend the thesis defense. If no member of the council is available, a
non-voting member of the UCO Graduate Faculty from a different department shall be present
at the defense. Although the Graduate Council Representative does not have voting privileges,
he or she is encouraged to ask questions and participate in the discussions. The non-voting
member will certify only that procedures were followed properly.

7. Open and Closed Periods during the Defense. The thesis defense is open to the public and is
publicized within the department, but only the thesis committee and the Graduate Council
representative are allowed in the room during the deliberations. The student must not be
present. At the conclusion of the deliberations the chair of the committee announces the
committee’s decision to the student.

8. Signatures. At the conclusion of the thesis defense, three voting members of the thesis defense
committee must sign the thesis cover document for the document to be acceptable or
acceptable with minor changes. If it is not acceptable and in the committee’s view not likely to
become acceptable with only minor changes, the committee may either direct the student to
make changes and offer the student a second defense of the theses or fail the thesis. If no more
than one committee member signs, the thesis is unacceptable. If only two of the committee
members sign, the committee chair will take the results of the committee’s deliberations to the
graduate dean for his or her signature as the third voting member. If the dean signs, the thesis
becomes acceptable. If he or she does not sign, the student’s thesis is not acceptable.

The Graduate Council
The Graduate Council is an elected group of tenured and/or tenure-track, Full Members of the Graduate
Faculty and administrators concerned with policy recommendations as they relate to all graduate
programs at the University of Central Oklahoma. The Council is composed of 19 members: 15 are
elected from faculty with 3 from each of the 5 academic colleges; up to 3 are appointed by the Dean of
the JCSR, who is also the 19th member. Appointees from the Office of Academic Affairs, the Library, the
Faculty Senate and the AAUP serve as liaisons to the Graduate Council.

If a vacancy on the Graduate Council occurs after the college of the departing member has held its spring
elections to the council, the dean of the college in which the vacancy occurs will appoint an Interim
member to the council. The interim member so appointed will serve until that college’s next spring
elections at which time the faculty of the college will elect a person to fill the remaining portion of the
term for that council position. The interim member will be eligible election. This procedure applies to
all positions filled in elections after July 1, 2015

The Graduate Council consists of four standing committees: The Membership Committee, the Executive
Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Admissions and Retentions Committee. These
committees shall make recommendations to the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Council, who may
reject, amend, or accept these recommendations and send them to the provost, and/or the full
Graduate Faculty, except that the Graduate Council shall make final decisions on membership requests.  
[Amended Spring 2015]

Expectations of the Graduate Council

1. Hear reports and take action on recommendations of the standing committees.
2. Advise the committees in carrying out their duties.
3. Appoint ad hoc committees when necessary.
4. Make recommendations concerning Graduate Faculty policies and procedures.
5. Receive communications on any and all matters relating to the Jackson College of Graduate Studies and Research.
6. Advise and make recommendations to the Graduate Dean.
7. Review matters which are to be taken to the Graduate Faculty.
8. Cooperate with the Undergraduate Faculty or its representatives and to appoint joint committees when needed.
9. Meet a minimum of once each semester.
10. If so requested by the Graduate Dean or his/her representative, members shall serve as an outside observers on up to three thesis defense committees per year. By mutual agreement, a member may serve on more such committees. As an observer, the Graduate Council member does not vote. No Graduate Council member shall represent the council on a thesis defense committee from his/her own department.

Election Procedures for the Graduate Council

Election of Graduate Council members shall be conducted during the spring semester by the deans of each of the teaching colleges in the following manner. At the beginning of March the Graduate Dean will provide each of the college deans with:

1. A list of eligible candidates from his or her particular college.
2. The names of the standing committees to be filled, and
3. A sufficient number of application forms to be distributed within the college.

College deans will notify all eligible candidates of openings on the Graduate Council and call for applications. Applications will be for a position on a specific committee as a representative of the college for which the position is open. An election will be conducted by ballots mailed from the college dean’s office. Each Full member of the Graduate Faculty from the college will vote for only one person for each committee position open. Ballots will be tabulated in the office of the college dean. At the end of the election process, the dean of each college will provide the Graduate Dean with the name(s) of the newly elected Graduate Council member(s) from his/her college.

The term of office of Graduate Council Members will be three academic years, from July 1 of the first calendar year through June 30 of the second calendar year.

The Graduate Council Reviews requests for curricular changes and sends recommendations to the Provost (and in some cases through him to the President, Regional University Board of Oklahoma, and
the Oklahoma State Regents). Chairs and faculty members have opportunities to comment on and/or contest proposed curricular changes during their colleges' discussions of those change proposals. Once a college gives its approval and support to proposals, the college becomes the sponsor of the proposals and sends them to the Graduate Council, indicating its approval and recommendation for endorsement. The college may attach to its recommendation a minority report from the college’s curriculum committee. The Graduate Council Curriculum Committee reviews the proposals and, if they meet committee approval, sends them to the Graduate Council. After its review and approval, the Graduate Council sends them to Academic Affairs for review and approval. Through the dean or his/her representative or designee, colleges, but not subunits, chairs, or faculty within colleges, may challenge curricular change requests in the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council. For purposes of this motion, the Forensic Science Institute is treated as if it were a college. [Amended Spring 2015]

**Academic Programs**

**Master’s Degrees**

The University of Central Oklahoma offers the following master’s degrees: Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Education (MEd), Master of Science (MS), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Master of Music (MM), and Master of Public Administration (MPA). A master’s degree is composed of a program with one or more majors. All majors (and therefore, all programs) require a minimum of 32 credit hours. If the program contains only one major, then the program and major have the same title and same number of credit hours. In programs with more than one major, each major has its own title and its own 32 or more hours of requirements, approximately 50% of which must duplicate hours in the other major or majors within the same program. These duplicated hours form a common core of courses for that program. [Amended, Spring 2017.]

**Five-Year Bachelor/Master’s Degrees** (Effective, July 1, 2016)

In partnership with appropriate undergraduate programs, UCO graduate programs may create 5-year or other short-term degree programs, provided that overall academic quality is maintained. Programs which require no curricular changes may, at their own discretion, move forward with this option. Programs requiring curricular changes, must gain approval for those changes from the Graduate Council, and if undergraduate curricular changes are needed, from the undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and ultimately from the State Regents. Changes which include permission to double-count the same course(s) for credit toward undergraduate and graduate degree automatically require approvals from both the Graduate Council and the undergraduate Curriculum Committee and ultimately from the State Regents.

Students who use the Mixed Enrollment provision to complete two degrees in 5-years must meet all requirements for Mixed Enrollment. Students who enter 5-year degree programs which allow double-counting of credits for both undergraduate and graduate degrees may not subsequently drop out of a 5-year degree program and still double-count those credits.
No major program is required to create a 5-year program, and no major program creating a 5-year program is required to double-count credits for both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Graduate Academic Certificates. (Effective, July 1, 2016)

A. UCO Graduate Academic Certificate programs must conform to all UCO, RUSO, OSRHE, HLC and US Department of Education rules governing academic certificates. Because of OSRHE rules, HLC rules and in most cases USDE rules, UCO certificate programs must lead to gainful employment outcomes.

B. At UCO, Graduate Academic Certificate programs exist within master’s programs (embedded certificates). All courses included within graduate certificates must be available in the certificate’s degree program either as required courses or electives. It is recommended that at least one course must be an elective course within the degree.

C. All rules applicable to master’s degree programs also apply to UCO Graduate Academic Certificate programs, except that in GAC programs:

1. GAC students must earn a minimum of 12 credit hours.
2. GAC students may apply no grade below a “C” and no more than one grade of “C” to a certificate.
3. GAC students may apply Graduate Academic Certificate program courses to both the certificate and its master’s degree, but certificate hours may apply to only one certificate program.
4. GAC students must earn at least 50% of their certificate’s total credit hours in residence at UCO facilities or through UCO off-site or online instruction approved by HLC and OSHRE.

D. UCO Graduate Academic Certificate programs may establish more rigorous requirements, but they must clearly state these requirements in the program requests and in the Graduate Catalog.

E. UCO Graduate Academic Certificate programs embedded within degree programs require the same undergraduate or graduate prerequisite courses as required for their degrees. Prerequisite hours cannot count within the minimum hours required for certificate or degree completion. Graduate Catalog wordings must state clearly and separately the total number of prerequisites, course requirements, and GPAs required to complete the certificate.

F. UCO Graduate Programs must include the requirements for their embedded certificates on their degree “Plan of Study” form.