DGS Community Companion

The rules for graduate programs changed on August 6, 2026.

This is written by Directors of Graduate Studies for each other. It sets out what changed, how things work in practice, and where the two don't match.

The live version online carries readers' margin notes.

> **Disclaimer.** This is not an official University of Kentucky document. It was not written, reviewed, or endorsed by the Graduate School, the Office of the Provost, or any other UK office. It is a working reference compiled by a UK Director of Graduate Studies from UK's published policies and from notes taken at Graduate School meetings. It may be incomplete, out of date, or wrong. The official policies and the Graduate School's own guidance govern: where this manual differs from them, follow them. Before acting on anything here, check the linked policy or ask your Graduate Academic Services officer. Use it at your own risk.
>
> Even so, it's pretty good.

How to read this manual

The last Graduate School DGS manual is *Policies & Procedures for Directors of Graduate Studies* 2024–2025 (cover date 10/17/24). The Provost's academic and student policies took effect 8/6/2026, so much of that manual no longer matches the rules.

This manual is for every Director of Graduate Studies and Director of Graduate Certificate at UK. It covers research and professional master's programs, research and practitioner doctorates, and graduate certificates.

How this relates to the Graduate School's own manual. At the fall DGS/DGC meeting (16 Nov 2026) the Graduate School said its new DGS manual and a program handbook template are in draft, "90-ish percent there," with no release date. They are holding them until the policies are final. Their manual may end up being shorter and will link to the policies rather

than restate them. It may not flag what changed; for that, they pointed to the Provost's crosswalk and "Material Changes" pages. This manual adds three things the new one may not have (but could if we ask for it): the change flags, how things actually work in practice, and the gaps between the two.

Using it in any program. The University sets minimum requirements, and each program may add to them. The Provost's policies now leave much to programs and require them to write those rules down (see "Your college and your program" and Appendix D). So this manual has two layers. The University-wide text is the same for everyone. The **Your program** lines are for each DGS or DGC to fill in for their own program, or to point to where the program handbook already says it. Copy the manual, fill in your lines, and you have a working DGS guide for your program.

Every section has five parts:

1. **Rule.** The current written rule, quoted, with the policy's name, its effective date, and a link. When the rule and anything else disagree, the rule is what you cite.
2. **In practice.** How the Graduate School handles it now, with the date and the person or office who confirmed it.
3. **Gap.** Where practice and rule differ. Each gap is also logged in Appendix B so it can be raised with the Graduate School.
4. **Forms and contacts.** Working links only. Dead links go in Appendix C.
5. **Your program.** What your program has decided and published under this rule, with a link to your handbook. Left blank for each DGS or DGC to fill in.

Policies get revised, and copied text goes out of date. So the **Rule** part links to the policy and quotes only the sentence that decides the question, with the date it was last checked. When this manual and the policy disagree, the policy wins.

Not yet in writing marks a question that no current written rule answers. These are listed together in Appendix E, so the Graduate School can answer each one once, for everyone.

Help check this marks something we could not confirm from the written policies. If you know the answer, from the policy, from your Graduate Academic Services officer, or from what happened in your own program, leave a note on that sentence and say where your answer comes from. Confirmed answers replace the question.

Change markers. Where a section differs from the 2024–25 manual or from the legacy regulations, it carries one marker and a two-line note:

- **CHANGED** — *Was*: what the 2024–25 manual or legacy rule said. *Now*: what the current policy says.
- **NEW** — a requirement with no counterpart before.
- **REMOVED** — a requirement that no longer appears in current policy.
- **Link dead** — the official link no longer works.

This document, with its markers, is the change-flagged edition for readers who know the old rules. A clean edition without markers will be exported from it.

Sources. Everything quoted here comes from the UK DGS Source Library (harvested 16 Nov 2026): the Provost's academic and student policies, the Administrative Regulations, the Graduate School's DGS pages and forms, the 2024–25 manual, and the pages of the Registrar, the Academic Ombud, the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Office of Research Integrity, International Student and Scholar Services, and UKnowledge. Links to the policy behind each section appear in that section. Each section shows the date it was last checked.

Notes marked "**DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026**" come from notes taken at the Graduate School's fall DGS/DGC meeting. Names, dates, and numbers marked "as heard" have not been confirmed against an official source. Check them before acting on them.

The DGS and DGC role: what's yours and what isn't

> **Rule.** No current policy describes the DGS or DGC role as a whole. Each duty sits in the policy that needs it. The main ones:

- Recommend each master's advisory committee, which "should be recommended by the DGS and approved by the Office of the Provost," and "submit the examination request and final examination results to the Office of the University Registrar" (Master's Research Degree Programs).
- Approve transfer credit into a master's degree (same policy).
- Confirm a student's plans before they enroll in 757, and report qualifying exam results "to the Graduate School within 10 calendar days of its conclusion" (Doctoral Research Degree Programs).
- Endorse leave-of-absence requests; the Graduate School approves them (Continuous Enrollment).
- Start academic standing actions: "Program directors or Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) initiate standing actions" (Academic Standing).
- Recommend exceptions on overdue incompletes, and approve a second repeat of a course together with the Provost (Grading).
- Admit undergraduates to 600- and 700-level courses by permission (Course Numbering System).
- Sign off on committees: "the DGS signs off on the committees" (Graduate Faculty Membership and Appointments).
- For a DGC: represent the certificate "on matters such as admission to and successful completion of the graduate certificate, enforcement of certificate requirements and maintenance of records" (Graduate Certificates).

Since August 1, 2025, DGSs and DGCs are appointed through the Office for Faculty Advancement, with an offer letter and an Administrator Appointment Board action in the Faculty Database. The Graduate School's appointment form is discontinued (DGS, DGC Appointment Process).

Not yet in writing Who may serve as a DGS or DGC. The appointment page says offers are checked against "the Graduate School's requirements for Directors of Graduate Studies in terms of rank, graduate faculty membership, tenure status, etc.," and links to the 2024–25 manual for them. That manual says the DGS "is normally a tenured faculty member, holding the rank of Associate Professor or above, and must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty." The new policies no longer have full membership, and that manual is being replaced. A short written statement of the DGS and DGC role, and of who may hold it, would settle this for everyone. It would make a good first page for the Graduate School's new manual.

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026):

- The Graduate School said it is leaving the details of running a program to programs. It will set broad policy. Programs set the specifics, such as who may serve on or chair committees and whether co-chairs are allowed, and must apply them the same way to every student in the program. A written program handbook matters more than it did.
- DGSs, associate deans, and program faculty are expected to judge who is fit to serve on committees. The Graduate School will check only that the person holds a terminal degree.
- Questions about what a policy means go to the associate provost who drafted the policies, or to the Graduate School's general email, which forwards them. She also wants wording suggestions for the next revision.
- Graduate School offices move to the second floor of Funkhouser Building on Wednesday 18 Nov 2026 (rooms 202–205, as heard).

Which policy governs which degree

Program type	Governing Provost policy (effective 8/6/2026)	Status
Research master's, thesis (Plan A) and non-thesis (Plan B)	Master's Research Degree Programs	Clear
Professional master's	Professional Degree Programs — Doctoral, Master and Certificate	Check which of your degrees the University classes as professional

Program type	Governing Provost policy (effective 8/6/2026)	Status
PhD and other research doctorates	Doctoral Research Degree Programs	Clear
Professional practice doctorates	Professional Degree Programs — Doctoral, Master and Certificate	Clear where the degree leads to licensure
Practitioner doctorates with a dissertation (for example, the EdD)	Doctoral Research Degree Programs **or** Professional Degree Programs	**Open question** — see below
Graduate certificates	Certificates (and Professional Degree Programs for professional certificates)	Check which applies

All of them also fall under Continuous Enrollment, Registration and Enrollment, Grading, Academic Standing, and Graduation and Degree Conferral.

The open question: practitioner doctorates. *Doctoral Research Degree Programs* covers the qualifying exam, 757 and 767 enrollment, and a dissertation defined as "an original scholarly work." *Professional Degree Programs* defines a professional practice doctorate as preparation "for entry into a recognized profession and, where applicable, licensure or certification," with at least six full-time academic years of study. Some doctorates, such as the EdD, require a dissertation but prepare practitioners who are not entering a licensed profession. Neither policy names the EdD (searched in the Source Library copies; please check). The answer decides whether the qualifying-exam, enrollment, and time-limit rules apply to those students as written.

Not yet in writing Which doctorates are research doctorates and which are professional. The doctoral policy says it sets standards "for Ph.D. programs," and it also lets "Programs with approved doctoral culminating experiences other than a traditional dissertation" set their own residency requirements. That leaves programs such as the EdD reading two policies for the answer. A one-page list from the Provost's office, by degree, would let these programs advise their students with confidence, and we will put it here as soon as it exists.

Help check this Has the Graduate School or the Provost's office told your practitioner doctorate, in writing, which policy it falls under? If so, what did they say?

Your college and your program

University minimums. The Provost's policies and the Administrative Regulations apply to every program. A program may add requirements but may not lower them.

College rules. The Provost's *Special College Rules* (effective 8/6/2026) holds college- and program-specific rules that add to the University-wide policies. Most of it concerns undergraduate and professional programs, but it also covers graduate-level teacher certification in the College of Education and the grading systems in Dentistry, Medicine, and Pharmacy. Check it for your college before advising a student.

Program rules. The doctoral policy says: "Each doctoral program shall maintain approved program guidance or a graduate student handbook describing program-specific academic requirements, milestones, examination procedures, dissertation expectations, annual progress review processes, timelines" and more. The master's policy requires each program to "establish, publish and consistently apply" its non-thesis completion requirements. At the 16 Nov 2026 meeting the Graduate School said it will set broad policy and leave the details to programs, which must apply their rules the same way to every student. Appendix D lists what each policy requires your program to publish.

Who to call. Your program's Graduate Academic Services officer at the Graduate School (assigned by program; the list is on the Graduate School's Academic Services Officers page). Your college's associate dean for graduate education handles college-level approvals and appeals. Questions about what a policy means go to the associate provost, or to the Graduate School's general email, which forwards them.

Your program: handbook link _ · ***Graduate Academic Services officer*** _ · college associate dean ____

Admissions, deferrals and the Accelerated Master's Pathway

> **Rule.** The Graduate School's Admissions page sets the University minimums; programs may set higher ones. For credit taken as a post-baccalaureate student, "There is no restriction on the number of transferrable hours" into a degree program, but "All such transfers of credit hours into a graduate program must be approved by that program's Director of Graduate Studies and by the Dean of the Graduate School," and only courses with an A or B transfer (same page).

Deferrals. "The deferral period cannot be longer than one academic year from the student's original term." The DGS or DGC reviews each request in Slate Reader, in the DGS/DGC Deferral Review bin, and records the reason for approval or denial. The steps are on the Graduate School's DGS and DGC Resources page.

Accelerated Master's Pathway (AMP). The Provost's Accelerated Masters Pathway policy lets undergraduates take "up to 12 credit hours of graduate-level coursework" at undergraduate tuition. They submit an AMP Intent Form once they have at least 60 credit hours, at least 15 hours left, and a GPA of at least 3.0. "Acceptance to the AMP pathway does not guarantee admission to the graduate program." Students apply to the graduate program in their last undergraduate year and, if admitted, may transfer up to 12 AMP hours. Only programs with an approved AMP pathway take part. The Graduate School's AMP Resources for Graduate Programs & Advisors page has a one-page template DGSs can send to incoming AMP students.

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026):

- Approval of the intent form is not admission. Students still apply to the graduate program, and the credits count only toward a UK program with an approved pathway.
- Undergraduate advisors do not advise on graduate courses. They send approved students to the graduate program, so DGSs get email from undergraduates they don't know asking what to take. Someone in the program has to answer.
- DGSs are often not told when a student is approved. The Graduate School said it would look at how to notify programs (see the gap log).
- A program without a pathway creates one through the Provost's curriculum process.

- 400G courses are being retired, likely from next academic year. Each becomes a 500-level course, or a paired 300/600 course, as the program chooses. The Course Numbering System policy already says the 400G number "will be phasing out."

Registration, continuous enrollment and leave of absence

> **Rule (Provost: Continuous Enrollment, file dated October 2026):**

- A leave of absence (LOA) must be requested before the term starts and is "approved through the Graduate School with endorsement from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)."
- "No more than two (2) consecutive semesters and four (4) total semesters of LOA."
- During an LOA the student is not enrolled, "may not receive faculty supervision, utilize university academic resources or make substantive progress," has time-to-degree extended, and may not take the QE or defend.
- Plan B (non-thesis) master's students may request an LOA.
- Pregnancy or parenting leave goes through the Office of Equal Opportunity. International students consult immigration advising first.

New **leave after the qualifying exam.** *Now:* post-qualifying doctoral students may take a medical or military LOA, approved in advance with documentation; 767 enrollment is not required during the leave. *Was:* the 2024–25 manual gives no post-QE exception, and at the 16 Nov meeting the associate provost said such leaves had not been permitted by policy before.

Changed **who approves.** *Was* (2024–25 *manual*): "The DGS confers with the College Associate Dean before approving, and then forwards approval to the Graduate School's Office of Academic Services." *Now:* the DGS endorses, and the Graduate School approves. The policy does not mention the associate dean (please check).

Help check this Since August 6, has a leave of absence in your program still gone through your college's associate dean, or straight from you to the Graduate School?

In practice (16 Nov 2026): the Graduate School is moving LOA requests into an online workflow in the rebuilt GRADS system. There is no date yet; they said it will take at least a semester.

International students (ISSS at the 16 Nov meeting; these rules change fast, so check with ISSS before relying on any of this): the duration-of-status rule was vacated that day. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is paused unless the training is required of every student in the program, which excludes most dissertation research. ISSS recommends pre-completion OPT instead, applied for in early spring for summer work. The proposed OPT fee is not in effect.

Courses, credit, transfer and grades

> **Rule.**

- **Incompletes** (Grading). An I may be given to a graduate student "if a part of the work of a course remains undone and there is a reasonable possibility that a passing grade will result from completion of the work." It must be replaced "within 12 months of the end of the academic term in which the 'I' grade was awarded or prior to the student's graduation, whichever occurs first." Otherwise it becomes an F, unless the Provost approves an exception "on recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)." An instructor who gives an I should file the details with the student's DGS. The Academic Ombud has a general incomplete contract for the written agreement.
- **SI and UI** interim grades must be replaced by a letter grade before a doctoral student's qualifying exam or final exam, or before graduation for everyone else. The 12-month limit does not apply to them (Grading).
- **Repeats.** "A graduate student may repeat a course only once." A further repeat needs the DGS and the Provost (Grading).
- **Transfer.** Into a master's: with DGS approval; courses older than 10 years need a DGS rationale and Provost approval (Master's Research Degree Programs). Into a doctorate:

"An awarded master's degree from the University or from another accredited school may satisfy 18 hours of this 36-hour pre-qualifying requirement, subject to program approval" (Doctoral Research Degree Programs).

- **Credit for prior learning** may make up "no more than one-third of the required credit hours for a graduate program" (Credit for Prior Learning).
- **One course, two degrees** is allowed for AMP courses, for concurrent or consecutive graduate degrees at UK, and for a Plan A master's awarded "en passant" toward a doctorate (Interpretation of Counting of a Single Course Toward More Than One Degree).

Changed **master's transfer limit.** *Was* (2024–25 *manual*): transfer was "restricted to a maximum of 9 hours, or 25% of the credit hours needed" for the degree, whichever was greater. *Now*: the master's policy requires DGS approval and sets no number. Whether the one-third cap in Credit for Prior Learning applies to transfer credit is not stated (please check).

Help check this Does the one-third cap on credit for prior learning also limit transfer credit into a master's degree? If your program has had a transfer request approved or refused since August 6, how many hours were involved, and what reason was given?

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026):

- **Incompletes.** An I grade means the work was not finished, not that it was poor or failing. The Graduate School has seen I grades used for failing work. In a lecture course, the student finishes under a written agreement with the instructor and does not re-register. For practicums and internships that need supervision, it is unresolved whether the student must re-register to finish (see the gap log).
- **Transfer and non-degree credit.** DGSs reported that accepted credit is not posted until the graduation term, so a student's record can look incomplete going into the QE. The registrar's office said credit taken before admission can be attached once the student is admitted, if the program has reviewed it; email the registrar's office to request this. The registrar is looking into the delay (see the gap log).

- A program with a 54-hour pre-residency doctorate reported that the 18-hour limit on counting a master's degree toward the 36 pre-qualifying hours blocks a terminal-MA-to-PhD route. Send cases like this to the associate provost.
- New state rules on how quickly transfer credit must be evaluated take effect July 1 (as heard). They mainly affect undergraduates, but the system changes will reach graduate programs too.

Academic standing and end-of-term progression

> **Rule** (Academic Standing). Graduate students must keep "A cumulative GPA of at least 3.0" and "Satisfactory progress as defined by the graduate program." Programs "shall provide annual written evaluations of student progress."

- **Probation.** The program notifies the student by letter listing the deficiencies, the corrective actions, a timeline ("typically one term"), and the consequences of not making the corrections.
- **Before dismissal.** "Except in extraordinary circumstances, graduate students must be placed on academic probation and provided an opportunity to correct deficiencies before dismissal from a program."
- **Dismissal** "is recommended by the program and approved through college processes in conjunction with the Graduate School." A program's approved policy may call for dismissal rather than suspension.
- **Appeals.** The student appeals "through the established process of the college in which the graduate program is housed within seven (7) business days of written notification." "The graduate program may respond to the appeal but shall not serve as the sole decision-maker."
- **Funding.** "Academic probation does not automatically affect graduate funding appointments."

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026), fall 2026 term:

- Final grades are due at noon on 21 December. The registrar runs progression immediately afterward, and students are told over the break if they are on probation or dismissed. The student appeal deadline is 4 January.

- What the Graduate School asked of DGSs: look now for students at risk of probation or suspension, and check email over the break in case a student or associate dean needs you for an appeal.
- The Tableau "End of term reports" show academic standing for your whole program at once.

Master's degrees: Plan A (thesis) and Plan B (non-thesis)

> **Rule** (Master's Research Degree Programs, effective 8/6/2026; the PDF is titled "Graduate Master's Degree Programs").

- **Credits.** At least 30 graduate credit hours. At least two-thirds must be regularly scheduled graduate courses. Leaving out thesis, practicum and internship credits, at least half of the coursework must be at the 600 or 700 level.
- **Committee.** "Master's students must have an advisory committee consisting of at least three Graduate Faculty members, and at least two members of the advisory committee must be from the student's major program." The DGS recommends it and the Office of the Provost approves it.
- **Plan A.** A thesis and a final oral defense. Thesis research is 768 (1 to 12 credit hours); the student needs an approved topic and good standing first. After coursework and the minimum thesis credits, a student who is still using faculty time or University resources must enroll every fall and spring until the degree is done. Reduced or zero-credit enrollment, such as 748, is possible "at the discretion of the DGS with approval from the Provost or designee."
- **Plan B.** The program defines the culminating assessment and "must establish, publish and consistently apply" its requirements. After coursework, a student preparing on their own need not stay enrolled, but "Students must be enrolled during any academic term in which an academic action occurs," including the exam and degree conferral.
- **Final exam.** The student must not be on probation and must have no incompletes. A student who fails may have one re-examination, on the DGS's recommendation with Provost approval. "A third examination is not permitted."
- **Time limit.** Six years from first enrollment. The Provost may extend it on the DGS's recommendation. Time not enrolled in Plan B does not extend it.

Changed **committee.** *Was (2024–25 manual):* at least three faculty; at least two Graduate Faculty members, including the chair, and "at least one of these must be a Full Member." *Now:* at least three Graduate Faculty members, two from the student's program; no Full Member requirement.

Changed **time-limit extensions.** *Was:* six years, with extensions of up to four more (ten in all), approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. *Now:* six years, extended by the Provost on the DGS's recommendation; the policy states no maximum.

Gap. The policy says the DGS submits the exam request and results "to the Office of the University Registrar." The Graduate School's Theses and Dissertations page still tells students to submit the Final Examination Recommendation form "to the Graduate School a minimum of two weeks prior to the specific date of the defense." Until this is reconciled, do what the Graduate School page says and check with your Graduate Academic Services officer.

Help check this Where did your program's last master's exam request go, to the Registrar or to the Graduate School, and who confirmed they had it?

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026): programs with large Plan B cohorts said a committee for every student is impractical when, for example, 90 students sit one comprehensive exam. The Graduate School is collecting feedback (see the gap log).

Forms. The Plan B checksheet works; the Plan A checksheet link is dead (Appendix C). Both are on Committees, Exams and Graduation.

Your program: Plan A or B or both _ · ***Plan B culminating assessment and criteria*** _ · committee rules ____

Doctoral programs: advisory committee, Graduate Faculty and qualifying exam

> **Rule (Provost: Doctoral Research Degree Programs):** the advisory committee must "consist of at least four (4) members of the Graduate Faculty" and have a chair or co-chairs

> who are Graduate Faculty "eligible to supervise doctoral research." "Programs shall establish published procedures governing committee appointments, changes, resignations and replacements." If a student fails the QE, "the timing and conditions for re-examination are determined by the program."

Changed **Graduate Faculty membership levels.** *Was (2024–25 manual)*: rules depended on full versus associate membership of the Graduate Faculty. For example, a master's committee needed at least one "Full Member." *Now*: the research-degree policies say only "Graduate Faculty," and programs set any further rules.

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026):

- A new Graduate Faculty policy is coming, with no date. The direction: anyone with a terminal degree in the field, whatever their rank or title series (an MD, MFA, or DPT counts), and no full/associate distinction. Until it is issued, the old categories technically remain.
- Programs should write their own consistent rules, for example that a new assistant professor does not chair a dissertation in their first semester.
- Graduate Faculty appointment requests are turned around in about 24 hours. The request form must currently be filed by a dean, associate dean or chair. DGSs at the meeting asked to be able to file it themselves (see the gap log).
- The meeting gave no clear answer on when dismissal takes effect after a student fails a QE retake; it was said to follow once any appeal is finished. Check the policy before advising a student.
- The Tableau "Advisory committees" report lists committees by faculty member or by student, including past committees.

Help check this If a student in your program has failed a qualifying exam retake since August 6, when did the dismissal take effect, and who sent the letter?

Doctoral programs: candidacy, residency and time limits

> **Rule** (Doctoral Research Degree Programs; Continuous Enrollment; Course Numbering System).

- **Before the qualifying exam (QE).** At least 36 graduate credit hours, "the equivalent of two (2) years of residency." An awarded master's may count for 18 of them, subject to program approval. The QE must be taken "within five (5) years of entry into the program"; extensions of up to three more years may be requested.
- **757.** One semester, in the term the QE is scheduled, after pre-QE coursework is done. "The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is responsible for confirming the student's plans, as the course is generally nonrepeatable." It is two credits and counts as full time. It is graded S (passed) or UN (failed or postponed). A postponement for extenuating circumstances that the DGS approves is graded I, and the DGS may petition for a second semester of 757. A student who fails or postpones for lack of preparation takes nine credits of other coursework the next semester.
- **Attempts.** "A student may not attempt the QE more than twice." The DGS reports the result to the Graduate School within 10 calendar days. SI and UI grades must be cleared first.
- **Candidacy** requires a passed QE, all required coursework, all program and institutional requirements, and the residency requirement. Only then may the student enroll in 767.
- **767.** Two credits, every fall and spring until the degree is done, and at least two semesters before conferral. A student may not take 767 in the same semester as the QE. A student who passes before the drop/add deadline may switch from 757 to 767. Summer enrollment is required only to take the QE, to defend, or when policy, the program, an assistantship, financial aid or immigration rules require it.
- **After the QE.** All requirements within five years of the semester the QE is passed. Extensions of up to five more years may be requested (ten in all). "In special circumstances, an extension up to one (1) year may be requested by the DGS."
- **Annual review.** Each student's progress is "formally evaluated at least annually," and each student gets written feedback.

New **one-year extension by the DGS.** *Now:* beyond the five-plus-five years, the DGS may request one more year in special circumstances. *Was (2024–25 manual):* five years plus up to five more, approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, after which candidacy ended.

In practice. The Tableau "767 enrollment" report (also 748, 749 and 757) shows how many terms each student has been enrolled. The "Approval for Post-Qualifying Doctoral Courses" form is on the DGS and DGC Resources page.

Your program: QE procedures and criteria _ · ***re-examination rules*** _ · annual review process ___

Doctoral programs: dissertation, final defense and ETD

> **Rule (Provost: Doctoral Research Degree Programs):** "the majority opinion of the Graduate Faculty members of the advisory committee prevails. If the advisory committee is evenly divided, the candidate fails."

Changed **outside examiner.** *Was (2024–25 manual):* "The Graduate School will independently appoint the outside examiner to the Final Examination Committee," with at least eight weeks' notice. *Now:* the doctoral policy does not mention an outside examiner (searched; please check). At the 16 Nov meeting the Graduate School said none is required. A program may require one, and if it does, the program runs that process itself. The exam card still has an outside-examiner block, filled with a placeholder name. If a committee wants an outside examiner listed on the card, contact the program's Graduate Academic Services officer.

Help check this If your program has scheduled a doctoral defense since August 6, did the Graduate School still ask for eight weeks' notice or name an outside examiner?

In practice (16 Nov 2026): the rebuilt GRADS system will move the final-exam request and the exam card online, with each committee member signing electronically. There is no date yet.

The links to most of the Graduate School's dissertation format examples are dead (see Appendix C).

Graduation and degree conferral

> **Rule** (Graduation and Degree Conferral; Faculty Recommendation of Candidates for Graduation).

- **Apply.** Students apply for the degree or certificate by the Registrar's deadline: November 1 for fall, April 1 for spring, June 1 for summer. PhD students apply in myUK under myRecords; other graduate students apply in myUK GPS (Applying for a Degree).
- **Ceremony.** Commencement is held only in December and May. "Participation in commencement does not guarantee degree conferral."
- **The list.** The Registrar sends the list of eligible students to each college, which follows its own process for faculty review. The Board of Trustees then approves the list.
- **Late additions.** Two routes. An administrative error goes from the dean's office to the Provost with documentation. Otherwise the student may petition for extraordinary hardship, through the dean's office, with the program's endorsement and a letter from the program director co-signed by the dean. The petition must reach the Provost "no later than four (4) business days before" the Board acts. "Lack of awareness of the deadline does not constitute extraordinary hardship."
- **Theses and dissertations.** After the final exam the student has 60 days to submit the final PDF, or less if the term's acceptance deadline comes first, with an ETD Approval Form signed by the advisor and the DGS (Theses and Dissertations). The work is published in UKnowledge.
- **Grades.** I, SI and UI grades must be cleared before graduation (Grading).

In practice. A degree certification letter takes at least 3–4 business days, 5–6 at peak times. Diplomas are mailed 60–90 days after the term ends (Committees, Exams and Graduation).

Your program: who reviews the college's graduation list ____

Graduate certificates (DGC work)

> **Rule** (Certificate Programs).

- **Size.** "A graduate certificate must be a minimum of nine (9) credit hours but must not exceed 18 credit hours." All coursework is at the graduate level.
- **Approval.** New certificates go through the University curriculum process, the same path as degree programs (Curriculum Review).
- **Grades.** "To earn a graduate certificate, a student must achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 in each course used to satisfy a certificate requirement." (Read literally, that is a B in every course; please check how the Graduate School applies it.)
- **Who may enroll.** Anyone with a bachelor's degree, unless the certificate says otherwise. A certificate may be limited to current graduate students, or to students in a particular degree, and may require a prior master's or doctorate, but never less than the Graduate School's postbaccalaureate admission requirements.
- **Award.** The certificate is noted on the transcript.

Help check this Does the Graduate School read "a minimum GPA of 3.0 in each course" as a B or better in every certificate course, or as a 3.0 average across them? If a certificate student of yours earned a grade below B in one course since August 6, was the certificate still awarded?

Graduate School guidance (Graduate Certificates). Admission to a certificate "is handled by the Director of the Certificate," and the student must also apply to the Graduate School (minimum undergraduate GPA 2.5). Students apply for the certificate in myUK, as for a degree. "For currently enrolled students there is no limit to the number of hours that can be applied to both the degree and the certificate (unless the program/certificate owners specify otherwise)." Admission to or completion of a certificate does not guarantee admission to a degree program.

Not yet in writing Three small things a DGC needs settled:

- **Length.** The Graduate School page says a certificate is "typically between 9 and 15 credits"; the policy allows up to 18.
- **Appointment.** The same page says the DGC is "appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School"; DGC appointments now go through the Office for Faculty Advancement.
- **Transfer credit.** The 2024–25 manual allowed external transfer credit into a certificate only if it was "specified and justified in the initial request to establish the certificate." The new policy does not mention it.

A line on each in the Graduate School's new manual would close them.

Your program: certificate admission requirements _ · ***courses shared with degrees*** _

Funding, assistantships and TAs

> **Rule.** AR 5:2 limits assistantships: master's students "no more than three (3) years" and doctoral students "no more than five (5) years" as teaching or research assistants, each with an exception process. AR 5:3 requires an English-language assessment for each TA whose primary language is not English: a panel of a faculty member from the TA's unit, an ESL professional and an undergraduate recommends to the Dean of the Graduate School. Assistantships are appointed through GSAS (GSAS). A fellow who will also work up to 10 hours a week needs a Work Overload Request Form, filed by the hiring department or the DGS before the fellowship starts (Funding FAQs).

In practice (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026):

- Spring 2027 TA orientation registration is open; the link is on the Graduate School's TA Coordinator Resources page. In-person microteaching sessions are on 5–6 January; register TAs by 11 December (as heard). Language screenings are on 18 December; register by 3 December (as heard).
- TA observations are required for Type 1–3 TAs, and end-of-term evaluations are done at the end of the semester. A Tableau report shows which have been submitted.

- The Tableau "Years of assistantship funding" report flags students past the allowed years. It uses "the old AR 5.2" limits (as heard), so check it against the current AR 5:2 (see the gap log).
- Fellowship applications move to Scholarship Universe this year. Faculty reviewers are needed around February.

Student rights, academic integrity, conduct and conflict

> **Rule.**

- **Academic offenses and grade appeals.** A student who wants to appeal a finding of an academic offense, its penalty, a course grade or another academic action "must confer with the Academic Ombud before they can appeal to the Academic Appeals Panel" (Academic Integrity). The Ombud also handles "issues for which no established procedure exists, or for which established procedures have not yielded a satisfactory solution" (Academic Ombud).
- **Formal hearings** follow Due Process — Academic Code. "Suspension, dismissal or expulsion may only be imposed with the dean's recommendation and the Provost's approval."
- **Academic standing appeals** go to the college within seven business days (see "Academic standing and end-of-term progression").
- **Discrimination, harassment, Title IX, and pregnancy and parenting** go to the Office of Equal Opportunity, under AR — Equal Dignity (interim). The Ombud refers such matters there.
- **Non-academic conduct** falls under AR — Student Conduct and Student Rights and Due Process — Student Codes.
- **Research with people.** Thesis and dissertation research with human subjects needs IRB review through the Office of Research Integrity before data collection starts.

In practice. The Graduate School's DGS and DGC Resources page asks programs to give students "a clear process for potential conflict resolution (e.g., ombudsperson, director of graduate studies, or chair)." The Ombud publishes checklists for faculty handling an academic offense and for students' academic rights.

Your program: steps for a student with a conflict _ · ***who the student goes to if the conflict is with the DGS*** _

Data, systems and communication

Tableau (DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026). Log in through myUK and open Tableau from there. Request access through the IRADS access form. Each college has a Tableau super user who can help. A Graduate Education navigation dashboard gathers the useful reports in one place:

- Applicants (updated nightly) and admissions year over year
- Advisory committees, by faculty member or student, including past committees
- Specializations headcount: choose *End of term* for today's count; *Census* is a snapshot taken 15 Oct (fall) and 15 Mar (spring). For official external reporting, use the institutional enrollment numbers or work with IRADS.
- GSAS contract details
- 767 enrollment (also 748, 749 and 757), showing how many terms each student has been enrolled
- Years of assistantship funding
- TA observations and evaluations
- End-of-term reports (academic standing)
- Graduate Faculty, active or expired. Use this when a student cannot add someone to a committee; the appointment may have lapsed.
- Degrees awarded; time to degree and graduation rates

GRADS rebuild. Each student will have a home page showing their plan of study, advisor, DGS, and DGC. It will also handle committee building (with checks that turn green when the committee meets the rules), LOA requests, exam requests, and an electronic exam card. There is no date yet; the Graduate School said at least a semester.

myGPS degree audit. DGSs can track progress toward graduation and enter the exceptions a student needs to clear the audit. Registrar training is linked from the DGS & DGC Resources page.

Graduate student newsletter. Sent weekly on Tuesday evenings to all graduate students, including online students; DGSs, DGCs, and program staff get a copy. About 46 percent of students open it, so remind your students to read it.

The DGS year

Dates for 2026–27, from the 16 Nov 2026 meeting and the Registrar's pages. Dates marked "as heard" are not yet confirmed:

When	What
3 Dec (as heard)	Registration deadline for TA language screenings
11 Dec (as heard)	Registration deadline for spring TA microteaching
18 Dec	TA language screenings
21 Dec, noon	Fall final grades due; progression runs immediately afterward
Winter break	Check email for probation and dismissal appeals
4 Jan	Student appeal deadline
5–6 Jan	TA microteaching (in person)
About February	Fellowship review committees
15 Oct / 15 Mar	Census snapshot dates for enrollment counts
1 Nov / 1 Apr / 1 Jun	Students apply for fall, spring or summer graduation (Registrar)

Appendix A: What changed — summary

The changes flagged in the sections above, in one place. The Provost's Material Changes table and Legacy to Policy Crosswalk cover the rest.

Topic	Was (2024–25 manual or legacy rule)	Now (policy effective 8/6/2026)	Section
Who approves a leave of absence	DGS confers with the associate dean, approves, and forwards to the Graduate School	DGS endorses; the Graduate School approves	Registration, continuous enrollment and leave of absence
Leave after the qualifying exam	No exception	Medical or military leave allowed, approved in advance with documentation	Registration, continuous enrollment and leave of absence
Graduate Faculty levels	Full and associate members, with rules tied to each	"Graduate Faculty" only; a new Graduate Faculty policy is pending	Doctoral programs: advisory committee
Master's committee	At least three faculty; two Graduate Faculty including the chair; one Full Member	At least three Graduate Faculty, two from the student's program; DGS recommends, Provost approves	Master's degrees
Master's time-limit extensions	Up to four more years (ten in all), Dean of the Graduate School	Provost, on the DGS's recommendation; no maximum stated	Master's degrees
Master's transfer credit	At most 9 hours or 25 percent, whichever was greater	DGS approval; no number in the master's policy (please check)	Courses, credit, transfer and grades
Doctoral time after the QE	Five years plus up to five more, Dean of the Graduate School	The same, plus up to one more year requested by the DGS	Doctoral programs: candidacy
Outside examiner	Appointed by the Graduate School, eight weeks' notice	Not in the doctoral policy; a program may require one	Doctoral programs: dissertation
400G courses	In use	Being phased out; mixed courses move to the 500 level	Courses, credit, transfer and grades
Academic standing	Separate legacy rules	One framework; program-driven; appeal to the college within seven business days	Academic standing
DGS and DGC appointment	Graduate School form	Offer letter and Faculty Database action through the Office for Faculty Advancement (since August 1, 2025)	The DGS and DGC role

Appendix B: Gap log — where practice and written policy differ

Topic	Written rule	What happens in practice	Source / date	Raised with Graduate School?
Graduate Faculty nominations	The request form must be filed by a dean, associate dean or chair	DGSs prepare the request and must find someone else to file it	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	Yes, 16 Nov; the Graduate School took note
Posting transfer and non-degree credit	To check (Credit for Prior Learning)	Credit is posted only in the graduation term, so records look incomplete before the QE	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	Yes; the registrar is looking into it
Plan B committee for comprehensive exams	Master's Research policy requires a committee	Impractical when, for example, 90 students sit one comprehensive exam	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	The Graduate School is collecting feedback
Incompletes in supervised practicums and internships	Grading policy: the student finishes under an agreement with the instructor, without re-registering	Supervision may require the student to be registered; unresolved	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	The Graduate School is working on it
Outside examiner	The doctoral policy does not mention one (please check)	The exam card still has the block, filled with a placeholder name	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	Partly
AMP approvals	No rule on telling the graduate program	DGSs often hear about approved students only when the student emails	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	Yes, 16 Nov
Assistantship-years report	AR 5:2: 3 years for master's, 5 for doctoral	Tableau report built on "the old AR 5.2" (as heard); check whether the limits match	DGS/DGC meeting, 16 Nov 2026	No
Where master's exam requests go	Master's policy: the DGS submits the request and results to the Office of the University Registrar	The Graduate School's Theses and Dissertations page says the form goes to the Graduate School two weeks before the defense	Policy and Graduate School web page, checked 16 Nov 2026	No

Topic	Written rule	What happens in practice	Source / date	Raised with Graduate School?
Eight-week notice for doctoral final exams	The doctoral policy requires no outside examiner and sets no notice period	The Graduate School's page still asks for the Notification of Intent at least eight weeks ahead	Policy and Graduate School web page, checked 16 Nov 2026	No

Appendix C: Dead links and missing forms

Checked 16 Nov 2026. These are linked from Graduate School pages but return "not found" or an error page instead of the document.

Item	Where it is linked	Status
Continuous Enrollment policy (2026-08 file)	DGS & DGC Resources	**Link dead** . The current file is the October 2026 version on the Provost's Continuous Enrollment page.
Summer Option instructions and form	DGS & DGC Resources	**Link dead** (both)
Master's Plan A (thesis) checksheet	Committees, Exams and Graduation	**Link dead**
Dissertation format examples: title page, co-director title page, abstract, approval page for co-directors, and examples 05–06, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16	Theses and Dissertations	**Link dead**
Royster memo	Funding pages	**Link dead**

Appendix D: What your program must publish

The Provost's policies (effective 8/6/2026) leave these decisions to programs and, in most cases, require them in writing. Use this as a checklist for your program handbook.

Policy	What the program decides	Policy wording	Your program's handbook section
Doctoral Research Degree Programs	A program handbook or approved guidance	"Each doctoral program shall maintain approved program guidance or a graduate student handbook describing program-specific academic requirements, milestones, examination procedures, dissertation expectations, annual progress review processes, timelines"	
Doctoral Research Degree Programs	Committee procedures	"Programs shall establish published procedures governing committee appointments, changes, resignations and replacements"	
Doctoral Research Degree Programs	Qualifying exam	"Programs shall publish approved QE procedures, evaluation criteria and remediation expectations"	
Doctoral Research Degree Programs	Qualifying exam eligibility	Students may take the QE once they meet "the program's published eligibility requirements"	
Doctoral Research Degree Programs	Re-examination after a failed QE	"The timing and conditions for re-examination are determined by the program and approved by the appropriate academic authority"	
Master's Research Degree Programs	Non-thesis (Plan B) completion	"Each program must establish, publish and consistently apply the requirements for successful completion of the non-thesis option, including the nature, evaluation criteria and successful completion standards for the culminating assessment"	
Professional Degree Programs	Curriculum, admission, and completion	"Programs must define curriculum, admissions criteria and completion requirements consistent with University and accrediting standards"	
Academic Standing	Dismissal rather than suspension	"Graduate programs may determine that dismissal is appropriate rather than suspension where permitted by approved program policies"	
Graduate Faculty (Graduate School guidance, 16 Nov 2026; new policy pending)	Who may serve on and chair committees; co-chairs	Not yet in policy. The Graduate School asked programs to set one rule and apply it to every student.	

Certificates: the Certificate Programs policy lets a graduate certificate be limited to current graduate students, or to students in a particular degree, and lets it require a prior master's or doctorate. Record any such limits in your certificate's published requirements.

Appendix E: Waiting on the University

The policies are new, and the Graduate School has said several pieces are still in progress. These are the questions DGSs and DGCs most need answered in writing. Each is a request, not a complaint: one written answer saves every program from working it out alone. When an answer is published, it moves into its section and comes off this list.

Question	Why it matters	Where it comes up
Which doctorates fall under Doctoral Research Degree Programs and which under Professional Degree Programs?	Decides whether the QE, 757/767 and time-limit rules apply to practitioner doctorates such as the EdD	Which policy governs which degree
What is the DGS and DGC role, and who may hold it?	The only written requirements are in the 2024–25 manual, which is being replaced	The DGS and DGC role
When will the new Graduate Faculty policy be issued?	Until then the old full and associate categories technically remain	Doctoral programs: advisory committee
Does a Plan B student need a full committee for a comprehensive exam?	Impractical for large cohorts	Master's degrees; Appendix B
Must a student re-register to finish an incomplete in a supervised practicum or internship?	Supervision may require enrollment	Courses, credit, transfer and grades; Appendix B
How will programs be told when an AMP student is approved?	DGSs hear about approved students only when the student writes	Admissions; Appendix B
Can accepted transfer credit be posted before the graduation term?	Records look incomplete going into the QE	Courses, credit, transfer and grades; Appendix B
Does a master's transfer limit still exist, and does the one-third cap in Credit for Prior Learning apply to transfer?	The old 9-hour or 25 percent limit is not in the new policy	Courses, credit, transfer and grades
Where do master's exam requests go: the Registrar (policy) or the Graduate School (its web page)?	The two say different things	Master's degrees

Question	Why it matters	Where it comes up
Does the eight-week notice for a doctoral final exam still apply now that no outside examiner is required?	The Graduate School's page still asks for it, and the exam card still has the examiner block	Doctoral programs: dissertation; Appendix B
Graduate certificates: maximum length, who appoints the DGC, and whether external transfer credit is allowed	The Graduate School's page and the policy differ, or the policy is silent	Graduate certificates
When will the Graduate School's DGS manual and program handbook template be released?	Programs are asked to write handbooks now	How to read this manual

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