

3-16-2012

DOC 2012-07 Graduate Retake Policy

University of Dayton. Office of Graduate, Professional and Continuing Education

University of Dayton. Graduate Leadership Council

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University of Dayton. Office of Graduate, Professional and Continuing Education and University of Dayton. Graduate Leadership Council, "DOC 2012-07 Graduate Retake Policy" (2012). *Senate Documents*. 201. https://ecommons.udayton.edu/senate_docs/201

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PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: Graduate Retake Policy
SUBMITTED BY: The Office of Graduate, Professional & Continuing Education, and the University of Dayton Graduate Leadership Council.
DATE: March 16, 2012
ACTION: Legislative Concurrence
REFERENCE: Senate Constitution, Article II.B.2.

1.0 Introduction

The University of Dayton has a strong desire to sustain the level of academic rigor within its graduate programs. This is balanced by an equally strong desire to enable the long term success of its graduate students. In order to help strike this balance, the Office of Graduate, Professional & Continuing Education, in collaboration with the University Dayton Graduate Leadership Council (GLC) proposes the graduate retake policy detailed herein.

Current policy requires that all courses retaken by graduate students be included in cumulative quality-point average calculations. If approved, the policy proposed herein will instead allow graduate students, with permission, to retake a single course, one time, for the purpose of excluding the lower grade from the calculation of their cumulative quality-point average. Both attempts at the course will, however, be reflected on the student's graduate transcript.

A central intent of the proposed graduate retake policy is to offer graduate students, in consultation with their academic advisor and program director, a meaningful tool to use, on a limited basis, in crafting an academic recovery plan should they ever find themselves on academic probation. In addition, there will surely be other students facing challenging situations, in some cases beyond their control, who will benefit from this policy. For example, the proposed graduate retake policy could benefit students who have been out of school for a long period of time and who find the transition to the rigors of graduate school unexpectedly challenging. This policy may also provide a valuable safety net to assist some, particularly new, international students who may encounter cultural or language barriers when coming to UD. Without attempting to anticipate all situations in which the graduate retake policy may benefit our students, the Office of GPCE and the GLC strongly encourages passage of this important piece of legislation.

2.0 Proposal

The Office of Graduate, Professional & Continuing Education, in collaboration with the Graduate Leadership Council, proposes that the following language be added to the online Graduate Bulletin as a hyperlinked bullet item in Section V. General Academic Information, under the General Information tab [1]:

Graduate Retake Policy. University policy does not limit the number of courses that may be retaken by graduate students, nor does it limit the number of times any particular course may be attempted. Academic units are nevertheless free to impose specific restrictions according to their needs. All retaken courses, including the original attempt, will be shown on the student's transcript. With permission, however, graduate students may retake a single course, one time, and have the lowest grade excluded from the calculation of their cumulative quality-point average.

To exclude a grade of C or F from their cumulative quality-point average, matriculated graduate students may retake at most one graduate level course of no more than four semester credit hours. For students who pursue more than one graduate degree at the University of Dayton (e.g., a master's degree followed by a doctoral degree, or multiple masters degrees), at most one graduate level course per graduate degree program may be retaken for purposes of grade exclusion according to this policy. In all cases, the course(s) in question must have been taken at the University of Dayton and must be retaken at the University of Dayton.

Courses may be retaken for the purpose of grade exclusion only once and only with the prior written permission of the student's graduate Program Director or Department Chair. In the event that the Chair/Director was the student's original instructor, permission to retake a course for the purpose of grade exclusion may be sought from the student's academic Dean, or Dean's designee.

When permission to retake a course is granted according to this policy, the lowest grade for that course will be excluded from cumulative quality point average calculations. Note that, in the event that the grade received on the approved retake attempt is not better than the original grade(s), the grade for the approved retake attempt shall be excluded from the cumulative quality-point average calculation. While all attempts at the course, including corresponding grades, will be shown on the student's graduate transcript, the excluded grade will be annotated with an "E" (i.e., Grade Excluded). For all other retaken courses, the grades for all attempts will be shown and included in the calculation of the cumulative quality-point average.

Students must demonstrate that a course retaken for the purpose of grade exclusion contains essentially the same material as the original course in which a grade of C or F was earned. In all cases, retake requests must be approved prior to enrollment in order for the grade exclusion policy to apply. Moreover, within 30 days of completing the retaken course, the student's Department Chair or Program Director must communicate with the Registrar's office to initiate the grade exclusion designation and subsequent recalculation of the student's cumulative quality-point average.

Special Provisions:

1) One course taken in pursuit of the Master in the Study of Law (M.S.L.) degree may be retaken according to this policy. All courses leading to the Juris Doctor (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M) degrees are, however, excluded from this policy.

2) Also excluded from this policy are all graduate courses taken by undergraduate students for undergraduate credit (i.e., graduate courses taken to satisfy one or more undergraduate program requirements which are also included in the calculation of undergraduate term and cumulative quality-point averages). This exclusion applies to, but is not limited to, students enrolled in approved Bachelor's Plus Master's (BPM) degree programs.

3) Students enrolled in the joint Accounting plus MBA 150-Hour Program may, according to this policy, retake one graduate level course taken for graduate credit (i.e., a graduate course taken to satisfy a graduate program requirement which is also included in the calculation of graduate term and cumulative quality-point averages).

3.0 Rationale

As mentioned in the introduction, a central intent of the graduate retake policy is to offer graduate students a tool to use in crafting academic recovery plans should they ever find themselves on academic probation. The proposed graduate retake policy is restricted to a single course which may only be retaken with permission. We did not believe it was appropriate to propose a retake policy as generous as that available to University of Dayton undergraduates ([2] and Appendix).

The provision excluding J.D. and LL.M. courses from this policy was made at the request of the UD School of Law. In addition, the J.D. degree needs to be addressed directly in this policy because the University of Dayton offers two joint J.D. degree programs: the J.D. plus MBA, and the J.D. plus Master of Science in Educational Administration. Students enrolled in either of these joint programs are eligible to retake, with permission, one course leading to either the MBA or the M.S. in Educational Administration degrees, but are not eligible to retake any course leading to the J.D. degree. Students in the M.S.L. program are, however, not pursuing law degrees and are considered graduate students in the usual sense. Therefore, M.S.L. students are eligible to retake one course according to the provisions of this policy.

Regarding undergraduates who take graduate courses for undergraduate credit (including, but not limited to, students enrolled in approved Bachelor's Plus Master's degree programs), these students may in some cases be eligible to retake failed graduate classes (recall that students may not earn "D" grades in graduate courses) according to the undergraduate retake policy ([2] and Appendix). However, only graduate courses taken for graduate credit and counted in the determination of graduate term and cumulative quality-point averages may be retaken according to the policy proposed herein. This restriction applies to students pursuing only graduate degrees, students in approved Bachelor's Plus Master's degree programs, and to other students who have joint undergraduate/graduate enrollment status.

Finally, students enrolled the joint Accounting plus MBA 150-Hour Program typically substitute MBA-698 for MGT-490. As the MBA-698 course is commonly taken late in the MBA program, most 150-Hour program students do not complete all their undergraduate Accounting degree requirements until they have also completed nearly all of their graduate MBA requirements. As a result they are often not matriculated graduate students in the usual sense in their final year, as is the case with other Bachelor's Plus Master's degree program students. Nevertheless, we believe that 150-Hour program students should have the opportunity to retake one graduate course, taken for graduate credit, according to this policy.

4.0 Promulgation

The graduate retake policy shall take effect immediately after final approval is granted by the Academic Senate. In particular, a course taken prior to the initiation of this policy, but before completion of the graduate degree, may be retaken within the guidelines of this policy. While the online graduate bulletin will be updated during the next revision cycle, students may, with permission, register for and plan to retake courses as soon as the term following the one in which this policy is approved.

To facilitate informing the graduate student body of the new policy provisions, after receiving final approval from the Senate this document will be distributed by the GPCE office to all graduate program directors and department chairs. Program directors and chairs will in turn be asked to share and discuss this information with their students.

5.0 Reference

[1] University of Dayton Graduate Bulletin, <http://bulletin.udayton.edu/content.ud?v=30>.

[2] University of Dayton undergraduate Bulletin, <http://bulletin.udayton.edu/content.ud?v=31>

6.0 Other Concurrences & Approvals

- 1) The language of this proposal was prepared in close consultation with Tom Westendorf, UD's Registrar. All Registrar suggested revisions were incorporated into this document prior to review by the Graduate Leadership Council.
- 2) GLC Executive Committee (unanimous vote of approval on 5/13/2011)
- 3) Provost's Council discussion (9/20/2011)

Appendix

August 2010 Online Undergraduate Bulletin, General Information, Section V. Academic Regulations, Grades and Scholarship

<http://bulletin.udayton.edu/content.ud?v=31&p=3588&c=3599>

R- Retaken. An undergraduate student who receives a grade of D or F in a course taken under Option 1 at the University of Dayton may retake that course under Option 1 at the University of Dayton and remove the original D or F from the cumulative GPA. When a course has been retaken and the subsequent grade is higher than or equal to the previous grade, the previous grade will not count towards the student's cumulative GPA. The transcript will reflect this event by noting the original grade with an "E" (Grade Excluded) and the term and cumulative GPA's will be adjusted. A student may have no more than 15 semester hours of "retaken" grades.

If a student retakes a course in which the topics vary, it must be demonstrated that the retaken course contains the same material as the original course in which the student received a D or F. Courses taken by students prior to the initiation of this policy, and before completion of an undergraduate degree, may be retaken within the guidelines of this policy.

Exceptions to this policy may be made by the dean (or the dean's designee) of the school or college in which the student is enrolled.

Addendum to Retake Policy: When a student retakes a course which he or she has taken more than once previously, the retaken course will serve to replace both previous grades (if it is the same as or higher than each). The number of "retaken hours" will be counted as the total hours for the two courses in which the grades are replaced; e.g., if a student retakes PSY 101 in which he or she had previously earned F two times, the new passing grade will replace both F's, but will count as 6 credit hours taken instead of 3. This student will then be able to take up to 9 additional course grades.

GPCE Observations: The "R" grade referenced in the undergraduate retake policy is actually never used. Perhaps this section of the undergraduate bulletin ought to be re-named. We also note that the undergraduate bulletin does not specifically mention exclusion of "E" designated grades from cumulative grade point average calculations. Only marks of I, K, N, IP, S, W, X, NC, and EM are specified to be disregarded in the computation of the cumulative undergraduate GPA. For reference, see the website listed at the beginning of this Appendix.