

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

# ***UNC Charlotte Academic Policy: Academic Standing (Graduate)***

## ***I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

This policy provides the definitions associated with continued enrollment and details the differences between academic suspension and termination.

## ***II. POLICY STATEMENT***

### **Requirements for Continued Enrollment**

All graduate students whether degree seeking or non-degree seeking (post baccalaureate) must maintain satisfactory grades. In addition, students enrolled in any graduate program must maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students are expected to achieve a commendable or satisfactory grade (A or B) in all coursework attempted for graduate credit. Students who fail to maintain satisfactory progress toward their degree or who do not achieve commendable or satisfactory grades in all their graduate coursework are subject to suspension and/or termination from their program of study and/or the Graduate School.

International students on F-1 or J-1 visa status must carry a full course load each academic semester (Some exceptions apply. See International Student/Scholar Office for further information.) Students who are suspended or terminated from their program of study are advised to consult the [International Student and Scholar Office](#) for information on maintaining valid F-1 or J-1 status, or reinstatement to valid F-1 or J-1 status.

### **Academic Suspension**

All graduate students (degree/certificate seeking and post baccalaureate) are subject to academic suspension. An accumulation of three marginal C grades in any graduate coursework will result in suspension of the student's enrollment. If a student makes a grade of U in any graduate course, enrollment will be suspended. A graduate student whose enrollment has been suspended because of grades is ineligible to register in any Fall or Spring semester or Summer term unless properly reinstated through the appeal process.

*Note: Some departments and/or programs have stricter regulations on suspension than those of the Graduate School. See the academic regulations presented in the program specific sections of the Graduate Catalog.*

## **Appeal Procedure**

Graduate students may appeal a suspension or termination using the procedures described in the following paragraphs. Other grievances relating to academic status are to be addressed to the Graduate School. For additional information on grievances, see University Policy 411, Student Grievance Procedure, online at [legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-411](http://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-411).

## **Appeal of Academic Suspension for the Purpose of Reinstatement**

A student who has been suspended from the Graduate School and/or a program of study may appeal their suspension and must be reinstated in order to continue their studies. After notification of suspension is received, the student initiates the appeal procedure by submitting a Suspension Appeal Form, available through the online Graduate Academic Petition, to the Graduate Program Director of their academic program. Pending approval, the Graduate Program Director will provide a recommendation regarding reinstatement to the Graduate School. The Associate Dean for Enrollment Management makes the decision on the suspension appeal and notifies the student of the decision in writing.

A student readmitted to a graduate program through reinstatement will be expected to complete the degree program with satisfactory or commendable performance (A or B grades). Should a student receive a grade of C or U in a graduate course after being reinstated to the program, enrollment in the graduate program will be terminated.

A student who is denied readmission through the suspension appeal process is considered to be terminated from the Graduate School and/or the graduate program. Terminated

students may appeal their termination as identified in the section entitled "Appeal of Academic Termination for the Purpose of Reinstatement."

## **Academic Termination of Non-Degree Seeking Students**

Academic termination of non-degree seeking (post-baccalaureate) students may occur in two ways.

1. A student's graduate status will be terminated if, after receiving an initial suspension (see "Academic Suspension") and subsequent reinstatement (see "Appeal of Academic Suspension for the Purpose of Reinstatement"), the student receives a grade of C or U in a graduate-level course.
2. A student's graduate studies may be terminated if they fail to maintain the general standards of the Graduate School (e.g., accumulation of more than one C grade in a term resulting in a total of four or more C grades in their graduate academic record, three C grades and one U, or two or more U grades in a single term).
3. Students who are suspended from the Graduate School and are denied re-admittance through the suspension appeal process (see "Appeal of Academic Suspension for the Purpose of Reinstatement") are considered terminated from the Graduate School.

## **Academic Termination of Degree/Certificate Seeking Students**

Academic termination of a degree/certificate graduate student's program of studies may occur in four ways.

- 1)** Students may be required to terminate their graduate studies if they fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress. One example of failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress is non-adherence to the schedule of "Time Limits for Degrees."

When a program determines that a student is making unsatisfactory progress, the program notifies the student in writing of the program's concern about the student's performance. Such a warning specifies the source of the concern, the applicable program and/or Graduate School rules, and the proposed action. Warnings specify when and on what basis a recommendation for academic termination will be considered by the program. A probationary period of one academic semester is normal.

Following the probationary period, a student who fails to meet the provisions of the warning is subject to termination from the program. If the program believes that termination is

warranted, the graduate program director or coordinator communicates to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School in writing the specific reasons involved, all warnings communicated to the student, the program and/or advisory committee procedures and actions leading to the recommendation, and the mailing address of the student. After considering all of the information, the Associate Dean will make a decision. If the decision is to terminate, the Associate Dean will notify the student of their termination from the Graduate School.

**2)** A student's graduate studies may be terminated if they fail to maintain the specific standards of the student's academic program as described in the program specific sections of the *Graduate Catalog* (e.g., a doctoral program may indicate that the accumulation of two C grades or one U grade is grounds for termination from the program) or the general standards of the Graduate School for termination (e.g., accumulation of more than one C grade in a term resulting in a total of four or more C grades in their graduate academic record, three C grades and one U, or two or more U grades in a single term).

*Note: A graduate student may be terminated without prior suspension if they receive four C grades, regardless of the semester in which the grades were received.*

**3)** A student's graduate studies will be terminated if, after receiving an initial suspension (see "Academic Suspension") and subsequent reinstatement (see "Appeal of Academic Suspension for the Purpose of Reinstatement"), the student receives a grade of C or U in a graduate level course.

**4)** Students who are suspended from a graduate program and are denied re-admittance through the suspension appeal process (see "Appeal of Academic Suspension for the Purpose of Reinstatement") are considered terminated from their graduate program.

## **Readmission of Terminated Graduate Students**

Students who have been academically terminated from the Graduate School and/or a UNC Charlotte graduate program are not eligible for readmission as either a degree seeking or non-degree seeking graduate student. However, if **after two years** the student can demonstrate the potential for academic success and/or personal and professional development since leaving the University, the student may initiate a request for readmission to the Graduate School. The student may initiate the request for readmission to the program from which they were terminated, to a different graduate program, or as a post-baccalaureate student. Students seeking readmission must submit a new application

package which includes the full set of materials identified in the section entitled “General Application Requirements for Admission.” In addition, the student must include within their essay (Statement of Purpose) a section explaining the circumstances that led to their termination from the UNC Charlotte Graduate School and a discussion of the academic and/or personal and professional development since last attending the University that has prepared them for a successful return to graduate studies.

## **Appeal of Academic Termination for the Purpose of Reinstatement (Post-Baccalaureate Students)**

While an action of termination is considered final, a post-baccalaureate student who is terminated may appeal that termination to the Graduate School if there are unusual or extenuating circumstances.

To initiate an Appeal of Academic Termination, the student must send a written letter to the Graduate School requesting consideration of their case by the UNC Charlotte Graduate School Appeals Committee. In the written request, the student must make their case for reinstatement. The student must include two letters from UNC Charlotte faculty or academic administrative personnel who are knowledgeable of the student’s academic capabilities and are supportive of the student’s reinstatement to the Graduate School. A termination appeal request and the supporting documentation must be received by the Graduate School within 30 days of the date on the letter of termination.

Once the Graduate School receives the Appeal of Termination, it will be forwarded to the Chair of the Graduate School Appeals Committee. This Committee will review all relevant materials and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School makes the decision on the Appeal of Termination case and their decision is final.

## **Appeal of Academic Termination for the Purpose of Reinstatement (Degree-Seeking Students)**

While an action of termination is considered final, a student who is terminated from a graduate program may appeal that termination to the Graduate School if there are unusual or extenuating circumstances. The type of academic termination will determine the permissible grounds for the appeal and the specific procedure utilized.

## **Category 1: Academic Termination Based on Failure to Maintain Commendable or Satisfactory Performance in Coursework**

Category 1 appeals are available to students who have been terminated for receiving a U or C grade after an initial suspension and students who fail to maintain the specific grading standards of an academic program. In these cases, an Appeal of Academic Termination submitted to the Graduate School must be supported by the student's graduate program. Without support from the student's graduate program, academic termination of this type is always considered a final action.

To initiate a Category 1 Appeal of Academic Termination, the student must send a written letter to the Graduate School requesting consideration of their case by the UNC Charlotte Graduate School Appeals Committee. In the written request, the student must make their case for reinstatement. Included with the student's letter must be at least two letters of support for reinstatement from the student's academic program. For master's degree students, the termination appeal should include a letter from the program coordinator/director and a letter from the department chair, major advisor and/or the thesis/project advisor. For a doctoral student, a termination appeal should include a letter from the program coordinator/director and the advisory committee or dissertation committee chair. The letters from the program must specify what expectations must be met by the student if they are readmitted to the program. An appeal is not considered complete without letters of support and will not be reviewed by the Appeals Committee. A termination appeal request and the supporting documentation must be received by the Graduate School within 60 days of the date on the letter of termination.

Once the Graduate School receives a Category 1 Appeal of Termination, it will be forwarded to the Chair of the Graduate School Appeals Committee. This Committee will review all relevant materials and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School makes the decision on the Appeal of Termination case and their decision is final.

## **Category 2: Academic Termination Based on Programmatic Action**

Category 2 appeals are for students who have been terminated for failure to make satisfactory progress in an academic program and for students who have been denied re-admittance through the suspension and/or the Category 1 termination appeal process. Academic decisions based on the disciplinary expertise and judgment of graduate faculty members and program coordinators/directors in a particular field are not subject to appeal. The fact that a programmatic decision goes against a student's desire for continuation in an

academic degree program is not grounds for a termination appeal. However, with program support, a doctoral student who was terminated for failing a milestone may appeal for immediate admission to the relevant master's program, provided they meet the outlined criteria for doing so. When moving to the master's program is not an option, a Category 2 appeal may be brought on the grounds that there was "procedural error" or "discrimination" in the termination decision.

To initiate a Category 2 Appeal of Academic Termination, the student must send a written letter to the Graduate School requesting consideration of their case by the UNC Charlotte Graduate School Appeals Committee. In the written request, the student must make their case for reinstatement. If the student is alleging "procedural error," the student must specify what procedures were utilized and how the program deviated from the specified procedures. If the basis of the appeal is "discrimination," the student must show how their case was handled substantially different from those of other students in similar circumstances. A termination appeal request and the supporting documentation must be received by the Graduate School within 60 days of the date on the letter of termination.

Once the Graduate School receives a Category 2 Appeal of Termination, it will be forwarded to the Chair of the Graduate School Appeals Committee. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will contact the program in question and request a response to allegations of "procedural error" and/or "discrimination." The program will have two weeks to respond to the request of the Appeals Committee Chair. Once all relevant information had been received, the Committee will review the materials and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School makes the decision on the Appeal of Termination case and their decision is final.

## **Graduate School Appeals Committee**

The Graduate School Appeals Committee is authorized to review appeals for reinstatement from graduate students who have been academically terminated. The Committee does not hear grade appeals, for which a separate procedure exists. The Appeals Committee is comprised of four members. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School serves as the ex officio, non-voting chair of the committee. The three voting members of the Appeals Committee are graduate faculty members named by the Dean of the Graduate School.

## ***III. DEFINITIONS***

- **Appeal** – A formal, written narrative to request reinstatement following suspension or termination.
- **Post-baccalaureate** – A student who has earned a baccalaureate degree and takes educational courses; sometimes referred to as a “post-bacc” or Non Degree seeking student.
- **Reinstatement** – Re-establishment of a student’s active status following a successful suspension/termination appeal or an approved leave of absence.
- **Suspension** – Administrative cancellation of enrollment due to unsatisfactory academic performance.
- **Termination (Academic)** – Administrative cancellation of enrollment for failure to make satisfactory academic progress following an initial program probation or suspension. Students who are suspended from a graduate program and are denied re-admittance through the suspension appeal process are considered terminated.

## ***IV. POLICY CONTACT(S)***

- **Authority:** [Faculty Council](#) [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee]
- **Responsible Office:** [The Graduate School, Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs](#)
- **Additional Contact(s):** n/a

## ***V. HISTORY***

- **Established:** TBD
- **Revised:** April 24, 2024 [Established a protocol that clarifies the appeal process relevant to academic termination decisions and extended the appeal period from 30 to 60 days]

## ***VI. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES***

- [Academic Appeal and Grievance](#)
- [Ombudsman](#)

## ***VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

- **Where is this policy referenced?**

The policy is published on the Academic Policies & Procedures webpage of the [Provost website](#) and in the Degree Requirements & Academic Policies section of the [Graduate Catalog](#).

- **When can I apply for readmission after academic suspension?**

Students who left the university under academic suspension and chose not to appeal may apply for readmission after 2 years.

- **What are my next steps if my suspension appeal is denied?**

A student who is denied readmission through the suspension appeal process is considered to be terminated from the Graduate School and/or the graduate program.

- **When can I apply for readmission after termination?**

If you can demonstrate the potential for academic success and/or personal and professional development since leaving the University, you may initiate a request for readmission to the Graduate School.

## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

### ADDRESS

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### PHONE

704-687-8622

### RESOURCES



Alumni Association

Maps & Directions