Substitutions and waivers (i.e. exceptions)

Students must fulfill all degree requirements including specific courses to be taken, total credits earned, a cumulative GPA in the program of 3.0 or above, and (as required) submission of an electronic thesis/dissertation, an ETD approval form, and a survey of earned doctorates to earn a degree or certificate. All requirements are described in their Bulletin or catalog and tracked in DegreeWorks.

Students typically meet degree requirements by earning credit for taking prescribed courses or performing prescribed activities. If that approach is not possible or is not in the best interest of the student, degree requirements may be met via a substitution or waiver (i.e. exemption) submitted as a request through the Google substitution-waiver form.

There must be compelling, valid reasoning for an approved substitution or waiver. The "Rationale for Request" should be authentic, accurate and well researched to support the request. Exception requests that are not well founded (e.g. appear to have the sole purpose of propelling the student forward in the program) are very likely to be denied. Programs should consult with the Associate Dean for Graduate Education to discuss situations that are confusing or complex. Programs should not contact Graduate School administrators for guidance because their advice will often be somewhat generic. Ultimately, program directors and/or program administrators have the detailed understanding of curricula required to initiate requests for exceptions.

General guidelines for both substitutions and waivers
- Completion of one certificate/degree requirement cannot be used to satisfy another requirement in the same certificate/degree program
- Course content or training activity being substituted/waived must be truly similar or otherwise achieve the training goals of the program
- The credit or activity must have been earned or completed within 6 years for a MS and 8 years for a PHD
- Course numbers and grading system are not typical considerations; the key issue is that the content of the credits earned or activity completed is a satisfactory alternative
- Courses graded A, B, S or P are generally eligible. Courses graded C are discouraged, but will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Courses grades D, U or F are not eligible.
- Except in rare circumstances, courses must be graded to be considered eligible

Substitutions: specific guidelines
- Used when credit or activity is acceptable in place of the originally prescribed degree requirement
  - Substitutions satisfy certificate/degree requirements and the substituted credits count toward the total credits required for certificate/degree completion
  - An earned credit can count toward the credits required for both a certificate and a separate degree program, but an earned credit can count toward a single degree program only
- Possible rationale
  - Identical course taken prior to admission satisfies requirement
  - Similar course or activity satisfies requirement
  - Course needs to be moved to satisfy a more appropriate requirement
- Examples of requested substitutions likely to be approved

- o Degree program requires course A, program director allows student to take course B (which is similar or otherwise achieves the training goals of the program)
  - o Degree program requires activity A, program director allows student to complete activity B (which is similar or otherwise achieves the training goals of the program)
  - o Student completes a course in a certificate program that is applied to a separate MS or PHD degree program
- Examples of requested substitutions that will not to be approved
  - o Degree program requires course A, student takes course B (which does not achieve training goals of program)
  - o Degree program requires activity A, student completes activity B (which does not achieve training goals of program)
  - o Credits for course A applied to a MS degree, request to apply same credits to a PhD degree
  - o Any substitution of credits with grades of D, F or U

Waivers: specific guidelines
- Used when a student has completed an activity that would make a separate effort to satisfy a degree requirement redundant
  - o Program does not require student to complete the degree requirement
  - o No other coursework or activity will be required to fulfill the degree requirement
  - o Waived credits do not count toward the minimum credit hours required
- Possible rationale
  - o Student completed same or similar course for previous degree
  - o Student completed same or similar activity for previous degree
  - o Student completed similar course work at another institution
- Examples of requested waivers likely to be approved
  - o Student completed a course or other activity in a MS degree program and the same course or activity is required for their current PHD program
  - o Student completed a required activity, but student did not register for or complete the required course used to track completion of the activity
- Example of requested waivers unlikely to be approved
  - o Course no longer offered
  - o Student, possibly through no fault of their own, did not complete a required course or activity

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