

**GRADUATE COLLEGE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT**  
**(Approved by University Graduate Faculty Vote: April 30, 2021)**

**I. GENERAL ORGANIZATION**

- A. There shall be a single University-wide Graduate College with a single University-wide graduate faculty, having the authority and responsibilities designated in Section II, THE GRADUATE FACULTY.
- B. Unless superseded by direct action of the Graduate Faculty acting as a whole, the legislative and academic authority of the Graduate Faculty shall be vested in the University Graduate Council respecting appropriate collegial relationships with the University Faculty Senate and college faculty assemblies.
- C. The Graduate College Dean shall be the University-wide executive officer for graduate studies. The Dean shall be administratively responsible for the welfare of the Graduate College and for implementing the policies of the Board of Trustees and the Graduate Faculty concerning graduate studies. Acting on the recommendation of the Graduate Faculty, the Dean shall serve as the authority on all admissions of students to graduate degree and certificate programs, appointments of graduate advisers, decisions on continuing graduate status, appointments of members and chair of each supervisory committee, admission to candidacy for doctoral degrees, or certification of completion of requirements for graduate degrees and certificates. The office of the Graduate College Dean shall be the clerical center and clearinghouse for communications between the University Graduate Council and the faculty, administration and external agencies. No provision in this document shall be construed to supersede the authority of the College Deans with regard to their broad responsibilities concerning their faculty members and students; this includes their ability to delegate authority and duties to those within their college.
- D. Each academic unit offering the masters, specialist or doctoral degree shall have a Graduate Committee consisting of no fewer than three Graduate Faculty members, one of whom shall serve as its Chair or Coordinator.
- E. Throughout this document, the term academic unit is used generically to represent a graduate program, department, interdepartmental graduate program, center, school, and/or college depending upon its purpose and existing governance structure.

**II. THE GRADUATE FACULTY**

**A. Authority and Responsibilities**

The authority and responsibilities of the Graduate Faculty shall include adoption of Graduate College policies and procedures, determination of university requirements for admission in all graduate programs, development of new graduate programs, modification of existing programs, creation and delivery of graduate courses, mentoring graduate students, and recommending for graduation students who have met established standards to receive a graduate degree at Florida Atlantic University. Admission requirements, approval of new programs, modifications of existing, and introduction of new courses are subject to authorization by the University Faculty Senate. In cases of multiple graduate program appointments, the faculty member is entitled to participate in the governance of each, but may only vote once in Graduate College governance matters. The categories of membership in the Graduate College are Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate

Faculty, Graduate Lecturer, and Graduate Faculty Emeriti. Upon the recommendation of University Graduate Council, the Graduate College Dean may authorize variants of Graduate Faculty membership to accommodate special circumstances or specialized classes of faculty.

## **B. Membership Levels and Privileges**

### **1. Graduate Faculty.**

- a. Members of the Graduate Faculty may teach graduate courses, serve on supervisory committees and the University Graduate Council, and vote on all matters relevant to graduate affairs at Florida Atlantic University. Graduate Faculty not employed by the Florida Atlantic University (such as affiliated research faculty) may only co-chair a committee with a co-chair employed by the university.
- b. Graduate Faculty have sole franchise to vote on program policies and procedures, curriculum changes, nominations for their college-wide University Graduate Council representative, and nominations for appointment and reappointment of their Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty and Graduate Lecturers.
- c. Any graduate program may have additional written criteria, approved by the University Graduate Council, for their Graduate Faculty to participate on graduate supervisory committees, either as a member, committee chair or primary advisor.
- d. Graduate Faculty members are appointed to a seven-year renewable term.

### **2. Associate Graduate Faculty.**

- a. Members of the Associate Graduate Faculty may teach graduate courses and serve on masters and specialist degree supervisory committees.
- b. Any graduate program may have additional written criteria, approved by the University Graduate Council, for their Associate Graduate Faculty members to serve on or co-chair doctoral supervisory committees, or serve as the chair of masters and specialist degree supervisory committees.
- c. Associate Graduate Faculty members are appointed to a seven-year renewable term.

### **3. Graduate Lecturer.**

- a. Graduate Lecturers may teach graduate level courses.
- b. In addition, any graduate program may have additional written criteria for their Graduate Lecturers to participate as members on masters and specialist degree supervisory committees.
- c. Graduate Lecturers are appointed to one-year renewable terms.

### **4. Graduate Faculty Emeriti.**

- a. Upon the recommendation of the program/department/school or interdepartmental Graduate Committee, retired Graduate Faculty members who have been appointed to emeritus status may retain the rights and privileges associated with their previous status as members of the Graduate Faculty.
- b. In all respects their rights and privileges are maintained; except, when serving as a doctoral student advisor each emeritus shall have a non-emeritus co-chair.
- c. Graduate Faculty Emeriti are appointed to a seven-year renewable term.

## **C. Membership Criteria**

### **1. Graduate Faculty.** A faculty member nominated for appointment as Graduate Faculty must meet the following minimum requirements:

- a. Hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above (clinical, research scientist/faculty, and affiliate research faculty inclusive). Under exceptional circumstances, faculty members with a comparable level of expertise may apply for status as Graduate Faculty;
- b. Hold the terminal degree suitable for contributing to the program or show a comparable level of attainment through experience as determined by the Graduate Committee of the program;
- c. Be actively involved in scholarly or creative activity, graduate teaching or graduate mentoring;

### **2. Associate Graduate Faculty.** A faculty member nominated for appointment as Associate

Graduate Faculty must meet the following minimum requirements:

- a. Hold the rank of non-tenure-track faculty, including Postdoctoral Fellow, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Adjunct Faculty or above (visiting faculty inclusive);
  - b. Hold the terminal degree suitable for contributing to the program or show a comparable level of attainment through experience as determined by the Graduate Committee of the program;
  - c. Be actively involved in scholarly or creative activity, or graduate teaching.
3. **Graduate Lecturer.** A faculty member nominated for appointment as Graduate Lecturer must meet the following minimum requirements:
- a. Hold the rank of Instructor, Lecturer or above;
  - b. Hold at least a master's degree or professional degree or show a comparable level of attainment through experience as determined by the Graduate Committee of the program.
4. **Additional Criteria.** Academic units may specify more stringent or specialized criteria beyond the minimum membership requirements for Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty and Graduate Lecturer. Each faculty member with a joint, affiliate, or courtesy appointment shall be subject to the membership criteria established by each academic unit.

**Summary of Privileges**

	Graduate Faculty	Associate Graduate Faculty	Graduate Lecturer
Chair or Co-chair a graduate student's supervisory committee	Yes	See Sections B2a and B2b	No
Serve on Graduate Council	Yes	No	No
Vote on Graduate College issues	Yes	No	No
Serve on a graduate student's supervisory committee	Yes	See Sections B2a and B2b	No
Teach graduate courses	Yes	Yes	Yes
Serve on academic unit Graduate Committee	Yes	No	No

**D. Procedures for Appointment**

**1. Appointments Not Requiring an Initial Application.**

- a. **Existing faculty participating in graduate degree programs.** Unless individual graduate programs specify additional membership criteria or appointment procedures, all Florida Atlantic University faculty members who meet the required criteria stipulated under Section C, and are tenured or tenure-track, or are appointed to specific terms in academic units that house a graduate degree program are automatically approved to be members of the Graduate Faculty for a period of seven years. No application process is required. At the end of the seven-year period, appointment to the Graduate Faculty will be renewed per Section D4.

- b. **New faculty participating in graduate degree programs.** Unless individual graduate programs specify additional membership criteria or appointment procedures, all future Florida Atlantic University faculty members who meet the required criteria, and are tenured or tenure-track, or are to be appointed to specific terms in academic units that house a graduate degree program are automatically approved to be members of the Graduate Faculty for a period of seven years. No application process is required. All new faculty members in this category will be appointed as Graduate Faculty in their letter of appointment at the time of hire. At the end of the seven-year period, appointment to Graduate Faculty will be renewed per Section D4.
  - c. Appointment of Graduate Faculty not requiring an application will begin upon ratification of the Graduate College Governance Document by the University Faculty Senate, or any date later on which their appointment begins.
- 2. Appointments Requiring an Initial Application.**
- a. **Faculty in academic units without graduate degree programs.** With the exception of faculty members appointed as Graduate Faculty without application under Sections D1a and D1b, all current or future Florida Atlantic University faculty members who currently do not participate in a graduate program must apply to be appointed as members as stipulated in Section D3.
  - b. **Associate Graduate Faculty and Graduate Lecturer.** Existing or future Florida Atlantic University faculty members seeking appointment as Associate Graduate Faculty or as a Graduate Lecturer in any academic unit (whether it houses a graduate degree program or not) must apply to be appointed.
- 3. Process for Applying as Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty or Graduate Lecturer.**
- Eligible faculty members will use the following process to apply for status as Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty, or Graduate Lecturer.
- a. The applicant submits an application ([Form 1](#)) and vita to the Chair or Coordinator of the graduate program in the relevant academic unit.
  - b. All Graduate Faculty members in the relevant academic unit will vote on the application. A simple majority of these Graduate Faculty members must support the nomination.
  - c. The Chair or Coordinator of the graduate program up through the appropriate College Committee and/or College Dean must review and make a recommendation on the nomination.
  - d. For faculty members in academic units who do not participate in a graduate program, or for those academic units with fewer than six Graduate Faculty members, a special ad-hoc six-person review committee will be elected by the Graduate Committee of the appropriate college or colleges. The Chair of the ad-hoc committee shall write a letter to the Graduate College Dean explaining the reasons for supporting or not supporting the nomination. A simple majority of the committee must support the nomination.
  - e. The Graduate College Dean will review the nomination and either approve or deny the nomination.
- 4. Reviews and Lists.** Each academic College Dean shall submit a list of approved faculty annually to the Graduate College Dean for concurrence. The list shall include all faculty in the following categories, (a) tenure-track Assistant Professors; (b) faculty promoted to Associate Professor or Professor in the last seven years; (c) faculty with a “meets expectation” or better on their most recent sustained performance evaluation (SPE); and (d) all other faculty recommended for appointment as graduate faculty by their respective academic units. The Graduate College Dean formally appoints the faculty member to the Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty or Graduate Lecturer.

## **E. Procedures for Reappointment**

### **1. Criteria for Continued Membership.**

- a. Re-appointment of seven-year term as Graduate Faculty or Associate Graduate Faculty will be automatic as long as the faculty member continues to hold their rank within the home department or unit. Graduate Faculty will be reappointed by (a), having been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor or Professor; (b) received satisfactory SPE; or (c) a vote of the program faculty that the Graduate Faculty or Associate Graduate Faculty member is to retain graduate faculty status. In the event of an unsatisfactory SPE, appointment of a member as Graduate Faculty may be terminated, and conditions apply as stipulated in Section E3.
- b. In the interim period, the program's Graduate Faculty may conduct a review of graduate faculty status when evidence is presented to the Coordinator or Chair of a program, the College Dean or the Graduate College Dean that established criteria of expectations for graduate faculty performance are not being met. At least a two-thirds majority of the program's Graduate Faculty must support a recommendation to modify or terminate a faculty member's Graduate Faculty membership status.
- c. If the recommendation is upheld by the program's Graduate Faculty, the Coordinator or Chair of the graduate program shall present the results of the vote and the supporting evidence to the Graduate College Dean and the University Graduate Council for further action.

### **2. Loss of Privileges.**

- a. Individual graduate programs may establish guidelines by which faculty members with a modified or terminated membership status may complete their previously established obligations as an advisor, chair or member of a supervisory committee.
- b. In the absence of any established guidelines, all faculty members with a terminated or modified membership status shall be allowed to complete their obligations with all previously held membership privileges.
- c. Loss of Graduate Faculty privileges shall not affect an individual's rank, tenure or status of employment.

## **F. Membership Status Appeal Process**

1. The Graduate College Dean will be responsible for ensuring the faculty member receives written notification of the reasons why the membership status was denied or reduced, based on criteria and that the appeal processes are outlined in writing. Any faculty member who believes that his or her membership status has not been acted upon properly by the Graduate College Dean may appeal the decision to the University Graduate Council. He or she must file an appeal within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Dean's decision with the University Graduate Council chair with a copy to the Graduate College Dean.
2. At any level of the appeal process the reviewers shall consider any testimony and documentary evidence that may be presented and may also solicit the views of the faculty members, supervisors and graduate students in the program(s) for which membership is being reviewed.
3. The faculty member shall be allowed to provide evidence in support of his or her view to the University Graduate Council and at all stages of the appeal.
4. A quorum of the University Graduate Council shall review the appeal and render a decision within 30 working days of the original appeal. If the Council denies the application, the reasons shall be given in writing to the Graduate College Dean and the faculty member within 10 working days of the decision. If the University Graduate Council recommends approval, the reasons shall be stipulated to the Graduate College Dean and faculty member within 10 working days of the decision. The Chair of the University Graduate Council shall be responsible for a letter summarizing the reasons to support or deny the appeal along with any supporting documents to support this conclusion. If the Graduate College Dean agrees with the appeal, the decision will be final. If the Graduate College Dean does not agree with the University Graduate

Council's recommendation, the letter and all accompanying documents shall be automatically forwarded to the Provost. The Provost will consider all evidence and render a final decision within 20 working days. Records of appeals shall be in writing and may be supplemented at any time through the appellate process by the faculty member.

## **G. Graduate Supervisory Committees and Advising**

### **1. Graduate Advising**

- a. Each academic unit offering the masters, specialist or doctoral degree shall ensure each student is advised by at least one member of the Graduate Faculty as determined by the academic unit.
- b. A plan of study shall be completed for each student and filed with the Graduate College no later than mid-way through the student's studies.
- c. Each student has the responsibility to work with an advisor and university officials to ensure that all appropriate forms are on file with the proper offices.

### **2. Doctoral Supervisory Committees.**

- a. Each doctoral candidate shall have a Supervisory Committee comprised of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty. One of the members shall serve as the Chair of the Supervisory Committee and principal advisor to the student. It is strongly recommended that each Supervisory Committee include one member from outside of the department or program. The goal of including an outside member is to broaden the supervision and guidance of the doctoral student, and this could be achieved by an external member or may already be present in an interdisciplinary program. Outside members may be selected from the scholars within other academic programs that have appointments as graduate faculty, or from other institutions where scholarly work is conducted. Graduate Faculty not employed by FAU must be approved for an appointment as Courtesy Affiliate Faculty (as per [Policy 2.2.1](#)) and as Graduate Faculty. After consultation with the student and the committee chair, the Supervisory Committee is approved by the director of the respective academic program using the [Form 8](#).
- b. The Supervisory Committee shall approve the student's plan of study, monitor the student's academic progress, approve the dissertation subject, prepare, give, and evaluate the qualifying examination or examine the dissertation prospectus (either as part of the qualifying exam or subsequent to it), decide when the student is ready to defend the dissertation, articulate the process by which Supervisory Committee members will evaluate the dissertation defense, conduct the evaluation of the dissertation defense, and reach a decision on the final document. All Supervisory Committee members are expected to be present at the defense. Participation by Supervisory Committee members via distance-based technologies is permitted by the Graduate College.
- c. Each doctoral student is encouraged to consult with members of her/his/their Supervisory Committee at frequent intervals throughout the progress of research or scholarly activity. It is recommended that the student submit a progress report to each member of the committee at least once a year.
- d. The minor, or related fields, if applicable, shall have representation on the Supervisory Committee.

### **3. Masters and Specialist Supervisory Committees.**

- a. Each graduate student preparing a thesis shall have a Supervisory Committee comprised of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty or Associate Graduate Faculty. One of the members shall serve as the Chair of the Supervisory Committee.
- b. The Supervisory Committee shall approve the student's plan of study, monitor the student's academic progress, approve the thesis subject, evaluate the thesis defense, and approve the final document.
- c. The minor, or related fields, if applicable, shall have representation on the Supervisory Committee.

## **H. University Graduate Faculty Meetings**

### **1. Special Session.**

- a. The Graduate Faculty as a whole shall be called into special session by a majority vote of the University Graduate Council, or by a petition signed by 10% of the voting members of the Graduate Faculty. The University Graduate Council has the responsibility for setting the time for the meeting. At the meeting, the Chair of the University Graduate Council will act as chair pro tem for the special session with the singular initial task of overseeing the election of the ad hoc Session Chair. The Session Chair will serve over all other business for the Special Session.
- b. The quorum for meetings of the University Graduate Faculty shall be ten percent of the voting membership of the Graduate Faculty.
- c. Provided a quorum is in attendance, all actions taken at such meetings under the category of new business, or agenda items supported by a majority, but less than a two-thirds majority of those present at such meetings, must be submitted to all Graduate Faculty for ratification using a secure electronic ballot.
- d. Any agenda item ratified by a two-thirds majority shall be policy, and shall not be sent to the Graduate Faculty using a secure electronic ballot, unless specifically requested by a majority of those present at the meeting.
- e. Ten members of the Graduate Faculty may petition to place items on the agenda for meetings of the Graduate Faculty. Petitions for agenda items should be sent to the University Graduate Council chair with a courtesy copy to the Graduate College Dean. In the absence of a quorum, the agenda items of the proposed meeting of the Graduate Faculty shall be referred to the University Graduate Council for consideration.
- f. There shall be an alphabetical master list of the Graduate Faculty available at meetings of the Graduate Faculty for sign-in purposes. The University Graduate Council Chair shall be the parliamentarian, and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (most recent edition) shall be the parliamentary authority for Graduate Faculty meetings.
- g. Actions taken by the Graduate Faculty as a whole shall supersede any action taken by the University Graduate Council.

## **III. AMENDMENTS AND CONFLICTS**

All amendments to this Governance Document shall be proposed by the University Graduate Council and, once proposed shall be forwarded to the Graduate Faculty using secure electronic ballot. An Election Committee comprised of at least three (3) Graduate Faculty from different colleges shall be formed to oversee the voting process. The Graduate College and others as needed shall provide administrative support for the voting process. Once the ballots have been distributed, at least fifteen (15) and no more than twenty (20) working days will be allocated for voting. All amendments must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those casting a vote provided at least 10% of the entire Graduate Faculty vote. Nothing in this Graduate College Governance Document shall be construed to supersede any Bylaws of the Board of Trustees, the BOT/UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement or any applicable state or federal laws.