



University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
**TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative  
Exchange**

---

Academic Policy Committee Reports

Graduate Council

---

3-29-2018

## Academic Policy Committee Report - March 29, 2018

Graduate Council

Follow this and additional works at: [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_gcacadpol](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gcacadpol)

---

### Recommended Citation

Graduate Council, "Academic Policy Committee Report - March 29, 2018" (2018). *Academic Policy Committee Reports*.

[https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_gcacadpol/73](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gcacadpol/73)

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Council at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Policy Committee Reports by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [trace@utk.edu](mailto:trace@utk.edu).

**MINUTES OF ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Thursday, March 29, 2018, 2:00 P.M.**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Committee members: Maria Stehle (Chair), Sergio Bedford, Eric Boder, Julie Bonom, Lars Dzikus, and Reza Seddighi

Other attendees: Mehmet Aydeniz, Graduate Council, Chair-Elect; Sara Bradberry, Graduate School Assistant Dean; Jens Gregor, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science; Dixie Thompson, Graduate School Dean; and Catherine Cox, Graduate School Liaison.

Maria Stehle called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

At the Graduate Council Meeting on March 22, 2018, I reported that after our discussion concerning the proposal for the residence requirement, the decision was to not take any action. Dr. Jens Gregor asked why no action was taken and requested APC review the proposal again. Per Dr. Gregor's request, APC will review and discuss the doctoral residence requirement a second time.

**1. *Proposal:* Jens Gregor, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science submitted a proposal regarding the doctoral residence requirement.**

I have one more proposal for the APC to consider before I rotate off the Graduate Council. More accurately, I am suggesting three variants of a proposal that all seek a more uniform treatment of PhD students with regard to the residence requirement. As I do not understand the Financial Aid implications, what you see below are the core ideas, not catalog wording changes. I imagine those are easy to write once it has been determined which of the three variants to pursue. As always, I would be happy to attend your meeting to elaborate.

**Preamble**

PhD students are required to take a full course load two semesters in a row. For students holding one-half time assistantships, this means 6 credit hours. For everybody else, this means 9 credit hours. Students in the latter group include those holding quarter-time assistantships as well as students who hold full-time or part-time jobs, be they on or off-campus. Having to take 9 credit hours of graduate course work while working 20-40 hours is difficult for all students, not just those holding assistantships. Besides, some employers may not reimburse students for 9 credit hours in which case the residence requirement poses a financial burden as well.

**PROPOSAL 1: Change the definition of a full course load for residence requirement purposes**

The "Course Load" section could be augmented to say that "For the purposes of meeting the residence requirement, PhD students who hold either a full-time job or a part-time job that requires 20 or more hours per week will be considered equivalent to students holding a one-half time assistantship with respect to course load expectations."

**PROPOSAL 2: Change the residence course load requirement for all students**

A simpler solution would be to require the same number of hours for all students, say 6 credit hours per semester for two consecutive semesters. Students who hold quarter-time assistantships and international students have to meet their course load requirements regardless.

**PROPOSAL 3: Eliminate the residence requirement**

The simplest possible solutions would be to do away with the residence requirement unless Federal or State laws say we must have it. Again, students holding assistantships and international students have to meet their course load requirements regardless.

### **Current catalog text for Residence Requirement**

*Residence is defined as full-time registration for a given semester on the campus where the program is located. The summer term is included in this period. During residence, it is expected that the student will be engaged in full-time on-campus study toward a graduate degree.*

*For the doctoral degree, a minimum of two consecutive semesters of residence is required, except in programs where alternative or additional residence requirements have been approved.*

*A statement as to how and during what period of time the residence requirement has been met will be presented with the Application for Admission to Candidacy along with signatures of approval from the major professor and the department head/program director.*

Dr. Stehle began the meeting by noting that we already have departments where the resident requirement for their program differs from that listed in the catalog (Social Work for the DSW requires 4 consecutive semesters with minimum of 6 credit hours).

Let us look at the policy philosophically and rationally and see if we can create a policy that fits all programs. Of course, programs may have a more restrictive policy, if they choose. I open the meeting up for discussion.

Discussion and questions that arose:

#### Jens Gregor:

My motivation in submitting this proposal is to make the registration hours the same for all students - whether on assistantships, not on assistantships, and those working a full-time job. I would just like to see the required registration hours the same for all students.

#### Discussion:

In reading the Residence Requirement text, the text indicates:

1. "full-time" registration. What does "full-time" registration mean?  
We looked at the catalog definition of "Course Loads." It was determined that the wording for "Course Loads" is very confusing. Dr. Dixie Thompson communicated that the catalog text for "Course Loads" is one of the sections being reviewed and edited by Mary Albrecht and the catalog-working group. They will rewrite the text to make it clearer to understand - but not to change the policy.
2. "on the campus where the program is located." What about our on-line programs? We need to have language that applies to all our doctoral programs – not just the PhD, to include the online programs.

As we look at rewriting the residence requirement policy:

1. Do we want to make the residence requirement 6 credit hours for all students?
2. Do we want to keep it at two consecutive semesters or make it more than two consecutive semesters?
3. How do we encourage progression and time to the degree?
4. We need to communicate to Mary Albrecht how we are looking at revising the residence requirement text so that she can incorporate the edit in her rewrite of "course loads."
5. Before we edit this policy, we need to look at all areas that this policy revision may impact. Such as, student health and federal financial aid.
6. We may need to indicate in the policy the difference in enrollment hours – what you get access to in enrolling in 6 hours versus 9 hours.

Before our next meeting:

1. Sara Bradberry will meet with the Office of Financial Aid and find out the required hours that graduate students must be enrolled to receive aid. And, will meet with the Bursar to resolve what it means to be "full-time" by the university standards and how that impacts fees – including the student health fee.
2. The Graduate School will have a list of our peer and aspirational schools as to what they consider full-time and if they have a residence requirement.

With no further items, the meeting adjourned at 3:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison