

Category D: Graduate Policies Catalog

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Graduate Academic Requirements for Earning Graduate Degree

Policy Title	Graduate Academic Requirements for Earning Graduate Degree
Responsible AIU Office (Higher Management/Directorate)	Faculty of Postgraduate Studies
Policy Owner (Executive Department/Office)	Senior Director of Office of Postgraduate Students Affairs
Pertinent Dates	Created in March 2022, Approved in, Applied effective in

I. SCOPE OF POLICY

Graduate academic requirements for earning a degree in postgraduate studies apply to all applicants in AIU for postgraduate studies, whether they are applying for certificates, diplomas, masters, or Doctor of Philosophy. All applicants should be informed with this policy. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the academic requirements to interested applicants and enrolled students.

II. DEFINITIONS

Academic adviser: Upon starting a graduate program, the student will be assigned a staff member (an academic adviser) who will provide counselling concerning degree requirements, course offerings, preparation for the comprehensive examination, and selection of a thesis topic and thesis supervisor. When a thesis topic and supervisors are selected and approved, the thesis principal supervisor then becomes the academic adviser.

Academic calendar: The academic calendar is issued by the AIU university council before the beginning of the academic year. It includes the starting and ending dates of each academic year and the official holidays. The Fall semester starts during September of each year, while the Spring semester starts in February. The optional summer semester starts in July.

Academic load: The academic load is the total number of credit hours registered by a student per semester.

Academic requirements: means all needed criteria to be fulfilled by the enrolled postgraduate student to earn the post graduate degree or certificate from AIU. These include (but not limited to) time limit for a degree or course completion, comprehensive exam or thesis requirements if any, prerequisites, academic load, grading system for postgraduates, planned education leave of absence, withdrawal from the university and transcripts.

Academic year: For postgraduate studies, the academic year consists of two regular semesters, the Fall and the Spring and an optional summer semester. The duration of the regular semester is 15 weeks, which are followed by two weeks for the final exams. The summer semester is 8 weeks followed by one week of exams. Courses are condensed in the summer (double the time in lectures and practical work as well as in the field training).

Comprehensive exam: It is an exam that ensures that students meet minimal criteria for promotion to PhD candidacy. This exam assesses a student's areas of expertise and knowledge claims prior to moving forward to a PhD program.

Course: A course is the specific content which is taught throughout a semester and is allocated a certain number of credit hours according to the educational program. A special code is assigned for each course.

Credit hours

Coursework is counted in credit hours. In general, a credit hour represents a one-hour class period and at least two hours of individual study each week for one semester. It also represents 2-3 hours of lab work or 4 hours of field training.

Credit hours achieved: It is the credit hours of successfully completed by a student and which are calculated as part of his/her educational achievement.

Educational Program: This is the group of courses needed for the completion of the academic degree according to the study plan for each educational program.

Education System: AIU follows the credit hour system in all its programs and courses.

Forced withdrawal: A student receives a forced withdrawal if he/she exceeds the absence percentage (25% of the time of the course) allowed in a given course.

Grade Point Average (GPA): This is calculated by dividing the points achieved by a student (according to the achieved grades) by the total number of registered hours. The GPA ranges between 0 to 4.0.

Planned Educational Leave of Absence: it is defined as a planned interruption of a student's regular education during which the student temporarily ceases his or her formal studies at AIU, and after which he/she resumes his/her studies without the need to apply for readmission.

Points: The points achieved by a student in any subject are calculated by multiplying the student's score in the course with the number of the credit hours of the course.

Pre-requisite: This is a course which must be completed before registering other courses according to the educational program study plan.

Probation: The student is placed under probation if he/she scores a GPA below 2.0 in any semester, and this requires the reduction of his/her educational load.

Residence time: It is the period of study completed at AIU during the postgraduate program. For the master's and for the PhD degrees, the residence time in AIU must be at least 60% of the credit hours to fulfill the degree excluding the credits for the thesis to be awarded a degree from AIU. The other 40% may be completed in an accredited institution, and all the transferred courses must be approved by the Council of the faculty of Postgraduate Studies and comply with AIU course transfer policy.

Thesis: it is a dissertation involving personal research, written by a candidate for a university degree.

Transcript: It is a record showing a student's academic path at AIU and the courses he/she has studied in each semester, along with their codes, credit hours and grades. It also includes other transferred courses finished by the student in another university and the semester GPA.

Underachievement: when the student's completion of the acquired credit course is below 50% of the total hours, he/she is supposed to accomplish in the semesters.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy document sets out the fundamental academic requirements for postgraduate studies in AIU. It sets the minimum requirements for graduation from a program. This document will be revised and supplemented, as required, to meet new needs and conditions of newly opened programs. Revised pages will be sent to all holders who are responsible for keeping the manual current. An important part of this updating process depends on the constructive comments, information, and suggestions received from the postgrad students as well as the staff members and other administrative users.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy must be implemented by Office of Graduates Students Affairs in Faculty of Postgraduate Studies to be applied on all the students in postgrad programs.

V. POLICY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

AIU announces all graduate academic requirements and regulations on the university website. These general requirements apply to all students working toward a graduate diploma, master's degree or a Ph.D. Specific requirement for each degree program are described under the relevant "Fields of Study." AIU also conducts other programs in training as well as adult education as part of its graduate studies., which are discussed in a separate section "**Graduate Academic Requirements for Earning a Nondegree certificate**".

Registration system and procedures

Students have to abide by the starting date of registration according to the academic calendar announced by AIU. The registration process is as follows:

- Students are to register electronically via their student portal or with the help of their academic advisor can fill a **registration form** on announced dates.
- Students should plan their courses with their advisers prior to registration and follow the instructions contained issued by the Office of Graduates Students Affairs
- Students can register a number of hours each term, provided that they do not exceed the maximum academic load allowed or go below the minimum limit.
- Students can drop or add a registered course during the announced dates, while abiding by all registration rules and regulations.
- In case students do not finalize registration procedures during the allowed time, they must apply for postponing the semester. Otherwise, they are considered absentees for this particular semester.

Change of courses

If a student needs to change a course that he has registered, he/she must fill **add and drop form** and sign it from his academic advisor and submit it to the Office of Graduate Students' Affairs. Change of courses can only take place during the start of a semester during the "Add and Drop period and Late Registration period" determined by the Office of the Graduate Students' Affairs. A course may not be added to the student's schedule after that time.

Withdrawal from a course

After the "Add and Drop period and Late Registration period" students may drop a course and receive a "W" grade till the 12th week. The student has to fill **course withdrawal form** and sign it from his academic

advisor and the course instructor. Students will receive a grade of “F” if they stop attending classes without officially dropping the course. Students may petition the dean of Faculty of Postgraduate Studies for permission to drop a class and receive a “W” grade after the 12th week of the semester. However, such petitions will be approved only in special cases, which in most extraordinary circumstances will mean documented health or family crises.

Academic load:

The normal load for a full-time postgraduate student is 9 credit hours per semester. Upon the recommendation of the program concerned, students may register for up to 15 credit hours per semester after filling **an overload form**. The academic load in the summer session is a maximum of 6 credits. Students may not register in any course unless they have completed its prerequisites.

A foreign student taking a course load of 9 credit hours per semester is entitled to university certification for obtaining a student visa. Foreign students carrying less than a full load are not entitled to such certification unless they are fellows or sponsored students. In case of withdrawal, the university reports to the Egyptian authorities to cancel the student residence visa that was received through the university.

Grades

At the close of the semester students receive a final grade in each course, which is the sum of the students course work grades (60% of the grade) as well as the final exam (40% of the grade). The grade is the course instructor’s official evaluation of the student’s achievement as reflected in course work. The grade may not be changed or removed from the record.

Grade	Points	Percentage from the Course Marks	Description
A+	4.00	97% and more	Excellent
A	3.88	93% to less than 97%	
A-	3.70	89% to less than 93%	
B+	3.30	84% to less than 89%	Very Good
B	3.00	80% to less than 84%	
B-	2.70	76% to less than 80%	
C+	2.30	73% to less than 76%	Good
C	2.00	70% to less than 73%	
C-	1.70	67% to less than 70%	Conditional Pass
D+	1.30	64% to less than 67%	
D	1.00	60% to less than 64%	
F	0.00	Less than 60%	Fail
Grades not included in the Grade Point Average:			
W	Withdraw		
WF	Forced withdraw for exceeding the limit of absences		
I	Incomplete course		
MW	Withdrawal to do the military service		
AU	Audit		
IP	In Progress, for students registering a thesis and it is not completed yet		
AP	Approved, for students who defended the thesis successfully		
NAP	Not Approved, for students who fail to defend their thesis successfully		
S	Satisfactory		
U	Unsatisfactory		
TR	Transferred course		
P	Pass		

- The grade point average is calculated by multiplying the grade point value by the number of credit hours the course represents. The result is listed as quality points for each course. The total quality points are then divided by the total credit hours. The results in courses for no credit are not included in the computation of a grade point average. Grades of “I”, “S”, “U”, “W”, “WF”, “MW”, “AU”, “IP”, “AP”, “TR” and “P” are not assigned grade point values and are not used in the computation of the grade point average.
- A course is not counted in the GPA, if the student gets less than “C” and the student has to repeat it.
- The student may repeat a course to get a better GPA, the highest grade is calculated in his GPA
- All the grades that the student get are included in his transcript. If the student fails a course, he/she gets a grade “F”. Upon repeating this course, he/she gets a maximum grade of “B+” if he succeeded. If the student fails a course for the second time only one “F” is calculated in his GPA.
- If a student studied a course and then did not complete his graduate degree or took a long time to finish the degree, the course that was passed successfully from more than three years (date of approval of the result) for the diploma or 5 years for the masters or 6 years for the PhD degrees must be repeated because it will no longer be valid. After passing these courses for the second time due to the end of their validity time, the grades obtained appear in the transcript as “satisfactory” and are not included in the cGPA.

Incomplete course

In rare cases, graduate students who are unable to complete a course may be permitted to continue and complete it in the following semester. In the meantime, a grade of “I” is assigned to the course. Any course instructor submitting an incomplete grade must supplement this submission with **an incomplete form** to the Office of the Graduate Students Affairs (with copies to the course instructor, and the student) giving the following information:

- Reason for the incomplete.
- The material which is lacking.
- Action necessary for completing the course.

The student must make the necessary arrangements with the course instructor to complete the missing course work before the start of the examination period of the following semester, whether the student is enrolled at the university or not. Failure to complete the course work within this time period will result in the grade to change to “F”, signifying failure for the course. However, in cases where the student cannot complete the course work due to sustained medical or family crises the student may withdraw from the course before the start of the exam period of the following main semester (summer is not counted).

The incomplete course is considered part of the student academic load in the following semester till he finishes this incomplete and clears the incomplete grades.

Time limit for a degree completion:

Typically, the time taken for completion of the requirements needed for a diploma should not exceed 3 years, whereas that required to finish a master’s degree should not exceed 5 years. Additionally, time taken to finish a PhD degree should not exceed 7 years including the thesis. Any period of interrupted studies, such as an approved Planned **Educational Leave of Absence**, or a period of temporary withdrawal, is counted as part of the time period required for degree completion.

An academic program may grant an extension for completing the degree beyond the set limit by one semester, up to a maximum of one academic year. This requires the approvals of the dean of the Graduate Studies.

Comprehensive exam:

A student may sit for a required comprehensive examination immediately after completing the whole credit hours specified for a master's degree program (according to the program needs). Students must register for **comprehensive exam** and pay tuition for it. Dates for these exams are announced at the beginning of each academic year. Comprehensive exams may be repeated once. A student who fails the comprehensive exam a second time would be dismissed from the degree program after the end of the semester in which the examination was retaken.

Dual Graduate Degrees

Graduate students may pursue two distinct graduate degrees (two master's degrees, or a diploma and a master's degree, or two graduate diploma degrees) in different fields or specialties, either simultaneously or consecutively. In any case, the student must seek admission to and be accepted by each program of concern and **should fulfill each program admission criteria**, and then fill out a "**Dual Graduate Degree**" form, which is available on at the Office of the Graduates Students Affairs.

In case of **consecutive degrees**, student who wants to complete a masters degree after finishing a diploma in the same filed and there is an overlap between the courses of these 2 degrees; in such case, credit hours from the first degree can be accepted for credit in the second degree, however, the validity time of the courses should be considered between the dates of completing these credits in the first degree and the start of the second degree (3 years for diploma courses and 5 years for master courses).

In the case of **simultaneous degrees**, students who have completed all the requirements for one of the degrees and who decide to withdraw from the other degree, will receive the appropriate single degree. Students who have withdrawn from one of the degrees and later decide to complete this degree, must apply for **readmission**, be readmitted and then fulfill the requirements for this degree. This must be carried out within the period of the time limit for completing a degree.

All the above concerning the dual degree is contingent on the approvals of the dean/council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Dual Undergraduate/Accelerated Graduate Programs (Diploma or Masters degree)

In AIU, a dual undergraduate/graduate degree program is an approved program in which a student pursues a graduate degree with an undergraduate degree in a related field. The undergraduate student should fill a **Dual undergraduate/ Graduate degree** form and it must be approved from the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies as well as the Program director of the bachelor's degree the student is enrolled in. The total time for the two degrees could be decreased through the acceptance of up to 12 credit hours of required courses in both degrees. A student enrolled in such a program must complete all requirements for the two degrees and is awarded both degrees at the end of the program. In this regard, this student is admitted to the graduate program before he/she has earned a bachelor's degree. The student is typically able to take both undergraduate and graduate courses for the program during his/her senior year.

- The minimum cGPA of a student to register in a Dual undergraduate/Grade degree is 3.
- Students admitted to an accelerated master's program must continue satisfactory performance in undergraduate course work and maintain a GPA commensurate with the admission standards of the program.
- If the student fails to maintain his GPA during the time of taking the 2 degrees together, the postgrad degree is halted till his/her GPA returns to 3 or above.
- The credits of the postgraduate degree are distributed over the Fall, Spring and Summer semester

- Undergraduate students may enroll in no more than 6 credit hours of graduate coursework in each semester or term.
- No undergraduate-level course may count toward a graduate degree
- The undergraduate/master's degree is considered "**Accelerated Master's degree**", which is typically equals to the years of the bachelor's degree + One Year. The acceptance of the student in the master's degree is considered conditional acceptance and he is fully accepted when he finishes the bachelor's degree and fulfills all criteria for the masters degree.
- The undergraduate/diploma degree is considered "Accelerated Diploma degree" which is earned within the time taken to finish the bachelor's degree. The credits earned by such a diploma can be later transferred to a master's degree provided that the candidate has fulfilled the admission criteria for the master's degree.
- Example for such dual degrees is Bachelor of Engineering/MBA, or Bachelor of Computer Science/Digital Marketing diploma
- A student who decides to withdraw from this dual degree program, he/she should fill **Dual undergraduate/ Graduate degree withdrawal form** and he/she will receive his/her appropriate undergraduate degree after completing all requirements for this undergraduate degree.

Joint degree program:

This is a single degree with one curriculum designed and offered collaboratively by two universities. Admission and requirement for such programs are decided by both universities for each individual program.

Time limit on graduate to earn a degree:

- The diploma has a time limit of 3 years and the master's degree has a time limit of 5 years, whereas the PhD has a time limit of 7 years from the date of registration of the courses. After that time the student enrollment in a degree is cancelled if he/she did not finish the requirement for the degree.
- The supervisors or the academic advisor in case of professional degrees may request justified extension up to 2 semesters based on the student achievements and any obstacles that might have hindered his achievement such as health condition of family issues.

Probation, dismissal, course repeat and course substitute

- If a student's grade falls below "B", he/she will be placed on probation for one semester, during which time he/she must regain a "B" average. In case the student's overall GPA does not meet the "B" average at the end of the given semester, the student will be given one other chance in the next semester to amend his GPA. If he did not succeed for the second time to get a grade B or above, the student will be dismissed from the university.
- If the course that the student needs to repeat to amend his GPA is an elective course, the student may choose another substitute elective course. In such case, both the original grade and the new grade will appear on the transcript but only the new grade will be used in calculating the GPA.
- A student who is proven to breach the academic integrity in a course (cheating or copying a work of another colleague) will receive an "F" in the course.
- A graduate student, who receives an "F" in any course, may repeat this course to clear the "F".
- Provisionally admitted students must meet the required admission condition specified by the graduate program. In case the student fails to meet the admission condition, he/she will be dismissed from the program.
- When a student does not complete all program requirements within the time limit for a degree completion, he/she will be dismissed from the program for the expiration of the study period. A student may not seek new admission to the same program from which he/she has been dismissed for the expiration of the study period.

Transcripts

Students who have graduated or who withdrew from the University can apply for official student transcripts of their academic record. There will be a charge for this service. No transcript of academic record will be issued during the examination, registration, or graduation periods. Academic transcripts will not be issued when unsatisfied financial obligations to the university exist.

VI. FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS (if applicable)

1. Graduate Registration Form
2. Graduate Add and Drop Form
3. Graduate Course Withdrawal Form
4. Graduate Overload Form
5. Dual Undergraduate/Graduate Form
6. Dual Undergraduate/ Graduate degree Withdrawal Form
7. Graduate Education Leave of Absence Form
8. Graduate Comprehensive Exam Registration Form
9. Graduate Guidelines on Thesis Writing and Format
10. Research Ethics committee (REC) Approval Form
11. Thesis Supervisors Approval Form
12. Thesis Examiners Approval Form
13. Graduate Transcript

VII. APPENDICES (if applicable)

[This section includes any additional relevant information or documents in attached appendices.]

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

University Vice President
 Dean of Faculty of Post Graduate Studies
 Senior Director of Office Postgraduate Students Affairs

Triggered by:	Name	Date	Sig.
Created by:	Name	Date	Sig.
Revised by:	Name	Date	Sig.
Approved by:	Name	Date	Sig.