

SUNY Optometry/GCVR Graduate Policy Document

Amended August 2015

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GRADUATE PROGRAM IN VISION SCIENCE

GRADUATE CENTER FOR VISION RESEARCH
SUNY COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

I. DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES

A. Definitions

1. "Associate Dean" refers to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research
2. "Graduate Program Committee" refers to the Graduate Committee on Policy, Curriculum, Admissions, and Course and Standing.
3. "Graduate Program" refers to the Graduate Program in Vision Science at the Graduate Center for Vision Research, SUNY College of Optometry.
4. "Qualified graduate faculty" refers to a member of the College Faculty who, following the recommendation of the Graduate Qualifications Committee, has been formally designated as qualified for the responsibilities under discussion.
5. "Academic-year semesters" refers to the Fall and Spring semesters.
6. "Dissertation" refers to doctoral program components and requirements.
7. "Thesis" refers to masters program components and requirements.

B. Procedures

1. This Policy Document is subordinate to, and must be interpreted in conformity with, the negotiated agreement with the UUP, the Policies of the Trustees of the State University of New York, and the Faculty Bylaws of the State College of Optometry.
2. This Policy Document shall constitute the Graduate Policy Document referred to in the Faculty Bylaws (Appendix A, "COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE PROGRAM, POLICY, ADMISSIONS & STANDING", Section C).
3. Changes in this Policy Document shall be made in accordance with the procedures described in the Faculty Bylaws (Appendix A, "COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE PROGRAM, POLICY, ADMISSIONS & STANDING", Section C).
4. In the sections that follow, when references are made to recommendations made by the Graduate Program Committee it shall be understood:
 - a. All such recommendations shall be made in writing to the Associate Dean.
 - b. The Associate Dean shall either proceed to implement the recommendation OR shall meet with the Committee to discuss its recommendation OR shall respond in writing to the Committee indicating that its recommendation has been rejected or modified.
5. As indicated in several places below, formal communications from students concerning the Graduate Program shall be made to the Associate Dean. When appropriate, the Associate Dean shall then pass copies of these communications to the appropriate committee for its consideration. Likewise (with the exception of transcripts, which come from the Registrar),

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formal communication to students concerning the Graduate Program shall come from the Associate Dean's office.

6. The Associate Dean shall be informed of all meetings of the Graduate Program Committee and may attend and participate in these meetings.
7. The academic calendar for the Graduate Program shall be prepared and distributed by the office of the Associate Dean. The calendar shall generally incorporate the dates given in these policies, but under exceptional circumstances any of these dates may, in consultation with the Graduate Program Committee, be altered.
8. Every year, prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, the Qualifications Committee shall prepare a list, in accordance with the Faculty Bylaws, of all members of the Graduate Faculty for the coming academic year. This list shall indicate which functions within the Graduate Program each faculty member has been formally authorized to perform. This list shall be sent to the office of the Associate Dean and be distributed to all members of the Graduate Faculty.

C. Graduate Faculty Responsibilities

As specified in the SUNY College of Optometry Faculty By-laws, the (Section J-2), The Faculty of the Graduate Program refers to members of the Faculty who are designated by the Dean, after review and recommendation by both the Associate Dean and the Qualifications Committee to:

- Teach a course in the Graduate Program
- Serve as the research advisor of a M.S. student
- Serve as the research advisor of a Ph.D. student
- Serve as a member of a Dissertation Committee.

1. Teaching Responsibilities in the Graduate Program:

Responsibilities of Instructors of Record of Graduate Program Courses include:

- a. Providing overall administration and direction of the course
- b. Ensuring quality of content and instruction
- c. Coordinating teaching activities of other faculty participating in the course
- d. Communicating with the Associate Dean on a regular basis about course activities
- e. Submitting grades within the required time period
- f. Submitting a Course Syllabus and Reading List to the Associate Dean prior to the start of the semester the course will be offered. The Course Syllabus should contain:
 1. Course name, number, and credits
 2. Brief summary of the course
 3. Specific Course and learning objectives
 4. List of topics to be covered
 5. Number of contact hours with students
 6. Student requirements
 7. Method of evaluating student performance

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8. List of prerequisites
9. Reading list (all books and journal articles)

2. Responsibilities of Masters Student Research Advisors

- a. Mentor students on basic intellectual and technical skills called for to complete the thesis research project.
- b. Be available to meet with his/her students on a regular basis. During the first year in the program, meetings must occur at least twice monthly during the academic year and weekly during the summer months, and at least once monthly thereafter.
- c. Ensure that the student's thesis project progresses on a timely basis and is completed prior to graduation from the professional program. Advisors must inform thesis committee members and the Associate Dean of any problems in a student's progress towards completion of his/her thesis research project.
- d. Ensure that students' research projects meet all College, state and federal requirements for research and that students are properly informed about these processes and certified to conduct research with human or non-human subjects as appropriate.

3. Responsibilities of Doctoral Student Research Advisors

- a. Mentor students on basic intellectual and technical skills called for to complete the thesis research project.
- b. Be available to meet with his/her students on a regular basis. Meetings (either face-to-face or through electronic media) must occur at least twice monthly during the academic year and summer months.
- c. Ensure that the student's Dissertation research progresses on a timely basis and that student meets all deadlines for degree completion. Advisors must inform dissertation committee members and the Associate Dean of any problems in a student's progress towards completion of his/her thesis research project.
- d. Ensure that students' research projects meet all College, state and federal requirements for research and that students are properly informed about these processes and certified to conduct research with human or non-human subjects as appropriate.

4. Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee Members

- a. Help facilitate discussions to resolve any conflicts that may arise between the student and his/her advisor.
- b. Complete Dissertation Committee Report once a year and determine if the student is making timely and adequate progress in his/her dissertation research.
- c. At the last Progress Report Meeting, the Committee must certify that all aims proposed by the student have been completed and that the student can begin writing the dissertation.
- d. Be available to meet with the student and/or Dissertation Committee when needed.

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e. Give constructive and timely feedback on proposals (i.e., IRB/IACUC, protocols, thesis papers, presentations) and the oral dissertation defense.

5. Responsibilities of M.S. Thesis Committee Members

a. Help facilitate discussions to resolve any conflicts that may arise between the student and his/her advisor.

b. Complete Thesis Committee Report once a year and determine if the student is making timely and adequate progress in his/her thesis research.

c. At the last Progress Report Meeting, the Thesis Committee must certify that all aims proposed by the student have been completed and that the student can begin writing the thesis.

d. Be available to meet with the student and/or Thesis Committee when needed.

e. Give constructive and timely feedback on proposals (i.e., IRB/IACUC, protocols, thesis papers, presentations) and the oral thesis defense.

D. Qualification of Graduate Faculty Members

According to the SUNY College of Optometry Faculty By-laws, qualification for each of the following categories of participation in the Graduate Program (teaching a course in the Graduate Program, serving as a an advisor of a M.S. or Ph.D. student, serving as a member of a M.S. student's Thesis Committee and doctoral candidate's Dissertation Committee) shall lapse after three consecutive years of inactivity in that category. Qualification may be reinstated only after review by the Graduate Qualifications Committee. To make this determination, the Graduate Qualifications Committee will evaluate graduate faculty members every (3) three years. Failure to meet the criteria outlined below may lead to a review of previously qualified faculty by the Graduate Qualifications Committee before the three year review period.

The Graduate Qualifications Committee shall evaluate faculty qualifications for re-appointment to serve in the Graduate Program based on the following criteria:

1. Qualification for Teaching Graduate Courses

a. Candidates shall be evaluated for possessing the appropriate type and extent of expertise to teach courses in the Graduate Program.

b. For those who have taught in the Graduate Program in the past, as instructor of record, they will be evaluated by the Graduate Qualifications Committee as to whether they fulfilled their responsibilities. For teaching faculty who have participated in courses, they will be evaluated as to whether they fulfilled their responsibilities as determined by the instructor of record.

2. Qualification for Serving as a Masters Student Research Advisor

a. Meet the same requirements for teaching graduate courses and have should have participated in graduate teaching in the past three years.

b. Possess an M.S. or PhD degree in an appropriate discipline. The degree requirement may be waived for individuals who are judged to have attained equivalent qualifications.

c. Have a full-time faculty appointment.

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- d. Have an active on-going research program, as evidenced by at least two peer-reviewed publications (excluding abstracts) in the past three years.
- e. Have adequate funding to support a M.S. student's thesis research.
- f. Candidates for qualification who have served as a M.S. student research advisor in the past must have successfully fulfilled the responsibilities outlined in Section I.C.2.
- g. Be in compliance with all college, federal, state and local research regulations.

3. Qualification for Serving as a Ph.D. Student Research Advisor

- a. Meet the same requirements for teaching graduate courses and have should have participated in graduate teaching in the past three years.
- b. An earned Ph.D. degree in an appropriate discipline.
- c. Have a full-time faculty appointment.
- d. Have an active on-going research program, as evidenced by at least two peer-reviewed publications (excluding abstracts) in the past three years.
- e. Have adequate funding and space to support a Ph.D. student's dissertation research.
- f. Candidates for qualification who have served as a Ph.D. research advisor in the past must have successfully fulfilled the responsibilities of a Ph.D. research advisor as outlined in Section I. C. 3.
- g. Be in compliance with all college, federal, state and local research regulations.

4. Qualification of Doctoral Dissertation Committee Members

- a. Candidates shall be evaluated for possessing the appropriate type and extent of expertise to serve on such committees.
- b. If a candidate has served on a Dissertation Committee in the past, they will be evaluated on how successfully they fulfilled the responsibilities of a Dissertation Committee member as indicated in Section I.C.4.

5. Qualification of Masters Thesis Committee Members

- a. Candidates shall be evaluated for possessing the appropriate type and extent of expertise to serve on such committees.
- b. If a candidate has served on a Thesis Committee in the past, they will be evaluated on how successfully they fulfilled the responsibilities of a Thesis Committee member as indicated in Section I.C.2.

E. Conduct of Reviews by Graduate Qualifications Committee

The Conduct of Reviews by the Graduate Qualifications Committee is specified in the SUNY College of Optometry Faculty By-laws as follows:

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1. Meetings of the Graduate Qualifications Committee shall be closed and all proceedings of the Committee shall be held in strict confidence. Results shall be reported to the Dean for Academic Affairs and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research.
2. Records and files of the Committee shall be maintained by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research.
3. Requests to evaluate the qualifications of a Faculty member for participation in the Graduate Program may come from the Dean, the Associate Dean, or from the faculty member him/herself.
4. A member may be de-qualified for any or all of the categories listed above (Teaching in the Graduate Program, Serving as an Masters Student Research Advisor, Serving as a Doctoral Student Advisor, Serving on a Doctoral Dissertation or Masters Thesis Committee) upon recommendation for de-qualification by the Graduate Qualifications Committee with concurrence of the Associate Dean to the Dean of Academic Affairs.
5. To assist in its deliberations, the Committee may:
 - a. Request candidates to furnish written materials such as a curriculum vitae and copies of publications and grant applications.
 - b. Invite members of the College community to its meetings to discuss a candidate's qualifications.
 - c. Solicit letters of recommendation from outside the College community.
 - d. Invite the candidate to meet with the Committee. Alternatively, the candidate, if he or she wishes, may request a meeting with the Committee.

II. ADMISSIONS

A. Admissions Decisions

1. Applications for admission to the Graduate Program shall be made, directly or indirectly, to the Associate Dean, whose office shall maintain access to all admissions records and shall conduct or authorize all correspondence with applicants.
2. The Associate Dean's office shall transmit all applications materials to the Graduate Committee, which shall consider them and convey to the Associate Dean its decisions concerning action to be taken on the application. The Committee may consult other faculty and students as it deems appropriate. It may also interview applicants, when possible, as it deems appropriate. The Associate Dean's office shall inform applicants of the decisions made by the Graduate Program Committee. (See section III-1, and note that the Graduate Program Committee makes the final decision on admissions, but not on financial support.)
3. Admission to the Graduate Program is to either the MS, OD-MS, or PhD program.

B. Admission Requirements

An applicant for admission must have completed the following requirements within the past ten years:

- a. Baccalaureate degree, or a professional degree in a health science
- b. Graduate Record Examination General Exam or at the discretion of the Graduate Program Committee, the OAT or other similar examination.

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- c. Demonstration of ability in both written and spoken English. Foreign applicants from non-English speaking countries must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
- d. Letters of recommendation from three (3) mentors familiar with the applicant.
- e. Official Transcripts of all college and post-graduate work (up to the last recent semester or quarter prior to application deadline).
- f. Under special circumstances, the Graduate Program Committee may recommend waiving some of the requirements for admission.

C. Admissions Timetable

- 1. Ph.D. and M.S. program students will normally be admitted to the Fall semester. The O.D.-M.S. program will accept M.S. applications no later than November 30 for acceptance in the Spring. The Graduate Program Committee may, at its discretion, recommend that a student be admitted to any other semester.
- 2. Completed applications normally must be received not later than January 15 for admission to the Fall semester, but the Graduate Program Committee may, at its discretion, recommend the acceptance of a late application.
- 3. For Ph.D. and M.S. applications completed by January 15, notification of acceptance or rejection shall be sent to the applicant not later than April 1.
- 4. For M.S. applicants to the O.D.-M.S. program, notification of acceptance or rejection shall be sent to the applicant not later than the first week in January.

D. Admission with advanced standing

1. A student who has been admitted to the Graduate Program may apply to the Associate Dean for transfer credit for graduate level work completed at another institution. The Graduate Program Committee shall then assess the work that has been completed and make its recommendation concerning what transfer credit to grant. Transfer credit shall be indicated as such on the student's transcript, and no grade shall be assigned to it, nor shall it be counted in the determination of the student's G.P.A.

III. FINANCIAL AID, AWARDS, AND ASSISTANTSHIPS

- A. Recommendations concerning granting of financial aid and awards and the assignment of graduate assistantships shall be made by the Graduate Program Committee.
- B. Students shall receive graduate assistantship support only for those semesters during which they are enrolled full-time in the graduate program.

IV. ADVISORS

- A. Every graduate student must have a graduate advisor, whose role shall be to help the student plan her or his course of study, to direct the student's research, and to assist the Associate Dean and Graduate Program Committee in their periodic assessments of the student's progress.
- B. A student's advisor shall be selected by the student, with the consent of the chosen advisor, from among the appropriately qualified graduate faculty (See Section I.D.).

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- C. It shall be the responsibility of the Associate Dean to inform students concerning available advisors and to inform all qualified faculty of students who are in need of advisors.
- D. For the Ph.D. program, an advisor should be selected no later than the end of the student's third semester in the program. For the M.S. and O.D.-M.S. programs, an advisor should be selected no later than the end of the student's first full semester in the program.
- E. The Associate Dean, or his or her designee, shall be the interim advisor to students who have not yet selected an advisor.
- F. A student who does not or cannot identify an advisor willing to work with the student may not remain in the program.
- G. A formal event for prospective O.D.-M.S. students, with lectures/demonstrations by available advisors, will occur in the Fall semester of the first year of the professional program. Students will then interview with the advisors of their choice.
- H. A student may change to a new advisor with the consent of the Associate Dean.
- I. A student shall signify her or his choice of advisor, or change in advisor, by a written statement, signed by both the student and the new advisor, filed with the office of the Associate Dean. In the case of a change of advisor, the office of the Associate Dean shall immediately notify the previous advisor of the requested change

V. REGISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE OF MATRICULATION

A. Registration

- 1. Each semester, a student's registration form must be approved on-line by her or his advisor as specified in the academic calendar.

B. Adding Courses

- 1. With the approval of the instructor and the approval of the student's advisor, a student may add courses to his or her program using the on-line registration procedure within the first two weeks of the semester.

C. Withdrawal from Courses

- 1. A student may withdraw from a course using the on-line registration procedure within the first four weeks of the course without the registration or withdrawal being recorded on the transcript.
- 2. A student withdrawing within the first four weeks must give notice to the instructor of his/her intention to withdraw.

D. Requirements for Active Status

- 1. To maintain active full-time status, students normally must maintain registration in at least 12 semester-hours of graduate credit in each of the academic-year semesters (Fall, and Spring). With the written approval of her or his advisor, a student may petition the Associate Dean to be granted full-time status for a particular semester while maintaining registration for as few as 9 semester-hours of credit. A recommendation to approve such a petition shall be at the discretion of the Graduate Program Committee. Students enrolled for fewer than 9 credits shall be considered part-time.

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2. To maintain active combined program or part-time status, students normally must maintain registration for at least one graduate credit (including research done for graduate credit) per academic-year semester.
3. To maintain active status, students must have an advisor.
4. Failure to maintain active status, without formal leave of absence, for more than one academic-year semester, consecutively, shall result in dismissal from the graduate program.

E. Leaves of Absence

1. A student may request a leave of absence by petitioning in writing to the Associate Dean. Such requests are generally for medical or emergency reasons.
2. The Graduate Program Committee, following consultation with the student's advisor and other appropriate persons, may recommend granting a leave of absence of up to one year in duration.
3. A request for an extension of a leave of absence may be made and acted upon in the same manner as an original request for a leave of absence.

VI. GRADES, PROBATION, AND DISMISSAL

A. Letter Grades and Credit-only Grades

1. The letter grades are "A", "B", "C", "D", and "F". Of these grades, "A", "B", and "C" are passing grades and receive full graduate credit, while "D" and "F" are failing grades and receive no graduate credit.
2. All graduate courses (with the exception of the Scientific Integrity and Ethics in Research course, Vision Science Journal Club, Research Survival Skills course, and research and independent study) must be taken for letter grades.
3. The credit-only grades are P and U.
4. Research or independent study shall be taken for a credit-only grade.
5. The instructor of each course is responsible for determining the procedures to be used in evaluating performance for the course and is responsible for informing the students of these procedures at the beginning of the course.

B. Incomplete Grades

1. A grade of "I"--incomplete--indicates that the requirements of the course have not been completed by the end of the grading period but that the work that has been done has been at a passing level. A grade of "I" may be given at the discretion of the instructor.
2. An "I" grade must be replaced by a letter grade or credit-only grade no later than the end of the following semester. An "I" grade that has not been replaced by this time will be automatically converted to an "F" or a "U" grade. Under exceptional circumstances the course instructor may grant an extension of one semester to this period. The instructor is to notify the Associate Dean's office in writing of any extension that is granted. After the "I" grade has been replaced, the student's transcript shall not indicate that the initial grade received in the course was an "I".

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C. Submission of Grades

1. Instructors shall submit course grades to the Registrar using the on-line procedure within 1 week of end of the final exam period.
2. A grade may be changed by the instructor of the course at any time after the grades for the course have been submitted, but **ONLY** in the event that the original grade issued was in error. A written statement of such a grade change is to be submitted by the instructor to the Registrar and to the Associate Dean.

D. Notification of Grades

1. Following each semester, students may access their transcripts and view their grades using the on-line procedure. Grades with students' names should not be posted or otherwise made public.

E. Grade Point Average (GPA)

1. In calculating a student's grade point average, the quarter- hour credit assigned to a course is multiplied by the numerical weight of the grade received in the course. The numerical weights of the letter grades are as follows:

- A - 4
- B - 3
- C - 2
- D - 1
- F - 0

Credit-only grades are not used in calculating grade point averages.

2. If a student repeats a graduate course for any reason, the student's transcript shall show this and shall show both the first and second grades received. The grades and the credit hours shall each be averaged in calculating the student's cumulative grade point average.
3. Following every academic semester, cumulative GPAs shall be calculated by the Registrar and recorded on the students' transcripts.

F. Academic Probation and Dismissal

1. Students are expected to maintain a cumulative graduate grade point average of at least 3.00.
2. Joint-degree students must maintain good standing in the professional program.
3. Starting with the end of a student's second academic semester in the graduate program, a student who, following the end of a semester or evaluation period, has a cumulative graduate GPA of less than 3.00, or who has received a grade of "D" or "F" in any graduate course or a grade of "unsatisfactory" in a research course, in the semester just completed, shall be placed on academic probation by the Associate Dean.
4. A student may also be placed on academic probation by the Associate Dean if he or she is judged not to be making satisfactory progress by the student's thesis or dissertation committee toward the degree for which he or she is a candidate. In such cases explicit

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conditions should be specified that the student must meet during the next academic semester to be removed from academic probation.

5. When a student's academic performance does not yet warrant probation but appears to be in danger of doing so, a letter of warning may be sent. The Graduate Program Committee shall recommend to the Associate Dean that the student and his/her advisor receive written notification that the student is in jeopardy of being placed on probation. In such cases explicit conditions should be specified that the student must meet to avoid being placed on probation.
6. A student whose performance warrants automatic academic probation for two consecutive academic semesters or evaluation periods, or who fails to meet the conditions specified when he or she was placed on probation may be dismissed from the Graduate Program. This action will be based on the recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee to the Associate Dean, who will make the final determination.
7. Prior to making a recommendation of dismissal, the Graduate Program Committee shall consult with the student's advisor and shall offer the student an opportunity to meet with the Committee.
8. A student shall be informed in writing of academic probation or dismissal by the Associate Dean. A copy of any such communications shall be sent to the student's advisor.
9. Decisions concerning probation and dismissal shall be made and communicated within the first two weeks of the semester following the semester under consideration. A student who is dismissed shall be allowed to complete the semester during which the decision is made. Prior commitments of financial support shall be honored during this period.
10. A student in the PhD program who must leave before completion of the Ph.D. for any reason may submit a written request to the Associate Dean to be considered for conferral of the MS degree. This "terminal masters" is typically awarded only to students who have completed the Ph.D. Core Curriculum and submitted a paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal resulting from research conducted in the Program.

G. Transcripts and record-keeping

1. The Registrar shall maintain official graduate transcripts for each graduate student. The transcript shall be a chronological record of each course taken, the course's instructor, the credit assigned to the course, the grade received, and the GPA. The transcript shall include an explanation of the Program's grading system and an explanation of the course numbering (GP100-level, GM200-level, etc.). Any credit awarded for prior academic work shall also be noted on the transcript.
2. Copies of all records pertinent to each student's admission to and progress through the Graduate program shall be kept by the Associate Dean and made available to the Graduate Program Committee as requested.

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VII. GRADUATE COURSES AND CREDIT

A. Graduate credit for professional courses

1. Certain courses in the profession curriculum have been designated as courses that may be taken for graduate credit. The Graduate Program Committee may recommend additions to or deletions from this list.
2. The graduate credit assigned to professional level courses shall be computed as one semester-hour of credit for each hour of lecture per week and 0.5 semester-hour of credit for each hour of laboratory or recitation per week.
3. Students who have a passing grade in the courses in the professional program that are required for completion of the M.S. will retroactively receive credit for these courses when they are accepted into the O.D.-M.S. program.

B. Graduate Seminars and Tutorials

1. All graduate seminars/tutorials that can be used to fulfill the M.S. or Ph.D. course requirement shall be designated as GM200-level courses.
2. Other graduate seminars/tutorials shall be designated as GE300 level courses.
3. Proposals for graduate courses by faculty must be submitted to the Associate Dean no later than the third week of the semester prior to the semester in which the seminar is proposed to be offered. The Graduate Program Committee shall consider such proposals and shall recommend whether the proposal be accepted, rejected, or modified as to content and amount of meeting time and associated credit.

C. Credit for research and independent study

1. Students may register for and receive credit for independent study. Such credit shall be at the G300-level and may be applied toward the requirements for elective credits in the professional program
2. Students working toward the PhD degree may register for and receive credit for their research activities. Such credit shall be designated at the GD400-level.
3. To receive graduate credit for research or independent study in a given semester, a student must follow the usual procedures for registration in (or withdrawal from) graduate courses and so must have the consent of the advisor. They must also have the consent of the person supervising the research or independent study, if different from the advisor.
4. In general, it shall be expected that a student do at least 2 hours of work per week for each one semester-hour of credit for research.
5. Research shall receive credit-only grades.

D. Credit for work to be done at other institutions

1. A student enrolled in the graduate program may, with the written approval of his or her advisor, petition the Associate Dean to receive graduate credit for courses, seminars, or research to be undertaken at another institution. When the majority of research is being

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carried out off campus, the Office of the Associate Dean and the Graduate Program Committee should be notified. Subsequently, the Associate Dean will determine if credit is given. Petitions must be made no later than the beginning of the semester prior to the semester in which such work is to be done.

VIII. MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) IN VISION SCIENCE

A. Requirements for the M.S. degree, including the O.D.-M.S. degree

1. Completion of the curriculum requirements (see Section VIII-B).
2. Completion of at least 40 semester-hours of graduate credit, at least 25.5 of which must be at the GM200-level or above. Up to 14.5 semester-hours of graduate credit may be earned at another institution (either prior to or following enrollment in this program), but at least 25.5 semester-hours (including research credit) at the GM200-level or above must be completed in this program.
3. A cumulative graduate grade point average of at least 3.00.
4. Completion of the Master's Research requirement and oral defense of the work (see section VIII-E).
5. All requirements for the M.S. degree must be completed within 5 years of starting the program.
6. M.S. degrees may be awarded two times a year, near the end of each semester. (Commencement ceremonies are held once a year, near the end of the Spring semester, for all degrees awarded during the past year.)
7. When a student has completed all the requirements for the M.S. degree, the student may file a written request for the degree with the office of the Associate Dean. The first day of each semester is the deadline for filing a request to receive a degree near the end of that semester.
8. At the time of filing a request for the M.S. degree, the student must also indicate whether he or she wishes to be considered for admission to the Ph.D. program.
9. Awarding of the degree shall be subject to verification by the Registrar that all requirements have been completed.

B. Masters Program Core Curriculum

1. To qualify for the M.S. degree, students enrolled in the Masters Program must pass the following professional program courses which are designated as GM100 Level courses:
 - Integrated Optics I
 - Visual Function: Sensory, parts A and B
 - Ocular Anatomy, Biochemistry & Physiology I
 - Ocular Anatomy, Biochemistry & Physiology II
2. Students must also pass the GM201 Introduction to Statistical Methods.
3. Students must pass the GM240 Research Survival Skills course.
4. Students must pass one semester of GM241A Vision Science Journal Club.
5. Students must pass the seminar GM219 Scientific Integrity and Ethics in Research.

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6. The published description of each core course shall list any courses or material prerequisite or co-requisite to that course. Students must meet these requirements to the satisfaction of the course instructor.

C. Advanced Topic Seminars

1. To qualify for the M.S. degree, a student must pass four (4) GM200-level seminars. At least three of these seminars must be Advanced Topic (AT) seminars. There will be an AT seminar offered every Fall and every Spring semester. Students may satisfy the requirement by taking either (a) four AT seminars or (b) with the approval of the student's advisor and the Associate Dean, three AT seminars and an academic (non-research) course such as independent study or a course in the Ph.D. program. Over the course of two years, AT seminars are generally offered in these four topics:

- GM251 Oculomotor Systems
- GM252 Sensory Physiology and Perception
- GM253 Optics, Refractive Error, and Maturation of the Optical System
- GM254 Ocular Bioscience

2. Each of the above seminars shall be a 2-credit course.
3. Seminars in the above areas are expected to be somewhat broad, rather than narrowly specialized, but they are also not expected to cover all of the topic area nor to cover exactly the same material each time offered.
4. A student taking an AT seminar must satisfy any prerequisites and co-requisites for the seminar as specified by the instructor.
5. Each time an AT seminar is to be offered, a proposal concerning the topics to be covered must be submitted to the Associate Dean no later than the third week of the semester prior to the semester in which the seminar is to be offered. The Graduate Program Committee shall consider the proposal and recommend whether it is appropriate in content and breadth for the AT area or needs to be modified. If necessary, the Graduate Program Committee shall also recommend whether the proposed seminar is sufficiently different in content from a previous seminar in that area so that a student taking both seminars could receive separate graduate credit for each of them.
6. By the end of the semester during which an AT seminar is offered, a complete reading list for the seminar must be requested and received by the Associate Dean to be put on file.
7. The schedule for AT seminars will be announced two years in advance.

D. Exemptions from required courses

1. A student may, on the basis of previous work, request an exemption either from a required course in the core curriculum or from a required prerequisite or co-requisite to a core curriculum course or to an AT seminar. Such requests shall be made by petition in writing to the instructor of the course seminar.
2. The instructor may use any appropriate evaluative method in deciding on whether to recommend the exemption and shall transmit his or her recommendation in writing to the Associate Dean.

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E. Masters Program Research Requirement

1. In consultation with his/her thesis advisor, a Masters student will invite at least two members of the graduate faculty to serve on his/her thesis committee by May 1st of their first year. Since one role of the thesis committee is to resolve any conflicts that may arise between a student and his/her advisor, a member other than the thesis advisor should be named committee chairperson. This committee shall be approved by the Associate Dean. The thesis committee may, if it desires, make use of consultants not on the committee.
2. By no later than June 15 of their first year, a student will write a brief thesis proposal and meet with the committee members to discuss the project and obtain approval and submit a Masters Thesis Committee Progress Report to the Associate Dean. As a proposal, it is anticipated that changes may be made as the research project is executed; students should inform committee members of any significant changes in the project as it progresses.
3. Students are expected to meet with their full Thesis Committee at least once per year (usually in the Spring) in order to discuss the project and assess progress. The committee chairperson will provide a progress report to the Associate Dean after the meeting.
4. Each student must submit a final thesis based upon completion of his/her research activities, which must be approved by the student's thesis committee.
5. In addition to the written Masters thesis, students will be required to present and defend their work orally in the form of a scheduled talk to the College community, including the thesis committee, followed by a question and answer period. A satisfactory oral presentation, as judged by the student's thesis committee, is a requirement of the M.S. degree.
6. O.D.-M.S. students are encouraged to finish the written thesis and oral defense before the beginning of their 4th year of optometry school, particularly if they will be away on externships.

IX. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) IN VISION SCIENCE

A. Requirements for the Ph.D. degree

1. The student must complete at least 80 semester credits (see Ph.D. Curriculum requirements, Section IX-B). Candidates are encouraged, in consultation with their advisors, to take advanced seminars and tutorials and relevant course work.
2. The student must have a cumulative grade point average from course work, including research course work, of 3.00 or higher.
3. All students in the PhD Program are expected to attend at least 75% of the SIVR Colloquia and/or VisioNYC, presented each academic year, except during the final semester before submitting their dissertation.
4. All PhD students are expected to give a minimum of one presentation at a national conference per year beginning in Year 3.
5. All PhD students are required to make a yearly oral presentation of their research accomplishments. (see Section IX-D on Oral Presentations.)
6. Students must take and pass a Qualifying exam: (see Section IX-F). After passing this exam, the student will advance to candidacy.

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7. Students must write a dissertation and have it approved (see Section IX-H).
8. Ph.D. degrees are awarded two times a year, near the end of the Fall and Spring semester. Students may attend the Commencement ceremony, held once a year, near the end of the Spring semester, irrespective of when their degree was awarded. When a student has completed all the requirements for the Ph.D. degree, the student must file a written request for the degree with the office of the Associate Dean.
9. Following a written request for the degree, the Office of the Associate Dean and the Office of the Registrar shall examine the student's credentials and, if all the requirements have been completed, shall recommend that the student be awarded the degree of Ph.D. in Vision Science contingent on acceptance of the dissertation after the student's oral defense
10. A student in the Ph.D. program who must leave before completion of the Ph.D. for any reason may submit a written request to the Associate Dean to be considered for conferral of the MS degree. This "terminal masters" is typically awarded only to students who have completed the Ph.D. Core Curriculum and submitted a paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal resulting from research conducted in the Program.

B. Doctoral Program Core Curriculum Requirements

1. To qualify for the Ph.D. degree, students must pass the following courses:
 - GM230 Introduction to Vision Science – Part I
 - GM231 Introduction to Vision Science – Part II
2. Students must also pass GM201 Introduction to Statistical Methods.
3. Students must pass the seminar GM219 Scientific Integrity and Ethics in Research.
4. Ph.D. students are required to complete a minimum of two lab rotations during the first year in the program, one during the Fall semester and a second in the Spring semester.
5. The published description of each core course shall list any courses or material prerequisite or co-requisite to that course. Students must meet these requirements to the satisfaction of the course instructor.
6. Students are required to register for Vision Science Journal Club each semester except during the final semester before submitting their dissertation.
7. To qualify for the Ph.D. degree, a student must pass five (5) of the following GM200-level seminars/tutorials from the Options List:
 - GM202 Optics of the Eye
 - GM203 Spatial-temporal Processes
 - GM204 Color Vision
 - GM207 LGN and Cortex
 - GM208 Ocular Motility
 - GM209 Binocular Vision
 - GM210 Visual Perception
 - GM211 Ocular Biochemistry
 - GM213 Ocular Pathology
 - GM214 Accommodation
 - GM216 Visual Physiology of the Eye

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GM218 Visual Development
GM221 Early Visual Processing in the Brain
GM222 Retinal Mechanism & Behavior

8. Each of the above seminars/tutorials shall be a 2-credit course.
9. Seminars/tutorials in the above areas are expected to be somewhat broad, rather than narrowly specialized, but they are also not expected to cover all of the topic area nor to cover exactly the same material each time offered. A student may, with the permission of his or her advisor, take more than one seminar in the same topic area for credit; in that case he or she must still take seminars/tutorials in a minimum of four distinct options list areas.
10. A student taking an options list seminar or tutorial must also satisfy the prerequisites and co-requisites for the seminar.
11. Advanced Topics courses in the O.D.-M.S. program (Section VIII. C.) may be taken for credit in the Ph.D. program only with the approval of the course instructor, the student's advisor, and the Associate Dean.
12. By the end of the semester during which an options list seminar/tutorial is offered, a complete reading list for the seminar must be requested and received by the Associate Dean to be put on file.
13. At least two courses will be offered each semester, to be announced two years in advance.

C. Exemptions from Required Courses

1. A student may, on the basis of previous work, request an exemption either from a required course in the core curriculum or from a required prerequisite or co-requisite to a core curriculum course or to an options list seminar. Such requests shall be made by petition in writing to the instructor of the core course or the options list seminar.
2. The instructor may use any appropriate evaluative method in deciding on whether to recommend the exemption and shall transmit his or her recommendation in writing to the Associate Dean.

D. Required Oral Presentations

1. Each Ph.D. student is required to make an oral presentation of the work done after each year. The presentation will last 15 minutes, with 5 minutes for questioning by the Graduate Faculty. The Annual Oral Presentations serves to assess students' proficiency in communicating the knowledge they have gained during their lab rotations or thesis research to an audience.
2. All members of the Graduate Faculty attending the presentations will evaluate each student's performance. Based on these evaluations, students' advisors will provide individual feedback to each of their students and submit a grade of Pass or Unsatisfactory, which will be recorded on the official graduate student transcript.

E. Dissertation Committee

1. Each student, in consultation with his/her advisor, will select a Dissertation Research Committee. The Dissertation Committee will consist of (a) the student's advisor, and (b) at least two qualified faculty who have agreed to serve on the Committee. Since one role of the Dissertation Committee is to resolve any conflicts between the student and his/her advisor, the advisor cannot be the chairperson of the committee. The Dissertation Committee must be

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created prior to the Qualifying Examination. The Dissertation Committee must be approved by the Associate Dean.

F. Qualifying Examination

1. The Qualifying Exam consists of a Dissertation Proposal which must be submitted by the end of Year 3. It should be in the form of a grant application, such as the National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award (NRSA) to include:

- Aims
- Background and Significance
- Preliminary Data, Materials and Methods
- Timetable

Students are encouraged to submit the proposal to the Dissertation Committee by the beginning of Year 3.

2. The student will be required to orally defend of the written dissertation proposal which will be graded by the student's Dissertation Research Committee. The Committee may: (i) pass the proposal indicating that the detailed aims are sufficient for an acceptable doctoral thesis; (ii) conditionally pass the proposal calling for remedial changes; or (iii) fail the proposal. Failure of the Dissertation Proposal may result in a student's termination from the graduate program as decided by the Associate Dean. A student so terminated may submit a written request to the Associate Dean for the conferral of a M.S. degree. (IX. A.12)
3. Appropriate forms will be signed by the Dissertation Committee and filed with the Associate Dean's Office indicating that the proposal has been accepted and that completion of the detailed aims are sufficient for an acceptable doctoral thesis. A copy of this form will be forwarded to the student.

G. Dissertation

1. Doctoral students must meet annually with the Dissertation Committee to give a progress report. The committee will determine whether adequate progress has been made by the student and report this to the Associate Dean. Any changes in the aims of the project should be provided to and approved by the Dissertation Committee at these meetings. At the last progress report meeting, the committee will certify that all aims proposed by the student have been completed and that the student can begin writing the dissertation. A student may request a meeting of her/his Dissertation Committee at anytime for any reason.
2. An oral dissertation defense will be conducted by the Dissertation Committee, augmented by a member appointed from outside the College by the Associate Dean. It is expected that in-house members of the Dissertation Committee will have been kept informed of progress on the dissertation during the conduct of research.
3. A portion of the candidate's public dissertation defense will consist of a SIVR Colloquium.
4. Interested members of the graduate faculty may attend the private dissertation defense, which follows the public colloquium, and may participate in the questioning. Only the Dissertation Committee (including its outside member) may vote on approval.
5. Approval of the dissertation must be unanimous. Signatures are required from all members of the Dissertation Committee (including its outside member) indicating approval.
6. Final, approved copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the Associate Dean not later than 5 years after advancing to candidacy.

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