
Graduate College

University Graduate Committee (UGC) Bylaws

1. Name

1.1 The name of this committee is the University Graduate Committee, (UGC).

2. Faculty Senate Charge

2.1. The University Graduate Committee is charged by the Faculty Senate to establish and maintain standards, policies, best practices, and procedures ensuring University graduate curricula and policies pertaining to graduate education comply with the stated mission and goals of Northern Arizona University. The UGC accomplishes this charge by:

2.1.1. articulating standards for graduate study across disciplines, ensuring the general expectations and performance of graduate students are appropriate to graduate-level academic programs and certificates;

2.1.2. establishing and maintaining standards and policies for graduate education in such matters as, but not limited to: academic standing, satisfactory academic progress, admission to graduate study, admission to doctoral candidacy, thesis and dissertation defense requirements, regulation governing transfer credits, and graduate assistantships;

2.1.3. providing meaningful feedback on newly proposed graduate degree and certificate plans, including the Academic Planning Framework, in relation to NAU's current programs, and providing feedback on these proposals to the academic College and Provost;

2.1.4. evaluating and recommending approval or disapproval, to the Provost, of courses or plans that exist to serve the overall academic mission of graduate education across colleges;

2.1.5 reviewing sections of a graduate program's Academic Program Review or External Accreditation reports that pertain to graduate curriculum by using the Degree Program Expectations (DPE) and other curricular materials to provide recommendations to the academic units for consideration in their Action Plan;

2.1.6. making recommendations to an academic unit's Dean, the Provost, and NAU's Coordinating Committee for Curriculum and Assessment, regarding an academic unit's achievement of DPE as documented in their periodic self-study

2.1.7. representing the Dean of the Graduate College at dissertation defenses; and

2.1.8. reporting annually to the Faculty Senate regarding actions taken to fulfill their charge and strategic efforts for the coming year.

3. Relationship to the Faculty Senate

3.1. University Graduate Committee shall:

- 3.1.1. Prepare for submission to the Senate, through the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Committee Bylaws and Procedural documents and any changes to those documents;
 - 3.1.1.1. Minor changes in process or procedure that are proposed for increased efficiency and which do not alter the underlying purposes of the committee do not need Faculty Senate approval.
- 3.1.2. Submit a written report at the end of each academic year, or more often if deemed necessary by the Committee, to the Past President of the Faculty Senate for transmission to the Senate through the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

4. Membership

4.1. Membership on the UGC is composed of elected or assigned voting members and appointed ex officio non-voting members.

4.1.1. Voting members of the University Graduate Committee shall include faculty members, as defined by the Faculty Senate Constitution, from each academic unit that has a graduate degree program and one graduate student representative from the Graduate Student Government.

4.1.2. Ex officio (non-voting) membership of the University Graduate Committee shall include the following representation:

- 4.1.2.1. Administrative Liaison of the Provost's Office (or designee)
- 4.1.2.2. Dean of the Graduate College
- 4.1.2.3. Associate Dean of the Graduate College
- 4.1.2.4. Office of Curriculum, Learning Design, and Academic Assessment Liaison
- 4.1.2.5. Cline Library Dean or designee
- 4.1.2.7. Faculty Senate Liaison

4.2. Members will normally serve three-year staggered terms so that approximately one-third of the members are elected each year.

4.3. Faculty members will be selected by the faculty or appointed by the appropriate unit administrator from each academic unit housing a graduate degree program.

4.4. All members will serve without compensation.

5. Officers of the Committee

5.1. The Committee will have only two officers, an elected Chair and an elected Chair-Elect. The officers will be elected each year from among the eligible voting members of the Committee.

5.1.1. Elections will be held in a manner as to provide for a smooth transition into the business of the upcoming academic year.

5.1.2. The term of the officers is one year, starting at the first meeting of the academic year until the new chair resumes the responsibilities.

5.1.3. Officers may be re-elected to additional terms.

5.2. The Chair is responsible for:

- 5.2.1. setting the agenda in consultation with the University Graduate Committee Executive Committee, the Graduate College Dean, and the Graduate College Associate Dean.
- 5.2.2. conducting the meetings to insure that the business of the Committee is conducted in a timely manner,
- 5.2.3. ensuring accurate minutes of the meetings and membership attendance records are publicly available, and
- 5.2.3. providing leadership for the immediate and annual work of the Committee.
- 5.3. The Chair-Elect will assume the duties of the Chair in their absence, and other responsibilities as delegated by the Chair.

6. Duties of Membership

- 6.1. Each voting member is expected to attend each meeting of the UGC, participate in UGC activities, and complete any assigned tasks. At a minimum, this includes preparing for UGC meetings by reading all materials scheduled on the agenda, in advance, for discussion and voting.
- 6.2. Each committee member is expected to serve on a task sub-committee during the academic year, such as:
 - 1. UGC Executive Committee
 - 2. Review Committee Option A
 - 3. Review Committee Option B
 - 4. Curriculum/Program Review
 - 5. Dissertation Defenses
- 6.3. If a voting member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting of the UGC, the member should notify the UGC Chair and the Graduate College Associate Dean of the impending absence.
 - 6.3.1. Occasional substitutes are permitted to attend but not able to vote on topics that have been discussed outside of the current session, except by written proxy. Substitutes are not permitted on a meeting-by-meeting basis, and because of the importance of the discussions which occur at the UGC meetings, votes in absentia are not permitted.
- 6.4. A member's position will be declared vacant by the Chair if the member fails to attend three meetings during the year and the vacating member's academic unit will be asked to facilitate the designation of a new faculty member to serve for the amount of time remaining in that committee member's term. If the remaining time in the term is less than one year, the replacement member may be appointed by the Academic College's Dean.
 - 6.4.1. If a regular member of the UGC is unable to attend the meetings for one semester or more, a long-term substitute may be appointed for the affected time period.

7. Meetings

- 7.1. The committee will meet regularly, throughout the semester, in a pre-arranged location.
- 7.2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair as necessary to conduct Committee work.

7.3. Members may attend by conference call, and the meet-me line number will be on the agenda.

7.4. Agenda and minutes of the previous meeting, including attendance records, will be available online a minimum of one week prior to the meeting.

7.4.1 If the agenda materials are not ready for distribution the week before the meeting, the Chair and Associate Dean of the Graduate College will notify the membership concerning the delay. At that point, some parts of the agenda may be distributed with missing items distributed as soon as they are available.

7.5. All meetings are open to the public.

7.6. If the Committee Chair and the Vice Chair/Chair-Elect are both unavailable, a member of the UGC Executive Subcommittee or the Graduate College Associate Dean will act as a substitute to chair the meeting. If a policy motion results in a tie, the motion will be tabled until the UGC faculty chair can render a tie-breaking vote.

8. Voting

8.1. A simple quorum (50% of the voting members + one member) of the voting members must be present at any meeting before any binding action may be taken. The number of members necessary for a quorum will be determined at the first meeting each Fall based on the numerical representation from the units.

8.2. The Chair of the committee may vote in the event of a tie vote.

8.3. Proxy voting is not allowed.

8.4. Virtual voting is acceptable if the member is present on the phone at the time of the vote for an item or groups of items.

8.5. Approval of formal actions of the Committee regarding policies, curriculum, courses, or related matters will be by a simple majority vote of the regular voting members of the Committee present at the meeting when the vote is taken.

9. Subcommittees and Task Forces

9.1. The UGC has the authority to create subcommittees and task forces to facilitate the accomplishment of the committee's charge.

9.2. Any UGC subcommittee or task force will develop their own set of by-laws (if applicable) and procedures related to their charge by the UGC.

9.3. The UGC Executive Committee will be a permanent subcommittee of the UGC and will abide by its own set of bylaws, approved by the UGC and housed with the Graduate College.

10. Amendments

10.1. These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the University Graduate Committee by a majority vote of those present, assuming a quorum, provided that notice of the proposed actions shall have been given at the previous regular meeting or shall have been communicated to all members of the Committee in writing through email or regular mail at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting at which the action is to be taken.

11. Establishment of Operating Policies and Procedures

11.1. In concert with the Coordinating Committee for Curriculum and Assessment and the Office of Curriculum, Learning Design, and Academic Assessment, the UGC will establish and document the processes and procedures for carrying out its charge.

12. The University Graduate Committee as part of the general function of the Northern Arizona University Governance Structure.

12.1. The University Graduate Committee recognizes that its bylaws must be in accordance with the Faculty Senate charge, all NAU and ABOR policies and local, state and federal laws.

- Initial Bylaws Approved by UGC: April 29, 2009.
- Initial Bylaws Revised and Approved by UGC: July 9, 2009, January 18, 2012, and January 23, 2013.
- Bylaws Revised and Approved by the UGC (after the change to the Faculty Senate Charge): September 21, 2016.
- Bylaws Reviewed by UGC: April 2020, (Proposed revisions discussed, no approval vote)
- Bylaws Revised and Approved by the UGC: March 23, 2022.