

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Chairs, Graduate Advisors

FROM: Philip Cohen, Dean, Graduate School

RE: Graduate Assistant Processing Changes

DATE: 03 August 2006

cc: Dana Dunn, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost; Judy Young, Executive Director, Office of International Education; Graduate School Staff

In order to streamline the process for appointing graduate research and teaching assistants, the Office of Graduate Studies is revising two exception policies for funded students. One policy concerns requests for employment in excess of 20-hours. The other policy concerns requests to reduce enrollment to less than 9 hours in final semester. I have granted exceptions to these policies after reviewing formal requests from students. Our office will no longer require that these requests accompany a graduate assistant appointment. Please note that students who are not appropriately enrolled in their final semester will not be able to graduate.

1. Graduate assistants seeking more than 20 hours of employment: The Graduate School will no longer require funded graduate students to seek the Graduate Dean's approval to work more than 20 hours during a semester. Employment exceeding 20 hours may be the only means by which some students can continue their studies and complete their degrees. Graduate Advisors, academic and non-academic hiring departments, and the Office of International Education (OIE) can ensure that students are not employed at levels that will impact degree completion negatively or exceed employment limits allowed by law. Federal law states that international students may not work more than 20 hours a week in long semesters. OIE notifies international students about this requirement at their mandatory orientation. Academic and non-academic hiring departments wishing to hire an international student in a long semester are responsible for determining if the student already holds other forms of employment. Please note that current CPT and OPT policies are not affected by this change.

2. Minimum enrollment requirements for funded and unfunded students enrollment before the final semester: Funded students engaged in appropriate levels of thesis or

dissertation hours who are not in their final semester will no longer need to request approval from the Office of Graduate Studies for less than 9-hours enrollment. Master's students enrolled in 5699 and doctoral students enrolled in 6699 courses who have passed their Comprehensive Examinations may limit their enrollment to these courses and hold an assistantship without submitting documentation and gaining prior approval by the Graduate Dean. The Office of Graduate Studies will conduct periodic audits of funded students in thesis or dissertation hours to ensure compliance. Please note that international students must still secure permission from the OIE for less than 9-hours of enrollment in this situation and present it to the appointing department. Both the OIE and the appointing department will retain copies of these approvals and supporting documentation needed to justify under-enrollment.

3. Funded and unfunded thesis and dissertation students in final semester: Whether funded and unfunded, thesis master's students must enroll in 5699 and doctoral students must enroll in 6999 in their final semesters. These policies will remain unchanged. However, funded master's students enrolled in 5699 will no longer need to submit a request to the Office of Graduate Studies for less than full-time enrollment. Please note that international students must still secure permission from the OIE for less than 9-hours of enrollment in this situation. The student's graduate program and the OIE will retain copies of supporting documentation needed to justify under-enrollment.

4. Funded and unfunded non-thesis students in final semester: Because funded and unfunded non-thesis master's students in final semester may enroll in a master's comprehensive course or equivalent if required by the student's program or at least one graduate course in the student's program, these students may enroll in as few as 3 graduate hours to complete their degree requirements. Funded students in this situation will no longer need to request approval from the Office of Graduate Studies for less than 9-hours enrollment. Please note that international students must still secure permission from the OIE for less than 9-hours of enrollment in this situation. The student's graduate program and the OIE will retain copies of supporting documentation needed to justify under-enrollment.

Please notify your graduate faculty of these changes.