

Rhode Island College

Graduate Studies Policies
and Procedures Manual

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For Appendix forms, please refer to [Graduate Committee Forms and Information](#) and [Graduate Plans of Study and Thesis Resources](#).

GRADUATE STUDIES

Mission Statement

Rhode Island College Graduate Studies (RIC-GS) serves as a partner to departments and programs to oversee policies and processes that assure the academic integrity of graduate programs across the institution. RIC-GS manages an array of supports for the advancement of graduate curriculum and for the oversight of academic programs. Graduate Studies also serves as an ally to graduate students, providing a wide range of services and programming to support graduate students as they pursue their education.

Rhode Island College (RIC) prepares graduate students for advanced careers as practitioners and scholars in research, teaching, and as experts in the public and private sectors. With over 30 graduate degrees and certificate programs in the arts and sciences, areas of social, public, and community services, including applied and practitioner-oriented fields within the service sector, RIC prepares its graduates to help address challenges of our communities.

I: INTRODUCTION

This handbook includes the policies and procedures that govern all students enrolled in Graduate Programs at Rhode Island College. It outlines the procedures for students, their advisers, Program Directors, Department Chairs, and program committees. Information concerning the organization of the Graduate Committee, the Graduate Faculty, and the authorization for graduate programs and courses are available in the [Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures](#). Information on specific programs of study and courses are available in the [Rhode Island College Catalog](#) and the [Rhode Island College Graduate Studies webpage](#).

Administration of Rhode Island College's graduate programs is a collective endeavor coordinated by the Provost/ Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Committee, the Academic Deans, the Deans' offices, the Graduate Directors and other administrative units. Together, they address the following issues:

- the quality and standards of graduate education,
- the review of existing and proposed programs,
- the policy and procedure regarding admissions,
- the establishment of and compliance with degree requirements,
- the criteria for and appointment of graduate faculty
- the policies and procedures related to the appointment of graduate assistants, and
- the recommendation of graduate degree recipient

In addition, these academic and administrative units monitor

- the academic progress of graduate students,
- the preparation of graduate material for the College Catalog,
- the promotion of graduate programs,
- the maintenance of graduate student records,
- the administration of the graduate studies budget, and
- the encouragement of faculty research

II: ADMISSION

A. General Provisions

1. Persons holding a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education and wishing to take graduate-level courses at Rhode Island College may do so by:
 - a. enrolling as a non-matriculating student,
 - b. admission to a degree, or
 - c. admission to one of the Certificate of Graduate Studies Programs.
2. Persons not holding a baccalaureate degree and who are undergraduate students at Rhode Island College may take graduate courses in accordance with the policies elaborated in [Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures](#) - See section 3.3. for students' admission in bachelor's/master's early admission track and other undergraduate students.
3. Deadlines for receipt of applications and all supporting documents, and interviews where required, are specific to each individual program and can be verified by contacting the graduate program. Applications shall be submitted online through [CollegeNet](#).
4. The completed application is evaluated by the program's admissions committee. The program makes a recommendation in a timely fashion regarding admissions to the Academic Dean who notifies the applicant of the admissions decision.

B. Application to Degree Programs

1. Persons wishing to be admitted to a graduate program must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution at the time they begin their graduate studies at Rhode Island College. The following material is required for admission:
 - a. Completed online application for admission to graduate study accompanied by a non-refundable application fee.
 - b. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate records.
 - c. Copy of teaching certificate (when applicable)
 - d. Official reports of scores on standardized graduate admissions tests are required for some programs (see program requirements for specific details).
See [The Miller Analogies Test](#) and the [ETS Graduate Record Examination](#) for more information.
 - e. An interview may be required.
 - f. Three professional recommendations attesting to the candidate's potential to do graduate work.
 - g. Professional goals essay or statement of educational philosophy.

Requirements vary by program. Please see individual programs for all requirements.

2. Persons applying for BA/MA early admission track must be Rhode Island College

undergraduate students who have earned at least 60 credits. They may also be subject to additional requirements specified by each program. The GRE admissions requirement is waived for BA/MA applicants. Successful undergraduate applicants for an early admission track are conditionally accepted into the graduate program and may begin taking graduate classes after earning at least 90 undergraduate credit hours. Upon completion of their undergraduate degrees, while maintaining graduate level standards, students will be matriculated into the graduate program. Please see Section II: F for policies regarding credits (link in Manual).

3. [Admission policies for Individualized Graduate Programs](#) are outlined on page 19.
4. Applications must be completed within one year. After that time, prospective students will need to reapply or update their application.
5. Upon recommendation to a program, a graduate applicant has one year to submit a signed Plan of Study. A request for deferment may be considered by a program. Please see Section III: B for more information on Plan of Study.
6. To be accepted as a graduate degree candidate, applicants are expected to have attained an average of B overall (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) in their undergraduate work. Admissions committees may also consider the undergraduate G.P.A. in the applicant's undergraduate major or coursework related to the prospective major. Applicants with undergraduate grade point averages below this level, but not less than 2.00, may be admitted to degree candidacy upon the submission of other evidence of academic potential, i.e., satisfactory performance in post-baccalaureate work, professional experience, letters of recommendation, high scores in the standardized tests referred to above, and/or interviews.
7. An applicant to a graduate degree program who does not meet the program's admission standards but who demonstrates the potential to successfully complete graduate work may be considered for provisional admission, when this option is available in the program to which they have applied. The provisionally admitted student will be matriculated into the program and must earn at least a 3.0 GPA in the first 9 credits. Individual programs may have additional retention standards. The student's coursework during provisional admission may include courses from the graduate degree Plan of Study and other necessary prerequisites. The details of the provisional admission will be specifically outlined at the time that the Plan of Study is developed. Failure to meet the provisional admission requirements is sufficient cause for dismissal from the program.

C. International Students

Rhode Island College encourages applications from prospective international students. See the Guide for International Graduate Students for information and guidance. In addition to all program requirements, prospective international students must fulfil the following requirements.

1. Language

International applicants are required to pass the TOEFL exam with a minimum score of 80

for the internet-based test, 213 for the computer-based test, 550 for the paper and pencil test or IELTS with a minimum score of 6.5. Individual programs may have additional requirements. International students who have completed the studies of their undergraduate degree in English are exempt from language exam requirements.

2. Credit Evaluation

International students must have their academic records and transcripts from the baccalaureate degree reviewed by an accredited evaluation agency and submit certified literal English translations of their transcripts. See the Guide for International Graduate Students for a complete list of approved agencies.

3. Financial Ability

In addition, international applicants must provide proof of financial ability to pay all academic fees (tuition, books, and associated fees) for one full year of study. Proof should be in the form of a certified statement from a bank and/or a letter from a sponsor guaranteeing financial support (with appropriate bank verification).

Complete information on international admissions can be obtained from the International, Immigrant, Undocumented, DACAmented & Refugee Student Services, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Consult the program or the [Guide for International Graduate Students](#) available on the RIC website for more information.

D. Application to Certificate of Graduate Study Programs

1. Application requirements for Certificate of Graduate Study (CGS) Programs are the same as those for degree programs except standardized tests are not required.

Students who complete CGS Programs at Rhode Island College may request to include the earned credits to an appropriate graduate degree program. Contact the program director for specific details.

E. Non-Matriculating Status

1. Persons holding a baccalaureate degree who are not candidates for an advanced degree or for a Certificate of Graduate Study may take courses in a non-matriculating status. See individual programs for restrictions.
2. Credits earned at Rhode Island College by a student in non-matriculating status before admission to a degree or certificate program may be used toward degree or certificate requirements only upon the recommendation of the student's adviser or program committee, and with the approval of the Academic Dean. No more than a total of nine credits of work taken at Rhode Island College by a non-matriculating student may be applied towards degree or certificate requirements. See also Section III: B-3 Plan of Study and Advising.
3. Non-matriculating students follow the same course registration procedure as degree candidates. If non-matriculating students later wish to be admitted to a degree or certificate

program, they must complete the graduate admission procedure.

F. Undergraduates Enrolled in Graduate Courses

1. Undergraduates may enroll in graduate courses when
 - a. The student has completed a minimum of 90 credits, and
 - b. A sufficient number of upper-level undergraduate courses in the major have been completed, and
 - c. Grades in the preparatory coursework reflect readiness for graduate study. OR
 - d. The student has been approved for Bachelors/Masters early admissions track and has earned at least 90 undergraduate credit hours.
2. Undergraduates who have been admitted to a bachelor's/master's early admission track will be allowed to take a maximum of 15 graduate credits while completing their undergraduate studies, of which up to 9 graduate credits may also count in fulfillment of the undergraduate major program, depending upon that undergraduate program's policy for allowing credit for graduate courses. Graduate credit may not count toward undergraduate minors.
3. Undergraduates who are not admitted to Bachelors/Masters early admission track and who intend to enroll in graduate courses for undergraduate credit must obtain the written approval of the course instructor, the Program Director, Department Chair, and Academic Dean. The School of Social Work does not allow undergraduate students to take SWK 500-level courses.
4. If the per-credit cost for graduate courses exceeds the general fee that the student pays as a full-time undergraduate student, the student shall pay the excess.
5. Undergraduates are not admitted to 600-level courses.
6. Graduate courses cannot be counted for credit in satisfaction of both an undergraduate and graduate degree requirement, unless the student has been accepted into a bachelor's/master's early admission track.

III: GRADUATE PROGRAM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A. General

The goal of all master's degree programs is the development of sound scholarship that will lead to advancement of knowledge and prepare the student for intellectual leadership and further work in advanced areas of scholarship.

1. Master's programs require a minimum of 30 credits. At least 24 of these will be formal course credits exclusive of the thesis. Some programs require additional hours of work in formal courses or in other activities.

2. Degrees are awarded when all the requirements on the Plan of Study have been completed.
3. Each department that offers an advanced degree or certificate publishes information in the Rhode Island College Catalog that covers specific departmental requirements, program requirements and departmental options.
4. Students will be expected to comply with the requirements in the College Catalog at the time they are admitted to the program
5. Students may be matriculated in more than one graduate degree program, bachelor's/master's early admission track or certificate program only with the approval of the advisers, Program Directors, Academic Deans, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

B. Plan of Study and Advising

1. New graduate students will be assigned a graduate adviser by the department when they are recommended for acceptance. Every student recommended for admission to a degree or certificate program must have a Plan of Study. The student and adviser develop the Plan of Study in accordance with the graduate program's policies.
2. The Plan of Study must be signed by the student, approved by the adviser, program director and, where appropriate, the Department Chair and submitted to the appropriate Academic Dean for approval. A candidate is not formally admitted into a graduate program until a Plan of Study is on file in the departmental office of the appropriate School and the Records Office.
3. The Plan of Study includes all degree requirements, including coursework both required and elective; independent research; and exams and assessments necessary to complete degree requirements. The Plan of Study also includes courses that are to be taken without program credit to remedy deficiencies or to satisfy prerequisites.
4. In addition to formal courses at the graduate-level, an approved Plan of Study may also include independent study courses or other courses involving creative activity, research and thesis preparation. Provisional admission requirements are also listed in the Plan of Study. For certain professional degrees, the required Plan of Study is quite specific; in other programs, the courses are selected, and other requirements planned according to the needs of the individual student and appropriate to the discipline. Program credit will not include any of the following: the teaching of courses, courses audited, courses failed, courses numbered below the 400 level, courses needed to remedy deficiencies, credit by examination, or credit for work experience.
5. A Plan of Study can contain no more than nine semester hours of graduate coursework taken in non-matriculating status from RIC. A Plan of Study for Bachelor's/Master's early admission track can include up to 15 graduate credits before final acceptance as a degree or certificate candidate. Students accepted into a degree program who have also completed a Graduate Certificate Program at Rhode Island College may be exempt from this policy. For specifics, consult the following program information; the Advanced Standing track in the Master of Social Work program and Health Care Administration, Graduate Certificate

Programs, transfer student (see Section III: F) and in the individual Bachelor's/Master's early admission track.

6. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all program requirements listed in the Plan of Study are fulfilled. If a change in program requirements occurs after a student has matriculated, the student may complete the requirements as specified in the Catalog at the time of matriculation or may shift entirely to the new requirements. In the latter case, a new Plan of Study is to be filed in the Dean's office of the appropriate school and with the Records Office.
7. Any change in the plan of study requires approval and the filing of Request for Change to Plan of Study form with the appropriate signatures. The Change to Plan of Study may not be used to remove any course that has been assigned a grade.

C. Distribution of Courses

1. Courses taken for program credit should be at the 400-level or above. (In the Master of Social Work program, all courses must be taken at the 500-level or above.) The 30-hour coursework requirement for a master's degree may be satisfied by a combination of:
 - (1) a minimum of 24-hours of existing RIC courses and seminars at the 400/500/600-level.
 - (2) directed study or readings at the 500/600-level (maximum of 6 semesterhours). No more than 9 hours may be in 400-level courses.
2. Graduate students may, upon the recommendation of their adviser, include up to 9 hours in 400- level courses in their programs. In special cases, additional 400-level courses may be included in the Plan of Study subject to approval of the adviser, Program Director, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the appropriate Academic Dean.
3. Courses taken by graduate students below the 400-level may not be taken for program credit. Where such courses are considered as entrance or prerequisite courses, they may be required of graduate students and listed on the Plan of Study under "No Program Credit." They cannot under any circumstances be included in that section of the Plan of Study, which is to satisfy degree requirements, nor can they be included in calculating the cumulative GPA required for graduation. Required "No Program Credit" courses must be replaced or repeated unless a grade of C (2.00) or better is received.

D. Independent Study

1. Students enrolled in independent study are expected to observe time limits corresponding to semester limits unless specifically arranged by the instructor. A Request for Independent Study form signed by the instructor, Department Chair, Program Director, the appropriate Academic Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies must be filed with the departmental office of the respective Graduate Program. Grades are reported for independent study in the same manner as for other courses.
2. Requests for an independent study should be made in the semester prior to the semester of

the planned independent study. Independent study requests must be approved, and fees paid before study begins.

E. Transfer Credits

A candidate may request credit for work taken at other regionally accredited institutions of higher learning. Candidates must successfully complete a residency requirement of a minimum of 4/5 of the credit hours of the graduate degree program at Rhode Island College. In considering a request for transfer credit, the student's advisor will review the program of study, carefully evaluate the relevance of the proposed courses to the Plan of Study and consider the availability of courses to fulfil credit requirements. Transfer credit is granted only when approved by the student's advisor, the Program Director and Academic Dean. In order to qualify for transfer credit, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- a. The student must have earned a grade of B or better for graduate-level coursework.
- b. The graduate-level coursework approved to be included in a Plan of Study may be from a candidate's previously completed graduate degree.
- c. Transfer credit for courses taken more than six years prior to the development of the Plan of Study needs to be approved by the Program Director and Academic Dean.
- d. The work must have clear and unquestioned relevance to the student's Plan of Study.
- e. A student enrolled at Rhode Island College may receive transfer credit for work subsequently taken at another institution under the provisions cited above only if approval is obtained in writing from the appropriate Academic Dean before the student enrolls for the course.
- f. Any credits transferred from another institution of higher learning will be so indicated on the student's transcript. However, the grade earned at that institution would not be recorded or used in computing the student's GPA.

(edits approved by Graduate Committee April 2019)

To determine 4/5 of transfer credits refer to [Form A-20 Transfer Credit Guide](#).

F. Time Limit

Students must complete their program of study within six years (seven years for students in the URI/RIC joint doctoral program and the DNP) from the time of registration following acceptance to degree or certificate candidacy; otherwise, the candidacy will be considered discontinued. An appeal for extension requires review by the appropriate Program Director, adviser and Academic Dean.

G. Programs without Thesis/Project

1. A student in a program that does not require a thesis or project is required to pass written master's comprehensive evaluations(s) when the formal coursework is nearly completed. See Section IX: E.
2. Students in some departments may be required to complete a final oral master's

examination in addition to the written examination. The nature of the examination and the composition of the examining committee are the responsibility of the department. The results shall be reported promptly to the student and to the Academic Dean. In case of failure, a second examination may be allowed consistent with program policies.

H. Programs with Thesis/Project

1. In programs that allow thesis as an option, students may have up to 6 credits of the 30-credit minimum for a thesis in lieu of formal coursework. Each candidate who chooses the thesis option shall prepare a thesis that will demonstrate ability to perform and to report independent research in an acceptable scholarly fashion. See Section IX for preparation of a thesis.
2. The candidate shall successfully defend the thesis in an oral examination before a thesis defense committee. The committee is selected, and the examination is conducted according to procedures outlined in Section IX. A candidate who fails may be permitted one reexamination in the part or parts failed if recommended by the committee and approved by the appropriate Academic Dean. The second examination may be allowed consistent with program policies.
3. All projects involving humans, vertebrate animals, recombinant DNA or hazardous biological materials must have approval from the appropriate institutional compliance committee before the start of the project.

I. Graduation/Commencement

Graduate students who have completed all but three courses on their Plan of Study may participate in May Commencement. Credits that remain to be completed cannot be thesis credits.

J. Memorial Recognition of Graduate Achievement

This recognition acknowledges the academic achievements of graduate degree students enrolled at the college at the time of their death and commemorates those achievements for the benefit of the students' families and the campus community.

The graduate student must have been enrolled at the time of death, unless their continuous enrollment was interrupted by injury, illness or deployment and close to completion of degree requirements.

IV: CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

A. Continuous Enrollment

1. Most graduate students remain continuously enrolled until completion of the degree. In those instances where students cannot register for courses in a given semester, they must comply with the regulations governing withdrawal or leave of absence. See Section IV: C.

Students completing thesis work but no longer registered for coursework should contact the Dean of Graduate Studies to maintain enrollment.

2. Each spring semester, Records Office will designate as inactive those matriculated students who have not taken a graduate course in three semesters, excluding summer sessions. Students can request to return to active degree status with approval of their adviser and program director and in accordance with the program of study.
3. In the School of Social Work, graduate students must complete the second year at Rhode Island College.

B. Full-Time and Part-Time Status

1. To qualify for full-time status, students must register for at least nine credits during a regular semester or at least six credits during a summer term.
2. The bachelor's/master's early admission track, master's degree or graduate certificate may be completed either through full or part-time study or by a combination of both.
3. Students holding appointments as graduate and teaching assistants will be considered by the College, but not necessarily by lending agencies, as having full-time status with a minimum of six credits in the Plan of Study per semester. (Note that lending agencies may often have other requirements regarding full-time status.) Graduate Assistants may not register for more than nine credits without prior written permission from the appropriate Academic Dean.
4. Students with financial aid and / or loans should check with lending agencies to determine the requirements for full-time status.

C. Leave of Absence

Graduate students who must leave the college for a period of one semester or more, due to military service, prolonged illness, or other unusual circumstances, whether before or after they have completed the work prescribed in their Plan of Study, should apply for a Leave of Absence. The request should be made in writing to the appropriate Academic Dean, include an endorsement from the adviser or Program Director, and should be sufficiently specific to inform the Academic Dean. A leave of absence has the effect of suspending time limitations such as those for completion of the degree or for the removal of incomplete grades. Accordingly, a leave will be granted for sufficient reason and if it is to be for one year or less. Students may apply for a maximum of one additional year if circumstances warrant.

V: REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A. General

1. Before initial registration, degree candidates shall confer with their adviser to select appropriate coursework from the approved Plan of Study for the first semester.

2. Non-matriculating students may register for graduate courses for which they have completed the prerequisites, subject to enrollment limitations and the accommodation of degree candidates and may need approval of the Program Director.

B. Registration for Research or Study Off-Campus

1. Students who wish to register for credits to be counted toward a degree but to be earned through off-campus activities such as research or independent study at a national laboratory must receive prior approval from their adviser, Program Director and the appropriate Academic Dean.
2. These activities must be listed as part of their Plan of Study. These students must register for an appropriate number of credits of research or directed study. Credit evaluation should conform to provisions in the College Catalog (one credit for three hours per week per semester) and may not exceed the limits of full-time registration, namely 15 credits per semester and 8 per summer session.

VI: ACADEMIC STANDING

A. Grading System

1. To qualify for continuation in degree, for candidate status and for graduation a GPA of 3.0 or higher is required.
2. Programs may have specific additional retention and grade requirements. Students should refer to the program descriptions for these requirements.

Academic standing is based on grade points, which are related to letter grades as indicated below.

| Letter Grade Points | |
|---------------------|--------|
| A | 4.00 |
| A - | 3.67 |
| B+ | 3.33 |
| B | 3.00 |
| B- | 2.67 * |
| C+ | 2.33* |
| C | 2.00* |
| C- | 1.67* |
| D | 1.00* |
| D- | 0.67* |
| F* | 0.00* |

** These grades will result in review of the student's progress.*

3. Review of academic standing occurs each semester at the program level. Grades below B (3.00) are not indicative of graduate quality work. Students who earn a grade below B (3.00) in any course and/or whose cumulative GPA has fallen below 3.0 will have their status reviewed by the program. Such a review may result in the student being placed on probation or dismissed from the program. Probation may also require the retaking of course, the revocation of graduate assistantship, and the suspension of progress in the program until satisfactory performance is achieved. Students will be informed in writing. Students on probation must achieve grades of B (3.00) or better in graduate-level coursework for the next 9 earned credits. Students on probation will continue to be monitored until a satisfactory performance in their graduate program is achieved. Failure to meet the conditions of probation will result in dismissal. Students on probation are not eligible to apply for assistantships and students on probation may not retain assistantships.
4. For a repeated course, the most recent grade will be included in calculating the grade point average. (The first grade will remain on the student's transcript.)
5. Students in a bachelor's/master's early admission track must earn at least a B for a course to count for graduate credit while under conditional acceptance status.

B. Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Grade

Graduate courses approved for an S/U grade by the Graduate Committee require students to perform at the B level (3.00) or better to receive a grade of S. These courses shall be so labeled in college catalogs and bulletins. Grades of S or U are not included in calculating grade point average.

C. Incomplete Grade

For all graduate students, an incomplete grade shall be given when substantial work of the semester has been completed satisfactorily but all work has not been completed because of illness or some other reason that, in the opinion of the instructor, justifies such a report. The instructor sets the conditions and time frame required for completion which will not exceed 3 semesters. Graduate students who do not meet the time frame for completion of an Incomplete grade must make a request in writing to their graduate program for permission to complete the course.

D. Credit / No Credit

Graduate students cannot elect to take graduate courses with credit/no credit option.

E. Audit

1. Audited courses may not be counted for credit toward an advanced degree. The same tuition and fees apply to audited courses as to courses taken for a grade.
2. By auditing a student participates in a course without receiving credit or having the grade point average affected. A course may be audited if registration is still open. Preference must be given to those enrolling for credit.

3. A course must be changed from credit to audit by the end of the add/drop period.

VII: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

1. Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. In pursuing graduate study, all students are expected to adhere to the accepted standards of scholarly integrity in all presentations, examinations, research and writing of papers and theses/projects. Students who violate college rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure or removal from a course, disciplinary probation, and/or dismissal from the college. Individual schools may have additional standards and policies related to academic honesty. See section 9.1 Academic Honesty in [Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures](#).
2. All projects involving humans, vertebrate animals, recombinant DNA or hazardous biological materials must have approval from the appropriate institutional compliance committee before the start of the project. For more information consult the websites of the RIC [Institutional Review Board](#).

VIII: GOVERNANCE OF GRADUATE STUDY

A. Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Office of the Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for the overall administration of all graduate programs and activities at the College.

B. Dean of Graduate Studies

1. The Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for the policies and procedures of graduate studies and reports to the Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs. This includes overseeing the policies and procedures related to graduate education as detailed in the graduate manual.
2. The Dean is also responsible for promoting and developing graduate programs internally and to the community at large, coordinating graduate programs across divisions, administering the policies and procedures related to graduate assistantships and promoting a culture of graduate education for students, faculty, alumni and staff.

C. Academic Deans of Graduate Programs.

The Academic Deans within the Division of Academic Affairs are responsible for the administration of all graduate programs and activities within their schools.

D. The Graduate Committee

The mission of the Graduate Committee is to oversee graduate curricula and programs and to advance the interest of graduate programs and students at Rhode Island College. The

committee shall:

1. Be responsible for the approval of graduate curricula, including Certificates of Graduate Study Programs. The Committees' recommendations will be sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval. Implementation of Graduate Committee decisions regarding graduate curricula is subject to action by the President of the College. Courses which carry both a 400- and 500-level number will require the approval of the Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Committee.
2. Initiate study of new graduate curricula or changes in graduate curricula and consider suggestions for graduate curriculum development from the administration, divisions, departments, individual faculty members, and students. The Graduate Committee shall consult faculty concerned with graduate curriculum proposals under consideration.
3. Initiate semi-annual reports to the faculty on the decisions of the Committee and subsequent actions on these decisions, and list of proposals which remain on the calendar.
4. Meet at least once a month during the academic year to review and evaluate the graduate curriculum in general, to consider important problems and deficiencies in the graduate curriculum, and to discuss its major goals and directions. Additional meetings may be conducted under suspension of rules and without a formal agenda of specific proposals. Any faculty member may attend any meeting.
5. Post recorded minutes of each meeting and meeting agenda on the Graduate Committee website.
6. Periodically or as needed, review and interpret policies pertaining to graduate studies at Rhode Island College and shall recommend changes to the Dean of Graduate Studies as appropriate.
7. Seek to maintain high standards of quality of program, including recruitment, admissions, and assessment of graduate programs, in coordination with the Dean of Graduate Studies.
8. Review and promote uniformity among graduate programs so far as they are consistent with quality in coordination with the Dean of Graduate Studies.
9. Advise the Deans of the Schools and the Vice President for Academic Affairs on other matters of mutual concern.
10. Have the responsibility, through the proper and appropriate channels, of dealing with matters which extend beyond the scope of any one department and are entirely or predominantly concerned with graduate studies.
11. Public announcements on the agenda shall be posted one week prior to each

meeting, except in case of emergencies.

E. Departments

The academic department has general and overall responsibilities for graduate programs within the department, including the maintenance of overall quality of graduate education. The department structure may include department chair, Program Director and Graduate Committee. Administrative responsibilities at the department level include:

- a. Review and recommendations on admission and retention.
- b. Recommendations for assistantship appointments
- c. Administration of comprehensive exams
- d. Supervision of MA theses and research projects
- e. Assignment of academic advisers
- f. Assessment of graduate programs
- g. Allocation of resources
- h. Hear graduate student appeals within the established grievance process.

F. Faculty Who Teach in Graduate Programs

Faculty responsible for graduate programs hold the credentials and are provided the time to commit to the successful accomplishment of program objectives and program improvement. Normally faculty teaching graduate courses are active research scholars or experienced professionals making contributions to the development of the field. Faculty who teach in graduate programs have appropriate qualifications as identified by their respective departments. These faculty are assigned to teach graduate-level courses, to serve as academic and thesis advisers to graduate students, to serve on Graduate Admissions Committees, and to assist in the direction of graduate programs.

G. The Adviser

The graduate adviser has overall responsibility for the student's graduate study. The graduate adviser will help the student prepare a Plan of Study, making certain that it meets all minimum core and special requirements. The adviser will supervise the student's progress in the Plan of Study including coursework, independent study, research and, if applicable, thesis preparation. The adviser is responsible for informing the student of deadlines for submitting plans of study, thesis proposals and other appropriate documents.

IX: THESES, PROJECTS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

A. General

1. The academic and/or research adviser(s) will be responsible for supervising the candidate's preparation of the thesis, project or comprehensive evaluation.
2. All theses and written portions of culminating projects will be prepared in accordance with the accepted preparation styles of the discipline in which the student is a candidate for a

graduate degree. This includes proper citation and attribution of all material that is not the original product of the writer.

3. Candidates will comply with the requirements listed in Appendix B of this manual for the Preparation of a Thesis/Field Project and shall secure written approval of their proposals from the Dean of the appropriate school before formally starting work on the thesis. See appropriate forms in the Appendix.

B. Theses and Culminating Project

1. Theses and culminating projects that are to be submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for either dual bachelor's/master's degree, master's degree or a C.A.G.S. degree shall be prepared in accordance with the instructions described in the following paragraphs.
2. The final proposal must be signed by the full committee and the Department Chair, Program Director and approved by the office of the Dean of the appropriate school and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

C. Thesis Committee

Each student enrolled in a master's or C.A.G.S. degree program that requires a thesis must have a committee.

1. This committee is chosen by consultation between the adviser and student. It consists of:
 - a. The adviser who serves as chair and who is from within the academic program.
 - b. The second member of the committee, who shall be in the same discipline and/or department as the adviser, or from a closely related discipline or department.
 - c. The third member shall be from outside the department or program. Members from different disciplines are encouraged. The third committee member may be from another institution. Recommendations for members of the committee shall be approved by the Department Chair, Program Director and the appropriate academic Dean.
2. The thesis or thesis/project committee is responsible for planning and directing the work required for the thesis/project. This includes ensuring that the final proposal has validity, has obtained approval from research compliance committees, and can be accomplished within the time and facilities available. The committee must also verify that the student is prepared to do the required work at a satisfactory level.
3. The thesis committee is responsible for evaluating the orals/presentation and for determining that the candidate has demonstrated sufficient command of the subject matter to pass successfully. Unanimous approval of the committee is required for passing. The committee must also specify any changes that must be made before the thesis/project can be approved, and the date when those changes must be completed.

4. If the orals/presentation is unsatisfactory, the committee may recommend that a second examination be given, subject to the approval of the office of the appropriate academic Dean. If the second orals/presentation does not occur within a year of the first, no further opportunity will be allowed unless exceptional circumstances justify that the Dean grants an extension of time.
5. The final duty of the committee is to sign the approval form after making certain that all necessary changes and corrections have been made. The chair of the committee is responsible for verifying that the stipulated changes have been made and ensuring that the signature of the Department Chair is affixed.
6. The signed form shall be submitted (and a copy of the thesis where appropriate) for signatures to the Dean of the appropriate School and to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
7. A student may change his/her thesis/project adviser with the approval of the Department Chair and the appropriate Dean. The Department Chair is responsible for notifying the original adviser of the change and, where necessary, to determine the circumstances requiring the change. A change in adviser will automatically dissolve the committee.
8. A change in the committee membership other than the adviser shall be made with the approval of the student, the Adviser, the department chair and the office of the appropriate Dean.

D. Thesis/Project Scheduling and Approval

1. In graduate programs requiring a thesis/culminating project, the adviser will arrange with the student, the committee, and the Dean of the appropriate School for the submission of the completed thesis or written project and the scheduling of the orals/presentation.
2. At least 10 working days before the proposed date for the orals/presentation, the candidate shall submit unbound copies of the thesis to the adviser and members of the thesis committee.
3. All copies submitted must be complete, including all data, tables, charts, maps, photographs, appendices, etc., and full references, citations, and bibliographies as required by accepted standards of academic integrity.
4. The office of the Dean of the appropriate school and the Dean of Graduate Studies shall be notified 10 working days in advance of the orals/presentation and will ascertain that all other degree requirements have been completed.
5. All thesis or project orals/presentations shall be open to all faculty and students at the college. These examinations may be closed only in exceptional circumstances, as determined by most of the examining committee.
6. The adviser is responsible for conducting the examination and providing for changes and corrections to be made before it is given committee approval. A successful defense of the

thesis requires unanimous approval of the committee members. When a candidate's performance is unsatisfactory, one reexamination may be recommended, and the committee will determine the conditions under which it is to be given.

7. Committee approval of each thesis/ project is indicated by signing the approval sheet. This occurs when the chair has assured the committee members that the student has made the changes and corrections as agreed upon by the examining committee.
8. Final approval of all theses and projects rests with the Dean of the appropriate school and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

E. Comprehensive Evaluations

1. The comprehensive evaluation will typically follow completion of all course work required for the degree with approval of the examining committee. Sufficient announcement should be given of the dates for the evaluation. The time allowed for the comprehensive evaluation will be determined by the program.
2. A candidate who fails the comprehensive examination may be permitted one reexamination in the part or parts failed if this is recommended by the examining committee and Program Director. Any special conditions that the candidate will be expected to fulfill prior to the second examination must accompany the recommendations. The second comprehensive examination may be taken only on the next regularly scheduled examination date. Candidates may not take the comprehensive exam more than two times.
3. The chair of the examining committee reports the results of a particular examination to the Program Director. The Program Director notifies the Department Chair, the Dean of the appropriate School, the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Records Office in writing.
4. The academic department notifies the student in writing of the results of a written examination within three weeks (exclusive of vacation periods) of the examination. With oral examinations, the student shall be notified as soon as the examining committee completes deliberations.

X: INDIVIDUALIZED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

A. General

Individualized Graduate Programs (IGP) provide graduate students with an opportunity to design unique programs that satisfy particular needs for which no existing graduate program is adequate. An IGP should not replace a standard degree or certificate program. These programs may be oriented toward professional or unique scholarly pursuits. An IGP may constitute a request for a concentration in a traditional academic area in which no program currently exists but for which appropriate and sufficient graduate-level coursework does exist. In all cases, an IGP is designed from appropriate and available graduate level coursework. Most IGP programs are cross-disciplinary and draw on courses in several departments and across schools.

Individualized graduate programs are offered through the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Feinsein School of Education and Human Development and the School of Business: I.M.A., I.M.Ed., I.M.S, and I.C.A.G.S. The first step in the pursuit of an IGP is to contact the Dean of Graduate Studies (graduatestudies@ric.edu) to discuss the feasibility of an IGP, the program goals and the selection of an appropriate adviser.

B. Admissions

1. The following material is required for admission to an IGP program and must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for review by the IGP Committee¹:
 - a. Admission materials required for graduate programs in the School in which the IGP will be completed. See Section II: Admissions
 - b. A written IGP proposal which includes:
 - i. An essay presenting the scholarly value, educational objectives and feasibility of the proposed program, how each of the courses included in the plan will fulfill these objectives, and the inability of any current graduate program to do so.
 - ii. Title of the proposed program
 - iii. A Plan of Study which must include the signatures of the adviser, the Chair(s) of the departments offering courses, the Deans of the appropriate schools and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
 - iv. The deadline for IGP applications is March 1 for acceptance in the fall semester and November 1 for acceptance in the spring semester.
2. The Individualized Graduate Programs committee is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The committee consists of five faculty members, one from each of the five schools. They must be faculty or program directors from graduate programs, and at least two must be members from the graduate committee. Faculty members are appointed by the Chair of the Graduate Committee in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Graduate Committee and serve for one-year, renewable terms.
3. The adviser and the student will meet with the IGP committee. The committee is responsible for assuring that the proposal contains a coherent plan of study with courses clearly related to the future goals of the student and consistent with the mission of the college. If a proposal is not approved, a statement of the reasons shall be sent to the student and to the adviser(s) with suggestions for revisions. Once the proposal is approved, the Chair of the IGP Committee will forward recommendations and approved Plans of Study to the Dean of the appropriate school and will inform the candidates regarding acceptance to candidacy.

C. Plan of Study

1. IGP Plans of Study may not replace a standard degree or certificate program.
2. The Plan of Study for the individualized graduate program is designed by the student, in consultation with academic Advisers, subject to criteria established by the Individualized Graduate Program Committee.
3. An IGP plan of study should consist of:
 - a. A minimum of 30 hours of coursework for an Individualized Master's degree taken for graduate credit. No more than 9 hours may be in 400-level courses.
 - b. The 30-hour coursework requirement may be satisfied by a combination of: (1) a minimum of 24-hours of existing courses and seminars at the 400/500/600-level; (2) directed study or readings at the 500/600-level (maximum of 6 semester hours).
4. An IGP plan of study may also include:
 - a. Graduate-level coursework transferred from other institutions (subject to the limitations described in Section III: F).
 - b. 600-level credit for thesis or project/performance work (3-6 semester hours maximum).
 - c. Internships (6 semester hours maximum).
5. An ICAGS degree is only available for students in the joint RIC/URI Ph.D. program who are applying for a terminal ICAGS.
6. All IGP programs require the completion of a capstone experience such as a master's thesis, project or performance. Students in the joint RIC/URI Ph.D. program who are applying for a terminal ICAGS may request substitution of the doctoral programs written comprehensive examination plus its successful oral defense. See Section IX for regulations concerning the completion of the project or confer with the Adviser in the case of the fine or performing arts.

XI: COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

- A. Rhode Island College/Saint Joseph Hospital School of Nurse Anesthesia, Nurse Anesthesia option Rhode Island College and the Saint Joseph Hospital School of Nurse Anesthesia (SJHSNA) offer a joint Nurse Anesthesia option in the Master of Science Nursing (M.S.N.) Program. All courses, credits, instructors and degrees are granted under the auspices of Rhode Island College with the clinical instruction delivered in partnership with St. Joseph Hospital School of Nurse Anesthesia. For further information, see the Rhode Island College Catalog or contact the School of Nursing.

- B. Rhode Island College/University of Rhode Island Doctoral Program Rhode Island College collaborates with the University of Rhode Island in providing a program leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education. For further information refer to the [Doctoral Program's website](#) or confer with the RIC Co-Director of the Doctoral program.

XII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. Policy

1. The purpose of a grievance procedure is to secure, at the lowest level possible, an equitable solution to the dispute that a student may have with an academic unit, an instructor or multiple faculty members.
2. The filing of an academic grievance does not stay any action under college policy. If a student's grievance is regarding a grade(s) that has caused probationary status or dismissal from the college, the probation or dismissal will become effective upon notification, despite the filing of the grievance. Program directors/department chairs will advise students of grievance procedures. The Master of Social Work Program has a separate procedure.

B. Procedures

1. Policies and procedures for handling complaints and grievances, described in detail in the College's Manual of Academic Policies & Procedures are applicable to graduate students except for the academic standing committee.
2. Policies and procedures concerning issues of academic honesty are also described in the [Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures](#). Policies and procedures concerning issues of sexual harassment are described on the [Title IX page](#).

XIII: ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

A. Graduate and Teaching Assistantships

1. Graduate Assistantships are limited to accepted degree candidates who are enrolled full time in their plan of study. This includes international students in the F-1 or J-1 visa categories. Students in the joint RIC-URI doctoral program, a joint program of the two institutions, are eligible for an assistantship at Rhode Island College. Awards are based on academic achievement, proficiency in the field and fit with program needs. Assistantships can be revoked if students earn grades below a B. Appointments are for one year and are subject to satisfactory performance. Students in a bachelor's/master's early admission track are not eligible for assistantships until they have gained final acceptance into the graduate program. Appointments may be renewed, and students must reapply each year.
2. Students holding appointments as Graduate Assistants will be considered as having full-time status with a minimum of six credits each semester. Graduate Assistants may not register for more than nine credits without prior written permission from the appropriate

Academic Dean. (Students without a Graduate Assistantship must register for at least nine credits during a regular semester or at least six credits during a summer term to qualify for full-time status.)

3. In the semester that a Graduate Assistant is completing a thesis or final project, an exception may be approved for the candidate to enroll in a regularly scheduled course outside the plan of study with approval of adviser, Program Director and the appropriate Dean.
4. Assistantships may involve such activities as preparation for and supervision of laboratory sections, assistance with classroom instruction, assistance in student support services, research, and data collection. The student may be required to devote a maximum of 20 hours a week to such work, not more than 10 hours of which may be in classroom contact hours, during the regular semester. Work hours may include evening hours: students must confer with their supervisors about the expected hours. The acceptance of an assistantship assumes full-time commitment to academic activities.
5. Graduate assistants are encouraged to apply for work study funds that may supplement a graduate assistantship. Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online before May 1 of each academic year. Those who have been granted federal work study funds may access those funds only during academic breaks (fall, spring). In all cases, 20 hours per week is the maximum number of work hours a graduate student can complete.
6. Graduate Assistants receive a stipend and tuition waiver (either full or half depending upon the assistantships) for courses at Rhode Island College only for the academic year and one summer session immediately preceding or following the assistantship. Further details on stipend and tuition waiver are available at [Graduate Assistant Opportunities](#).
7. Assistantship positions, along with deadlines for applications, are posted in the spring on the graduate studies website. Student notification will typically be made by July.

B. Graduate Traineeships

The School of Social Work and the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities offer graduate traineeships. The School of Social Work graduate traineeships are available to accepted M.S.W. degree candidates who are enrolled full-time in the program. Graduate trainees in the School of Social Work are refunded tuition for the academic year and are required to fulfill ten hours per week on assignments within the School of Social Work. Interested candidates who are accepted into the M.S.W. program should contact the dean's assistant at the School of Social Work.

The Sherlock Center interdisciplinary graduate traineeships are open to accepted graduate students who have a life commitment to people with disabilities. Graduate traineeships receive refunded tuition for the academic year or a stipend. They are required to fulfill 10 hours per week of field work and research activity connected to disability and Sherlock Center initiatives.

C. Graduate Scholarships

1. Scholarship assistance is available through the Elizabeth S. Carr Trust Fund for students in the elementary/early childhood education programs and through the Rhode Island College Alumni Association. The Harrower Family Award is available through the Department of English and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Naylor Family Scholarship is available through the Department of Psychology and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Specific information on these and other scholarships is available from the Office of Student Financial Aid and, for alumni scholarships, the Office of Alumni Affairs.
2. The School of Social work offers graduate student scholarships through the Rhode Island College Foundation to students who meet specific criteria. These include the Gladys Corvera-Baker scholarship for Hispanic students who demonstrate academic excellence, the Juanita Handy Scholarship, awarded to a second-year minority and/or female student, and the Mary C. Davey Scholarship, awarded to a student who is interested in child welfare. The School also offers scholarships to full-time MSW students in their field placements. These \$2,000 scholarships match federal work-study funds to obtain paid field placements in nonprofit agencies and organizations. To be eligible for these scholarships, students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online before May 1 of each academic year. Please contact Eileen Ryan (eryan@ric.edu, or 401-456-8864) with questions about scholarship assistance.

D. New England Regional Student Program

1. Rhode Island College participates in the Regional Student Program (RSP) administered by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). Through this program, New England residents who live outside of Rhode Island may enroll in specified curricula at Rhode Island College for in-state tuition fees plus 50 percent. The program of study must be one not offered at an institution in the student's home state, or Rhode Island College must be closer in traveling time to the student's legal residence than is an institution offering an approved RSP program in the home state.
2. Students must remain in the program for which they applied or may transfer only into another NEBHE program. Otherwise, they will be charged out-of-state tuition fees as of the date of transfer. Each semester, they must also request a tuition waiver from the Records Office.
3. Those entering Rhode Island College through the NEBHE program must meet all the standards required for admission to the collective Schools of Graduate Studies.
4. Additional information can be obtained from each respective School or the New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA. 02111.

E. Northeast Neighbors Policy

1. Rhode Island College students whose permanent place of residence is Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Long Island and New York City Metro Area are eligible for a special tuition discount at Rhode Island College of the in-state tuition rate plus 50%. [The Northeast Neighbors Policy](#) includes both full-time and part-time students,

undergraduate and graduate students and degree and non-degree students.

2. Forms for verification of residence for this purpose are available in the Records Office and must be submitted for approval prior to the close of registration.
3. The Office of the Bursar provides a [breakdown of tuition and fees](#).

F. Financial Aid

1. To be eligible for need-based financial aid, a student must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident accepted into a graduate degree or certificate program and enrolled at least half-time (4.5 credits per semester). The need-based student aid programs available at the college include the Federal Direct Loan and Federal Work-Study.
2. In order to apply for financial aid, graduate students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Priority for funds administered by Rhode Island College will be given to applications received at the federal processing center by May 15 prior to the following academic year. The [FAFSA may be completed online](#).
3. Eligibility for a subsidized Federal Direct Loan is based on financial need as determined by the Office of Student Financial Aid using information from the FAFSA. Students who cannot demonstrate need may be eligible for an unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan. Unsubsidized federal direct loans accrue interest during the in-school and grace periods. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.
4. Federal Work-Study is a part-time employment program based on financial need as determined by the Office of Student Financial Aid using information from the FAFSA. The Career Development Center assists work study students with job placement on or off campus.
5. In addition to the process outlined above, students who wish to apply for financial assistance for summer sessions must submit a Rhode Island College Application for Financial Aid – Summer. This form is available from the [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) on or around February 1 each year. Summer session aid is contingent on availability of funds and Federal Work-Study. Preference is given to applicants who file the FAFSA by March 1 and the summer application by March 1.

G. Unemployment Waiver

Rhode Island residents receiving unemployment benefits are eligible for waiver of tuition and registration fees. Admission into particular courses (for which all academic prerequisites have been fulfilled) will be granted on the last day of registration, upon a space available basis. Applicant is subject to a means test.

H. Senior Citizens' Tuition Waiver

Any Rhode Island senior citizen who submits evidence of being at least 60 years of age will be allowed to take graduate courses with tuition waived. Admission into particular courses (for

which all academic prerequisites have been fulfilled) will be granted on the last day of registration, upon a space available basis. All other costs of attendance are to be borne by the student. Applicant is subject to a means test.

[1] *The Individualized Graduate Program Committee is a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee of Rhode Island College.*