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TO: Graduate Programs Committee

Graduate Council

University Faculty Senate

University Provost

FROM: Diane E. Alperin, Interim Dean, Graduate College

SUBJECT: Proposal to change the credits required for a doctoral degree

The current University Catalog at Florida Atlantic University states that "doctoral degrees require at least 80 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree." There are no other documents that could be found (current or historic) that state this requirement and it has not been possible to document the date this requirement was instituted at FAU. It is believed that this has been a requirement for a very long time.

A proposal has been made to change this requirement, allowing doctoral degrees to require at least 72 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. A justification for this change, and information about doctoral degree credit requirements at other universities in the Florida State University System, is attached.

According to the Procedure for Approving Graduate Program Catalog Changes and the UFS Constitution and Bylaws this proposal requires approval by the University Graduate Programs Committee, the University Graduate Council, and the University Faculty Senate prior to being recommended to the University Provost.

Approved by

Date

UGPC Chair _____

UGC Chair _____

Graduate College Dean _____

UFS President _____

Provost _____

Current FAU Catalog Language

Doctoral Degree Requirements

Doctoral degrees require at least 80 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. For specific requirements of individual doctoral programs, see the Doctoral Degree Program Information heading in the appropriate college section. For doctoral requirements in the College of Education, see the following headings: Specialist's Degree Program Information and Doctoral Degree Program Information.

Second Doctoral Degree Requirements

A second doctoral degree will be conferred upon the same individual if the second degree represents at least 80 credits of additional work in residence and if all of the requirements of the college awarding the degree have been met.

Proposed change:

Doctoral Degree Requirements

Doctoral degrees require at least 8072 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. For specific requirements of individual doctoral programs, see the Doctoral Degree Program Information heading in the appropriate college section. For doctoral requirements in the College of Education, see the following headings: Specialist's Degree Program Information and Doctoral Degree Program Information. These graduate credits must be taken as part of an approved graduate program of study. Some programs require considerably more than the minimum of 72 hours because of the nature of the discipline and the standards of the associated profession.

Second Doctoral Degree Requirements

A second doctoral degree will be conferred upon the same individual if the second degree represents at least 8072 credits of additional work in residence and if all of the requirements of the college awarding the degree have been met.

Justification:

1. *Where did the 80 hr credit requirement in the FAU graduate catalog come from?* - The 80 hr credit requirement in the FAU graduate catalog appears to be a university policy. The original reason for this policy is unclear. However, to change it requires a policy change at the university level (Provost) to lower it. The policy proposed would be a minimum, but would not affect any existing programs.
2. SACS requirement is that doctoral degrees program lengths should be substantially more credits than a master's degree (30 credits)
3. New SACS manual does not have a credit guideline or limit for Ph.D. programs
4. There are numerous benefits to the university for the proposed change:
 - a. Reduces time to graduation
 - b. Reduces tuition waiver commitment
 - c. Encourages faculty to support Ph.D. students with external research grants since degree can be awarded in less than 4 years
 - d. Better competes with peer institutions
 - e. May make our program more appealing to potential students
5. If all degree programs were at 80 credits (which they are not), that would be a savings of 8 credits per student plan of study.
 - a. If all Ph.D. students were in-state this would result in a savings of \$2.7 million in tuition waivers
 - b. If all Ph.D. students were out-of-state this would result in \$7.4 million in tuition waivers

The following table outlines the Ph.D. requirements at peer institutions

Table 1. Ph.D. degree requirements, enrollment, and degrees awarded for FAU peer institutions

Institution	Minimum credits to Ph.D. Beyond the baccalaureate	Total Ph.D. Headcount 2016	Total Ph.D. Headcount 2017	Degrees Awarded 2016	Degrees Awarded 2017
UCF	72	1942	2047	286	299
USF	72	2541	2844	321	314
FGCU	72	188	192	1	7
FIU	75	1591	1746	189	151
UF	90	4965	4934	766	737
UM	60				
FAU	80	907	933	104	103

The following are excerpts from peer institutions' graduate policies, as provided by Debra Szabo:

UCF:

The doctoral degree program requirements will consist of core and elective courses, seminars, directed and doctoral research, independent study, and dissertation research.

- Each doctoral program of study will include a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate credit beyond the baccalaureate degree or a minimum of 42 semester hours of graduate credit beyond the master's degree; these graduate credits must be taken as part of an approved graduate program of study. Some programs require considerably more than the minimum of 72 hours because of the nature of the discipline and the standards of the associated profession.
- All graduate credit in a doctoral program must be at 5000 level or higher.
- At least one-half of the credit hours used to meet program requirements must be in 6000-level or 7000-level courses, including the allowed number of research and dissertation hours.
- At least 50 percent of the credits offered for the degree are expected to be derived from a single field of concentration (that is, from one department). However, programs that are interdisciplinary in nature may be exempt from this policy upon approval from the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee.
- Only graduate-level credit with a grade of "C-" or higher may be used to satisfy degree requirements.
- A university-wide minimum of at least 27 hours of formal course work exclusive of Independent Study (XXX 6908), dissertation and research is required for all doctoral programs; some programs require a greater number of formal course work hours.
- A university-wide minimum of at least 15 hours of dissertation credits is required for all doctoral programs, although some programs require a greater number of dissertation hours.
- The dissertation hour requirements may only be satisfied by enrollment in dissertation hours.

USF:

Doctoral Minimum Hours

The doctoral degree is earned on the basis of advancement to doctoral candidacy status and satisfactory completion of the dissertation. The minimum number of credit hours to earn the doctorate is 72, post-bachelors, including dissertation. The minimum number of credit hours required for each individual doctorate major is noted in the degree requirements section of the Graduate Catalog for that major listing. Some graduate majors may require more than 72 hours. Majors with formally approved concentrations must have core major requirements that all students must successfully complete.

Students must comply with general enrollment requirements and also institutional residency requirements. All doctoral students must have at least one gradable (A-F) graduate course taken at USF to satisfy the GPA minimum requirements. No undergraduate course may be used to satisfy the gradable minimal course requirement for the doctoral degree. Lower level undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy doctoral major requirements, but may be taken to meet specific prerequisites. All graduate and undergraduate courses taken as a graduate student count in the overall GPA, whether or not they count toward the minimum hours for the degree.

Editor's note - Although the University requirement for a minimum of 90 hours post-baccalaureate was revised to the above, most doctoral programs still require 90 hours post-baccalaureate, unless they have revised their major and received approval from the University Graduate Council. Refer to the individual major listings in the Catalog for specific minimum hour requirements.

Each major has a required number of dissertation hours for completion of the degree. Departments may, with College approval, apply Directed Research hours toward the total number of dissertation hours required. Directed Research hours shall not exceed 50% of the dissertation hour requirement. No directed research hours will be converted to dissertation hours (i.e. a directed research course dropped and a dissertation course added) prior to or during the approval window. *For more information refer to Enrollment Requirements in the Academic Policies section.*

UF:

Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is a research degree and is granted on evidence of general proficiency, distinctive attainment in a special field, and particularly on ability for independent investigation as demonstrated in a dissertation presenting original research with a high degree of literary skill. Consequently, doctoral programs are more flexible and varied than those leading to other graduate degrees. The Graduate Council does not specify what courses are required for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. General requirements: the program should be unified in relation to a clear objective, the program should have the considered approval of the student's entire supervisory committee, and the program should include an appropriate number of credits of doctoral research.

Course Requirements

Course requirements for doctoral degrees vary from field to field and from student to student. In all fields, the Ph.D. degree requires at least 90 credits beyond the bachelor's degree. All master's degrees counted in the minimum must be earned in the last 7 years.

FIU:

Credit Requirements:

Programs leading to a doctoral degree require at least 75 semester graduate credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree and a minimum of 15 credit hours of dissertation. These shall include a minimum of 30 credit hours earned in academic courses that are part of the doctoral program. Doctoral programs normally make use of courses at the 6000 level and above.