

## CIS Graduate Student Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide supplemental and program-specific information for CIS graduate students in several areas. More general information and regulations about CIS Master program can be found on [UMass graduate catalog](#) and [CIS department website](#).

### Contact Information

To obtain information and get help, you may contact CIS office. Please give at least one-week leading time to process any paperwork. For Immigration related issue, contact Christina "Tina" Bruen (Phone: 508-910-6633) at international Student & Scholar Center.

### Financial Support Policy

The School will allocate a limited number of graduate assistantships each year. The following guidelines will be used to determine the recipients of this support.

- i) All financial support will be based on merit. Criteria used to determine merit will be the applicant's GRE scores, letters of recommendation and Statement of Purpose.
- ii) The decision as to who will receive department financial support (i.e., from the general College fund) will be determined by the department's service needs (e.g., teaching assistants). All graduate students on College support will be assigned appropriate teaching-related duties. **International students must pass the SPEAK test with a minimum score of 55 to be eligible for College teaching assistantships.**
- iii) Assignments in teaching and research for incoming students will be predicated on the student's indicated area of specialization.
- iv) The decision as to whom will receive support from research grants and contracts will reside with the principal investigator from whose funds the student will be paid.
- v) Students making satisfactory progress, subject to the availability of funds, are eligible to receive a maximum of four semesters of College support as MS candidates and six semesters of College support as PhD candidates. Students pursuing the non-thesis MS degree are not eligible for College support. Students on academic probation or new provisionally admitted students are not eligible for College support.
- vi) In general, no financial support from the university sources is provided to part-time students unless their services in either teaching or research represent a critical need for the university/program or students no longer need a full-time load of course work during their last semester/year.
- vii) Students on academic probation, i.e., students who have GPAs below 3.0 or have completed 6 credits for Thesis Research or 12 credits of Dissertation Research without submitting and successfully defending a research proposal are not eligible for financial support as TAs.
- viii) Graduate students in "program continuation" status are not eligible for TAs, Teaching Fellowships, Graduate Fellowships, or tuition and CSF waivers

## **Academic Probation and Dismissal of Graduate Students**

A student who has been admitted to a graduate program of study in the CIS department, either on a regular or on a provisional basis, must maintain a 3.00 or higher grade point average in all work taken for graduate credit as well as an overall 3.00 GPA in all studies at UMass Dartmouth.

A student will be placed on academic probation if:

- a) The student's GPA falls below 3.00 in the student's approved program of study.
- b) The student's overall GPA for all post-baccalaureate courses taken at UMD falls below 3.00.
- c) The student receives a D or F in a required deficiency or in a course at the 400-level or above.
- d) The student receives two or more B- or lower grades.
- e) For reasons other than above the student fails to make satisfactory progress toward a degree.

A student will be will be subject to dismissal from the graduate program if:

- a) The student is on academic probation for either reason (a) or (b) and fails to bring the GPA, defined in (a) or (b) above, to 3.00 or above by the completion of the next semester if a full-time student or the next 9 semester hours if a part-time student.
- b) The student receives a D or lower grade while on academic probation for any reason.
- c) The student fails to obtain at least a 3.00 average in all courses cited as deficiencies upon admission to a graduate program.
- d) The student's grade point average falls below a B (GPA = 3.0) after completion of 15 or more semester hours of course work, or 50% of the course work required for the program, whichever is greater.
- e) The student receives three grades below B in coursework taken toward the degree.
- f) The student fails to meet any other conditions imposed as a part of the probation.

A student may appeal any action concerning academic probation and dismissal by petitioning the graduate committee within the department.

## **Course Load Guidelines**

A course load of 9 credits per semester is considered minimum for full-time status in the Graduate School at UMass Dartmouth. An international student must register full time and stay registered full time for the whole semester. Dropping a course even at the end of the semester that causes the student to fall below full time is unauthorized reduce course load and a student is considered out of status. There are only three exceptions to the full time registration, first semester due to adjustment issues, the end of the study because the

student needs less than full time to complete the degree program, or medical reasons with documentation. In such exceptional situations, the student must file a reduce course load form and get approval first in order to maintain his/her full-time student status.

It is strongly recommended for international students to take only 6 credits in the first semester in order to achieve good academic progress while adjusting to the new environment.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Satisfactory progress is indicated by students who

1. maintain a grade point average above 3.0 on a 4.0 scale as computed from their program of study;
2. have received no more than two grades below "B"; and
3. are registered for normal course loads or project/thesis/dissertation continuation.

Unsatisfactory academic progress results from failure to meet the above requirements and/or failure to complete program requirements at the appropriate point in the program. Such requirements are: (1) filing a project or thesis proposal; (2) scheduling the project or thesis presentation; (3) producing final copies of the thesis or dissertation. Students who do not maintain satisfactory progress in their degree program risk having their appointments reduced or being dismissed from the program.

Please note that course credits have a longevity of 6 years from the time a course is completed. Only graduate courses in which the student receives a grade of C or better, or 400-level courses in which the student receives a grade of B or better, may be applied towards fulfilling degree requirements. All grades are averaged into the student's record. Required courses in which a student received a grade of C minus or less must be repeated in order for the student to graduate.

### **Course Selections, Registration and Continuation**

**Course from other department:** CIS graduate students are **not** allowed to take courses from other department unless:

- It is requested by MS project adviser, or
- CIS department does not provide technical elective courses that you have not taken before.

### **400-level technical electives**

No more than two 400 level technical elective courses (except CIS498 and CIS499) are allowed to be counted toward MS degree only when:

- such courses (or courses with similar coverage) have not been taken by this student previously.
- the 500-level course on the same topics has not been taken yet.
- EGR 500 - Graduate Internship takes place of one 400 level technical elective.

### **Internship course (EGR 500)**

- EGR 500 is a 3-credit course with pass/fail grade, it is counted into program credits but not counted in the GPA. It replaces one 400 level technical elective
- In order to take EGR 500 course, a student needs to
  - fill a form and get approval first
  - have one faculty adviser and one industry sponsor
  - submit a proposal that describes the project objective and outcomes
  - submit a support letter from the company to describe work responsibility to prove the merit of the internship
  - submit a report no later than 1 month after the course period ends.

**Registration for courses** Graduate students (except the 1<sup>st</sup> semester for new students) need to register courses for the next semester within the current registration period, the bill will arrive when the next semester begins. Any one who fails to do so may receive letter of disenrollment and needs to pay a certain amount of fee for readmission. MS project needs to be registered during the regular registration period too; project continuation can wait until the semester begins.

**MS project continuation** To get the first continuation of MS project, the student needs the approval of the faculty adviser and to submit a support letter to state the reason for continuation request. The second continuation is not allowed except in some extremely difficult situations such as accident or serious family matters (need documents of proof). In such exceptions, approvals from all levels are required.

- **Additional Degree Requirement** All full-time students must pass the course CIS 599 graduate seminars for two semesters. In order to pass the course, at least 80% attendance rate is required. In addition, a one-page report, which describes at least two seminars attended, must be submitted by the end of each academic semester.

### **Thesis/Project Presentation Schedule**

- Thesis/Project presentations are not scheduled between July 1 and Aug. 20 and Dec. 22 and Jan. 20.
- Thesis presentations will be scheduled in the CIS 599 seminar time frame during the Fall and Spring Semesters. If a thesis presentation cannot be scheduled within this time frame due to work conflict or faculty conflict, this needs to be discussed with the graduate program director for prior approval.
- A email notice of title, abstract, faculty supervisor and committee member names should be sent to the CIS office ([choaglund@umassd.edu](mailto:choaglund@umassd.edu) with copied to the faculty supervisor) at least 1 week prior to a project presentation and 2 weeks prior to a thesis presentations.

### **Continuous Registration Requirements**

To maintain status as an MS degree candidate, it is necessary to be enrolled continuously (exclusive of summers) or receive an approved Leave of Absence (see below). If you continue to work on a thesis or project after completing formal course requirements, you must remain in "Continuation" enrollment status for every semester until the

thesis/project/dissertation is completed, including the semester in which final approvals are given. You must register for Thesis/Project Continuation at the Registrar's office and pay a nominal fee in lieu of tuition and regular fees for each semester you are in that status. If you must interrupt progress towards your degree, you need to seek a formal Leave of Absence.

### **Interruption or Termination of Studies**

A request for a leave of absence (LOA) for one semester or one year may be made in cases when serious illness or injury or other major event prevents the student from participating in his/her program of study for an extended period of time. A Leave of Absence from graduate studies can be requested by submitting a completed form (available from the Office of Graduate Studies) to the CIS Graduate Program Director. The form should include the reason for the request and the anticipated date for returning. A Leave of Absence involves no fees and does not require a re-admission procedure provided that the student returns by the anticipated date or makes other arrangements. A Leave of Absence differs from Graduate Program Continuation in that the latter involves fees and implies that the student is still participating in the program. Students who fail to return from LOA after one year are dismissed from the program and must reapply to continue in their program of study.

Withdrawal from the University permanently removes the student from the program and is therefore a serious procedure. Any student considering withdrawal should consult with their advisor. If the student subsequently decides to withdraw from the University, s/he should do so formally through the normal University procedure. Withdrawing students who hold University appointments should also submit a letter of resignation to the CIS Graduate Program Director. Students who do not register for any courses or continuing studies, or do not request a Leave of Absence, will be automatically withdrawn from the University.

Students who have withdrawn from the University and wish to return must apply for re-admission. Application for re-admission is made by written request to the Office of Graduate Studies. Re-admission is granted subject to the approval of the CIS Graduate Committee, the CIS Department Chairperson, and the Dean of the College of Engineering.