

The University of Southern Mississippi Graduate Council Bylaws

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of this organization is The University of Southern Mississippi Graduate Council.

ARTICLE II. Purpose

The purpose of the Graduate Council is to supervise the graduate academic affairs of the University.

ARTICLE III. Relationships and Responsibilities

Section 1. Relationships

As indicated in Table 1, the Graduate Council makes recommendations about graduate programs and policies to the University Provost. The Provost makes recommendations regarding graduate programs to the President, who in turn presents his/her recommendations to the Board when their approval is required. The Graduate Council is the final authority in matters of graduate faculty status and graduate curricula.

Table 1: Procession of Graduate Council Actions

Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning
University President
Provost
Graduate Council
Professional Education Council*
College Curriculum Committee
School Curriculum Committee

*For matters dealing with professional education programs

Section 2. Responsibilities

Graduate Council responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Faculty Qualifications. The Graduate Council, via its credentials committee, determines the graduate faculty status of all USM faculty.
- 2) Curriculum and Program Approval. The Graduate Council reviews and recommends action to the Provost regarding new graduate programs and/or program changes. The Graduate Council makes the final decision on proposed new graduate courses, certain course modifications, and course deletions. Matters dealing with professional education programs must first go to the Professional Education Council.
- 3) Disseminating Information. The Graduate Council disseminates information relating to graduate policies and procedures to faculty and appropriate Councils within the University.
- 4) Policies and Procedures. The Graduate Council, via its policies and procedures committee, makes recommendations to the Provost on policies affecting graduate studies at The University of Southern Mississippi.
- 5) Program Review. The Graduate Council, via its program review committee, conducts systematic reviews and evaluations of existing graduate programs.

ARTICLE IV. Members

Section 1. Voting Members

The voting membership of the Graduate Council is composed of one elected faculty representative from each degree-granting unit that has a graduate program. Regular members of the graduate faculty who have successfully completed third-year review are eligible to serve. No more than one representative from any School at any given time may serve. Eligible faculty cannot serve on more than one University faculty body. No School or Center Director shall serve on the Council, nor shall an Associate Dean or Dean serve on the council. Directors of Programs are eligible to serve on the Council.

Section 2. Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members

The University President, the Provost, the Deans of the Academic Colleges, Dean of the Graduate School, a Graduate Student Senate representative, the Dean of the University Libraries, the University Registrar, and the Past-Chair (if not still a voting member) serve as ex-officio, non-voting members.

Section 3. Election and Terms

a. Appointments

Graduate Council faculty members are appointed in March by their School. Each School will administer its own appointments with input from directors and faculty.

b. Terms

Elected Graduate Council members serve three-year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms, although after a term absence from the Council, a faculty member again becomes eligible for two consecutive three-year terms, including summers as necessary. The term begins with the first Fall meeting following the member's election and completes in August.

c. Leaves and Vacancies

An elected member who takes a leave of absence for a semester or more must notify the Chair of the Graduate Council so that another representative may be appointed. If an elected Graduate Council position is vacated for any reason (for example, if the elected member will be absent for a semester or more or fails to appoint a proxy for an absence of a semester or more, the Chair of the Graduate Council may appoint an eligible faculty member from that School to serve out the rest of the term or an election may be held.

Section 4. Responsibilities

Members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Graduate Council, serve on committees if possible, and communicate the issues raised in Graduate Council to their colleges as well as communicating the concerns and opinions of their colleges back to Graduate Council. If an elected Graduate Council representative fails to attend two consecutive regular scheduled meetings of the Council without supplying a proxy, he/she shall be notified in writing by the chair of the Council that his/her position will be declared vacant in the event of a third consecutive absence without a proxy. Upon his/her third consecutive absence with a proxy, his/her position shall be declared vacant by the chair of the Council and filled in the interim by appointment by the Council chair.

Section 5. Proxies

A member may appoint a proxy for one meeting, or for a period of one semester or less, if the member will be unable to attend by submitting the proxy form via email at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to the Recording Secretary. Members of the Council or a proxy may hold only one proxy at a meeting.

ARTICLE V. Officers

Section 1. Officers

The officers of the Graduate Council are the Chair and Chair-Elect.

a. Chair

Any elected member of the Graduate Council is eligible to hold the office of Chair. The Chair-Elect from the previous year becomes Chair. The Chair's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Chairing the meetings of the Graduate Council.
2. Setting the agenda for Graduate Council meetings.
3. Chairing the Graduate Council Executive Committee.
4. Appointing members and chairs of the various standing and ad hoc committees of the Graduate Council.

b. Chair-Elect

Any elected member of the Graduate Council is eligible to hold the office of Chair-Elect. Whoever is elected serves as Chair-Elect in his/her first year and Chair of the Council in the following year. The Chair-Elect's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Assisting the Chair with Graduate Council activities and responsibilities.
2. Chairing the Graduate Council meetings when the Chair cannot do so.
3. Chairing the Graduate Council Executive Committee when the Chair cannot do so.
4. Serving as the chair of one of the standing committees.
5. Becoming Chair of the Graduate Council should the Chair's position become vacant.

Should the Chair-Elect's position become vacant, the Graduate Council will elect a new Chair-Elect at the next meeting.

There will be an ongoing rotation from Chair Elect to Chair to Past Chair in order to ensure continuity in leadership.

c. Corresponding Secretary

He or she takes care of all Graduate Council correspondence and can chair a meeting if the chair and chair-elect are both absent. [Dean of the Graduate School serves as the non-voting Corresponding Secretary].

d. Recording Secretary

The University Registrar serves as Recording Secretary and is a non-voting member. He or she takes minutes during the meeting and distributes the minutes.

e. Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian is appointed by the Chair. If the Parliamentarian is appointed from outside the body of elected Graduate Council members, he or she is a non-voting member.

ARTICLE VI. Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Graduate Council meets monthly from September to November and January to April. The Council will meet in May if the Chair calls a meeting. The meeting is held on the third or fourth Monday of the month. All meetings are open to all university staff and faculty.

Section 2. Special Meetings

The chair may call special meetings as needed. At least one week's notice should be given unless an emergency situation does not permit.

Section 3. Quorum

A simple majority of the voting members of the Graduate Council constitutes a quorum, including those members attending by way of an internet or voice call connection when such attendance is approved by the Chair. In these cases, the members will vote using an email or other electronic communication to the Teller.

Section 4: Standard Agenda

The Standard Agenda below is distributed to Graduate Council members, chairs, deans, and the Provost one week before the regular meeting. Items for the Agenda must be submitted to the Chair at least eleven working days before the regular monthly meeting.

Standard Agenda

Call to Order	Standing Committee Reports
Approval of Minutes	Bylaws Committee
Adoption of Consent Agenda	Credentials Committee
Adoption of Regular Agenda	Policies and Procedures Committee
Course and Program Proposals	Program Review Committee
Unfinished Business	Ad Hoc Committee Reports
New Business	Graduate Student Senate President's Report
Officers' Reports	Graduate School Dean's Report
Chair's Report	Announcements
Chair Elect's Report	Adjournment

Section 5. Minutes

The minutes of the regular meetings are recorded by the Recording Secretary and distributed before the following meeting. Committee reports are summarized in the minutes.

ARTICLE VII Executive Committee

The purpose of the Graduate Council Executive Committee is threefold: (1) to prepare the agenda for the monthly meeting, (2) to develop long range plans to present to the Graduate Council and (3) to assist the dean of the Graduate School whenever requested.

Section 1. Membership

The members of the Executive Committee are the Chair, Chair-Elect, Recording-Secretary, Graduate School representative, and Office of Institutional Effectiveness representative. Chairs of Standing Committees may attend.

Section 2. Meetings

The Executive Committee meets each month prior to the monthly meeting of the Graduate Council to prepare the agenda for the monthly meeting. After each Graduate Council meeting, the Executive Committee meets with the Provost to review the actions of the Council.

Section 3. Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Committee prepares the agenda, initiates action, and oversees long-range planning for the Graduate Council.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees

The Graduate Council has Standing Committees that are composed of Council members and other Regular Graduate Faculty as appointed by the Chair for a one-year term. The committees and their purposes are:

- a. **Bylaws Committee**
The purpose of the Bylaws Committee is to review and recommend revisions of the bylaws when needed. The Bylaws committee also reviews the council membership to ensure each degree-granting unit with a graduate program is represented.
- b. **Credentials Committee**
The purpose of the Credentials Committee is to review and recommend faculty members for graduate faculty status.
- c. **Policies and Procedures Committee**
The purpose of the Policy and Procedures Committee is to review and recommend changes when needed to the policies and procedures for graduate study at the University of Southern Mississippi.
- d. **Program Review Committee**
The purpose of the Program Review Committee is to work with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Graduate School to conduct systematic reviews of existing graduate programs.

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees

The Chair of the Graduate Council may appoint ad hoc committees as deemed necessary and desirable to assist in carrying out the program for the year. Such appointment expires at the end of the year.

ARTICLE IX. Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Graduate Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Council may adopt.

ARTICLE X. Amendment of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote, provided the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting. Amendments to these bylaws must be approved by the Provost and the President.

ARTICLE XI. Dissolution

The University of Southern Mississippi Graduate Council may be dissolved only if two-thirds of its members recommend dissolution to the Provost and the President, both of whom must approve the recommendation.

***Approved April 2011**

***Revised March 2020**

***Revised October 2015**

***Revised February 2021**

***Revised April 2019**

***Revised February 2022**