
Glossary Updated January 2016

Terms Related to Graduate Studies at BYU

Access – authorization to view or update pages in AIM.

Administrative Proceeding – the final hearing of a student academic grievance.

Admission Ceiling – the maximum number of students that may be admitted to a particular program each year.

Admit – 1) to accept an applicant into a particular program; 2) an individual admitted to a graduate program; 3) the designation in AIM given to an applicant who has been accepted to a program.

AIM – (Academic Information Management) BYU's student information system.

Applicant – one who is applying for admission to a BYU graduate program.

Apply Yourself – the system used by BYU for online graduate application management; also the name of the application module. Website: <https://byugrad.askadmissions.net/sso>.

Assistantship – an academic position given to a graduate student by a department that usually carries a stipend and involves part-time teaching or research.

B-1 Visa – visa for business visitors. Applicants with a B-1 Visa are required to return to their country of origin to obtain the F-1 Visa.

B-2 Visa – tourist visa. Applicants with a B-2 Visa are required to return to their country of origin to obtain the F-1 Visa.

BYUGSS – Brigham Young University Graduate Student Society. University-wide organization that includes all BYU graduate students.

Challenge Examination – an examination to evaluate if a graduate student may receive graded credit for a course without enrolling in and taking the class.

Commencement – university graduation ceremony held in April and August.

Comprehensive Examination – examination to assess the competency of a student within his/her program.

Connect – the system used for managing and communicating with prospective applicants, admitted and enrolled applicants.

Contract of Support – contract between an international applicant and another individual agreeing to sponsor the applicant for a specific amount and a specified duration delimited on the contract. The contract of support must be accompanied by a copy of the *sponsor's* bank statements, tax returns, or proof of income. Proposed sponsorship should not exceed 30% of the sponsor's income.

Convocations – college or school graduation ceremonies held in April and August.

Copyright – legal ownership right afforded original creative works including dissertations, theses, and projects.

Courses – classes or seminars in which a student may enroll.

Credit – official recognition that a student successfully completed a course.

Credit Certified by Challenge Examination – graded credit given to a student for successful completion of a challenge examination.

Credit Limit – a limit determined by departments on the number of credits for which a student is allowed to register for in an academic semester or term. University maximum is 22 for a semester and 11 for a term.

Curriculum Committee – university-wide committee responsible for approving new curriculum or curriculum changes.

Defense – (Final Oral Examination) culminating examination experience which usually includes a presentation and justification of a dissertation or thesis. All members of the BYU community are invited to attend the final oral examination, but only members of the graduate committee question the candidate and vote on the candidate's performance. The final oral examination is scheduled in AIM at least two weeks before the defense. The student must have applied for graduation in order to schedule the final oral examination. The examination result is "pass", "pass with qualifications", "recess", or "fail".

Degree – academic title conferred on a student after completing all graduate program requirements.

Deny – decision to recommend that a student not be admitted to a graduate program.

Department Chair – faculty member in each department responsible for department administration.

Dismissal – (Termination of Graduate Status) a student may be terminated from a graduate program for the following reasons: 1) failing to satisfactorily complete conditions of acceptance; 2) failing to meet the annual minimum registration requirement; 3) requesting to withdraw; 4) failing to make satisfactory progress toward a degree; 5) failing the comprehensive examination; 6) failing the final oral examination; 7) violating the standards of the Honor Code; 8) exceeding the time limit; 9) receiving a marginal or unsatisfactory rating in the annual department evaluation and being unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions for continuance outlined by the department.

Dissertation – formal scholarly treatise written by a doctoral candidate.

Doctoral Residency – requirement of doctoral students to register for at least two consecutive 6-hour semesters on the BYU campus.

Doctoral Skill Requirement – requirement of doctoral students related to a particular skill such as developing proficiency in a foreign language, computer programming, mathematics, or statistics.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement – two levels of endorsement are required for graduate applicants. The endorsement interview for LDS applicants is to be completed by the applicant’s bishop and stake president. Non-LDS applicants can either bring a paper copy of the endorsement to their ecclesiastical leader and complete their second level of endorsement with the University Chaplain or they may interview with an LDS bishop and the University Chaplain.

Continuing graduate students need one level of endorsement from their bishop each year as well as when applying for graduation.

Eligibility – (Registration Eligibility) access to register in AIM for a specific semester or term.

Emphasis – focus or track within a degree program. Emphasis does not appear on the transcript.

Enrolled – student currently registered for classes.

Enrollment Status – a designation (full-time or part-time) given to a student based on the number of credit hours for which he/she is registered; full-time status is 8.5 credits per semester (9.0 credits for international students) and 4.5 credits per term.

ETD – (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation) electronic dissertation or thesis submitted to Graduate Studies and the library. ETDs are included in the library digital document collection and are accessible on the World Wide Web.

ETS – (Educational Testing Service) organization responsible for administering entrance examinations including the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Expire – the action taken to make a student’s graduate program inactive.

F-1 Visa – international student visa issued by U.S. consulates or embassies.

F-2 Visa – international student spouse or dependent visa. The spouse and each dependent are issued an individual dependent I-20 which is used to secure the F-2 visa.

Fellowship – money granted for advanced study or research.

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Under this act, students who have not waived their right of access possess the right to see comments written about them only after they have been admitted and are enrolled. FERPA does not apply to unsuccessful applicants and admitted applicants who do not enroll.

Final Oral Examination – culminating examination experience which includes a defense of a dissertation or thesis. All members of the BYU community are invited to attend the final oral examination, but only members of the graduate committee question the candidate and vote on the candidate’s performance. The final oral examination is scheduled in AIM two weeks ahead of the exam. The student must have applied for graduation in order to schedule the final oral examination. The examination result is “pass”, “pass with qualifications”, “recess”, or “fail”.

Financial Aid – financial assistance with education. Financial aid at BYU includes department fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships, short term loans, and Federal Stafford Loans.

Financial Certification – process in which an international student provides proof of financial ability to pay for educational expenses at BYU by completing the GS I-1 form and submitting supporting financial documents. The amount of finances requiring certification depends on the degree program, religion, marital status, and the number of dependents. Generally applicants to master’s programs are required to provide two (2) years of finance documentation and doctoral applicants are required to provide three (3) years.

GMAT – (Graduate Management Admission Test) examination taken by prospective graduate applicants for particular graduate programs including business management, accounting, and public administration.

G-Parking - privilege given by the BYU Traffic Office to graduate students. Eligible students register online to gain access to park in both “G” and “Y” lots.

GPA Requirement – graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA on their Program of Study courses. If a graduate student’s (Program of Study) GPA falls below 3.0, the student will not be allowed to graduate and may be dismissed from the graduate program. No D credit may apply toward a graduate degree.

Graduate Advisor – the term refers to a temporary graduate advisor assigned for a student before the student has chosen a graduate committee chair. The Graduate Advisor may become the Graduate Committee Chair.

Graduate Catalog – annual publication listing graduate programs, available courses, and graduate faculty. Available online in html or pdf.

Graduate Committee – chosen graduate faculty members who have agreed to direct and advise a graduate student through his or her degree requirements including course work and research (the dissertation, thesis, or project).

Graduate Committee Chair – head of the graduate committee that directs and advises a student through all aspects of his/her graduate program.

Graduate Coordinator – a designated graduate faculty member responsible for department graduate program administration.

Graduate Council – council, chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, responsible for establishing policy and maintaining standards of quality in graduate education.

Graduate Faculty Status – designation given to faculty members who have met established university and college criteria. Graduate faculty members design and implement graduate programs and direct graduate students’ scholarly and creative work.

Graduate Handbook – written document detailing department policies and guidelines related to graduate study.

Graduate Minor – a degree component earned by completing graduate-level courses usually outside of the student’s major department.

Graduate Research Fellowship – Graduate Studies-sponsored graduate research award designated to support thesis and dissertation research and creative work. The fellowship is available to Master’s and Doctoral candidates.

Graduate Program Manager – department program manager working with the Graduate Coordinator to handle procedural issues related to student graduate programs.

Graduate Student Society (GSS) – (BYUGSS) university-wide organization that includes all BYU graduate students.

Graduate Studies – office that takes care of the central procedures concerning university admissions to graduate programs and includes advising on policy and procedure, clearing students for graduation, facilitating graduate student evaluations, and monitoring graduate student progress.

Graduation Deferral – a change in the year or term of graduation.

GRE – (Graduate Record Examination) examination taken by prospective graduate applicants consisting of three sections: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing.

GRE Subject Test – examination taken by prospective graduate applicants on a particular subject. Subject tests exist in the following areas: Biochemistry; Cell and Molecular Biology; Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science; English Literature; Mathematics; Physics; and Psychology.

Grievance – (Student Academic Grievance) an academic complaint issued by a student and governed by the Graduate Student Academic Grievance policy.

Honor Code – code of conduct which emphasizes being honest, living a chaste and virtuous life, abstaining from alcohol and tobacco, using clean language, and following other values encompassed in the doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The code is supplemented by additional guidelines on dress, grooming, and housing. All BYU students agree to live by the honor code. Students and applicants attest their willingness to comply with the Honor Code by completing their ecclesiastical endorsement.

GS I-1 – department financial support form

GS I-2 – (Contract of Support) contract between an applicant and another individual agreeing to sponsor the applicant for a specific amount and a specified duration delimited on the contract. The contract of support must be accompanied by a copy of the *sponsor’s* bank statements, tax returns, or proof of income. Proposed sponsorship should not exceed 30% of the sponsor’s income.

I-20 – Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status, issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security after all admission requirements are cleared. Obtaining an I-20 does not guarantee the granting of an F-1 visa.

IELTS - (International English Language Testing System) Test administered to prospective applicants whose native language is not English and who have not earned a baccalaureate degree from an English speaking country.

Imaged – final designation given to a document that has been digitized by Imaging.

Imaging – 1) system used to view imaged documents; 2) the BYU organization responsible for digitizing documents including non-BYU transcripts, application components, and other forms.

In-Process – designation given to an application while it is under consideration.

Interdisciplinary Study - combining multiple disciplines by sharing theory, methodology, and applications. At BYU this requires approvals at the department and college level.

Internship – paid or unpaid applied experience designed to augment academic training. Internships may or may not be taken for credit. Internships may be completed on or off campus.

International Applicant – an applicant who requires an international student visa (F-1 or J-1) to attend BYU.

J-1 Visa – visa for non-immigrants to come to the U.S. for teaching, studying, researching, consulting, demonstrating special skills or receiving training.

Late – designation given an application when it is received after the university application deadline. Departments may choose to designate applications late if they are received after the department application deadline, or if the application is not complete by department deadline.

Letter of Recommendation – letter of endorsement written in behalf of a graduate applicant or admitted student.

LSAT – (Law School Admission Test) examination taken by prospective law school applicants.

Major – approved graduate-degree granting program.

Master's Residency – requirement of master's students to enroll for a minimum of 23 credit hours on BYU campus.

Matriculated Student – student who is active in a graduate degree program and eligible to register for classes.

Matriculation Target – target for the number of students matriculated in a particular program.

Missionary Deferral – deferring the admission start time of an admitted but not enrolled graduate student who is currently serving a mission.

Non-Degree Seeking Students – see Post-Baccalaureate Studies.

Non-Degree Credit – see Post-Baccalaureate Studies Credit.

Oral Defense – (Final Oral Examination) the culminating examination experience which usually includes a defense of a dissertation or thesis. All members of the BYU community are invited to attend the final oral examination, but only members of the graduate committee can question the candidate and vote on the candidate's performance. The final oral examination is scheduled at least two weeks ahead in AIM. The student must have applied for graduation in order to schedule the final oral examination. The examination result is "pass", "pass with qualifications", "recess", or "fail".

Outdated Credit – credit taken outside the time limit for a degree (eight years for doctoral degrees and five years for master's degrees). Outdated credit cannot be applied to a graduate degree except under special circumstances through a petition for exception.

Pearson Vue – organization responsible for administering the GMAT test.

Petition for Exception – petition completed by the graduate committee chair/department on a student's behalf requesting an exception to a Graduate Studies policy or procedure.

Petition for Full-Time Graduate Status – petition for a part-time student who meets specific criteria to be granted full-time status.

Post-Baccalaureate Studies Student – student not currently admitted to a graduate program who is taking courses for credit after earning a baccalaureate degree.

Post-Baccalaureate Studies Credit – credit received by an individual who is not in a graduate degree program after a bachelor's degree is earned.

Prerequisite Course – required class or classes that must be passed before a student may register for a specific course.

Prerequisite Degree – earned degree required in order for an applicant to be admitted to a graduate program. A baccalaureate degree or equivalent is the prerequisite degree for all graduate programs at BYU. Departments may require a master's degree for doctoral degree programs.

Program – approved graduate-degree granting major.

Program Administrator – Graduate Studies' employee familiar with BYU's graduate policies and procedures.

Program Code – unique six-digit number used to designate a field of study (program/major).

Program of Study – list of courses a graduate student must complete and pass in order to fulfill the course work component of the graduate program.

Progress Report – account of a student's academic progress in their program available in AIM.

Project – final culminating practical learning experience required by some departments.

Prospectus – written plan to complete the dissertation, thesis or project. A student’s prospectus must be approved by the graduate committee before the dissertation, thesis or project work formally begins.

Registration Eligibility – designated access to register for a specific semester or term.

Research Presentation Award (RPA) – financial reimbursement award from Graduate Studies for qualified graduate students who travel to present research (administered through BYUGSS).

Residency – see Doctoral Residency or Master’s Residency.

Scholarship – financial aid provided by a department to a student typically based on academic merit.

Secure – designation given to a dissertation or thesis that is not immediately released to the public for patent or proprietary or export control purposes.

Senior Credit – credit earned prior to receiving the bachelor’s degree. In some cases, up to 10 hours of senior credit may be applied to a graduate program, but in no instances may credit apply to both an undergraduate and a graduate degree.

Short Term Loan – loan given by BYU for tuition only which must be repaid during the same semester/term it is borrowed.

Skill Course – course specified by a department to fulfill part of a doctoral skill requirement.

Specialization – specialty area within a major or program. A student’s specialization appears on the official transcript.

Specialization Code – unique six-digit number used to designate a specialization.

Stafford Loan – a loan facilitated by the U.S. government to cover educational expenses. There are two types of loans: 1) subsidized, where the loan is given on the basis of need and the government pays the interest while a student is in school; 2) unsubsidized, a loan where the student pays all the interest, but payments may be deferred until after graduation.

Statement of Intent – personal statement written as part of the application process.

Student Evaluation – evaluation of a graduate student’s progress in his/her graduate program. Must be completed twice a year.

Student Visa – (F-1 Visa) international student visa issued by U.S. consulates or embassies.

Supporting Financial Documents – official (original, certified, attested, or notarized) documents verifying the monetary amounts listed under personal, parent or sponsor, and government agencies, on GS02.

Terminate – a graduate student voluntarily discontinues their graduate work or a department desires to end a student’s graduate program.

Thesis – formal scholarly treatise required in many departments for the completion of the master’s degree.

Time Limit – maximum amount of time allotted for the completion of degree requirements. A doctoral degree must be completed within eight years of the first semester of enrollment. A master’s degree must be completed within five years of the first semester of enrollment.

TOEFL – (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test administered to prospective applicants whose native language is not English and who have not earned a baccalaureate degree from an English speaking country.

Transfer Credit – Credit taken at other accredited universities in the United States or Canada applied to a BYU degree. Transfer credits can only be used as stipulated in the Graduate Studies policy for transfer credit.

UMI – (Universal Microfilming Incorporated) company that digitally archives and publishes dissertations to Dissertation Abstracts International; also known as Proquest.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – U.S. government agency responsible for issuing visas.

Visa – official authorization appended to a passport permitting entry into and travel within a particular country.

Withdraw – 1) admission designation entered in AIM when an applicant withdraws an application or indicates that he or she is unable to accept an offer of admission; 2) the designation of the hold placed on graduate students whose graduate status has been terminated.

Year/Term Code – five digit code that indicates the year and semester (or term). The first four digits refer to the year and the last digit represents the semester or term. Semesters and terms have the following codes: 1 = Winter, 3= Spring, 4= Summer, 5 = Fall. For example the code 20155 indicates the Fall 2015 semester.