

Graduate Program Directors Job Description and Appointment

Job Description

Graduate program directors oversee graduate programs at the certificate, master's and doctoral levels. Graduate program directors guide the curricular process so that the academic standards and learning objectives of their programs emphasize deep comprehension, analysis, synthesis, application of specialized knowledge, and prepare students for applied research, scholarship, and/or professional practice. For those programs that focus on research, program directors promote learning activities that provide students with opportunities to generate knowledge and master theory, content, literature and research methods relevant to their discipline. For those programs that focus on professional practice, program directors promote learning activities that provide students with opportunities to gain broad conceptual knowledge, professional skills, and research experience relevant to their discipline, and to transmit and develop new applications of knowledge.

Program directors:

- Oversee the design and revision of the graduate curriculum for review and approval by university curriculum committees and external agencies
- Promote the quality and currency of the curriculum, learning resources, and learning opportunities
- Guide the course and program assessment processes, including external accreditation and reports
- Responsible for admission review and acceptance of students into their program following program/department policies. Regularly review retention, progression, and graduation of students according to defined university, department, and program requirements
- Coordinate the development, revision, and dissemination of program policies, procedures, and guidelines in accordance with those of the department, college, and university
- Coordinate the advisement process for or directly advise students regarding curricular progression, program and university policies and procedures, and career options
- Oversee maintenance of program documents, records, and web sites for currency and accuracy
- Provide program expertise to Graduate Marketing and University Admissions for promoting the program and recruiting students
- Fulfill other duties associated with individual graduate programs which may include
 - Establishing and monitoring internship contracts and placements
 - Mentoring program faculty

- Conducting advisory board meetings
- Overseeing program awards and recognitions
- Overseeing program related grants
- Establishing community collaborations

Additional responsibilities may be added by the department chairperson with the approval of the college dean and adherence to workload guidelines. Additional guidelines related to program director responsibilities are contained in Appendix A and within the Graduate Program Director Guide

<https://tu.sharepoint.com/sites/gradprogramdirectors/default.aspx> .

The graduate program director reports directly to the department chairperson, program director, or dean of the primary academic college where the program is housed. The dean of the academic college oversees the development, sustainability, and quality of those programs; faculty hiring, appointments, reappointments, and promotion/tenure decisions; and resource prioritization and allocations. The program director consults with the Dean of Graduate Studies regarding university wide graduate policies and procedures and curricular approval processes.

Appointment and Term of Service

Graduate program directors are tenure/tenure-track faculty whenever possible. Other faculty ranks with prior experience in teaching, scholarship, and program management may be considered for the position. The graduate program director must hold graduate faculty status. The dean of the college which houses a graduate program makes the appointment in consultation with the chairperson of the department/program, and forwards the name to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who confirms the appointment in consultation with the Provost. All graduate programs shall have a program director.

The graduate program director serves a three-year, renewable term, which usually begins and ends in August. This period coincides with the Fall start date for faculty teaching contracts. Reappointment is based on the attainment of annual goals related to program directorship that the program director lists on his/her Faculty Annual Report (AR).

If the graduate program director position becomes vacant during the academic year, a new director shall be appointed by the dean of the academic college. The new director may be appointed on an interim basis until a permanent director is found

Some programs, especially those with several tracks or concentrations and/or large numbers of students, may have more than one director or an assistant director. Co-directors also may serve to oversee tracks and/or concentrations. Their terms of appointment and office shall follow those of the directors. These arrangements shall be approved by the dean of the college which houses the program and the dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

Graduate program directors may count their administrative responsibilities toward their University workload as described in Academic Affairs policies. It is recommended that all graduate program directors receive at least a one-course release per AY and depending on size and complexity factors related to the program, the dean of the college which houses the program may offer additional courses releases or a stipend in lieu of and/or in addition to assigned time. As appropriate, the college dean consults with the department chairperson regarding workload issues.

Graduate program directors who are not on twelve-month contracts may serve during the summer on summer contracts with a stipend. The stipend is for 10 hours a week for 12 weeks. The program director shall be available **on-campus** for these hours and have scheduled office hours. Program directors may take vacation time of no more than two sequential weeks without the prior approval of the department chairperson and college dean. If a director needs to be away for a longer period, he/she shall notify the dean of his/her college of such intended absence. The stipend shall be adjusted and the dean of the college may appoint an interim director and arrange for appropriate compensation (time or stipend).

Appendix A Graduate Program Director Guidelines and Procedures

The responsibilities of graduate program directors include admissions, planning and marketing, administration, course development and oversight, advising, graduation clearance, and program evaluation and assessment as described below.

Admissions

Graduate program directors shall use the PeopleSoft Director's Screen to keep track of applicants and shall make admission decisions in a timely manner. Graduate program directors may admit a student who has submitted all university required documents but not all of the additional program specific requirements. Program directors who wish to admit a student who does not meet the full admission requirements may admit a student conditionally, in accordance with published University program guidelines and procedures. They are to notify the student in writing of the terms of the conditional admission and monitor the student's progress towards fulfillment of those terms. Students must fulfill the terms of the conditional admission to be fully admitted into the program. The director shall be responsible for overseeing program procedures for establishing and maintaining files for students' admissions and matriculations. The responsibility for monitoring student progress shall be maintained by the program director.

Unofficial/Official Notification

The director shall send an *unofficial* letter of welcome to newly admitted students with information such as contacts, name of advisor, and program resources. The unofficial letter shall include that the official offer of admission will be sent from University Admissions.

Special Action Admissions

Admissions of international students, specially organized cohort groups, students transferring from other graduate programs within the University or from elsewhere, or others may require special action. Staff of the Division of Academic Affairs, including those in International Admissions and the Towson Learning Network shall assist in these admissions, in consultation with the program director and in accordance with established University, department and college policies and procedures. Applications of international students are screened in International Admissions for degree equivalency and English language proficiency scores. Those candidates cleared are sent to the director for admission consideration.

Advising

The program director is responsible for the academic advising of all graduate students and may delegate this responsibility dependent upon program size. The program director or other faculty shall conduct formal advising of students, using PeopleSoft to keep track of courses taken as the student moves toward completing the requirements of the degree.

Advising may occur face to face, electronically, or by phone, depending upon the request of the student. It is the responsibility of the program director to notify students at least yearly of advising opportunities; it is the responsibility of the student to schedule advising appointments. The student and the advisor shall keep a copy of any special arrangements. Program directors, advisors, and students can access electronic versions of the student's unofficial transcript and class schedules through PeopleSoft to aid in advising.

The program director shall handle special individual problems, such as course failures, interruption of studies, requests for time extensions, issues of international students, complaints, and violations of academic integrity. Policies pertaining to these issues are described in the *Graduate Catalog*. Students are allowed up to seven years to complete a certificate or master's degrees and ten years to complete terminal or doctoral degrees; a one-year extension may be granted by the Office of the Registrar with the director's approval, in accordance with University policies and procedures.. A second year extension may be granted based on extenuating circumstances and requires the approval of the Registrar, program director and dean of Graduate Studies.

The program director shall be familiar with the Graduate Catalog, the Office of Graduate Studies' webpage (<https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/>) and policies, the program description, relevant course descriptions, and appendices. The director shall notify and monitor that faculty and students are aware of policies of grade and course requirements, deadlines, registration, graduation requirements, and other program specific policies and procedures.

Orientation

Graduate program directors welcome new students with a letter (as described above) and organize an orientation meeting to help students become familiar with the program. The Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Students Association also hold a general orientation session at the beginning of Fall and Spring terms for all graduate students, to help them become familiar with university resources. Program directors shall prepare and routinely update a student information handbook for the program, in print or on-line. The program handbook shall outline program specific policies and procedures that are in addition to those described in the Towson University Graduate Catalog. As applicable these include: program admission, progression, completion, and graduation requirements; alternate plans of study; course transfer, approval, substitution, and repetition requests; use of program resources; thesis or dissertation requirements; health and insurance requirements, and background checks; continuous enrollment, re-enrollment, grievance, and grade appeal policies and procedures; ethical and professional standards, and policies and procedures related to internships

Transfer Credits

To secure transfer credit, program directors should advise the student to follow the procedures in the [graduate catalog](#) and complete the form located on the [Office of the Registrar web site](#).

Thesis and Dissertation Information

For programs that include a thesis or dissertation, the graduate program director shall notify both students and faculty thesis advisors each semester about procedures and policies. Towson University Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines are available at: <https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/office/documents/guidelines.pdf>. The program director may add program specific policies and procedures. These are to be published and made available to the students.

Application for Degree Award

Students shall apply for graduation to the Graduation Office near the beginning of the semester in which they expect to graduate. They shall reapply the following semester if they do not graduate as expected. Program directors shall inform and remind students of the application deadlines.

The graduate application shall trigger the process for the approval of the student's certification for the degree award. Certification by the program director confirms that degree requirements have been satisfied. The commencement ceremony may include honors for graduate students, student speakers or banner carriers. The program directors shall nominate students for these honors, if so required. Program directors may serve as commencement marshals or other roles, or sit with other faculty in the ceremony.

Appeals Procedures

The [Graduate Catalog](https://catalog.towson.edu/graduate/procedures-policies/graduate-appeal-processes/) (<https://catalog.towson.edu/graduate/procedures-policies/graduate-appeal-processes/>) outlines the procedures students, graduate program directors, chairs, deans and the Graduate Studies Committee should follow regarding appeals. These include:

- Admissions
- Academic Standing
- Grade Appeals
- Graduation & Time Limits
- Registration & Withdrawal
- Second & Third attempts of a course

Academic Integrity Policy violations should follow the procedures outlined in Appendix F of the graduate catalog: <https://catalog.towson.edu/graduate/appendices/appendix-f-student-responsibilities-rights/>

Curriculum and Course Oversight

Graduate program directors should submit a four-year cycle schedule of course offerings for their graduate program, and update it annually to accommodate for changes in the need for courses. Program directors should submit these schedules to the department

chairperson for approval and inform the students of the schedule so they can make appropriate plans for program completion.

The Department/Program office is responsible for putting courses on the following semester's timetable, with the program director working with the Departmental and/or Dean's Office administrators to make certain that the courses needed for the graduate program are scheduled appropriately. Responsibilities for scheduling include completing the course term file, selecting the instructor, monitoring book order submissions, etc. These usually are done by the Department/Program with the support of the program director.

The director may have a larger role if there are special courses such as internships, cohort or closed courses, off-campus courses, or on-line courses. Such work will begin a semester or more before the course is offered. Program directors collaborate with the department chair to oversee the teaching of the graduate program courses, and assist the instructor as appropriate.

The graduate program director is responsible for monitoring all graduate syllabi so that they reflect acquisition of advanced level knowledge and competences and is consistent with university syllabus best practices:
<https://www.towson.edu/provost/academicresources/fhsyllabusguidelinesforbestpracticespring2021proposal.pdf>

Curriculum Development

The Graduate Program directors shall be the contact for the Office of Graduate Studies in curricular matters related to the graduate program. Approval procedures for new and changes to existing courses and programs are available on the Office of the Registrar web site: <https://www.towson.edu/registrar/cim.html>

When developing, modifying, or terminating programs, the policies and procedures stipulated by the University and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and Towson University curriculum and assessment committees are to be followed. Proposals to develop new programs or substantially modify existing programs include a statement of justification, specific details of its structure, information on faculty and facilities needed, assessment plans and budget charts. Such proposals must be approved at multiple university levels following procedures posted on the Office of the Provost web site: <https://www.towson.edu/provost/academicresources/proposals/>

Program directors should work cooperatively with department chairs, program committees, and other faculty to develop new courses or changes in existing courses. These require the use of the standard curriculum change process in CIM:
<https://www.towson.edu/registrar/cim.html>

Program Assessment and/or Accreditation

Program directors shall develop and implement assessment plans for the graduate programs, in accordance with university policies and procedures. Responsibilities include preparing a list of student learning outcomes, developing techniques to assess the achievement of the student learning outcomes, and preparing reports of assessment. Policies and procedures for program assessment are available at <https://www.towson.edu/assessmentoffice/>.

For programs that are accredited by professional organizations, the program director, working with the department chair and assisted by other faculty, shall coordinate the preparation of reports, portfolios, and other necessary materials, as necessary for accreditation.

Student Governance Participation

Program directors shall nominate students for appointments to committees, awards, honors, scholarship competitions, and announce competitions to students, as requested.

Alumni

After students graduate, the program director shall collaborate with the Alumni Association to maintain contact with the graduates for follow-up and to track their successes. The Alumni Association assists with maintaining accurate addresses of alumni. Program directors are encouraged to provide stories of successful students requested for purposes of recruiting, marketing, and general public relations. Directors should maintain contacts with past students to assist current students in job-seeking and other networking venues.

University Offices Supporting Graduate Programs

The Towson University Admissions Office coordinates general recruitment initiatives and the administrative processes for graduate admissions. Towson University Registrar's Office is responsible for registration, grades, records and transcripts, reenrollment, inter-institutional registration and national exchange programs, veteran's benefits, and graduation. Consistent with its mission, University Marketing and Communications supports graduate programs through marketing initiatives to strengthen their visibility and presence. This includes designing marketing materials and processes for prospective students, web page communications, and media relations