

## **Proposed Change to the Conditional Admission Policy in the Graduate Catalog**

**Sponsor:** George W. Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology;  
Unanimously passed by the Graduate Council on September 17, 2014.

**Motion:** Replace the current policy\* for Conditional Admission in the Graduate Catalog with the attached proposed policy\*\* for Conditional Admission.

\* Attachment A – Current Conditional Admission Policy

\*\* Attachment B – Proposed Conditional Admission Policy

**Commentary/Rationale:** The purpose of this motion is to change the Conditional Admission policy in the Graduate Catalog. Three primary reasons are detailed below.

### **1. Earlier Transition to Regular Admission Status**

For most graduate programs at UALR, 9 credit hours per semester is considered full-time enrollment. In fact, supported students wishing to take any courses that exceed this 9 credit hours maximum are not eligible to receive a tuition waiver for those extra credits taken, and must pay out-of-pocket for tuition on additional credit hours. For this reason, many graduate programs at UALR have set a maximum course load of 9 credit hours per semester.

The current Conditional Admission policy states that students are not eligible for transition to Regular Admission status until after the first 12 credit hours are completed. As a result, many students cannot be removed from Conditional Admission status until after completing two full semesters of coursework. Because students are not eligible to receive financial support (graduate assistantships) from the university while under Conditional Admission status, students originally admitted with Conditional Admission status remain ineligible for financial support until their second year of graduate studies.

This proposed change would allow for review of the Conditional Admission status after the first semester, and, thus, allow students to be eligible for graduate assistantships and other accompanying benefits associated with Regular Admission in their second semester.

### **2. Recruitment and Retention Tool**

Many graduate programs at UALR use graduate assistantships as a primary recruiting and retention tool during the admission process. Students choose to attend UALR because they are offered graduate assistantships, and, likewise, students are not as likely to attend UALR if they are *not* offered graduate assistantships.

Again, the current Conditional Admission policy delays the transition to Regular Admission status to students in their second year of graduate study. Faced with this inability to obtain a funded position, students that may have otherwise wanted to choose UALR for graduate studies will be forced, for financial reasons, to look elsewhere.

Moreover, this proposed change would allow for the delay in possible funding to be reduced to only one semester, instead of an entire academic year.

### **3. Allows for Consideration of Program-Specific Admission Requirements**

The primary change proposed by this new Conditional Admission policy states that a student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 during the first 9 credit hours to be eligible for Regular Admission status. This is a minimum requirement that applies to all graduate students university-wide and will be enforced by the Graduate School.

Clearly, many graduate programs have, or would like to have, the ability to enforce additional requirements on the eligibility of a student to transition from Conditional Admission status to Regular Admission status. Thus, language has been added to this proposed policy change that would allow for graduate programs to add program specific requirements for students to be eligible for transition from Conditional Admission to Regular Admission status.

**Attachment A:**  
**Current Conditional Admission policy in the Graduate Catalog**

**Conditional** (degree-seeking): supplied all admission materials; did not meet all admission requirements. Test scores, grades in the undergraduate major, or other pertinent data must indicate the student will perform satisfactorily in Graduate School. The student will be dismissed during the first 12 hours if GPA is not above 3.0 or satisfactory progress is not being made toward this GPA. Applicants dismissed from, on probation, or otherwise not in good standing in another graduate or post-graduate program will not be admitted. [pp. 19 of the 2013-2014 Graduate Catalog]

**Attachment B:**  
**Proposed Conditional Admission policy**

**Conditional** (degree-seeking): supplied all admission materials; did not meet all admission requirements. Test scores, grades in the undergraduate major, or other pertinent data must indicate the student will perform satisfactorily in Graduate School. *The student will be required to fulfill the condition imposed by Graduate School as well as any other requirements imposed by the graduate program in which the student will be enrolled. The Graduate School condition is: The student has a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during the first 9 graded hours.*

*In computing the above GPA, less than 9 hours cannot be used. A graded hour is defined as a regular, instructor-led course hour, and cannot include a dissertation or thesis research hour, an independent study hour, or a similar non instructor-led course hour. The conditional status of the student will be converted to regular admission only when the above condition and any conditions imposed by the program are met. Regardless of whether the student satisfies one or more conditions, the student will be dismissed during the first 12 9 hours if GPA is not above 3.0 or higher. ~~satisfactory progress is not being made toward this GPA.~~ Applicants dismissed from, on probation, or otherwise not in good standing in another graduate or post-graduate program will not be admitted. All conditions (imposed by the Graduate School and the graduate program) will be stated in the admission letter sent to the student qualifying for conditional admission.*

**Note:** *Italics* indicates new text; ~~strikeout~~ indicates deleted text from the current policy.