



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY

CHARTER OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

I. Mission

The mission of the Graduate School at Vanderbilt University is to promote excellence in research, scholarship, and creative expression such that graduate students and postdoctoral trainees are optimally prepared for successful careers in academia, industry, and related fields. We do so by recruiting the most promising pre- and post-doctoral scholars in a stimulating environment that fosters intellectual growth and development. We emphasize intensive, disciplinary-specific and interdisciplinary training, taking advantage of Vanderbilt's uniquely collaborative and collegial culture. We collaborate with the leadership of the schools/colleges as well as the Offices of the Vice Provosts and Vice Chancellors to ensure operational excellence. The Graduate School ensures the maintenance of the highest academic and professional standards and plays an important advocacy role for graduate students and postdoctoral trainees.

II. Roles of the Graduate School

The Graduate School promotes the education and academic training of all graduate students and postdoctoral trainees and maintains the highest standards. Responsibilities of the Graduate School include:

- a. Assist programs to recruit, admit, and retain the best and brightest cohorts of graduate students.
- b. Monitor and provide oversight regarding accreditation standards for graduate programs.
- c. Establish university-wide policies and procedures that identify requirements and define good practice in all graduate programs.
- d. Ensure accuracy and monitor compliance of the course catalog policies and academic regulations.
- e. Confirm completeness and accuracy of graduate education records, including student records.
- f. Provide support to schools/colleges, departments, and programs that oversee the curriculum of graduate degree programs.
- g. Contribute to and facilitate the review of new academic programs or substantial changes to existing programs in collaboration with deans, associate deans for graduate education, schools/colleges, departments, and programs.
- h. Guarantee continuous improvement in operations and excellence in the efficient delivery of services to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.
- i. Provide resources and support for graduate programs and departmental leadership, faculty, staff, and students.
- j. Foster a collaborative support system across graduate programs.

III. Roles of the Graduate School Programs of Study



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The university's colleges and schools are responsible for the administration and monitoring of Graduate School programs of study. Responsibilities of the graduate programs include:

- a. Assure compliance with Graduate School, university, accrediting agency, and federal guidelines and policies.
- b. Develop program-specific requirements and policies and monitor compliance.
- c. Maintain accurate information on program websites.
- d. Provide updated program information for the catalog to the Graduate School each year.
- e. Promote the career development of promising diverse pre- and post-doctoral scholars with support from the Graduate School.
- f. Develop and deliver innovative program curriculum to create a stimulating environment that fosters intellectual growth and development.
- g. Appoint and approve graduate faculty and student dissertation committees.
- h. Monitor and review student academic progress by conducting periodic degree audits with support from the Graduate School as needed.
- i. Manage and resolve graduate student concerns and complaints, which should first be considered by directors of graduate studies and elevated, as needed, to department chairs, associate deans, and academic deans. The Dean of the Graduate School shall be the final avenue of appeal unless the student pursues the grievance process as set forth in the university [Student Handbook](#).
- j. Refer graduate students to the Graduate School or appropriate resources as needed throughout their program.

IV. Composition of the Graduate School

The Graduate School is led by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School (Vice Provost/Dean) and includes members of the Graduate Faculty, the Graduate Faculty Council, and all graduate programs within the university's colleges and schools.

A. THE VICE PROVOST AND DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Vice Provost/Dean reports to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and provides leadership in the daily operations of the Graduate School and promoting Vanderbilt's graduate education culture by fostering an environment conducive to the highest level of academic success by graduate students. The Vice Provost/Dean oversees the Graduate School and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and partners with and is assisted by the academic deans in executing the following responsibilities:

1. Serve as key resource for all students enrolled in programs granting degrees from the Graduate School, regardless of department/program affiliation, and providing infrastructure and pro-active support that empowers all individual programs to address specific needs, requirements, and excellence.



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2. Coordinate and ensure a range of key common services are available for graduate programs through the Graduate School and the Office of the Provost; including, but not limited to the processing of applications, admissions, registration and enrollment actions, enforcing academic policies, verifying academic requirements and the awarding of degrees.
3. Support the monitoring and recording of academic progress and milestones such as residency, qualifying examinations, candidacy, and defense of theses and dissertations.
4. Ensure excellence in graduate programs through collaborating on cross-college and strategic efforts directed at both recruiting and in providing a supportive environment for academic success for all students.
5. Support graduate education through robust, connected communications platforms, and consistent policies and procedures, wherein all can easily access information regarding resources available across the university for career development, mentoring, responsible conduct of research and research integrity, health and wellbeing.
6. Maintain centralized data to facilitate graduate program collaborations for measuring and assessing impact, utilizing databases for tracking and analyzing metrics and defining benchmarks for accountability, and overseeing best implementation practices.
7. Promote Vanderbilt's graduate education efforts through representing Vanderbilt in national forums, disseminating best-practice innovations led by Vanderbilt, and collaborating with partners on campus, other institutions, and the public at large.

B. THE GRADUATE FACULTY

See [By-Laws](#) for descriptions of the Vanderbilt University Graduate Faculty composition, meetings and requests for consideration of action, and jurisdiction, duties and powers.

C. GRADUATE FACULTY COUNCIL

See [By-Laws](#) for descriptions of the Graduate Faculty Council composition, organization, and jurisdiction, duties and powers, and Graduate Faculty Executive Council description. The membership lists are available on the Graduate School [website](#).