Bond, Chair of the Graduate Council, called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Approval of Minutes
Gowen moved approval of the September 12, 2011, minutes; Willis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Priority Business

Selection of a Graduate Council faculty member representative to the University Assessment Panel for 2011-2013: Therese Clark Arado volunteered to serve on the committee effective January, 2012. The Council unanimously approved her appointment.

Selection of a graduate student representative to the Strategic Planning Workgroup: This group is responsible for reviewing Great Journeys Strategic Planning proposals and making recommendations. Bond asked that nominations be forwarded to him within the next day or so.

Committee Reports

Standards Committee: At the meeting on October 10, 2011, the Standards Committee agreed to various changes in the Graduate Catalog and now recommends them to the Graduate Council for approval. Konen reviewed two documents containing the proposed changes.

The first document contains minor revisions and updates, such as additions of missing information and the new IRB form requirement, deletions of repetitive wording, and department name changes. Bond added that many of the changes have been previously made to the catalog but occurrences in the front matter were not changed. Macdonald commented on the new requirement that all theses and dissertation students must file an IRB inquiry form. Bond stated that it is a one-page form and, if approved, would take effect next August. He justified the requirement by pointing to the number of theses and
dissertations that are delayed each year because they lack IRB approval. Bond added that the purpose of the form is to serve as a conversation-starter for students and directors to discuss whether or not IRB approval is needed.

Willis asked if there would be consequences for students who clearly do not need IRB approval but did not file the form. Bond stated that Graduate Council would need to have a conversation in the near future about possible blanket exemptions for some programs, such as Physics and, perhaps, Engineering.

Macdonald moved approval of the revisions in the first document that begins with the “Admission to Graduate Study” section in the Graduate Catalog; Morris seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (See attached document.)

Konen stated that the proposed changes in the second document, “Grading System,” are a carryover from last year. He discussed the history of the proposal, which originated with a Faculty Senate report on plus/minus grading.

The Standards Committee reviewed information Bond provided with regard to what other institutions are doing and made the proposed changes to the “Grading System” section of the catalog, which has been revised to incorporate the plus/minus grading system. Konen reviewed the document and stated that the committee as a whole did not support an A+/4.33 GPA or the plus/minus grading for grades that fall below a C- since those grades are considered not passing at the graduate-level.

Council members discussed the decision not to implement the A+/4.33 GPA, as well as the effects of a plus/minus grading system on GPAs. Willis stated that the grading system issue has been discussed at the Faculty Senate for a number of years and, at the undergraduate-level, there was a thorough study of institutions that switched their grading system, either way, which resulted in no net effect on GPAs. Abdel-Motaleb commented that the net change would affect individuals as opposed to the university as a whole. He stated his strong support of the new grading system, but expressed concern about the B-/2.67 GPA being listed with the “Satisfactory” descriptor. Willis agreed that a B- should be lowered to the “Marginal” category, which was strongly supported by other members of Council. There was also discussion about the ambiguity of the descriptors used for the level of grade performance and about whether or not they were even necessary. Bond explained that it was very typical to use those sorts of words to describe the level of performance and suggested that descriptors should probably not be abandoned altogether.

Abdel-Motaleb questioned the scale of S/U grading. He stated that there needed to be clarification so that faculty know that assigning a grade of S means a student is at the level of B or above. Bond directed Abdel-Motaleb to the statement at the bottom of the page about S/U grading. He stated that the ISBE is requesting clarification of S/U grading for students seeking certification or endorsements. The proposed statement reads, “A grade of S indicates that the student has performed at a level equivalent to at least a C.” Abdel-Moteleb stated that it was a contradiction to the proposed grading system and should be changed to B. Macdonald agreed and asked if the Standards Committee had discussed it. Bond stated that the committee was responding to the ISBE requirement,
and did not discuss that issue. Morris commented that the ISBE is largely concerned about field work classes required for teacher certification. She stated that students should be doing A/B work at that point in their program. Umoren agreed and expressed support for the change to a B. Beeson argued that an S being equivalent to a C or better contradicts the regular grading scale and the “Satisfactory” performance required of graduate students in order to maintain the GPA and remain in a program. Abdel-Motaleb commented that the S grade for a thesis course could come into question if the grade is considered to be equivalent to at least a C, which is considered “Unsatisfactory.” Bond stated that these were all compelling reasons for changing the minimum letter grade equivalent for a grade of S.

Konen directed Council members to the section, “Special Repeat Option,” and the revised statement, “The special repeat option is available only for graduate courses in which a grade below a B- was attained.” He asked members whether or not that needed to be changed. Konen suggested that the change to B- should be stricken from the proposal.

Beeson asked if the “Deficient” descriptor could be expanded into the “Marginal” category since a student is still considered deficient even if he or she passes the class. Macdonald responded that “Marginal” grades still count for credit, whereas a grade of D does not. Konen reminded members that the current proposal moves a C- into the “Deficient” non-credit earning category. There was some confusion amongst members about the descriptor for the C-. For clarification purposes, it was suggested that there be a line drawn above the C- in the “Deficient” category and a line between grades D and F.

Willis stated that her recollection was that grades of D were rare. Bond stated that he obtained information before the Standards Committee met and was surprised to learn that there were 35 grades of D in each of the two previous semesters.

Macdonald moved approval of the “Grading System” document with the following amendments: 1) Move the “Satisfactory” line up to exclude the B-; 2) Include C- and D as “Deficient;” 3) Change the statement at the bottom of page one to indicate that the grade of S is equivalent to at least a B, and 4) On page two, “Special Repeat Option,” strike the proposed change to a B- and leave the statement as is. Morris seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (See attached document.)

Curriculum Committee: In Bennardo’s absence, Bond presented the October 10, 2011, Curriculum Committee minutes for approval. The proposed changes include the addition of the new master’s program in Engineering, the Master of Science in Integrated Systems Engineering, as well as various changes related to the Department of Teaching and Learning name change. The committee returned two items to the Department of Philosophy for clarification. (Curriculum Committee minutes and catalog changes are available at: http://www.niu.edu/provost/curriculum/committeeminutes.shtml.) Willis moved approval; Zittel seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Fellowship Committee: Bond reported on the thesis and dissertation awards. The thesis prize went to Ryan Manow in the Department of Biological Sciences. His thesis was also submitted for consideration in the MAGS competition. The dissertation prize went to
Zhenzhen Yang in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Recipients and departments have been notified.

**Graduate Faculty Membership Committee:** Bond reported on the October 7, 2011, Graduate Faculty Membership Committee meeting. The committee reviewed criteria for three programs:

Nursing and Health Studies was formed by the merger of Public Health/Health Education and Nursing. Criteria was taken from the two areas and combined to form the new criteria. The committee asked the department to consider changing the proposed seven-year review cycle to a standard eight-year cycle since it is tied to program review in the APPM. The department agreed to the change and has revised its criteria accordingly.

Public Administration made some fairly minor changes to its standards. The committee asked the division to consider including APPM language in the provisional qualifications with regard to personal research or artistry. The division agreed to the change and made the minor revision to its criteria.

Special and Early Education is a new department born out of the reorganization of the former Department of Teaching and Learning. The department is using the same criteria as Teaching and Learning and simply changed the name references.

Hathaway moved approval; Morris seconded, which carried unanimously.

**New Business**

**Debt Ceiling Act of 2011 and Federal Financial aid for Graduate/Professional Students:** Bond stated that he wanted to share the information he distributed to chairs and graduate directors earlier in the semester about federal financial aid for students. In early August, President Obama signed the Debt Ceiling Act of 2011. It effectively removes graduate and professional students from eligibility for the subsidized portion of Stafford Loans. The chart distributed provides an estimate of the consequences for this legislative change. Doctoral students who take the maximum loan at the unsubsidized rate will pay approximately $100 more per month for 20 years than they would if they received $8,500 in subsidized loans each year. All graduate students will be affected by this change, which takes effect in summer, 2012.

Bond encouraged representatives to share the report with students.

Macdonald inquired about the exemption for initial teacher certification students. Bond stated that the application of the law needs clarification by the U.S. Department of Education.

**Graduate Student Travel:** Sagarin wanted to discuss graduate student travel grants, but had to leave the meeting to teach. Therefore, he requested that the discussion take place at the next meeting. The topic will be on the next Graduate Council agenda.
Announcement

*Honorary Degree Call for Nominations:* Bond announced that the Honorary Degree Call for Nominations was distributed in October. The deadline for nominations is December 16, 2011. He asked members to share the information.

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.
Admission to Graduate Study

Application for Admission

Students who wish to take graduate course work but not pursue a degree program . . .

The Graduate School requires degree-seeking applicants to submit the following materials:

- the application and application fee
- letters of recommendation,
- official test scores (GRE, MAT, or GMAT scores as appropriate; international students must also submit TOEFL or IELTS scores),
- a statement of purpose, and
- official transcripts from all institutions attended.

Departments and programs may require additional supporting materials. Consult the appropriate departmental section of the catalog.

The applicant must arrange to have letters of recommendation submitted directly to the Graduate School in support of the application. . . . Applicants uncertain of the suitability of particular individuals as writers of recommendations should consult with the head of the department or program to which they are applying.

Applicants for admission to the Graduate School assume all responsibility for the completion of their admission files; the Graduate School assumes no obligation to inform them about erroneous or missing credentials. [Move this paragraph to the end of the Application for Admission section.]

Graduate assistantships are normally awarded to begin in the fall semester. . . . This application should be submitted directly to the department or other unit in which the applicant wants to work, and not to the Graduate School. [Move this paragraph to the end of the Application for Admission section, preceding the paragraph above.]

An applicant who holds a baccalaureate degree from a college or university other than Northern Illinois University, or who has engaged in graduate study elsewhere, must submit official transcripts showing each such degree and all graduate work as part of the application materials. . . .

Students submitting credentials written in languages other than English are also required to submit an official English translation. Copies of either originals or translations, even if notarized, are not considered official.

An applicant whose native language is not English . . .
An applicant whose native language is not English must present a satisfactory score for either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), as indicated below under “Examinations Required for Admission.”

Applicants must submit a Statement of Purpose. The statement should be a concise essay that describes the applicant’s interest in the proposed field of study and his/her reasons for wishing to undertake graduate study at NIU. Specific advice about constructing a Statement of Purpose can be obtained on the Graduate School webpage and through consultation with faculty in the department or program to which the applicant seeks admission.

The Graduate School scrutinizes application materials to determine their authenticity and legitimacy. Any applicant who provides information either on the application or in supporting materials that misrepresents his/her previous experience or ability to succeed in graduate school will be denied admission. If the student is enrolled when such a discovery is made, the student’s admission will be terminated immediately.

**Justification:** The first bolded paragraph provides a concise list of universally-required application materials. The second bolded paragraph comments on the Statement of Purpose. The third bolded paragraph clarifies the ramifications of submitting falsified application materials. The statement about the truthfulness of an application is one to which applicants attest at the point of submission.

**Admission Procedures for International Students**

An international student residing in the U.S. may meet the application deadlines specified for domestic students. If seeking admission for the fall semester, such a student must submit the application form by November 1 and all supporting materials by December 1. An international student who is enrolled as an undergraduate at NIU or who has permanent resident alien status in the U.S. is required to meet only the application deadlines specified for domestic students, and may be considered for admission for the summer session.

A student seeking an F-1 or J-1 visa must also submit the financial statement and demonstrate adequate financial resources before an I-20 or IAP-66 DS 2019 form will be issued.

**Justification:** The Graduate School holds all non-immigrant applicants residing in the U.S. to the domestic student deadlines. Electronic processing of applications and SEVIS reporting allows the Graduate School to use the later deadline. The IAP 66 no longer exists; it has been replaced by the DS 2019.

**Notification of Admission**
Individual programs and departments make admission recommendations to the Graduate School; the Graduate School makes the admission decision. The official notification of admission is a letter sent to the applicant by the Graduate School. Correspondence from individual departments or programs does not constitute official notice of admission.

**Justification:** The original language noting that official notification of admission comes from the Graduate School intimates that the Graduate School makes final decisions on admissions. That has certainly been the practice over the years, as Graduate School staff enforces minimum admission requirements and insists on appropriate justifications for those decisions. The proposed language clarifies the process. Over the past several months, it has become apparent that we need this language to clarify processes. We (and testing agencies) have experienced a wave of falsified admission documents, some of which are only discovered after a file has been sent to a department for review.

**Early Admission of NIU Undergraduates**

Application for early admission is made through the Graduate School. If a student is granted early admission and fails to graduate from the baccalaureate program at the end of the term for which early admission was granted, admission to the Graduate School will be terminated.

Students receiving early admission are ineligible to receive graduate assistantships or graduate tuition waivers. Their eligibility to receive financial aid and scholarships may be adversely affected by early admission. Students admitted early are admonished to consult a financial aid or scholarship counselor prior to enrolling in graduate level courses.

**Justification:** We are offering some clarifying facts. Although we can talk about early admits begin graduate students, they are not classified that way by the State of Illinois or the Federal government. They are not eligible for financial aid. Any tuition waiver scholarship offered counts against the 3% cap for undergraduate waivers, as these students are not considered by NIU accounting processes to be graduate students.

**Matriculation; Deferral of Admission**

U.S. Social Security numbers are required for registration purposes. New international students and any students, who cannot initially provide a U.S. Social Security number, are assigned temporary identification numbers by the Graduate School, but should obtain a permanent number from a Social Security office as soon as possible. New international students may obtain Social Security numbers as part of the orientation program prior to the start of the semester.

**Justification:** Social security numbers are not required for registration purposes. The rules and methods for international students to obtain a social security number are determined by the federal government, not NIU. IFSO provides sufficient information
about obtaining social security cards, and there is no need to attempt to track such changes in the graduate catalog.

Termination of Admission; Retention

Graduate students who are academically dismissed lose their status as graduate students, even if they have previously earned a graduate degree at NIU.

Justification: The Graduate Catalog once said that a graduate student who graduated was automatically classified as a graduate student (technically, an SAL) in perpetuity. We eliminated the graduate student not in a degree program classification some years ago, but missed this reference in the catalog.

Enrollment for Graduate Study as a Student-at-Large

. . . In order to receive permission to register as a student-at-large, an individual must . . .

- submit to the Graduate School a completed application for permission to register as a student-at-large (http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/apply/atlarge.shtml), and
- provide documentation (e.g., unofficial transcripts) that the applicant holds a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited institution (or the equivalent from a recognized institution outside the United States). An official transcript documenting the completion of a baccalaureate or higher degree must be submitted within one month of matriculation as a student-at-large.

A student permitted to register as a student-at-large who fails to provide an official transcript as described above will not be permitted to enroll for more than one term. The student will remain ineligible for further registration, or for issuance of NIU transcripts, until the required degree transcript is received, and cannot expect any credit for work undertaken during the period of ineligibility for registration. If it is subsequently discovered that the necessary degree was not earned prior to the start of the term for which the student enrolled as a student-at-large, the student will lose any graduate credit earned during that term and, unless the student has an undergraduate status at NIU, will have all enrollment for that term dropped.

Justification: The Graduate School does not require official transcripts for SALs to continue taking classes.
General Regulations

Advisory System

Each student is assigned by his or her major department an adviser or advisory committee whose purpose is to guide the student’s studies and recommend him or her for the degree when the student is properly qualified. The departmental adviser(s) may be indicated in the student’s letter of admission from the Graduate School, or assigned later.

The official program of courses is formulated by the student in consultation with the assigned adviser or advisory committee. See “The Official Program of Courses” for details on the preparation and submission of the program of courses.

A program of study is formulated by the student in consultation with the departmentally- assigned advisor or advisory committee. See “The Program of Study” for details.

Justification: For some time, letters of admission have not included an adviser’s name. The program of courses has been replaced by the DPR in MyNIU.

Academic Integrity

. . . the faculty member shall notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken, and the University Judicial Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct shall receive . . . . In all matters where the charge of academic misconduct is disputed . . . the faculty member shall refer the matter to the University Judicial Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct. . . . Additional sanctions greater than an F in a course can be levied only through the University Judicial Office System of due process established and overseen by the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct.

Justification: A name change is noted.

Removal of Deficiencies

Departments or programs may identify course work deficiencies and require an admitted student to satisfactorily complete such course work prior to enrolling in courses applicable to a program of study that leads to a graduate degree. Courses may be listed as deficiencies either in the letter of admission to the Graduate School or on the program of courses. Students are encouraged to remove such deficiencies as early in the program of study as possible.

Justification: Admission letters do not contain references to deficiencies. Departments are responsible for communicating deficiencies. Most departments, though not all, no
longer list or enforce deficiencies; conditional admission provides an alternative method for addressing deficiencies.

Course Load

For a graduate student in a degree program, this approval must be obtained, in advance, from the student’s major department; for a student-at-large, or a graduate student not in a degree program, the prior written approval of the office of the dean of the Graduate School is required.

For the purposes of full-time enrollment certification to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the United States Department of Homeland Security, international students in F-1 and J-1 status pursuing doctoral degrees registered for 3 semester hours will be considered full-time once a program of courses is received by the Graduate School confirming that all course work except 799 (dissertation) is complete and that continuous enrollment in 799 has begun.

Justification: There are two changes. First, the Graduate Catalog once said that a graduate student who graduated was automatically classified as a graduate student (technically, an SAL). We eliminated the graduate student not in a degree program classification some years ago, but missed this reference in the catalog. Second, programs of courses have been replaced by the DPR.

Variable Course Hours; Repeatability of Courses

If a graduate-level student wishes to repeat an undergraduate course for credit, the student must have the approval of the department offering the course. In addition, if the course is a deficiency for the student’s major program, whether specified in this catalog or in the student’s letter of admission or program of courses, the student must also obtain the approval of the major department to repeat the course.

A student who has taken a course at the 400-level undergraduate-level, may take the same titled course at the 500-level graduate-level under the following circumstances:

A graduate student in a degree program must secure permission from his or her major department prior to enrollment in the course; or
A student-at-large must obtain approval of the department offering the course and of the office of the dean of the Graduate School;
A student pursuing teacher certification who needs to take such a course for graduate credit to meet a certification requirement may do so with the approval of the department in which authority for that certification resides.
**Justification:** In re: the first paragraph, graduate students cannot take undergraduate courses for credit. This is a reference to the old starred courses. In re: the second paragraph, the absence of a unified system for linking 400- and 500-level courses means that some 400-level courses have the GRAD-level equivalent at the 600-level.

**Special Repeat Option**

... Enrollments resulting in recorded grades of In, NG, NR, WF, or WP, or O (audit) which are not instructor-assigned, enrollments for audit (no credit), cannot be counted as repeats under this policy.

**Justification:** We are far enough away from the old grading system to no longer require reference to the old grades. Any student with the old grades on his/her transcript is subject to the policies in the catalog under which he/she falls.

**Drop of or Withdrawal from a Course**

... For each graduate course in which a student is doing passing work (C or better in a graduate course) at the time of withdrawal, as assessed by the instructor, a WP will be received; for any course in which the instructor determines that the student is not doing passing work, a WF will be assigned. If the instructor does not make an assessment of whether the student is passing or failing, a WP will be received...

Students who fail to notify the Graduate School in writing of their intent to withdraw from the university, or who fail to withdraw from a course or from the university in accordance with established procedure and by the established withdrawal deadline, may will receive an F in any affected course(s).

**Justification:** Three changes are made here. The first crossed-through text recognizes that the Graduate School has been out of the business of assigning grades to students. The second crossed through text recognizes the fact that the Graduate School does not need to know if a student is withdrawing from the university. Knowing that always allowed withdrawals to be marked in the Student Information System in such a way as to provide a larger refund to the student. Our late schedule update forms, however, ask if a withdrawal will constitute a university withdrawal. The final highlight is rhetorical.

**S/U and IP Grading**

...
IP is a neutral grade – that is, the grade does not carry quality points – but IP grades awarded for 699 and 799 count toward the completion of a degree. stipulated by the program of courses

**Justification:** The disappearance of the program of courses necessitates the change.

**Academic Standing**

...in re: calculation of the GPA
Courses in which a student has received I, IN, NR, O, OW, S, WF, or WP are not included in this computation.

... Following any academic term at the end of which the cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.00, the student will be considered on academic probation. A student on academic probation who fails to bring the GPA to the required level of 3.00 upon the completion of an additional 9 semester hours of graduate work, excluding S/U course work but including course work for which a grade of IN or NG I has been recorded, or upon enrollment in any course work in 3 subsequent terms, will be academically dismissed from the Graduate School. A student on probation who has registered for but not completed 9 or more such additional semester hours, or has enrolled in three terms following the term for which the student was placed on probation, will not be permitted further registration until all grades of I and NR have been removed and the student has achieved good academic standing.

... Some programs have higher performance expectations for undergraduate deficiency courses or courses required to remove conditions of admission, which may be specified in this catalog or in the student’s letter of admission to the Graduate School. Programs communicate such expectations to the student in writing.

**Justification:** Updating a few facts.

**Certificates of Graduate Study**

To pursue a certificate of graduate study, a student must be admitted to the Graduate School or to the graduate-level classification of student-at-large, and must have the approval of the individual responsible for administration of that certificate. Only courses taken at NIU for graduate credit may be applied toward a certificate. Some certificate programs may allow NIU law classes to apply toward a certificate, and law courses, provided they do not constitute more than one-half of the credits applied to a certificate, may satisfy certificate requirements when grades of Satisfactory or Credit are achieved. A GPA of at least 3.00 must be earned in the course work used toward the certificate, all of which must be completed within six years immediately preceding awarding of the certificate.
Justification: The Law School and Women’s Study Program are soon to propose a cooperative Certificate of Graduate Studies. The programs have requested the change to encourage graduate students to take law classes: the culture of the law school makes receipt of grades of “C” fairly common, which remains a grade anathema to graduate student happiness. However, at the same time, law classes can be taken for satisfactory or credit marks, and the programs want to encourage the students to do pursue the certificate.

Protective Standards in Research

Protection of Human Subjects

Any Northern Illinois University student or faculty or staff member who proposes to undertake research involving human subjects is required by federal and university regulations to seek approval for the project from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies’ Graduate School’s research compliance office. . . .

Departmental review forms and the Application for Approval to Use Human Subjects in Research may be obtained from most departmental offices or from the research compliance office within the Graduate School Division of Research and Graduate Studies. (See www.orc.niu.edu.) Applicants are responsible for providing the information requested on the forms, for securing the required approval signatures, and for seeing that the completed, signed forms are received by the Graduate School research compliance office. If research involving human subjects is part of a student's degree requirements, then to ensure eligibility for graduation, the student is urged to complete these required forms as soon as possible after the topic and protocols of the research have been determined. In no case should research involving human subjects begin before all necessary institutional approvals have been given. Questions concerning human subjects review may be directed to the student's faculty adviser or department chair, or to the research compliance office in the Graduate School.

Justification: These are corrections of fact.
Requirements for Graduate Degrees
Masters

Limitation of Time

... The student must fulfill all requirements for a degree within the six consecutive years immediately preceding the date of the student’s graduation from that degree program. This time limit applies to enrollment in all graduate course work in the student’s program used to satisfy degree requirements including work for which transfer credit is allowed.

Justification: Programs of courses for students enrolled Fall 2008 and later are no longer submitted to the Graduate School, as we use the DPR to monitor progress toward degree.

Course Number 699

A student who has formally begun the thesis or its equivalent must register in course number 699 in each subsequent term until the thesis or equivalent is submitted to and formally approved by the Graduate School. ... After a student has registered for the maximum number of hours of credit that can be earned in a course numbered 699, he or she should register as an auditor in 699 each term until the thesis receives final Graduate School approval.

Justification: Requiring students to register for audit credit when writing a thesis or dissertation prohibits their receipt of federal financial aid. In practice, the set-up in MyNIU allows students to register for up to 99 hours of 699, but we neglected to alter the catalog.

Requirements for the Degrees
Doctor of Education
Doctor of Philosophy

... Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees are offered in art education, biological sciences, chemistry, economics, English, geography, geology, history, mathematical sciences, physics, political science, and psychology, through the corresponding departments.

Justification: New degrees have been added recently. The program list was updated in other places but not here.

Admission

Normally a student applying for admission to a doctoral program will be expected to have completed both baccalaureate and master’s degrees. A student with a baccalaureate degree may, with the
approval of the department, be admitted directly into a doctoral program unless otherwise specified in
the appropriate departmental section of this catalog. No student will be admitted to doctoral work
unless the undergraduate and graduate records indicate ability to do work of high quality in the field
chosen. See also “General Requirements for Admission to the Graduate School.”

Admission to doctoral work in a specific department may also require passing whatever
entrance tests, screening devices, or interviews are required by the individual department.
Some programs have earlier application dates than those of the Graduate School; consult the
sections of this catalog describing the individual programs.

**Justification:** This level of information about “admissions” belongs in the admissions section of
the catalog, not the degree requirements section.

**Requirements for Graduate Degrees**

**Masters**

**Thesis**

. . .

A student writing a thesis must file an IRB Inquiry Form as soon as a research topic is identified
but no later than the end of the first week of classes of the semester or term in which the
student intends to defend the thesis. Forms are available on the Graduate School website.
When thesis research involves human subjects, . . .

**Justification:** Through this addition to the catalog, we will be requiring that all thesis
writers complete a form establishing whether or not IRB approval is required for their
thesis. IRB approval is required for any research project that involves human or animal
subjects. Completion of the form ensures that students and faculty have had discussions
about the IRB requirements well in advance of completing the thesis. Over the past two
years, we are encountering more theses and dissertations(4-5) than in the past that are
held up because they needed approval and the authors never sought it.

**Requirements for the Degrees**

**Doctor of Education**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Dissertation Requirements**

A student writing a dissertation must file an IRB Inquiry Form as soon as a research topic is
approved but no later than the end of the first week of classes of the semester or term in which
the student intends to defend the thesis. Forms are available on the Graduate School website.
When thesis research involves human subjects, . . .
**Justification:** Through this addition to the catalog, we will be requiring that all thesis writers complete a form establishing whether or not IRB approval is required for their thesis. IRB approval is required for any research project that involves human or animal subjects. Completion of the form ensures that students and faculty have had discussions about the IRB requirements well in advance of completing the thesis. Over the past two years, we are encountering more theses and dissertations than in the past that are held up because they needed approval and the authors never sought it.
\textbf{Grading System}

The Graduate School grading system applies to all graduate students taking courses for graduate credit.

The graduate grade point average (GPA) is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credit hours that a student has taken in NIU courses earning grade points. In no case are NIU courses taken for undergraduate or law credit or transfer courses included in the computation of the graduate GPA. Grades and their grade point values are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Earning Graduate Credit</th>
<th>Level of Grade Performance</th>
<th>Points Per Semester Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for courses graded S/U</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Not Earning Graduate Credit</th>
<th>Level of Performance</th>
<th>Grade Points Per Semester Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Deficient</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Seriously deficient</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Un satisfactory</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for courses graded S/U</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other transcript entries, with their definition, include the following.

- I–Incomplete (see also following section on “Incompletes”)
- IP–In Progress
- WP–Passing at time of withdrawal
- WF–Failing at time of withdrawal
- O–Audit; no grade and no credit

Students doing less than satisfactory work will be assigned the grade of D, F, or U. Graduate credit is given only for those courses in which a grade of S, or C or better, is earned. A grade of S indicates that the student has performed at a level equivalent to at least a B.
**Justification:** In response to the Faculty Senate’s report (Spring 2011) calling for a +/- grading system and in response to the sense of the Graduate Council articulated at Spring 2011 meetings, the Standards Committee recommends the above changes to the grading system for graduate-level courses. Primarily, a +/- grading system will allow faculty to make better distinctions about the performance of students in classes. The system presented reflects widely used grading systems. The Committee rejected as anomalous the Faculty Senate recommendation to assign an A+ 4.33 quality points, and determined that including A+ and A grades, both worth 4.0 quality points, was a practice not typical at other institutions. Additionally, the committee does not recommend assigning D+ and D- grades quality points, as the D is considered a failing mark. Tying a passing mark to 2.0 quality points, the committee recommends that C (not C-) constitute the lowest passing mark.