

Request to Modify Hour Restrictions in Graduate School Policy
Research and Proposal authored by: Dr. Britto Nathan, Biological Sciences
Co-authored by: Dr. Melanie Burns, Family and Consumer Sciences
and Dr. Melinda Mueller, Political Science

Requested Changes to Graduate School Policy

Request #1: To *increase* the 4750-4999 hours that may be applied to degree programs from **10** semester hours to **12** semester hours.

Current Graduate Catalog Policy:

4750-4999 Hour Restrictions: A maximum of **10 semester hours** of courses numbered 4750 to 4999 may be applied to degree programs.

Proposed Graduate Catalog Policy:

4750-4999 Hour Restrictions: A maximum of **12 semester hours** of courses numbered 4750 to 4999 may be applied to degree programs.

Request #2: To *decrease* the minimum number of semester hours in courses numbered 5000 or higher from **22** hours to **20** hours.

Current Graduate Catalog Policy:

5000 Level Semester Hours: A minimum of 22 semester hours of the 32-hour non-thesis option must be in courses numbered 5000 or higher. A minimum of **20** semester hours of the 30-hour thesis option must be in courses numbered 5000 or higher.

Proposed Graduate Catalog Policy:

5000 Level Semester Hours: A minimum of **20** semester hours of the 32-hour non-thesis option must be in courses numbered 5000 or higher. A minimum of **18** semester hours of the 30-hour thesis option must be in courses numbered 5000 or higher.

Rationale for Change

- Graduate students would benefit from taking an additional 2 hours of 4750-4999 coursework. These courses often focus on practical and technical application courses, further

developing students' professional skills. These courses maintain the rigors and expectations of graduate-level learning.

- Graduate students would have additional course choices, given the reduced offering of graduate level classes due to graduate faculty attrition in most departments.
- The proposal provides flexibility to meet the needs of our changing student demographics.
- This restriction has been waived several times in the past using the standard waiver procedure. This policy revision would eliminate paperwork, and reduce administrative duties.
- This change would bring us closer to the guidelines established at regional peer institutions.
 - The following institutions allow half of graduate study program to come from courses enrolling both undergraduate and graduate students: Indiana State, SIU-Carbondale, SIU-Edwardsville, Northern Illinois, Western Illinois, and Illinois State.
 - The Higher Learning Commission Policy (Section 1.B.c) recommends that at least half the credit earned for a graduate degree is in courses designed only for graduate students. This proposed change would meet that recommendation.