

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

SES Graduate Academic Policies

Academic Advising

Each active graduate student is to have an academic advisor throughout the period of graduate study. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies serves as the primary academic advisor for all SES MESS Professional Track and Graduate Certificate students and as the primary administrative advisor for SES MESS Research Track students. Faculty Thesis Advisors serve as the primary academic advisor to their individual Research MESS students. The Graduate Program Director (GPD) serves all of the MESS Research Track students administratively in thesis documentation, preparation, and defense. See Appendix A: "Instructions for Registration, Thesis Preparation, Thesis Defense, and Graduation" for details.

The relationship between advisor and advisee is reciprocal and requires mutual effort in the planning and execution of all aspects of the student's progress. The faculty academic advisor, as a mentor, is to be diligent in providing guidance by being available for regular consultation and by working with the student in scheduling regular meetings of the thesis/dissertation committee should this type of written work be required for the degree.

The student is responsible for actively seeking the guidance of the faculty advisor and, when appropriate, the thesis/dissertation committee members, for all matters pertaining to the student's progression through the program including degree completion.

Academic Grievance

The University's commitment to the care of the individual person is the foundation for a grievance process that affords students the opportunity to have a review of circumstances that impact their academic standing or progress at the University. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to attempt to informally resolve problems arising from academic matters. Open communication between all parties and mutual respect can lead to the resolution of a number of conflicts. When informal attempts at resolution fail, the management of academic grievances involving SES Graduate students is to proceed according to the formal procedures set forth below. All students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect throughout any interaction with the academic appeal process.

Jurisdiction

A graduate students faculty, staff, or administrator may invoke these procedures when academic grievances arise. Academic grievances include dismissal from a program as well as those that arise from matters involving scholarly competence and ethical scholarly behavior. Issues regarding evaluation of students, cheating on examinations, falsification or misrepresentation of research data and plagiarism are included within the meaning of "academic."

Allegations of misconduct in the design, conduct or reporting of research supported by federal funds shall be overseen through the procedures described in the university's policy (<https://www.luc.edu/ors/misconductscholar.shtml/>) concerning misconduct in scholarship published by the Office of Research Services.

Problems arising from non-academic matters fall within the jurisdiction of the university's Office of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. In cases in which the jurisdiction is unclear or mixed, the Dean of SES and the vice president for student development will determine the appropriate jurisdiction.

The academic grievance procedure based on evaluation of students applies only to those cases in which the evaluation of the student is alleged to be arbitrary and capricious, in significant violation of clearly established written school policies, or a result of improper procedures. An evaluation of a student is capricious if the evaluation is: 1) based partially or entirely on criteria other than the student's performance; 2) based on standards different from those standards of evaluation applied to other students; or 3) based on a substantial departure from announced standards of evaluation. In cases other than those noted above, an evaluation of a graduate student is not a basis for an academic grievance.

A graduate student believing they have a basis for an academic grievance, must provide notification to the SES Associate Dean of Academics via Loyola email, describing the nature and basis of the grievance and the requested relief, no less than 30 days after the student becomes aware, or with reasonable due diligence, should have become aware of the grievance. Within 10 business days of notification, the Associate Dean of Academics will determine and notify the grievant whether or not there exists a basis for academic grievance. If a basis is found, the Associate Dean of Academics shall do one of the following:

- Grant the requested relief.
- Grant a modified relief.
- Recommend the matter for hearing.

If the Associate Dean for Academics finds no basis for the grievance or the student disagrees with modified relief offered, the student may make a written request for a hearing. The request must be made via Loyola e-mail to the Associate Dean for Academics no less than 14 days from the date of the notification of the determination of a basis for the grievance.

Hearing

The purpose of the hearing is to ensure that all parties have full opportunity to present their views to the hearing board and to allow the hearing board to fairly and fully arbitrate the issue before it. The Dean of SES shall appoint a Hearing Chair and Board consisting of at least three faculty or staff with relevant subject matter knowledge of the issue area and with no specific conflicts. All matters of procedure are to be decided by the chairperson of the hearing board in accordance with the following guidelines.

The chairperson of the hearing board is to set the date, time, and location of the hearing. The hearing is to take place within 30 days of the request for a hearing, if practicable. All involved parties are to receive a timely written notice of the hearing and the matters to be considered. All supporting documentation relating to the matter is to be submitted to the Associate Dean for Academics at least three weeks prior to the hearing. The Associate Dean will distribute it in a timely manner to all involved parties prior to the hearing.

The hearing and material submitted to the hearing board are private and all parties involved in the grievance are to consider their contents confidential. However, if a party disseminates their own material, the party's interest in confidentiality is deemed waived. Electronic recording of the hearing is prohibited.

A party may obtain the assistance of members of the university community in preparing written documentation or in presenting information to the hearing board and may be accompanied in the hearing by one such assistant as an advisor. The role of an advisor is to provide a comforting presence for the parties. An advisor may only speak to their advisee. An advisor may not ask questions, interject, advocate for, or otherwise speak on behalf of the advisee. Even if an advisor is an attorney, the advisor may not function as legal counsel or “represent” an advisee during the hearing process. Individuals from outside the university, including attorneys, are not permitted to serve as advisors. The party must notify the chairperson of the hearing board of the names of the assistants at least one day prior to the hearing.

Each party may present information, both orally and in writing, to the hearing board. All parties are to be available throughout the hearing. Two formats for the hearing exist and are determined by the chairperson of the hearing board: all parties are present together during the hearing or the parties are heard separately at the hearing. Each party may call witnesses at the hearing during their initial statement period. Witnesses may only be present at the hearing during the time of their statements.

Unless the Chair determines modifications are necessary, the hearing shall follow the below process:

1. Introduction: Panel introduction and instructions from the Panel Chair
2. Grievant Case: The Grievant will have up to 30 minutes to state their case and answer questions of the Board.
3. Response: The Challenged party will have up to 30 minutes to state their case and answer questions of the Board.
4. Grievant Reply: Grievant will have up to 10 minutes to reply and answer questions of the Board.
5. The Board deliberates in private to make a final recommendation on the dispute.

In reaching its decision, the board will examine all documents and other exhibits and consider fully statements of all parties and witnesses. All decisions of the board must be determined by a majority vote of the board members. The standard of evidence required for a determination and evaluation is a “preponderance of the evidence.” This means the Board must determine that it is *more likely than not* that the academic evaluation was arbitrary and capricious based on the totality of available evidence. The Board must render a final decision by the end of the hearing process.

The Associate Dean for Academics will notify the parties in writing of the board's decision within two weeks of the hearing.

Appeal

A party may appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SES. The party is to request an appeal in writing within 30 days of notification of the hearing board's decision. The request must include an explanation of the basis for the appeal. The Dean will notify all parties of the request for an appeal and will provide an opportunity for a response. The Dean will obtain from the parties and the hearing board information necessary to consider fully the parties' views and the hearing board's decision.

The Dean may affirm, modify, or reverse the hearing board's decision. The Dean will notify the parties of the disposition of the appeal within 30 days of receiving the appeal, if practicable. The Dean's decision is final in all cases (including dismissal from an SES Graduate program), except those

involving possible expulsion from the university; the penalty of expulsion may be imposed only by the university's provost.

Academic Integrity

Students are personally responsible to act with academic integrity at all times and act in accordance with Loyola University Chicago general academic rules and regulations. Academic honesty is an expression of an ethic of interpersonal justice, responsibility, and care, applicable to Loyola University Chicago faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be conducted with integrity.

Academic dishonesty is characterized by the failure to apply this ethic, i.e., any action whereby faculty, student or staff misrepresents the ownership of academic work submitted in her or his name. A student's failure to practice academic honesty, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct, will result in a sanction ranging from the grade of F for the assignment to expulsion from the university.

Boundaries of Academic Honesty and Dishonesty

The following sections discuss specific expressions of academic honesty and dishonesty

Examinations: Obtaining or distributing materials prior to the scheduled examination without the intention of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; or attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted are violations of the examination process.

Papers, Theses and Dissertations: Plagiarism is the use of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement that the material is not one's own. The following acts are regarded as such violations:

- Submitting another person's work as one's own
- Submitting a rewritten or paraphrased version of another person's work
- Allowing another or paying another to write a paper for one's own benefit.

Original Research: Thesis work is guided by the expectation of making an original contribution to the field. The determination of what constitutes “original research” is made by the respective thesis committee and SES.

Research Procedures: Data misrepresentation or fabrication are clearly unethical. Ownership of data and programs and privileged information and confidentiality of data need to be clarified and respected by all those involved in the research process.

Authorship: In all cases of joint authorship, individuals working together should establish ahead of time the criteria for their co-authorship. Final determination of authorship should reflect effort and contribution, not rank or status. Dissertations and theses may not be co-authored.

Copyright: Laws of the United States and the university need to be respected. Faculty and students are responsible for knowledge and implementation of university policy in this area.

Failure to Practice Academic Honesty

A student's failure to practice academic honesty, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct, will result in a sanction ranging from the grade of F for the assignment to expulsion from the university. Channels for resolution of matters regarding academic honesty will originate with the relevant faculty members and student and will extend to SES Deans

levels, as necessary. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

Academic Standing

Good Standing

A graduate student is in good academic standing if he, she or they:

1. meets the standards of quality of the SES Graduate Program in their specific academic program;
2. makes satisfactory progress toward completion of program requirements within the established time limit;
3. fulfills SES's requirement regarding continuous registration; and
4. fulfills the SES Graduate program's requirement regarding grade-point average.

Students who are not in good academic standing are not eligible to receive a degree or certificate and cannot hold an award.

Incompletes

In extraordinary circumstances where a student will not be able to complete all assigned work before the end of the semester, an instructor may assign the temporary grade of "I" – Incomplete. The student must be unable to complete the work due to unanticipated reasons or emergency circumstances that have arisen toward the end of the semester. An Incomplete should not be granted due to a failure to appropriately manage time throughout the semester.

The student must request the Incomplete before the end of the semester; the granting of an Incomplete grade is not automatic and is at the discretion of the instructor. An instructor can reject a request for an incomplete grade. If granted, the instructor has the right to determine the conditions for completing the course work. The student and instructor will work together to complete the "Graduate Request for a Mark of Incomplete" that identifies the work and deadlines for each assignment and the entire coursework. The student shall submit to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies the completed and signed form by the student and instructor. If an extension is approved, the instructor must enter the grade of "I" in LOCUS during the semester final grade entry period.

Course work that is incomplete must be finished and submitted no later than 6 weeks into the start of the following term (6 weeks into the Fall term for Spring and Summer term work and 6 weeks into the Spring term for Fall and J-Term work). The instructor may, at their discretion, set an earlier date. Failure to complete required course work within the allotted time will result in a grade of "F." Please note: Students who are on Academic Probation may not request a temporary mark of Incomplete in any course for the term in which they are on Academic Probation.

Continuous Registration

All students, including those who have completed all coursework, are required to register during the regular academic year (not including summer sessions) until all degree requirements are met, unless they have received a leave of absence (see below).

Students who have completed all coursework and are preparing for a thesis proposal are to register for Thesis Supervision.

Failure to remain continuously enrolled at the thesis stage of a student's career carries a financial penalty as well. Master's students at the thesis supervision stage face a reinstatement fee should they fail to maintain continuous registration. The fee will be based on the combined thesis supervision fee for the terms.

Inactive Status

Students who do not meet the requirement of continuous registration are considered inactive and not in good academic standing. To request reinstatement to active status, the inactive student should discuss the matter with the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. Reinstatements are not automatic and students whose requests are denied will not be permitted to continue in their programs. Repeated failure to maintain continuous registration is, itself, grounds for denying a request for reinstatement.

The Associate Dean may require additional information of the student as it reviews her/his/their request. In addition, the program may recommend completion of additional requirements (e.g., coursework or examinations) as a condition of reinstatement because of the time that has elapsed since discontinuation of studies at Loyola.

Communications

Official notices to students will be made via Loyola e-mail accounts. Students are individually responsible for this information and should check their Loyola e-mail regularly.

For reasons of confidentiality, as well as efficiency, communications to students will be sent to students' Loyola email accounts and not to any other email address. Students are responsible for checking this account and/or setting up a forwarding system. The Dean's Office may refuse to provide confidential information using a non-Loyola email account.

Course Levels

Graduate students may only receive credit toward a degree or certificate from courses at the 400-level and above.

Undergraduate courses, including all 100, 200, and 300-level courses, do not apply toward fulfillment of graduate coursework requirements or electives.

Degree Conferral

Students are to apply to receive a Graduate Certificate or MS degree through LOCUS. They should select a program conferral term at the end of which they expect to complete all program requirements. Deadlines for program conferral application are:

Completion	Deadline
Fall (December)	August 1
Spring (May)	December 1
Summer (August)	February 1

Please note that students submitting a thesis or dissertation must fulfill all degree requirements, including defense and submission of final copies, prior to degree conferral.

The SES graduate program commencement ceremony is held in conjunction with the School of SES ceremony. A commencement ceremony is held only once per academic year, in May, for all students whose program was conferred in Fall or is expected to be conferred in Spring and Summer. Please note, this is not the commencement for The Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago. For more information, see Loyola's Commencement website (<https://www.luc.edu/commencement/>).

Leaves of Absence

Official leaves of absence are intended for students who wish to temporarily discontinue their graduate studies due to extraordinary

circumstances (e.g., medical, personal, or professional reasons). Students who are on a leave of absence may not use University resources, including faculty time. A leave of absence postpones all deadlines concerning completion of degree requirements for the duration of the leave of absence.

The Leave of Absence form is available through the Graduate Student Progress System (<https://gsp.s.luc.edu/>). Please log in to create this form for approval.

Decisions regarding the approval of leaves of absence rest with SES; when reviewing requests for a leave of absence, the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs may require additional information or documentation from the student and, where applicable, the student's Research Advisor. In cases where the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs recommends that the leave of absence not be granted, the student may petition the Associate Dean of Academics to consider their request. International students admitted to the United States on temporary visas must also receive approval from the university's International Student and Scholar Services Office for information regarding eligibility for a leave of absence.

Leaves of absence are limited to a period of one full academic year. If a student is not prepared to return to active status after one year, the student may request a renewal of the leave of absence for a period of up to one year; in such cases, the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs will review the student's record and future plans to determine whether an additional leave is in the best interests of the student, the program and SES.

To be reinstated to active status, the student must notify SES in writing upon returning from a leave of absence. Unless the student is granted a renewal of a leave of absence, the student must return to active status in the semester following the expiration of a leave of absence; failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program. If a student does not return from a leave of absence after two consecutive years, they must reapply for admission to the program.

Military Service

Students who have been called into the armed services of the United States and who are consequently withdrawing from the university before the end of the withdrawal period will receive a refund of all tuition and fees paid for the period in question but no academic credit. If they withdraw after the end of the withdrawal period, they will receive full academic credit for the semester with grades as of the date of withdrawal but no refund of tuition.

Registration

To be certified as active students and to have access to university resources, both new and continuing students must be registered before each term in which they are taking courses, working on a thesis, completing an internship or otherwise engaged in graduate study. Applicants must be officially admitted to SES before they will be permitted to register. While SES administration may assist students in the enrollment process, students are ultimately responsible for insuring they are registered for appropriate courses in a timely manner through the university's registration system.

No one is permitted to attend any class without first officially registering for that class. Students may not register for classes after the late registration period. A fee is charged for late registration. For specific information on registration, please visit the Office of Registration and Records website (<https://www.luc.edu/regrec/>).

Withdrawal from a Course

Students can withdraw from a class until the last day for withdrawal, as determined by the Bursar for that semester. The grade of "W" indicates official withdrawal from a course and is not counted in academic standing as either attempted or earned credit hours, nor calculated in a grade point average.

The effective date of withdrawal is determined by the date the course is dropped in LOCUS, not by class attendance or participation. In an online or hybrid course, participation and attendance are defined as any class activity, including logging into the course Sakai site, and accessing any of the course materials. Students who stop attending a class but have not officially withdrawn will receive the final grade based only on the work completed compared to all work required for the course completion. Voluntary and repeated unofficial withdrawals from class may result in the student being barred from further attendance in the university.

The financial impact of changes after the late/change registration period is defined by the University's withdrawal schedule. Please see the Office of the Bursar website for Key Dates and Deadlines. The schedule for fall and spring 8-week sessions is as follows:

- First week of session – 100% tuition credit
- Second week of session – 80% of tuition credit
- Third week of session – 40% of tuition credit
- Fourth week of session or later – 0% of tuition credit

Students contemplating official withdrawal from a class and receiving or expecting to receive financial assistance should consult with the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Number of Credit Hours

Registration for nine credit hours per semester is considered the normal full-time course load. The maximum course load for SES graduate students is 12 credit hours per semester and six credit hours per summer session. A student seeking a greater course load must obtain permission from the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

Repetition of Courses

Students may repeat a course in which they previously received a passing grade only with the specific authorization of the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. Authorization to repeat courses merely to improve the grade will rarely be given.

In an authorized repetition of a course the student will not receive credit hours toward graduation for both courses. The student will only receive credit hours toward graduation for the most recent attempt.

A student who repeats a course without permission of the Associate Dean will earn neither credit hours nor quality points for the repeated course.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who would like to seek accommodations at the university for their coursework or merit award (teaching and research assistantships) must contact the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities. More information can be found on the Student Accessibility Center website (<https://www.luc.edu/sac/>).

Transcripts

All courses taken by the student and other relevant academic information are included on the student's official academic transcripts, which are

maintained by the university's Office of Registration and Records (<https://www.luc.edu/regrec/>).

Transfer Credit

It is expected that all work toward a Graduate Certificate or Master's Degree will be completed within the SES graduate program. Under certain circumstances, up to six credit hours of graduate work completed in another Loyola program or at another institution may be applied toward a master's degree at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. Students may request transfer of credit during the student's first semester in the SES Graduate Program. SES has full responsibility for approving transfer credit. To ensure that each student is well prepared for undertaking scholarship in the student's current field of study, the decision regarding transfer credit will be based on the quality of the student's work, the time interval since its completion, and its relevance to the student's program of study at Loyola. Coursework below a B grade will not be accepted. Students may not transfer coursework that has been awarded as part of a conferred or completed degree program. If a course fulfills the learning outcomes of a requirement in the student's master's program, and upon department recommendation, a specific required course may be substituted with an elective chosen in concert with the student's academic advisor.

Withdrawal from the University

An enrolled student who wishes to withdraw from the university during any semester must notify the Dean's office and his or her graduate program director in writing. A student is considered to be in attendance until such notice has been received by the Dean or the Graduate Program Director. All financial refunds or obligations are dated from the date of the formal notice of withdrawal and not from the date of the last class attended; see the Bursar's website for more information. It is the student's obligation to inform the Graduate School promptly of the intention to withdraw. Telephone messages or non-attendance in class are not official notification.

A student may be required to withdraw from the university because of academic deficiency, lack of sufficient progress toward completion of degree requirements, failure to adhere to university requirements, degree requirements and/or regulations for conduct or failure to meet financial obligations to the university.

Complete Emergency Withdrawal

Students facing a significant emergency circumstance (see "Definitions" section below) that prevents them from continuing in or completing an academic term may submit an **Intent to Withdraw** form to their program director or the Graduate School. All requests must be supported by appropriate documentation. The Intent to Withdraw form is reviewed by the academic dean's office of the student's primary college/school for approval and processing.

Requests for complete emergency term withdrawals are considered after the last day of a term to drop a course or courses without a grade of "W." In cases where the student is incapacitated (see "Emergencies Resulting in Student Incapacitation" below for more details), the requests for complete emergency term withdrawals may be submitted by a parent, spouse or legal guardian.

Complete emergency term withdrawals constitute a withdrawal from all classes and may result in final grades of "WE" in all classes for the given academic term. The University does not grant partial withdrawals (i.e., requests to withdraw from some classes but not others) for emergencies. Grades of "WE" have no impact on a student's cumulative GPA. The "WE" grade has no earned or attempted hours associated

with the grade; however, "WE" counts towards attempted hours when determining **Satisfactory Academic Progress** for continued financial aid eligibility. This policy does not apply in cases where the student has completed final exams or final projects for classes in the term impacted by the significant emergency circumstance. When final grades have posted, students should utilize the **Appeal for Change of Academic Record** form and submit to their primary academic advisor, program director or assistant/associate Dean.

The Office of the Bursar will determine the impact of the Withdrawal on the student's account balance in LOCUS. The Student Account Balance will be determined by the University withdrawal calendar **Loyola Withdrawal Schedule**. The Bursar will not assess any late payment fees after the date of Withdrawal.

Emergencies Resulting in Student Incapacitation

It is required that a complete emergency term withdrawal request be submitted by the student. However, if an emergency situation has resulted in the student's temporary or long-term incapacitation for a period that may extend beyond the one-calendar-year deadline of this policy, the student's college/school academic dean's office, the Office of the Dean of Students, a parent (for minors), emergency contact person, or other legally assigned designee may submit a request on the student's behalf. In such cases, the student's college/school academic dean's office may require additional documentation (e.g., letter from medical doctor, hospitalization forms, power of attorney).

Potential Implications

The section below provides a non-exhaustive list and general information on the potential implications of a complete emergency term withdrawal. While the University offers a number of considerations that help support students who are facing emergencies, there are other important factors that should be taken into consideration before submitting a request for a complete emergency term withdrawal. Whenever possible, it is strongly recommended that a student discuss all practical options, including the potential implications of a complete emergency withdrawal with their primary academic advisor.

Financial Implications: Tuition and Financial Aid

- Students are strongly encouraged to purchase tuition insurance (e.g., A.W.G Dewar, Inc.) prior to the start of the academic term.
- Note that a complete emergency withdrawal does not automatically result in tuition credit. Please refer to the withdrawal schedule on the Office of the Bursar's website.
- Complete Emergency Withdrawal Procedures During an Academic Term
- Although it is recommended that the student submit as much information as possible, documentation does not need to specify details of the emergency that may be protected by law or considered private. Documentation must come from a verifiable authority (e.g., community/licensed healthcare provider, police agency, court of law, US military etc.) and minimally confirm the following:
 - Requests for a complete emergency withdrawal will be reviewed and decided by the student's college/school academic dean's office. Other areas, such as the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office for Equity & Compliance, or Student Accessibility Center, may be consulted in cases where the student was either referred or is being supported by said office. Additional documentation and/or information may be requested of the student before a final decision is made.
 - The student will receive a written decision notification no later than 14 business days after receipt of original request via LUC email.

If the school is unable to meet the 14 business-days deadline, the student will be notified in writing of the new deadline. If the request is approved, the effective date and further instructions before returning to campus (if necessary) will be provided. The date of the complete emergency withdrawal will be determined by the primary college/school dean's office based on the date of the last academically related activity.

Post-Emergency Complete Withdrawal Re-Entry Process

Unless otherwise indicated in the approval notification or by the Office of the Dean of Students in lieu of the Loyola University Chicago Behavior Concerns Team (BCT), the process for returning to the university will follow standard policies and procedures for re-enrollment. Students who were being supported by BCT before withdrawing or are returning because of a mental health hospitalization are required to consult the Office of the Dean of Students for instructions on potential re-entry requirements.

Definitions

Significant Emergency Circumstance – an unforeseen emergency situation that prevents a student from continuing in or completing an academic term. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Chronic illness of withdrawing student.
- Death of parent/legal guardian or medical issue of a family member and the withdrawing student must become a part-time or full-time caretaker of family member.
- Extreme financial hardship.
- Mental health condition, serious injury or illness of withdrawing student.
- Sudden or consistent lack of transportation which affected the withdrawing student's ability to meet in-person attendance requirements.
- Other situations, at the University's sole discretion, which are deemed to result in significant hardship to the withdrawing student.

This list includes examples of emergency situations that directly affect the student; it is not intended to be all-encompassing.