Office of Research Education
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

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Grading of PRGM* 8990 Thesis Research

Currently a grade of In Progress (IP) is assigned to post comprehensive exam students every semester for their thesis research course (PRGM*8990). Upon successful defense of the thesis, the IP grades are removed and updated to a single letter grade (e.g., A, B, C) for all semesters. Effective Fall Semester 2024, this practice will be revised to assign a letter grade each semester that thesis research is performed. Currently, feedback is provided in the form of annual or bi-annual meetings of the student with their thesis committee meetings and a report filed in GAIA. While the meetings and GAIA reports are valuable, a letter grade allows clear feedback in real-time about whether progress has been satisfactory and supports successful completion of PhD training.

PRGM*8990 will receive a letter grade, rather than IP, in each semester. The 8990 grade will be assigned the Thesis Mentor based on the following existing criteria in GAIA:
Intellectual Engagement in Research Area
Coursework and research effort and participation
Areas of strength
Areas for improvement
Progress

Research progress
1. Student has made satisfactory progress since the last meeting

2. There is evidence that the student is sufficiently committed to the research project

3. Student has sufficient knowledge of the current literature

4. Student actively seeks advice/help, as needed, from the mentor and other faculty

5. Student actively seeks advice/help, as needed, from others in the laboratory or others associated with the research project

6. Student has communicated the data and/or research outcomes clearly in committee meetings and RIP (research in progress meetings)

Evaluation of the literature
7. Student has sufficient knowledge of the current literature

Program concepts
8. Student exhibits an appropriate level of knowledge of the project

Conducting research
9. Student demonstrates an ability to analyze experimental results and/or research project outcomes

10. Future experiments and/or research goals proposed by the student are well designed and test the stated hypothesis/hypotheses

11. The results and interpretations are convincing

Oral Communication
12. The results were presented in a clear and concise fashion

May 2024

PRGM* - indicates the prefix associated with each ORE PhD program.

The student's thesis committee will review the 8990 grades at the required annual Thesis Committee meetings

8990 grades for all Programs would be collated and entered by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs each semester.

The Assistant Dean working with PDs and PAs would be required to:

- Monitor all 8990 grades being posted by the deadline (2 weeks after end of semester) each semester for all PhD students (especially graduating students).

- Monitor and address issues when the student receives a non-passing 8990 grade and ensure that at the time of graduation the 30-hour minimum requirement is met (not impacted by any non-passing 8990 grades).

- Verify at the time the student is graduating that all didactic and theses hours are recorded by the deadline for grade postings established by the Registrar's Office each term. The Graduate School usually brings these types of issues to the attention of the PA to work with their PD and faculty to resolve.

Individual letter grades are permitted under current Graduate School and Registrar policies.

The current practice of entering IP grades was adopted due to problems obtaining grades in a timely manner to meet deadlines and many missing 8990 grades found prior to graduation. This resulted in considerable additional administrative work and in some cases delayed graduation. In addition, since grades below a B do not count toward the 30 thesis credit hour requirements, registration for additional credits and the extra expense may be required. Per existing Graduate School policies, should a student's grade drop below 3.0, they and their Program would be notified that they have been placed on academic probation, requiring development of a plan to support and assist the student to raise their GPA within 2 semesters.

This policy is intended to complement the existing role of the mentor, thesis committee and ORE in advising, monitoring and evaluation of students and providing support and resources as needed to ensure that students are making progress towards their degree. It provides a formal ongoing record in the student's transcript, in addition to committee reports and mentor evaluations.

Effective date is Fall semester 2024