



April 15, 2025

Steven W. Cheung
Chair, Assembly of the
Academic Senate
Faculty Representative,
UC Board of Regents
Academic Senate

Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

senate.universityofcalifornia.edu

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Katherine S. Newman
Provost and Executive Vice President

Re: Academic Support for Students Unable to Complete their UC Degree on a UC Campus

Dear Provost Newman,

The Academic Senate would like to provide guidance on academic support for undergraduate and graduate students in good academic standing who are unable to complete their UC degree on a UC campus. Two systemwide Senate standing committees—the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA)—have reviewed relevant systemwide Senate regulations on this matter. Their letters are enclosed.

Senate regulations provide considerable flexibility to support degree completion when remote instruction is the only viable option. There is no regulation that prohibits UC campuses from developing student-centered plans to assist affected students. Students are strongly encouraged to work with their academic advisor or department to design a remote program of study or arrange for a remote thesis/doctoral defense that will allow them to graduate. These plans may include online courses offered by a student's home campus or another UC campus.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Cheung
Chair, Academic Council

Encl.

cc: Senate Division Chairs
UCEP
CCGA
Senate Division Executive Directors
Senate Executive Director Lin



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UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
Rachael Goodhue, Chair
regoodhue@ucdavis.edu

April 14, 2025

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Steven W. Cheung
Chair, UC Academic Council

RE: Academic Support for Students Unable to Complete Their UC Degree on a UC Campus

Dear Steven,

In response to a request from Provost Newman that the systemwide Academic Senate consider what the University can do to support students who are unable to complete their UC degree on their home campus due to disruptions in instructional continuity, UCEP met April 10, 2025, to develop guidance for Senate divisions on how to support students' progress in completing UC coursework and other graduation requirements.

The Senate regulations provide a significant degree of flexibility to support the completion of UC degree requirements in cases where remote instruction is the only practicable option. While some actions would require a variance or exception, many fall within the purview of divisions under Senate regulations. This memo outlines relevant regulations to assist division in determining an appropriate course of action; however, it is not a comprehensive list of all applicable policies. While the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the Senate's capacity to implement broad instructional adjustments applicable to the entire curriculum of all students, the current context requires a more targeted application of flexibility, focused on a subset of students. In this context, UCEP addresses options for supporting students' degree completion when faced with substantive barriers to access on their home campuses.

The relevant regulations considered by UCEP include Senate Regulations

(SR) [630](#), [SR 694](#), [SR 900](#), [SR 782](#), and [SR 544](#). This memo focuses on the provisions most pertinent to current context. UCEP also notes that the guidance provided is preliminary; only the University Committee on Rules & Jurisdiction (UCRJ) assesses regulations and provides recommendations to the Academic Council.

Residency Requirements (SR 630, SR 694)

SR 630 addresses the residency requirement for the academic terms immediately prior to degree completion for undergraduates. UCEP encourages flexibility in applying this regulation in order to support student success. Divisions may set their own requirements for residency through obtaining a variance from the systemwide Senate. During the pandemic, terms in which a student enrolled in courses taught by instructors from their home campus were considered in-residence, regardless of instructional modality. As written, SR 630 provides for terms completed through the UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) and the UC Washington Center Program (UCDC) to be defined as in-residence, providing potential flexibility for students, although UCEP did not discuss complications that could ensue by broadening the use of these programs. Other options could be investigated. Cross-campus enrollment is another option for satisfying the in-residence requirement. UC Santa Cruz provides it as an option. Other options UC Santa Cruz provides could be considered by other divisions as well. UCEP defers to the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) regarding graduate student residency ([SR 690](#) and SR 694).

Grading Policies (SR 782, SR 778.A, SR 778.B)

SR 782, [SR 778.A](#), and SR 778.B address grades, grading systems, and good standing. UCEP recommends flexibility regarding local grading policy, particularly the use of pass/no pass (P/NP) grading options. This approach is consistent with standing policy. UCRJ supported UCEP's position that the relevant regulations already provide the Senate divisions with broad authority to define how letter and P/NP grades are used on individual campuses. This authority was exercised during the pandemic and may be applicable in situations affecting a well-defined subset of students. UCEP recommends regular review after each academic term to assess the effectiveness of any campus modification.

In addition, UCEP recommends that Senate divisions may wish to consider implementing a policy that provides for departmental (or program) consultation before individual instructors change grading options for a subset of students. Broader consultation will help departments and programs anticipate potential negative consequences for students. In some cases, it may be appropriate for students to take advantage of the planned educational leave programs available at each campus.

Graduation Requirements, Standing, and Other UC Courses (SR 900, SR 782, SR 544)

UCEP discussed SR 900, SR 782 and SR 544, and concluded with recommending that Senate divisions (and campus administrators) apply criteria for good academic standing and residency flexibly regarding the satisfaction of major and/or graduation requirements and the role of online courses offered by UC campuses, including cross-campus course enrollments. Regarding time to degree, regulations set a maximum on the number of credits students are required to take per term. Minimums are at the discretion of the divisions. Major requirements are set by departments subject to divisional approval. UCEP recommends strongly that divisions communicate their local policy directly to departments and administrators. Clear and effective communication with all decision-makers is essential to promoting student success.

Other Regulations

UCEP has specific observations regarding additional procedural topics that should be addressed in future guidance. Further consideration of regulations addressing final examinations, specifically [SR 770](#) and SR 772, should be considered. The use of remote instruction in order for a subset of enrolled students to complete their UC degrees may require accreditor review.

UCEP urges the Academic Senate to prioritize student welfare and success. Divisional Senate chairs should ensure that academic units work closely with students requiring policy exceptions and/or flexibility to discuss their academic plans.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rachael Goodhue
Chair, UCEP



Academic Senate

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COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE AFFAIRS

James Bisley, Chair
jbisley@mednet.ucla.edu

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Steven W. Cheung
Academic Senate Chair

RE: Academic Support for Students Unable to Complete Their UC Degree on a UC Campus

Dear Chair Cheung,

The Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) offers guidance to the faculty to assist students who are unable to complete their UC degree on their home campus due to disruptions in instructional continuity.

CCGA wishes to remind faculty of the flexibility in relevant academic policy. The following recommendations are primarily aimed at allowing faculty to help graduate students who are nearing the end of their degree, while maintaining academic standards and equity for all students.

For students reaching milestone events, such as a thesis defense, dissertation defense, or oral qualifying examination, CCGA reminds faculty of campus policies allow students to complete such degree requirements remotely if needed. Campuses that require a student to be in residence for their final defense use the term “in residence” to mean that the student is enrolled in at least four units or on filing fee. For graduate students who are establishing academic residency at UC, CCGA encourages flexibility in applying SR [682](#), [690](#), and [694](#) in order to support student success.

For students involved in class work, CCGA concurs with the guidance letter from the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP), dated April 14, 2025.

For students who have a field work requirement (as outlined in [SR 740](#) and local program requirements), CCGA recommends they and their advisors

consult with campus travel advisories before finalizing plans. Programs should work to identify appropriate options for students with limited flexibility.

In all cases, CCGA encourages students to be in regular communication with their advisors and student affairs officer or equivalent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bisley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Bisley
Chair, CCGA

cc: Academic Senate Vice Chair Palazoglu
Academic Senate Executive Director Lin
Academic Senate Assistant Director LaBriola
CCGA Members