

University Of Balamand

Office of Admissions and Registration

Graduate Studies Manual

I. Admission Information

Admission to a degree in the graduate programs is granted through the Office of Admissions and Registration, which receives and processes all applications, evaluates credentials, and issues notification letters. Standards under which students are admitted for study in these programs are established and monitored by the departments and Faculties concerned. Acceptance into the graduate program is based on the candidate meeting University admissions requirements and the recommendation of the Faculty Graduate Admission Committee.

I.1. Admission Requirements

Applicants to graduate studies must hold a Bachelor's degree from a recognized institution of higher learning with an undergraduate cumulative average of at least 80/100 or its equivalent as evaluated by the department the applicant wishes to join. The candidate's application should contain the following documents:

- a- A filled-out application form for graduate admission.
- b- Three recent passport-size photographs.
- c- A certified copy of the Lebanese Baccalaureate Certificate or its equivalent.
- d- A certified copy of the Bachelor degree and its equivalence. An equivalence of a Bachelor degree is obtained from the Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education.
- e- Official transcript(s) from the university(ies) attended, and the corresponding course descriptions.
- f- Two letters of recommendation.
- g- A non-refundable application fee of L.L.135,000.

Acceptance into the graduate program is based on the recommendation of the Faculty Graduate Admission Committee.

Admission on Probation

An applicant may be admitted on probation if he has an undergraduate cumulative general average of at least 75/100 or its equivalent as evaluated by the Department the applicant wishes to join.

Language Proficiency Requirement

Applicants to English-track majors, other than UOB graduates, are required to meet the English Language Proficiency Requirement (a minimum of 600 on the paper-based TOEFL, or 100 on the internet-based TOEFL). Applicants, who score in the range 527 - 597 on the paper-based TOEFL, or 71 - 99 on the internet-based TOEFL, are admitted but must complete the English Language courses (ENGL101/ENGL102) during the first year of enrollment in the graduate program.

Applicants to French-track majors, other than UOB graduates, are required to meet the French language level FREN201 at UOB. A written entrance exam will determine the language level of the applicant. Applicants with FREN102 level, may be accepted however they must complete successfully FREN102 within the first semester of enrollment in the graduate program.

II. Academic Regulations

Registration Load

Full-time students must enroll in at least 9 credit hours per semester and a maximum of 12 credit hours. (See appropriate Faculty regulations)

Courses and Grades

Courses taken as part of the graduate program fall in one of two categories, graduate or bridging, with different grading systems:

Graduate Level Courses

These courses are normally numbered 300 or above (except for Engineering & Business 400 or above). The minimum passing grade for a graduate course is 70. Students in the graduate programs are required to maintain a cumulative average of at least 80 in all graduate level courses. The minimum grade for a graduate course is 55. (See sections III and IV below)

Bridging Courses

Graduate students with a different background from the graduate degree being pursued may be asked to take some undergraduate courses as bridging courses. If a student fails in any of the undergraduate bridging courses, he is allowed to repeat that course only once. Failure to meet the requirements stipulated above will result in the student being dropped from the graduate program. Students who are taking bridging courses are allowed to take along some graduate-level courses (maximum 6 credits) following the approval of the concerned department and the Dean of the faculty. Bridging courses must be completed during the first year of enrollment in the graduate program.

Transfer Credits

Students transferring to the graduate programs may be granted transfer credits up to 40% of the total credits required of the degree including 20% as CBE (credit by exam). Students pay $\frac{1}{4}$ of the credit fee of the corresponding program type per faculty rate excluding any automatic support. Transferred credits apply only to courses in which the applicant had earned a minimum grade of 80 and equivalent in content to courses offered at UOB.

The concerned Department/Faculty decides on the equivalency of courses.

III. Graduation Requirements

Students are advised to check, by themselves and with their respective advisors, that all graduation requirements are fulfilled. The graduate program is not held responsible for delays caused by students not meeting the requirements for graduation. To graduate with a Master's degree, a student must meet the following:

III.1 Residency Requirement

To meet the minimum residency requirement for the Master's degree, a student must register and be in residence as a graduate student for at least four semesters. All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within a period of five years after admission to graduate study. Extension beyond the maximum allowed period of study requires the approval of the Dean of the Faculty.

III.2 Academic Performance Required

1. A cumulative average of 80 or above.
2. A passing grade in all courses.

III.3 Graduation with Honors

1. A student achieving a cumulative average of 95 or above at the University of Balamand will graduate with High Distinction.
2. A student achieving a cumulative average between 90 and 94.99 at the University of Balamand will graduate with Distinction.

IV. Academic Evaluation

The evaluation of the academic performance begins when a graduate student completes at least 9 graduate credits and then he is evaluated every semester.

Good Academic Standing:

A graduate student is in good academic standing if his cumulative average is 80 or above and has passing grade in all his graduate courses.

Academic Probation and Removal of Academic Probation

- **Students Accepted on Probation**
 1. Student accepted on probation has to complete at least 9 credits of graduate work within the first two semesters of graduate studies and has to pass all courses with a minimum cumulative average of at least 80 in order to achieve regular status.
 2. If the student fails to meet any of the conditions, he will be dropped from the graduate program.
- **Students Accepted with Regular Standing**
 1. A student is placed on academic probation if his cumulative average is 70 or more but less than 80, or fails any graduate course.
 2. A student who is placed on Academic Probation due to his average must remove it by the end of the following semester by achieving a cumulative average of 80 or above.
 3. A student, who is placed on Academic Probation due to a course failure, must retake the course the next time it is offered and should pass it. If the course is not offered the following semester, the student should petition the Dean to be allowed to continue.

Dismissal from the Graduate Program

A student will be dropped from the graduate program in any of the following cases:

- If the student fails to remove the academic probation in the semester following the first probation, excluding students accepted on academic probation.
- If the student is placed on academic probation for a second time.
- If the student attains a cumulative average of 70 or more, but less than 80, in any semester and fails one course in that semester. (This rule does not apply to the first semester of study.)
- If the student attains a cumulative average of less than 70 after completion of 9 graduate credits or fails two courses in one semester.

A student dropped from a graduate program will not be allowed to re-enroll in the same program at any future date.

V. Assessment of Students' Work

Grading Scheme:

The following grading scheme is adopted for reporting final course grades for courses at the graduate level.

Grade Range	Equivalent GPA	Notation/Meaning
95.00 to 100	4.00	High Distinction
90.00 to 94.99	3.50 to 3.99	Distinction
85.00 to 89.99	3.25 to 3.49	Very Good
80.00 to 84.99	3.00 to 3.24	Good
75.00 to 79.99	2.50 to 2.99	Fair
70.00 to 74.99	2.00 to 2.49	Acceptable
< 70.00	< 2.00	Fail

As for the Thesis and Training grading system, the Pass/ Fail grading system is applied.

VI. Tracks at the Graduate Level

Students may choose one of three routes for conducting a research or professional project at the graduate level: A Field Project, a Training Project, or a Graduate Thesis. They are defined as follows:

Field Project - The Field Project (3 credits) allows the students to apply academic theory to solve real and practical problems. Students produce a report containing the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Background, Problem Identification, Solution Approach/Methodology, Data Collection and Results, Conclusions and Recommendations, References, and Appendices. ***This project may be carried out by an individual student or by a team of students with a maximum of two persons on each team.***

A Project Proposal must be submitted to the Dean's Office during the first two weeks from the time of registration in this Field Project.

Upon review of the Proposal, the Dean and/or Graduate committee recommends to the student names of faculty members who would be appropriate to serve as advisors and examiners (readers/ committee members). Each project team must have an advisor and two committee members. The committee members may be from within the Faculty and/or may be external.

The Field Project tuition fee is valid for a maximum of two registration semesters. The second Project registration semester following the first registration semester is for zero credit tuition (only reactivation fee applies).

Training Project - This is a 6-credit graduate Project conducted at specialized institutions/universities with contracts signed between the concerned Faculty and the training institution. The student will have an external advisor as well as an internal one (from the Faculty).

A professional Project, for duration of two semesters, would need to be submitted to the Dean's office for approval, prior to signing the contract. At the end of the training program, a student needs to submit a detailed report to the Dean's office, following instructions outlined by each discipline, and to take an oral examination conducted by a Dean-appointed committee charged with grading the project and the presentation. Note that this "Training Project" is different from the "Field Training" sometimes required in graduate programs.

Thesis - The Thesis (6 credits) allows the students to perform research and synthesize information through critical thinking, evaluation, and sound decision making. ***The Thesis is an individually-performed research project on a topic that is grounded in theory, has more***

depth and a broader scope. At the beginning of the second year of the program, the student initiates the process of outlining a Thesis proposal and submits an outline to the Professor, he or she is desiring to work with and have as a Thesis Advisor. The student's choice must be approved by the Dean who will nominate a Thesis Committee or seek the help of the Academic Graduate Committee to do so. Upon completion of the Thesis, the student produces a report containing the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Background, Problem Identification, Solution Approach/Methodology, Data Collection and Results, Conclusions and Recommendations, References, and Appendices. A Research Proposal must be submitted to the Dean's Office within one month from the time of registration in the Thesis.

The Thesis defense shall be open to the public and shall be announced at least two weeks in advance.

The Thesis tuition is valid for a maximum of four Thesis registration semesters. The three Thesis registration semesters following the first registration semester are for zero credit tuition (only reactivation fee applies each time the student registers). Any subsequent Thesis registration after the first four registration semesters, a Thesis fee equivalent to three graduate credits is applied and is valid for a maximum of two regular semesters.

Mandatory Requirements:

Graduate students completing a Field project or a Graduate thesis must submit the following documents:

1. Before starting work on the thesis/project, the graduate student(s) and the supervisor must sign three copies of the University of Balamand Graduate Thesis/Project Agreement, an agreement whereby both parties agree to abide by UOB policies outlined in the *Project, thesis, and dissertation: Format Guidelines*. This document provides help and guidelines on preparing the final copy of the thesis/project according to the policy of the University of Balamand. Two copies remain with both signing parties and the third copy is submitted to the Dean's Office to forward to the Library.
2. After the defense/presentation, two copies of the Thesis Completion Deposit Form must be signed by the student(s) and the supervisor. The Librarian will only sign if the student(s) have completed the work according to the *Project, thesis, and dissertation: Format Guidelines*. One copy will be returned to the Dean's Office for the Registrar's Office to record and announce the final grade.