Graduate Program Directors
Job Description and Appointment

Job Description
Graduate program directors oversee graduate programs at the certificate, master’s and doctoral levels. Graduate program directors guide the curricular process so that the academic standards and learning objectives of their programs emphasize deep comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and application of specialized knowledge and prepare students for applied research, scholarship, and professional practice. For those programs that focus on applied research, program directors promote learning activities that provide students with opportunities to generate knowledge and master theory, content, literature and research methods relevant to their discipline. For those programs that focus on professional practice, program directors promote learning activities that provide students with opportunities to gain broad conceptual knowledge, professional skills, and research experience relevant to their discipline, and to transmit and develop new applications of knowledge.1

Program directors:
- Oversee the design and revision of the graduate curriculum for review and approval by university curriculum committees and external agencies
- Promote the quality and currency of the curriculum, learning resources, and learning opportunities
- Guide the course and program assessment processes, including external accreditation and reports
- Coordinate the program committee review and approval of students for admissions, retention, progression, and graduation according to defined university, department, and program requirements
- Coordinate the program committee development, revision, and dissemination of program policies, procedures, guidelines in accordance with those of the department, college, and university
- Coordinate the advisement process for or directly advise students regarding curricular progression, program and university policies and procedures, and career options
- Oversee maintenance of program documents and records, and web sites for currency and accuracy
- Provide program expertise to Graduate Marketing and University Admissions to promote the programs and recruit students
- Fulfill other duties associated with individual graduate programs which may include
  - Establishing and monitoring internship contracts and placements

1 Western Association of Schools and Colleges (February 24, 2012). Draft policy on graduate education. Author.
- Mentoring program faculty
- Conducting advisory board meetings
- Overseeing program awards and recognitions
- Overseeing program related grants
- Establishing community collaborations

Additional responsibilities may be added by the department chairperson with the approval of the college dean and notification to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies and adherence to workload guidelines. Additional guidelines related to program director responsibilities can be found in Appendix A and in the Graduate Program Director Guide on the Towson SharePoint drive at https://sp.towson.edu/sites/gradprogramdirectors/default.aspx.

The program director reports directly to the department chairperson or to the dean of the academic college where the program is housed. In some departments, the graduate program director also reports to the program director for undergraduate and graduate programs. The dean of the academic college oversees the development, sustainment, and quality of those programs; faculty hiring, appointments, reappointments, and promotion tenure; and resource prioritization and allocations. The program director consults with the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies regarding university wide graduate policies and procedures and curricular approval processes.

**Appointment and Term of Service**

Graduate program directors are tenured faculty who hold graduate faculty status. Tenure track and clinical faculty with relevant prior experience in teaching, scholarship, and program management may be considered for the position. The dean of the college which houses a graduate program makes the appointment in consultation with the chairperson of the department, and forwards the name to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who confirms the appointment in consultation with the Provost. All graduate programs shall have a program director.

The graduate program director serves a three-year, renewable term, which usually begins and ends in August. This time frame coincides with the Fall start date for faculty teaching contracts. Reappointment is based on the attainment of annual goals related to program directorship that the program director lists on his/her Faculty Annual Report (AR).

If the graduate program director position becomes vacant during the academic year, a new director shall be appointed by the dean of the academic college. The new director may be appointed on an interim basis until a permanent director is found.

Some programs, especially those with several tracks or concentrations and/or large numbers of students, may have more than one director. Co-directors also may serve to oversee tracks and/or concentrations. Their terms of appointment and office shall follow those of the directors. These arrangements shall be approved by the dean of the college which houses the program and the dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.
Graduate program directors may count their administrative responsibilities toward their University workload as described in Academic Affairs policies. The following chart is included in the approved workload document\(^2\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students actively enrolled/number of formal advisees</th>
<th>Course units awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-35/min. 25 students</td>
<td>1 course unit/academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-100/min. 50 students</td>
<td>2 course units/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100/min. 50 students</td>
<td>3 course units/yr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on complexity factors related to the program, the dean of the college which houses the program may offer a stipend in lieu of and/or in addition to assigned time. As appropriate, that dean consults with the department chairperson regarding workload issues.

Graduate program directors who are not on twelve-month contracts may serve during the summer on summer contracts with a special stipend. The stipend is for 10 hours a week for 12 weeks. The program director shall be available on-campus for these hours and have scheduled office hours. Exceptions need to be approved by the dean of the program’s academic college. Program directors may take vacation time of no more than two sequential weeks without the prior approval of the department chairperson and college dean. If a director needs to be away for a longer period, he/she shall notify the dean of his/her college of such intended absence. The stipend shall be adjusted; the dean of the college may appoint an interim director and arrange for compensation (time or stipend).

\(^2\) This is based on current USM workload guidelines which are undergoing revisions.