F. GRADUATE FOCUS AREA

About Section F…

This section addresses the <u>third</u> **major component** of the
MA in Applied Professional Studies (MAAPS) Program—
The **GRADUATE FOCUS AREA**.

Subsections include…

▶ **Introduction to the Graduate Focus Area**

▶ **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES** *in the Focus Area*
- Main Theories/Ideas (AP-510)
- Methods of Research (AP-520)
- Specialized Skills (AP-530)
- Communication Modes (AP-540)
- Organizational/Interpersonal Dynamics (AP-550)
- Challenges from Larger Contexts (AP-560)
- Ethical Issues (AP-570)
- Reflection in/on Practice (AP-574)
- Supplemental Competence I (AP-585)

▶ **Building LEARNING ACTIVITIES & PRODUCTS** *in the Focus Area*
- Process, Possibilities & Implications (re: registration/tuition, etc.)

▶ **Implementing Prof. Competencies** *in the Focus Area*

▶ **Changing Prof. Competencies** *in the Focus Area*

▶ **Assessing Prof. Competencies (Learning Products)** *in the Focus Area*

▶ **CULMINATION OPTIONS** *in the Focus Area*
- Supplemental Competencies II, III, IV & V (AP-586, -587, -588 & -589)
- Integrating Project (Proposal/AP-591; Final Product/AP-592)

Introduction to the GRADUATE FOCUS AREA...

The Graduate Focus Area is the individualized, career-related portion of the MAAPS Program. Here, by design, each individual student in the MAAPS Program is afforded the opportunity to target his/her own area of focus or specialization (vision for enhanced professional contribution) and, together with the support of program resources, build-out a ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** to then pursue and accomplish. Rather than existing as a "major" *per se* (a term indicating a predetermined set of courses), this area of focus is *individually and uniquely* designed—in terms of sought outcome, methods of learning to get there, demonstrations of learning, etc.—for each *individual and unique* graduate student.

At the point of admission to the MAAPS Program, each student proposes an area of focus that he/she wishes to pursue in and through the MAAPS Program. Thereafter, through the Learning Plan Research & Development Seminar (AP-501), in-depth investigation, and ongoing interaction with his/her Faculty Mentor and Professional Advisor, the student works to hone his/her area of focus into an **official** "Graduate Focus Area". As such, the diversity/creativity possible in Graduate Focus Areas is nearly endless—provided each focus area adheres to the following parameters:

 (a) the focus area is congruent with the student's personal and professional goals;

 (b) the focus area is available for investigation (knowledge & competence development) in accordance with the program's Professional Competencies (See page F-1.) via 26 credit hours of study including *at least* 10 credit hours of *Graduate Guided Individualized Learning (GGIL)*;

 (c) the focus area is described in a phrase (75 characters in length including spaces) that specifies both the core activity to be studied and its primary context for application;

 (d) the focus area is not already addressed by existing DePaul graduate programs or by nationally recognized curricula leading to official designated licensure;

 (e) the focus area is supported by at least three years of experience (or equivalent) in the student's background; and,

 (f) the focus area is supported by a specified professional setting within which the student is able to practice, apply, and/or derive learning throughout his/her graduate study.

During the Learning Plan Research & Development Seminar (AP-501) and Learning Plan Review (AP-502), students define/explain their Graduate Focus Areas (beyond the initial synopsis offered in their application materials) and develop personalized plans for developing and demonstrating relevant competencies in support of such. The definition/explanation of each student's unique/individualized Focus Area is found in Part I of his/her ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** with details pertaining to competence development to be included within Part III of his/her ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan***. (See Guidebook Section G.)

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES (in the Focus Area)

Even as a sturdy *table* is a function of a firm tabletop, solid legs in the right places and congruent alignment between both (tabletop & legs), so too a sturdy Focus Area requires a firm focus, solid competencies in the right places and congruent alignment between the both (focus & competencies).

Here, in support of each student's Graduate Focus Area (individualized *tabletop*), the MAAPS Program enables students to identify, develop and demonstrate abilities (*legs*) in/through the following key areas (in the *right places*):

▶ **ability to understand the <u>main theories/ideas</u>* that guide and explain practice in one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-510)*;

▶ **ability to engage various <u>methods of research</u>* appropriate to one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-520)*;

▶ **ability to apply <u>specialized skills</u>* appropriate to one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-530)*;

▶ **ability to engage <u>communication modes</u>* appropriate to one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-540)*;

▶ **ability to understand the <u>organizational & interpersonal dynamics</u>* within which practitioners in one's Focus Area define and fulfill their roles/responsibilities** *(Competence AP-550)*;

▶ **ability to interpret <u>challenges from larger contexts</u>* (e.g., temporal, social, or international) facing one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-560)*;

▶ **ability to analyze <u>ethical issues</u>* involved within one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-570)*;

▶ **ability to engage <u>reflection in/on practice</u>* within one's Focus Area** *(Competence AP-574)*;

▶ **supplemental opportunity to <u>further</u> <u>develop</u> ability in one of the previous areas** *(Competence AP-585)*; **and,**

▶ **culmination.** *(See Culmination Options at end of Guidebook Section F.)*

*NOTE: A description of each ability is included at the top of each Competence Page within Part III of the *Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan* itself. *(See Guidebook Section G.)*

BUILDING LEARNING ACTIVITIES & PRODUCTS (in the Focus Area)

The process for building learning activities and products related to professional competencies involves the following:

STEP #1: **Investigating the Focus Area**

The student is admitted to the MAAPS Program with an intended area of focus. Through investigation* (in the context of the Learning Plan Research & Development Seminar/AP-501), he/she hones and refines that area of focus into an official Graduate Focus Area.

*Sources for investigation include: personal experience, related disciplines/ fields, professional associations, practitioners, experts/leaders in the field, college catalogues/curricula, websites, networks, trade/academic journals, specialized encyclopedias/ bibliographies, job descriptions of people currently doing work in the field, etc.

STEP #2: **Describing/Explaining the Focus Area**

The student formats the Graduate Focus Area (within the parameters listed earlier in this section of the Guidebook) into a phrase that specifies both **the core activity to be studied and its primary context for application—*"doing what…where?"*** (e.g., facilitating alternative dispute resolution strategies in organizational settings). Upon doing so, the student explains the phrase in some depth.

*This step is delineated within Part I of the **Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan**. (See Guidebook Section G.)*

STEP #3: **Identifying Sought Outcomes (COMPETENCE STATEMENTS)**

The student now identifies "sought outcomes" for each of the professional competence areas. The sought outcomes or Competence Statements might be framed in terms of the following question:

> ☑ **By the end of the Program, what statements would I like the University to be able to assert (on my behalf) in terms of my ability per competence area?**

Ideally, these "sought outcomes" are derived from a well-researched understanding of the Focus Area, i.e., to ensure that the sought outcome is valued by both the student and the field.

*This step is delineated for each competence area within Part III of the **Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan**. (See Guidebook Section G.)*

STEP #4: Identifying Means to Accomplish Outcomes (LEARNING ACTIVITIES)

For each sought outcome/competence statement, the next question for the student is:

> ☑ **How—through what means (what learning activities)—will I achieve my sought outcome/competence statement?**

*This step is delineated for each competence area within Part III of the **Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan**. (See Guidebook Section G.) In addition, the following pages of Section F outline an array of **possibilities and policies pertaining to identifying/building one's LEARNING ACTIVITIES**.*

STEP #5: Identifying Evidence of Competence (LEARNING PRODUCTS)

Simply put, the LEARNING ACTIVITIES (per competence area) are to result in LEARNING PRODUCTS that demonstrate or give evidence of the PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES. So, the next question—per area—for the student is:

> ☑ **What product(s) will I bring forward (from learning activities) to be assessed in support of my having achieved the sought outcome/competence statement?**

*This step is delineated for each competence area within Part III of the **Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan**. (See Guidebook Section G.) In addition, the following pages of Section F outline an array of **possibilities and policies pertaining to identifying/building one's LEARNING PRODUCTS**.*

STEP #6: Identifying Second Assessor

Each Learning Product is ASSESSED three times: first, by the student him/herself; second, by either the Professional Advisor or an approved Outside Assessor; and, lastly, by the Faculty Mentor. The question, then, at this point is:

> ☑ **Who, in addition to the student and faculty mentor, will assess each particular learning product?**

*This step is delineated for each competence area within Part III of the **Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan**. (See Guidebook Section G.) In addition, *Section C of the Guidebook provides direction regarding Outside Assessors. [Note: In cases where the Learning Activity is a graduate course from a regionally-accredited University, the Learning Product is the course grade. No further assessment/assessor is necessary.]*

The following pages provide an array of possibilities & policies pertaining to LEARNING ACTIVITIES & PRODUCTS. ➡
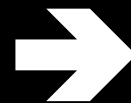
> ## Learning *ACTIVITIES* (in the Focus Area)... ➔ ➔ ➔

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

A "**learning activity**" in the Focus Area is a means-to-an-end—with the "end" being the sought outcome (per competence statement). Here, *after* identifying the sought outcome/professional competence appropriate to each area in the focus area, students commence to design or identify appropriate **learning activities** to get there. Once the competence outcome and learning activity are approved, the student proceeds accordingly.

In general, there are two types of learning activities---(1) individualized learning activities; and, (2) predesigned group learning programs/events. Both types are briefly described below in terms of their possibilities/policies for MAAPS application:

(1) **Individualized Learning Activities**: Given the program's aim to advance professionalism, learning activities that champion the ongoing development of initiative, resourcefulness, self-management and accountability are hallmarks. Within MAAPS, such activities are called *"Graduate Guided Individualized Learning (GGIL)"* and involve the student in *designing and executing his/her own learning projects—aligned to program outcomes—with the guidance of at least his/her Faculty Mentor.*

To develop and evidence increasingly sophisticated GGIL skills and abilities, MAAPS students are **required** to utilize GGIL as the learning activity(ies) for a ***minimum of 10 cr hrs*** of the focus area (five competencies *or* one competence plus the integrating project proposal and final product). In addition, given the importance of GGIL in professional practice, students are encouraged to employ GGIL for *more than the 10 cr hr minimum.*

(2) **Predesigned Group Learning Programs/Events:** For the rest of the focus area (*no more than 16 cr hrs*), students may complete formal university courses at accredited institutions or non-credit certificates/programs/workshops in accordance with the following parameters:

a. A graduate course of two or more credits may be used to develop and demonstrate a single competence provided that the course description aligns with the specifications of said competence. Graduate courses of four (or more) credits may be applied to two competencies.

b. It is the prerogative of the entity offering the course to set its admissions and enrollment requirements/conditions. For example: At DePaul, the College of Commerce limits non-commerce students to enrolling in no more than three graduate Commerce courses. In addition, the College of Law, School of Theater and School of Music do not permit non-law, non-theater or non-music students (respectively) to enroll in their courses.

c. Graduate courses from accredited universities can be applied (transferred) *without a MAAPS competence tuition charge* for up to four competencies (eight credit hours). Transferring in additional graduate courses for competencies beyond the four requires that students pay MAAPS competence tuition. *[Note: Periodically, SNL graduate faculty members offer individualized courses on particular topics. These **Graduate Faculty Designed Independent Studies/GFDIS** also qualify as graduate courses.]*

d. An SNL *undergraduate* course that is offered by an instructor with a doctoral degree may be incorporated into a broader/deeper graduate-level independent study—upon the approval of the Faculty Mentor and SNL Undergraduate Instructor. As approved, students register for a ***Graduate Guided Independent Study/GGIS (SNL-532)*** with the instructor; they do not register for the undergraduate course.

e. Courses applied within a previously completed degree or where the grade on the official transcript is C- or lower are not eligible.

f. Non-credit programs/workshops/certifications (offered by professional associations, employers and other industry vendors) may be used. Any non-credit offering must be approved by the Graduate Program—on an individual basis—for inclusion within a student's MAAPS Program.

⬛ ← ← ← Learning *PRODUCTS* (in the Focus Area)... ⬛

LEARNING PRODUCTS:

A "**learning product**" in the Focus Area is a demonstration of the sought outcome (competence statement)—providing evidence for assessment that, indeed, the sought outcome/competence has been achieved and to what level (satisfactory, strong, exceptional). Here, once the learning product is proposed and approved (as aligned with the sought outcome/competence and learning activities), the student proceeds accordingly.

In accordance with the two broad types of learning activities mentioned on the previous page, the following possibilities and policies pertain to **learning products** applied within MAAPS.

> ▶**RE: Individualized Learning.** Learning Products resulting from approved *Graduate Guided Individualized Learning (GGIL)* may take any number of forms depending on the competence/sought outcomes being demonstrated. (See box below.) Here, the student produces an approved product(s) which is then assessed in accordance with the MAAPS Learning Product Assessment Form & process. *See page F-8; Row #1.*

> ▶**RE: Group Learning (graduate course).** Learning Products resulting from approved graduate courses are represented merely by the grade (C or better) on an accredited institution's official transcript. Here, the course instructor—per the grade listed on official transcript—serves as the assessor. *See page F-8; Row #2 (DePaul courses); Row #3 (non-DePaul courses).*

> ▶**RE: Group Learning (non-credit programs/workshops/certifications).** Learning Products resulting from approved non-credit programs may take any number of forms depending on the competence/sought outcome being demonstrated. Here, the student produces the approved learning product(s) which is then assessed in accordance with the MAAPS Learning Product Assessment Form & process. *See Row #4 (additional study) & Row #5 (stand-alone) on page F-8.*

With respect to individualized learning (GGIL) and non-credit program/workshop/certificate learning), students are encouraged to develop learning products that speak, where possible, to both **academic and professional audiences** in order to integrate depth of knowledge/scholarship with sophisticated understanding of the pragmatics of professional practice. Furthermore, in keeping with graduate-level scholarship, all learning products are to include analysis which situates the learning and its product within **recent/current professional literature** and demonstrates the student's command of relevant scholarship. As such, students are to use APA format for both in-text citations and bibliographic references. (See Index—*APA Citation Format.*) In addition, students are to avoid *Wikipedia* and other less-than-scholarly sources.

Non-exhaustive List of Possible Learning Products that may be clustered together to demonstrate (give evidence of) competence statements/sought outcomes		
• artwork, graphic designs • audio-visual presentations • business plans • business reports • case studies • clinical notes • certifications • commentaries • conference papers • computer programs/systems • demonstrations • designs/blueprints	• diagrams • essays • evaluation reports • films or video reviews • guidebooks • interview transcripts • job-related materials • journal articles • laboratory reports • management reports • manuals • mind maps or concept maps	• newspaper/magazine articles • presentations (formal) • personal reflections/journals • photographs and slides • procedural manuals • project plans • recorded interviews • research reports • resource kits • video presentations • work products • etc.

Learning Activity/Product Implications—Registration, Tuition, etc.

	Learning **ACTIVITY** (as approved)	Learning **PRODUCT** (as approved)	**REGISTRATION & PAYMENTS**	Link to Competence for Transcript
1	**GGIL** [A] -*graduate guided individualized learning (including work-projects)*	✓PRODUCT is product as approved in learning plan. ✓Assessed by MAAPS process. ✓Mentor assigns grade.	-Student registers for MAAPS competence and pays its tuition.	-On registrar's transcript and narrative transcript.
2	**Graduate Course** (***DePaul***) [A] -*graduate credit* -*includes GGIS & GFDIS offerings*	✓PRODUCT is course grade. ✓Assessed in course; no MAAPS assessment. ✓Course Instructor assigns grade.	-Student registers for DePaul Grad Course & pays its tuition. *(See Grad Registration Bulletin for details.)* No MAAPS competence registration.	-On registrar's transcript and narrative transcript. -When complete, Mentor links competence & course within **DPR** [D].
3	**Graduate Course** (***Non-DePaul***) [A ,B, C] -*graduate credit* -*transfer course*	✓PRODUCT is course grade. ✓Assessed in course; no MAAPS assessment. ✓Course Instructor assigns grade.	-Student registers for **non-DePaul** grad course & pays its tuition [c]. No MAAPS competence registration. NOTE: As a *non-DePaul course*, this registration will not apply toward DePaul's financial aid minimum for the quarter.	-Student submits transcript of completed course to to SNL Grad Office. -SNL Grad Office enters course onto **DPR** [D]; Mentor links competence & course; course is listed as transfer course on registrar's transcript and narrative transcript.
4	**Certificate/Special Program** *with Additional Study* [A] -*non-graduate credit*	✓PRODUCT is certificate + additional study & demonstration. ✓Assessed by MAAPS process. ✓Mentor assigns grade.	-Student registers for certificate or program & pays its fee [c]. -Student also registers for MAAPS competence & pays its tuition.	-On registrar's transcript and narrative transcript.
5	**Certificate/Special Program** *without Additional Study* [A ,B, C] -*non-graduate credit* -*SNL deems activity to be sufficiently grad-level to merit* **waiver** *of designated portion of MAAPS program.*	✓PRODUCT is certificate or progr. completion. ✓Assessed in certificate or program; no MAAPS assessment. ✓Mentor waives portion of MAAPS program—per SNL authorization.	-Student registers for venue & pays its fee [c]. -No MAAPS competence registration. NOTE: As a *non-graduate credit entity*, this registra-tion will not apply toward DePaul's financial aid minimum for the quarter.	-Student submits documen-tation of completed venue to Mentor. -Mentor notes in **DPR** [D] "degree requirement waived." Per waiver, notification appears in DPR & MAAPS Narrative Transcript—not registrar's transcript.
	(SNL = School for New Learning Curriculum Committee)			

[A]-**Requirement:** Given the MAAPS Program's emphasis on individualized learning, students are ***required*** to utilize GGIL (categories 1 & 4) for *no less than 10 cr hrs* in the focus area (five competencies or one competence plus the integrating project and final product). Consequently, event-based/instructor-designed learning venues (categories 2, 3 & 5) may be used for *no more than 16 cr hrs* in the focus area. Due to the importance of GGIL skills in professional practice, students are encouraged to utilize categories 1 & 4 for more than the *10 cr hr minimum*.

[B]-**Transfer and/or Waiver:** Up to 8 credit hours of learning via categories 3 & 5 (above) can be applied *without* additional MAAPS tuition. Over the 8 quarter-credit-hour limit, students must register and pay for *both* the outside tuition/fees *and* the related MAAPS competence tuition.

[C]-**Financial Aid Parameter:** DePaul's Financial Aid applies to DePaul's tuition. Non-DePaul tuition/fees related to learning activities in categories 3, 4 & 5 are *not* eligible for DePaul Financial Aid unless special arrangements (on an individual basis) are made with DePaul's Financial Aid Office.

[D]-**DPR:** DPR = DePaul's *Degree Progress Report*

IMPLEMENTING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

As students are ready to implement work on approved Learning Activities associated with approved Focus Area Professional Competencies, they are to:

(a) Consult the third column of the table on the previous page for direction regarding how to register for a particular learning activity involved per competence. This step is critical in order to avoid mis-registering and mis-paying tuition. For example: the process for registering for an approved course to fulfill a competence is different from the process of registering for a GGIL to fulfill a competence, etc.

(b) Register for individual competencies only <u>after</u> their ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plans*** (and/or the relevant competence page of the plan) have been officially approved (See Learning Plan Approval process in Section D of Guidebook.) and <u>only</u> during the term in which they intend to make substantive progress in implementing the approved Learning Activities per competence.. *[NOTE: Faculty Mentors may authorize students to register for <u>one</u> <u>designated</u> <u>competence</u> in advance of official approval of the Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan—<u>designated</u> based on the Faculty Mentor's judgment of the strength and appropriateness of the specific competence.]*;

(c) If the particular Learning Product(s) is eventually to be assessed by an Outside Assessor (other than the Professional Advisor), discuss the nature of the Learning Activity and anticipated Product with the potential Outside Assessor as soon as possible. If the particular individual is willing to assess the work, consult with the Faculty Mentor as soon as possible to secure approval of the Outside Assessor.

(d) Return to the particular competence page as approved in the ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** (or approved subsequently) to re-ground regarding learning outcomes, learning activities and learning products. In addition, revisit the *Learning Product Assessment Form* (See Section I.) for directions regarding eventual submission of the learning product and for details regarding criteria to be used in assessing product.

(e) Consult with Faculty Mentor and second assessor (Professional Advisor or approved Outside Assessor) regarding components of "d" (above) to clarify expectations "up front."

(f) Engage the Learning Activities (as contained within the approved competence page of the ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** or as subsequently revised/reapproved);

(g) Submit draft(s) of Learning Products for "formative" feedback prior to final submission and integrate feedback into the revision/polishing of the next iteration of the work; and,

(h) When ready---initiate the "summative" assessment process of the Learning Product/s. (See "Assessing Professional Competencies" on page F-10.)

CHANGING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Each competence in the ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** (See Guidebook Section G.) includes five components: Competence Statement, Learning Activities (to develop competence), Learning Product/s (to demonstrate competence), an Anticipated Assessor, and a Timeline. Once approved by GSPRC, any one of these components may need to change for any number of reasons. To do so, the student is to revise the particular page from the ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** and submit both the original page and the revised page (with revised date and content) to his/her PA and Faculty Mentor for approval. The Faculty Mentor is authorized to determine if changes to the ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** are substantive enough to warrant resubmission to GSPRC. [Any proposed changes involving a possible waiver of MAAPS registrations and assessment for other than graduate-credit-courses are to be submitted through the Graduate Programs Director to the appropriate curriculum committee/subcommittee.] As soon

as the revised page from the ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan*** is officially approved by the Faculty Mentor, GSPRC and/or appropriate curriculum committee/subcommittee, the student is to use it and proceed accordingly.

ASSESSING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Within the Focus Area, students engage in various Learning Activities designed to develop Learning Products that demonstrate Professional Competencies. In doing so, students are encouraged to submit—for "formative" feedback—draft(s) of their learning products prior to submitting the final product for final "summative" assessment.

As a student is ready to begin the process of submitting the final product for final "summative" assessment, the student is to secure a copy of the *Learning Product Assessment Form* and follow the directions outlined at the beginning of that form. The Learning Product Assessment Form (including criteria for assessment) can be found with Section I of this guidebook or at http://snl.depaul.edu/student-resources/graduate-resources/Pages/special-documents-forms-and-templates.aspx.

In addition to the specific steps outlined at the beginning of the Learning Product Assessment Form, the following general policies/procedures apply:

(1) If the Learning Product(s) being submitted contains confidential information, the student is to include a note with the submission of the products asking assessors to honor such.

(2) If the Learning Product(s) involves artifacts that cannot be distributed electronically, the student is responsible to arrange delivery methods (prepaid by student) to transport materials when ready: (a) from student to second assessor (PA or approved outside assessor); (b) from second assessor to Faculty Mentor; and, (c) from Faculty Mentor back to student.

(3) For completion of the assessment process and grade posting within a current quarter, learning product(s)—along with their *Learning Product Assessment Forms*—are due to one's Faculty Mentor (having been already assessed by prior assessors) by no later than two weeks PRIOR to the last day of the quarter. If this deadline is missed, an "R" (research in progress) grade may be assigned by the Faculty Mentor. As soon thereafter as the work is assessed (within the time-limit afforded by the "R" grade), the "R" grade will be replaced with the appropriate grade.

CULMINATION OPTIONS

The Program culminates in one of two options:

▶**OPTION "A": Four Supplemental Professional Competencies in the Focus Area**
To bring closure and culmination to the Program, students may choose to develop and demonstrate four additional two-credit competencies across the eight areas of the Focus Area. The process for doing so is outlined below:

(1) In consultation with the Professional Advisor and Faculty Mentor, the student outlines the four areas for further development.

(2) Student prepares a Professional Competence "plan" for each of the four competencies by adapting the page designated for Professional Competence #AP-585. (See Part III of ***Graduate Focus Area Learning Plan***; Guidebook Section G.) The four supplemental professional competencies are to be numbered as follows: #AP-586 (2 credits), #AP-587 (2 credits), #AP-588 (2 credits), and #AP-589 (2 credits).

(3) Student submits each of the four supplemental Professional Competence pages to his/her

Professional Advisor and Faculty Mentor for approval.

(4) Once approved, the student pursues these competencies in accordance with the process used for all competencies as outlined earlier in Guidebook Section F.

▶**OPTION "B": The Integrating Project (Proposal & Final Product) in the Focus Area**

The Integrating Project is an original, independently conducted project that incorporates elements of theory and practice and demonstrates integration of Liberal Learning and Graduate Focus Area competencies. As such, it is designed to:

• Involve new learning while also building upon and integrating the learner's existing knowledge/skill;

• Engage the learner in deepening and/or expanding his/her base of knowledge and skills;

• Locate the topic of exploration within the relevant literature (i.e., the larger context);

• Employ a systematic method(s) of inquiry—working with a credible base of data/information;

• Contribute to current knowledge or practice and/or offer direction for further applications; and,

• Have utility/relevance to other persons, groups, organizations, larger systems and/or the world of ideas.

The topic and approach for the Integrating Project are chosen by the student with approval of the Professional Advisor, the Faculty Mentor, and the Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC). Major approaches for orienting lines of inquiry include: Discovery, Creative/Artistic Expression, Integration or Practice Enhancement. (See box on next page.)

Given the importance and significance of the Integrating Project, students are encouraged to begin discussing topics/approaches with their Faculty Mentors and Professional Advisors early in their programs of study. In this way, at least some Learning Activities within earlier competencies can be used to build toward, and provide foundation for, the Integrating Project.

Students who plan to complete Integrating Projects should have their Integrating Project Proposals approved by their Faculty Mentor, Professional Advisor and GSPRC at least 2-3 quarters prior to the quarter in which they plan/hope to graduate. In addition, all final Integrating Projects and assessments (by student, Faculty Mentor and Professional Advisor) must be completed and approved by GSPRC at least one month prior to the student's planned graduation. Failure to adhere to GSPRC deadlines in this regard may cause the student's graduation to be delayed.

Students wishing to review examples of completed Integrating Projects (formerly known as Master Works) may do so by consulting "Samples of Graduate Student Work." See Guidebook Section H.

INQUIRY APPROACHES for: *Graduate Integrating Projects*

Students may orient their inquiry for the Integrating Project from among several approaches.[1,2] Four general approaches are listed below and may, in some cases overlap. Each approach is addressed in greater detail within its particular Integrating Project PROPOSAL Review Form and/or FINAL PROJECT Review Form. (See Guidebook Section I.)

• **Discovery:** This approach is characterized by advancing knowledge through original research. The student collects original data, using a recognized method(s) of research. The data are analyzed and interpreted typically for the purpose of advancing or creating knowledge. Students' inquiry in the discovery mode may be characterized by contributing to the building of an important idea, rather than something that can be applied in the short term.

• **Creative/Artistic Expression:** This approach is characterized by advancing understanding through creative efforts drawing upon one or more media for expression. The student identifies an audience, purpose, and process(es) as touchstones for assessing the relevancy and innovation of the creative effort. Drawing on literature, practicing artists/writers, and/or other appropriate sources, the student should place his/her creative efforts in the context of genres or traditions that inform his/her choices and processes. Students' inquiry in their creative mode may be characterized by contributing to the understanding of events, ideas, people, and/or issues through the evocative capacities of the arts in one form or another.

• **Integration:** This approach is characterized by synthesizing knowledge in creative ways. In this mode of inquiry, the student seeks to synthesize specialized knowledge (his/her own and others) into new patterns of understanding and meaning. Often, perspectives from multiple disciplines/fields are woven together with the student's critical reflection on practice to arrive at new interpretations. This approach may include collection of some original data, or it may rely on existing data and information.

• **Practice Enhancement:** This approach involves applying knowledge to practical, real world problems and situations. In this mode of inquiry, the student seeks to improve or enhance specific practices based on explanations of ideas derived from relevant literature and the student's interpretations of his/her own observations and experiences within a given setting. In this context, the student will show his/her understanding of how practice(s) and the ideas behind it (models, principles, etc.) interrelate. The student's effort will involve designing, implementing, evaluating, and/or advancing practice in a defined setting. The student will collect primary data to support decisions or provide evidence of outcomes as appropriate to each of these phases.

[1] Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered.* Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

[2] Fiddler, M., McGury, S., Marienau, C., Rogers, R., and Scheideman, W. (1996). Broadening the scope of scholarship: A suggested framework. *Innovative Higher Education, 21*, 127-139

The Integrating Project is completed in two phases—a **Proposal** and a **Final Product**.

PHASE I: Proposal   (#AP-591; 2 credit hours)
The Integrating Project PROPOSAL is a concise, well-honed document that clearly delineates the student's readiness to engage in the project as well as the project's nature and scope. The topic under investigation should be supported by relevant literature in the field and the use of appropriate method(s) of inquiry. Multiple drafts of the proposal may be required before the student, Professional Advisor and Faculty Mentor deem that it is ready for submission to the Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC). Therefore, students are advised to plan sufficient time (several months) for the process of proposal development and refinement.

For guidance regarding what to include in the Proposal, students are advised to review the appropriate Proposal Review Form (aligned to the inquiry approach proposed). See Guidebook Section I.

Proposal Review: As soon as the student's Academic Committee (Student, Professional Advisor/PA, and Faculty Mentor) determines that the Proposal is ready for official review, the following steps are undertaken:

(1) **Student** prepares electronic version (no PDF or zip files) of PROPOSAL.

(2) **Student** secures electronic copy of PROPOSAL REVIEW FORM. (See Guidebook Section I.)

(3) **Student** electronically sends (#1-above) and (#2-above) to three assessors: self, Faculty Mentor and PA and asks that each reviews proposal, completes proposal review form and submits form to Faculty Mentor. *[Note: Student is responsible to see that all three review forms (student's self-assessment, Professional Advisor's assessment and Faculty Mentor's assessment) are completed and submitted to the FACULTY MENTOR by the first Thursday of the month in which the student wishes to have the materials reviewed by GSPRC.]*

(4) Upon receipt of ALL review forms (at least one week prior to the scheduled GSPRC meeting), the **Faculty Mentor** electronically sends the PROPOSAL (#1-above) and three completed assessment forms (#3-above) copies to members of GSPRC. Failure to submit complete materials to GSPRC members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting may result in delaying the GSPRC review until the following month. *[Note: GSPRC only reviews and acts on proposals that have been previously approved by the student's Academic Committee.]*

(5) The **GSPRC** reviews the PROPOSAL in light of their own observations as well as the written assessments provided by the designated reviewers (student, Faculty Mentor, and PA). If the proposal is approved by the GSPRC, the GSPRC assigns a "Pass" as the grade entry for AP-591. The grade is then posted by the Faculty Mentor.

(6) The **Faculty Mentor** notifies the student in writing regarding GSPRC's deliberations including the assigned grade and forwards a copy to members of the GSPRC. If the Proposal is approved "on-condition" or rejected, the conditions and steps for resubmission are clearly delineated in the written correspondence from the Faculty Mentor.

(7) Upon approval of the Proposal, the **Student** is cleared to commence work on the Integrating Project, i.e., with ongoing consultation with his/her PA and Faculty Mentor.

PHASE II: <u>Final Product</u>   (#AP-592; 6 credit hours)
For guidance regarding what to include in the Final Product, please see the appropriate Final Product Review Form (aligned to the appropriate inquiry approach). See Guidebook Section I.

<u>Final Product Review</u>: As soon as the student's Academic Committee (Student, Professional Advisor, and Faculty Mentor) determine that the Integrating Project (Final Product) is ready for official "summative" review, the following steps are undertaken:

(1) **Student** prepares electronic version (no pdf or zip files) of FINAL PRODUCT.

(2) **Student** secures electronic copy of FINAL PRODUCT REVIEW FORM. (See Guidebook Section I.)

(3) **Student** electronically (no pdf or zip files) sends <u>#1-above</u> and <u>#2-above</u> to three assessors: self, Faculty Mentor and PA and asks that each reviews the final product, completes final product review form and submits form to Faculty Mentor. *[**Note**: Student is responsible to see that all three review forms (student's self-assessment, Professional Advisor's assessment and Faculty Mentor's assessment) are completed and submitted to the FACULTY MENTOR by the first Thursday of the month in which the student wishes to have the materials reviewed by GSPRC.]*

(4) Upon receipt of ALL review forms (at least one week prior to the scheduled GSPRC meeting), the **Faculty Mentor** electronically sends the PROPOSAL (<u>#1-above</u>) and three completed assessment forms (<u>#3-above</u>) copies to members of GSPRC. Failure to submit complete materials to GSPRC members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting may result in delaying the GSPRC review until the following month. *[<u>Note</u>: GSPRC only reviews and acts on proposals that have been previously approved by the student's Academic Committee.]*

(5) The **GSPRC** reviews the FINAL PRODUCT in light of their own observations as well as the written assessments provided by the designated reviewers (student, Faculty Mentor, and PA). If the final product is approved by the GSPRC, the GSPRC assigns a letter grade as the grade entry for AP-592 and the Faculty Mentor, on behalf of GSPRC, posts it on Campus Connect. Once the GSPRC assigns a grade, the FINAL PRODUCT may not be resubmitted.

(6) The **Chair of GSPRC** notifies the student in writing regarding GSPRC's deliberations including the assigned grade. If the FINAL PRODUCT is approved "on-condition" or rejected, the conditions and steps for resubmission are delineated in the written correspondence from the GSPRC Chair.

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