

## Memorandum

To: UC Davis Students  
**Graduate Forensic Science Program**

Date: October 16, 2014

Subject: **Course and Unit Fee Policy for the UC Davis Master of Science in Forensic Science (MSFS) Program.**

### **Background**

The Master of Science in Forensic Science (MSFS) program is entirely self-supporting. As a self-supporting program, it is not eligible to receive state tax dollars to underwrite any portion of the program. In addition, the program must reimburse the University for the use of any campus facilities or services. Student tuition fees must cover the cost of all instruction, use of facilities, and all administration fees for the entire program. The program was budgeted and approved by the University on the basis that students would complete the units required for graduation and graduate after the completion of their thesis. The program was not budgeted for the possibility of students taking additional units beyond those required for the degree without paying tuition for those units. Allowing students to use university resources without payment would be in violation of the self-supporting nature of the program and is not equitable to the other students.

### **Courses over and above program requirements**

Should a student desire to take additional elective classroom-based courses beyond those required for the MSFS degree, the tuition will be charged at the current MSFS program rate. The only exception to this is the FOR299 research units. This is explained in more detail below.

We do make an exception if you exceed the required course units by no more than 2 units. As an example, let's assume you have completed 52 of the 54 units required for the degree (including 18 FOR299) and you need 2 more units to meet your elective requirement. The class you choose is a 4-unit class that brings your total to 56 units. In this case, we would waive the fee for the extra 2 units of course work.

### **Students who receive a course grade with a C+ or lower.**

Students who receive a grade of C+ or lower in any "FOR" required course must retake that course.

If a grade of C+ or lower is received for any optional course, you do not have to retake it but keep in mind that it will affect your GPA. If you retake the class and obtain a better grade, the prior grade is ignored in your GPA calculation.

Students will be required to pay the current tuition fees for all courses that are repeated.

## **Research Unit (FOR299) Policy**

In order to simplify accounting procedures, students will be required to pay for all the FOR299 research units as they sign up to take them, even if they are not doing active research. Once a student has paid for the required research units for the program (18), the fees for any additional research units may be waived (some exceptions apply. See Student Affairs Officer).

Exceptions:

- For students who have accumulated 32 units or more of course work, fee-waived research units will only be available if they have submitted an approved research project and have received a satisfactory rating on the annual performance evaluation. Thus, if you do not receive a satisfactory annual performance rating, you will be charged for all the FOR299 units that you have selected.
- The number of such fee-waived research units should be a number that realistically reflects the research work that can be done by that student for that quarter. Thus registering for 6 units of FOR299 has the expectation that one will conduct 18 hours of research per week.
- **TIME LIMITS:** Fulltime students (7 or more units) are expected to complete their thesis project in 3 years. After this period of time, the program will not waive any FOR299 fees. Part-time students (6 or less units per quarter) are expected to complete their thesis effort before the end of 5 years. After 4 years, the program will not waive any FOR299 fees. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the program director.
- Students who have completed and paid for all the required course work and research units and are enrolled in “fee-waived” research units will be required to pay an administrative fee equivalent to the cost of one unit. This annual one-time fee will be charged in fall quarter. The MSFS program is charged administrative fees by Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of the University Registrar for every student registered as an FOR graduate student. The one unit charge in fall quarter should be sufficient to cover these annual fees.
- There are certain exceptions for those students who need to maintain full-time status because of INS regulations, Graduate Student Researchers (GSR) with fee remission and Teaching Assistants (TA). For these cases, contact the program’s Student Affairs Officer for specific guidance

## **Course Enrollment Prioritization**

Some Forensic Science courses are subject to limited enrollment (i.e. Homicide Crime Scene Investigation, FOR 240; Case Reports, FOR218). The policy regarding enrolling in a limited space course is as follows:

- Seniority (if you have not already fulfilled your basic course requirements)

- International Students

It will be your responsibility to enroll in a timely fashion each quarter when the registration process is opened to current students. Enrollment is open to current students at least six weeks before the beginning of each quarter.

### **Course Work and Research Unit Completion**

Students in the MSFS program must complete all the course work and research units required.

Our normal policy is to provide a significant amount of your research fees back to the PI or department in which you are conducting research in order to cover costs for materials and supplies you may use.

### **Course Grade Policy**

#### **Maintaining an Overall “B” Average.**

The policy of UC Davis Office of Graduate Studies is that a graduate student must maintain a B average or better or be subject to dismissal from the program (see Graduate Studies Policy at [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/facstaff/policies/disqual\\_appeal.pdf](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/facstaff/policies/disqual_appeal.pdf)).

#### **Availability of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades.**

With a few exceptions, an S/U grade will not be allowed as credit for any forensic science program. The exceptions are:

- FOR290 Seminar classes
- FOR293 Research Methodology
- FOR299 Research units
- FOR298 Group Study classes
- One unit of XXX290 required external seminar class. The XXX refers to any approved science based seminar class.

Any other courses with S/U grading will not count toward the MSFS degree. However, tuition fees for these courses will still be charged at the current rate.

### **Course Work Recommendations**

Students should focus on completing the required courses as they are offered, as some are presented in alternate years. The selection of elective courses is to be determined by your area of research and the recommendations of your research advisors. The elective courses may be Forensic Science Graduate Group elective courses or specialty graduate level courses (selected from the UC Davis campus) that will assist you with your research endeavors. Generally, the elective courses must be of a technical or legal nature. Be aware that some campus graduate courses may have departmental prerequisites.

### **Auditing Forensic Classes**

Student members of the MSFS group are welcome to audit Forensic Science Graduate Group courses (*except lab classes*) on a space availability basis. One of the courses to consider auditing may be the Forensic Science Seminar sessions due to the incorporation of special topics. Please keep in mind that auditing a course does not imply course participation. In addition, if you wish to receive course materials, you will be expected to pay a predetermined materials fee.

### **Accepting Outside Equivalent Courses**

With the consent of the graduate advisor and Graduate Studies, certain qualifying course work taken elsewhere may be credited towards your degree. The normal limit is 6 units of course work from a non-UC institution or 12 units from a UC campus. These transfer units cannot have been used to satisfy the requirements for another degree. We will only accept graduate courses for transfer that have a grade of “B” or higher. Further, the MSFS Executive Committee has decided (June 3, 2005) that the course(s) should have been taken within the past five years with a “B” or better grade. Exceptions must be approved by the Education Policy Committee.

Contact the MSFS program director to obtain the information about requesting such credit. Also check the Office of Graduate Studies website (<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu>) to read their most current policies in this area.

### **Challenging a Course**

The term “challenging a course” (or credit by examination) assumes that one knows the content of the course, is ready to take the course exams, and has completed all the tasks without attending classes. Currently, the MSFS Program has no provisions for challenging any forensic designated classes.

### **California Criminalistics Institute (CCI) Classes**

A limited number of UC Davis MSFS students may be allowed to take classes at CCI, subject to the permission from the individual CCI program manager. While the cost is approximately \$125 per class day plus any designated materials fee, on several occasions, our students have had the opportunity to attend at no cost. These are worthwhile adult education classes but keep in mind that CCI classes do not count for any credit towards the UC Davis MSFS Program.

If you wish to enroll in a CCI class, please use the CCI web site to select classes and complete an application. The application must be signed by the MSFS program director. Submission of an application does not guarantee selection as the CCI program manager will make a final decision.



Director, Forensic Science Graduate Program

Replaces the following policies:

*Course Policy dated November 1, 2012*

*Course Policy dated January 10, 2010*

*Course Policy dated November 1, 2007*

*Research Units Policy dated 6-28-05*