

Graduate and Affiliate Graduate Faculty Appointments initiated through the School of Medicine

Policy Type: Administrative

Responsible Office: SOM Dean

Initial Policy Approved: 9/30/2026

Current Revision Approved: 9/30/2026

Policy Statement and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the individuals who can serve as graduate student advisors and who can serve on graduate student advisory committees, depending on the type of faculty appointment. This policy covers types of faculty appointments, review and confirmation of appointments and compliance with serving as advisors and/or on advisory committees, changes and appeals, program director and chair input and responsibility for communication of policy implications.

Who Should Know This Policy

SOM faculty members involved in graduate education and department chairs.

Definitions and initial appointments

Graduate Faculty Appointments

As defined by the VCU Graduate School, individuals with GRADUATE faculty appointments can serve as advisors to Ph.D. or M.S. students and can serve on graduate advisory committees.

Affiliate Graduate Faculty Appointments

In contrast, individuals with AFFILIATE GRADUATE faculty appointments can serve on graduate advisory committees, but cannot serve as advisors for Ph.D. or M.S. students.

Contacts

The Office of the Dean School of Medicine officially interprets this policy.

The Office of the Dean School of Medicine is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy *Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures* through the appropriate governance structures.

Please direct policy questions to the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the Dean's Office.

Policy Specifics and Procedures

Graduate programs submit requests for both types of appointments to the School of Medicine (SOM). Requests are reviewed by the SOM Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education (SADGE), and final appointment decisions are made by the Graduate School, which formally houses the appointments.

When reviewing requests for initial appointments, the SOM SADGE will consider the following:

GRADUATE faculty appointments are for VCU full-time faculty members who (i) are assistant professors, associate professors or professors, (ii) are tenure-eligible, tenured, or have other long-term employment arrangements with VCU, (iii) have doctoral or other terminal degrees and (iv) have the experience and on-going or anticipated scholarly activity required to advise and guide M.S. and Ph.D. students. Graduate faculty appointments do not have end dates.

AFFILIATE GRADUATE faculty appointments are for VCU faculty members, other VCU employees or individuals outside of VCU with the expertise required to serve on advisory committees for M.S. and Ph.D. students. Affiliate graduate faculty appointments have end dates.

Considerations for changes in appointments: An affiliate graduate faculty appointment may be converted to a graduate faculty appointment, or vice versa, if a faculty member's position, duties, or responsibilities change. For example, an affiliate graduate faculty member who develops an active research program suitable for training M.S. or Ph.D. students and meets all other eligibility requirements may be considered for appointment to the graduate faculty.

The SOM SADGE will review graduate/affiliate graduate faculty appointments when concerns arise regarding compliance with the policies, procedures, or practices of graduate programs, the SOM Office of Graduate Education, the Graduate School, or VCU. The review process will include consultation with the faculty member, the relevant program director(s), the chair of the faculty member, and other appropriate parties. In cases that are not egregious, the SOM SADGE, relevant program directors and/or chairs will meet with the faculty member to develop a plan to improve their skills as a graduate/affiliate graduate faculty member. In egregious cases (e.g. cases involving harm to a student, the graduate program, SOM or VCU), the SOM SADGE will ask the SOM Graduate Education Executive Committee to consider revocation of the faculty member's graduate/affiliate graduate faculty appointment. If the SOM GEEC recommends revocation of the appointment, the SADGE will communicate the recommendation to the Graduate School, the faculty member, the faculty member's chair and the relevant graduate program director(s). The VCU Graduate School will decide whether revocation of the graduate/affiliate graduate faculty appointment is warranted. A faculty member whose graduate/affiliate graduate faculty status has been revoked can apply to have it reinstated after one-year.

Within 30 calendar days of being notified by SOM about a recommended change in their graduate/affiliate graduate faculty appointment, a faculty member can appeal by providing the SOM Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Development a written statement outlining why they believe the action is unwarranted. The SOM SADFAD will empanel an ad hoc committee of three SOM graduate program directors with no prior direct involvement in the faculty member's mentoring of graduate students. The ad hoc committee will review the appeal and provide a recommendation to the SOM Dean, who will render a final decision on the appeal (i.e., the final recommendation by SOM). The SADFAD will

communicate the final SOM recommendation to the faculty member, their chair, the relevant graduate program director(s), and the SADGE. The SADGE will communicate the final SOM recommendation to the Graduate School.

If a graduate faculty appointment ends while the faculty member is serving as the advisor for graduate students, a new advisor for the students will be appointed by the graduate program. The SADGE, the faculty member's chair, and the graduate program director will consider whether the new advisor or another individual will supervise the student's thesis/dissertation project. The SADGE will communicate decisions to all parties.

Revision History_____

Initial approval date 9/30/2026