

Master's and Specialist Student Handbook

Prepared for

Master's and Specialist Students and Graduate Faculty



Created by
The Graduate School

Revised Fall 2024

CONGRATULATIONS!

Welcome to East Texas A&M University!

The Graduate School is pleased you have chosen to pursue your master's studies at East Texas A&M University. As you progress through your master's program, you will become aware that numerous rules and procedures must be followed for you to be successful. The Graduate School is here to help guide and assist you during each step of your master's program.

If you print out a hard copy of this handbook, please be aware that it is subject to change. The most current handbook will always be available online. Therefore, as you progress through your master's program, please check the [Graduate School's forms and guidelines web page](#) for the most current version of this handbook.

Everyone in The Graduate School will work with you to ensure your success. Ask questions or let us know of any concerns you might have; we are here to help you. If you have questions or concerns that are not answered in this handbook, please feel free to contact The Graduate School (903-886-5163).

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Master's and Specialist Degrees Awarded at East Texas A&M

Our Programs

East Texas A&M University offers graduate programs in 24 academic departments with more than 40 major areas of study. Six departments offer six doctoral degrees.

Graduate degrees now offered by East Texas A&M are:

Master of Science in Accounting	Master of Science
Master of Arts	Master of Science in Finance
Master of Business Administration	Master of Science in Nursing
Master of Education	Master of Social Work
Master of Fine Arts	Specialist
Master of Music	Doctor of Education
Master of Public Health	Doctor of Philosophy

The Graduate School is a component of the Academic Affairs division of the University. The other components are the College of Science and Engineering, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, the College of Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts, the College of Business, the College of Education and Human Services, and the College of Innovation and Design.

The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources includes the Department of Agricultural Sciences.

The College of Science and Engineering includes the departments of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Chemistry, Computer Science and Information Systems, Engineering and Technology, Mathematics, and Physics and Astronomy.

The College of Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts includes the departments of Art, History, Literature and Languages, School of Music, Sociology and Criminal Justice, and Theatre.

The College of Business includes the departments of Accounting and Finance, Management and Economics, and Marketing and Business Analytics.

The College of Education and Human Services includes the departments of Counseling, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, Higher Education and Learning Technologies, Psychology and Special Education, School of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the School of Social Work.

We offer a master's degree with the following majors:

Accounting	Healthcare Leadership
Agricultural Sciences	Higher Education
Applied Criminology	History
Applied Linguistics	Management
Art	Marketing and Marketing Analytics

Artificial Intelligence	Mathematics
Biological Sciences	Music
Business Administration	Organization, Learning & Technologies
Business Analytics	Political Science
Chemistry	Physics
Clinical Psychology	Psychology
Computer Science	Public Health
Counseling	Reading
Curriculum & Instruction	Secondary Education
Early Childhood Education	Social Work
Educational Administration	Sociology
Educational Technology	Spanish Language Teaching
Educational Technology Library Science	Special Education
English	Supply Chain Management
Family Nurse Practitioner	Technology Management
Finance	The Art of Teaching
Forensic Auditing Analytics	Theatre
Health, Kinesiology, and Sports Studies	

We offer a specialist degree with the following major:

School Psychology	
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We offer graduate certificates in the following areas:

Agribusiness	Plant & Soil Science
Applied Behavior Analysis	Professional Advancement in English Studies
Athletic Administration	Psychology of Gerontology and Positive Aging
Auditing & Forensic Accounting	Public History
Business Analytics	Sports Coaching
Chemical Dependency Counseling	STEM Education
Criminal Justice Management	Studies in Children's and Adolescent Literature and Culture
Criminal Justice Studies	Sustainable Food Systems
Economics of U.S. Healthcare	Talent Development
Exercise Science	Tax Accounting
Higher Education Student Affairs	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
Higher Education Teaching	Teaching History
Homeland Security	Teaching of Psychology

Instructional Coach	Technology Leadership
Instructional Design	The Business of Social Work
Intercollegiate Sport Administration	Urban School Leadership
Operational Excellence	UX Design
Organization Development	Women's & Gender Studies
Organizational Planning	

We offer post graduate certificates in the following areas:

Family Nurse Practitioner	
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Admission to Graduate School

Admission to Graduate School permits the student to enroll in graduate courses, but does not guarantee admission to a program leading to a master's or specialist or doctoral degree. Departments have the right, and many exercise that right, to have program admission requirements that are higher than those set by the Graduate School. In no case, however, can a department set criteria lower than the Graduate School minimum. Additional information regarding admission can be found online at <https://www.tamuc.edu/graduate-school/#tamuc-section-286413>.

General Requirements for Admission to the Graduate School

Domestic Students

An applicant to the Graduate School who is seeking admission must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution. The bachelor's degree must be substantially equivalent in content to degrees granted by East Texas A&M University. Each domestic applicant will submit to the Graduate School the following:

1. An application for admission to the Graduate School, available online: [ApplyTexas](#)
2. A \$50.00 non-refundable application fee.
3. An official bachelor's degree transcript from a regionally accredited institution and a transcript from any school at which the student has completed graduate courses (these transcripts should be sent directly to the Graduate School by the issuing institutions).

To view specific departmental requirements go to: [Graduate Programs](#)

International Students

An international graduate student is any degree-seeking student holding a non-immigrant visa. International students who desire to enter the university must submit all admission documents to the Graduate School a minimum of 90 days prior to the semester in which they wish to enroll. Each applicant must submit the following documents:

1. An application for admission to the Graduate School, available online: at [ApplyTexas](#)
2. A \$75.00 USD non-refundable application fee.
3. Official transcripts and official copies of diplomas, translated into English, from each college or university attended. The bachelor's degree earned at a foreign institution must be equivalent to an accredited U.S. institution's 4 year degree or selected 3 year bachelor's degrees using the guidelines established by World Education Services. Approval requires university accreditation with an A, A+, or A++ rating from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), and student standing of *first class or first division*.
4. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit proof of English proficiency, which is satisfied by one of the following:
 - a) A minimum TOEFL score of 79 for internet-based testing (IBT), or score of 550 for paper-based testing (PBT), or 213 on computer-based testing (CBT) scores must be less than 2 years old,
 - b) A minimum IELTS score of 6.0 overall band, scores must be less than 2 years old, or

- c) A minimum PTE score of 53 overall band, scores must be less than two years old; or
- d) Completing all years of a Bachelor's degree or higher degree at a U.S. regionally accredited university.
- e) A minimum Duolingo English Test score of 105 or higher less than two years old.

To view specific departmental requirements go to: <https://www.tamuc.edu/graduate-school/#tamuc-section-286413>

For new student information contact Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu.

Each applicant is subject to departmental approval. Individual departments may establish additional requirements for admission. International students must be admitted to a degree program in order to enroll in graduate courses unless visa classification indicates otherwise.

International students who hold an F-1 visa are not eligible for non-degree student status or provisional status.

Submitting an Application (Domestic/International)

East Texas A&M University Graduate School practices open application submission. Most programs do not require a submission deadline. For programs that do require a submission deadline, the dates are listed on the [specific program area webpages](#). **Below are the general application deadlines for international applicants:**

- To be considered for spring, the deadline is October 15th
- To be considered for summer, the deadline is March 15th
- To be considered for fall, the deadline is June 1st

Applications that have met the requirements listed above will be forwarded to the major department. The department will review each application and make a recommendation regarding admission status to the Dean of the Graduate School who will send notice of the admission decision to the applicant. Some departments have specific dates for the departmental review of applications and some require interviews.

Master's/Specialist Degree Program Status

Students desiring acceptance into a graduate master's or specialist program first must meet the general requirements for admission to Graduate School. For master's or specialist degree students, there are three types of admission status: full, conditional, and provisional. Financial aid is available for full and conditional admission status only.

Full Admission Status

The applicant must satisfy the following requirements for full admission status:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution or equivalent degree from a foreign institution. The bachelor's degree must be substantially equivalent in content to degrees granted by East Texas A&M University.

2. Have an overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.00 scale, or a 3.00 on the last 60 undergraduate hours.
3. Meet all departmental requirements.

Conditional Admission Status

Applicants not qualifying for full admission may be granted conditional admission status.

A student with conditional admission will have his/her academic standing updated to full admission or good standing once the student has completed 12 graduate semester credit hours from East Texas A&M University with a graduate GPA of at least 3.0.

Failure to achieve a 3.0 GPA after completing 12 graduate hours will result in suspension of the student from further graduate study in any degree program for one year.

Provisional Status

Some programs will allow a student to enroll for one semester under provisional status (initial semester of enrollment in Graduate School) with an application for admission and an application fee. International students are not eligible for provisional status.

Students admitted provisionally must be sure all outstanding admission documents are received before the end of the first semester of enrollment. Students whose files are not complete during the semester of provisional enrollment will not be permitted to enroll in future semesters until the necessary documentation is received and an admission decision is determined. Provisional status does not guarantee admission to a degree program. Financial aid is not available for students in provisional status.

Communication

Email for University Communication

1. Email is considered an official means of communication at East Texas A&M University.
2. Each student will be assigned a university email address when his or her application for admission to the university is processed. This email address will remain active throughout the student's academic career. Email accounts will expire after one long semester (Spring or Fall) in which the student is no longer enrolled at East Texas A&M University.
3. Student emails are Gmail accounts, which allows use of additional G-suite applications (Docs, Sheets, Google Drive, etc). It should be noted that faculty and staff emails are through Outlook and thus run on a separate system. All graduate assistants will also be assigned an Outlook email for work purposes, in addition to their student Gmail account.
4. Students are expected to monitor their official East Texas A&M University email accounts regularly. The university recommends checking emails at least once per day. Student should report any problems with

email accounts or access to email to the East Texas A&M University Technology Services Help Desk at 903-468-6000.

5. Requests to substitute non-university email addresses for purposes of official communication will not be honored.
6. Electronic mail is subject to the same policies regarding information disclosure as other methods of communication. The privacy of personally identifiable information must be protected under the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The confidentiality of email cannot be assured and any confidentiality may be compromised by access consistent with applicable law or policy, including this policy, by unintended redistribution or due to current technologies inadequate to protect against unauthorized access. Students, therefore, should exercise extreme caution in using email to communicate confidential or sensitive matters and should not assume that their email is private or confidential. Examples of confidential or sensitive information include, but are not limited to: drivers' license numbers, credit card numbers, social security number, grades, current or past academic history, medical information and medical history, criminal history, personal bank account numbers and payroll information other than gross pay.

GradNews

GradNews is a weekly newsletter sent out each Friday during the Fall and Spring to all registered graduate/doctoral students during the semester. It is also sent out on the first Friday of the Summer I and Summer II terms. This newsletter includes important upcoming dates and events for students, provides information on different topics related to graduate students (student account information, offerings happening on campus, etc.), and also includes a section for our Thesis and Dissertation students. If someone is not receiving GradNews, they can contact Graduate.School@tamuc.edu.

Requirement for the Master's and Specialist Degree

All Master's or Specialist Degrees must meet the requirements in this section. Additional degree requirements are listed in each departmental section of the [Graduate Catalog](#).

- **Prerequisite Coursework.** Admission to Graduate School does not imply that the applicant has the necessary background to earn a degree in a specific department. To major or minor in a specific discipline, the candidate must have or must obtain adequate preparation to assure successful graduate work. Background leveling courses cannot be applied toward the graduate major.
- **Course Requirements.** All master's degrees require completion of at least 30 graduate hours. Specialist degrees require completion of at least 66 graduate hours.
 - **Major.** A minimum of 18 graduate hours is necessary to complete a major. The student should check their degree plan in DegreeWorks through [MyLeo](#) for specific course requirements. A student desiring to change majors, must be in academic good standing with the Graduate School, and must complete a [Change of Major/Degree form](#).

- **Minor.** Twelve semester hours in a second subject area (designated by the course prefix) constitute a minor. Completion of a minor is not a mandatory requirement. Students receiving a minor may be required to satisfy candidacy and are required to meet the comprehensive examination requirements of the minor department.
- **Foreign Language Requirement.** Most Master of Art degree programs include the general language requirements listed below. Please view the program areas in the graduate catalog for specific language requirements.
General foreign language requirements can be met with one of the following options:
 1. Successful completion of at least 12 semester hours (college/university level) in one foreign language.
 2. Successful completion of 6 semester hours (college/university level) and 2 years of high school credit in one foreign language.
 3. Successful completion of 3 semester hours (college/university level) and 3 years of high school credit in one foreign language.
 4. Successful completion of 12 semester hours of American Sign Language (ASL).
 5. Completion of a Bachelor of Arts degree from East Texas A&M
 6. Successful completion of the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages examination with a minimum score/rating of intermediate proficiency in one of the following areas:
 7. Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) or
 8. Oral Proficiency Interview - Computer (OPIC) or
 9. Written Proficiency Test (WPT)
- **Grade Point Average.** An overall grade point average of 3.00 or better on all graduate work completed at East Texas A&M University and an overall GPA of 3.00 or better on all graduate work taken toward the graduate degree program is required for graduation. If a course is retaken, the last grade will be counted in the computation of the overall GPA. A course in which an "F" is received is considered a course completed. Only grades earned at East Texas A&M University are calculated into the student's GPA.
 - No grade of "D" or below will count toward a master's or specialist degree.
 - No more than three grades of "C" will be used toward a master's or specialist degree.
- **Master's or Specialist Degree Residency.** A minimum of two-thirds of the course work applied to a master's or specialist degree must be taken from East Texas A&M University. Students should check with the department for any departmental residency requirements.
- **Time Limitation.** All work for the master's or specialist degree must be completed during the 6 years immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. Credit earned over 6 years prior to graduation requires specific written departmental justification and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School to be counted toward a master's or specialist degree. The discipline in which the course(s) was taken shall be involved in the validation of an old course. In no case may courses more than 10 years old be applied toward the master's or specialist degree. These same limitations apply to all transfer courses. A master's or specialist student who has not been enrolled for 1 calendar year must apply for readmission under current admission & program standards for master's or specialist programs.

- **Catalog Privileges.** A student is entitled to use the degree provisions of any catalog in effect between the semester the student is admitted to the master's or specialist degree program and the semester the student's degree is conferred, provided the catalog used is not more than 6 years old at the time the degree is conferred.
- **Admission to Candidacy for Master's or Specialist Degree.** In those programs requiring candidacy, the student must apply and be admitted to candidacy at least one semester prior to graduation. Not all programs require candidacy. Students should check their DegreeWorks degree plan to determine candidacy is required for their program. Minimum candidacy requirements are:
 - Full admission into the master's or specialist program and satisfactory completion of all background courses and other departmental requirements.
 - Completion of at least four and not more than six East Texas A&M University graduate courses. Three of the courses must be in the major field.
 - An overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or better on all graduate work completed at East Texas A&M University and an overall GPA of 3.00 or better on all graduate work taken toward the graduate degree program.

When the above requirements have been met, the student should petition the major and/or (minor, if applicable) department for admission to candidacy. The major and/or minor department may require a written and/or oral qualifying examination before granting approval. It is the student's responsibility to see that the candidacy forms are submitted to the Graduate School prior to the semester in which the student expects to graduate.

- **Thesis (518) and Research Literature and Techniques (595) Credit.** All degree programs require the satisfactory completion of either the thesis (518) or the research literature and techniques (595) course at East Texas A&M University. These courses cannot be transferred from another institution. A student who is writing a thesis is required to register for 518 to receive guidance from a member of the faculty or while utilizing university facilities. Only 6 graduate hours of credit for 518 or 3 graduate hours of credit for 595 per degree will be given upon satisfactory completion of the requirement. Unless approved by the department and the Dean of the Graduate School, 518 or 595 must be taken in the student's major department. A reduced fee for 518 may be approved after all other course work for the degree is completed. Students writing a thesis must be enrolled in 518 during the semester the thesis is approved by the Graduate School. A student's completion of the 595 course must result in a product available for reference in the department for a minimum of 3 years. If a thesis student does not show to their advisor successful proposal/thesis progress in a semester of 518 or if a student does not show to complete more than 60% of the term/semester, they will be assigned a grade of U.
- **Final Comprehensive Examinations.** The candidate must pass a comprehensive examination administered by the advisory committee or major department and covering all the work within the master's or specialist degree program, including an acceptable defense of the thesis, if applicable. The student must be fully admitted to a master's or specialist degree program and be in good academic standing with the Graduate School to be eligible to take the comprehensive examination. The Final Comprehensive Examination Report form must be submitted to the Graduate School prior to graduation according to the <https://calendar.tamuc.edu/>.

A candidate who fails the comprehensive examination may be required by the advisory committee or the major department to complete further courses or additional study to correct the weaknesses or deficiencies revealed by the examination. The candidate who fails the comprehensive examination on

the first attempt may retake the comprehensive examination when the department head or equivalent deems it appropriate. Should the candidate fail the comprehensive examination upon the second attempt, a third and final attempt may be taken only with the recommendation of the major department head or equivalent and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School in accordance with University Procedure [11.99.99.R0.13 Examinations for Graduate Degrees](#). Successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam is required of all students to receive a master's or specialist degree. A student who attempts the comprehensive examinations for a third and final time and is unsuccessful is not eligible to receive his/her master's or specialist degree.

- **Graduation and Commencement.** Commencement exercises are held three times each academic year in May, August, and December. Students must apply for graduation online through [MyLeo](#) during the semester they plan to graduate. Students will be approved for graduation and the degree after they have satisfactorily completed all degree requirements and been approved by the academic department and the Graduate School. Please check the University [Academic Calendar](#) for deadline dates for filing. Graduation information is available online at Registrar's [website](#). Students must apply for graduation online through [MyLeo](#). A student must be in good academic standing in order to complete graduation requirements. Participation in the commencement ceremony does not guarantee conferring of any degree. East Texas A&M University has the right to rescind any conferred degree if the University becomes aware that the student did not meet all degree requirements including :
 - Good Academic Standing
 - No more than 3 Grades of "C" in the degree program
 - Overall graduate GPA of 3.00 or better
 - Overall graduate GPA of 3.00 or better on all graduate work taken toward the graduate degree program
 - Departmental Course Requirements are met
 - Successful Completion of Comprehensive Examination
 - Successful Completion of a thesis (if applicable to the program)

Students that have applied for graduation and are concurrently enrolled at another institution during the final semester in a program will be required to submit an official transcript before final clearance can be completed and degree can be awarded. In addition, all courses from East Texas A&M with a grade of X or IP must be completed before a degree can be awarded, even if the courses are not used in the program.

Coursework

DegreeWorks

DegreeWorks (digital degree plan) is a web-based planning tool to help students and advisors monitor student progress toward degree completion. DegreeWorks is not a substitution for consultation with an academic advisor. DegreeWorks shows the student in an easy-to-read format, the courses and program requirements that must be completed to achieve their chosen degree. All currently enrolled graduate students who attend East Texas A&M should use DegreeWorks. DegreeWorks is accessed through myLEO.

Registration

Registration dates, times, and instructions are available on the [Registrar's website](#). MyLeo (East Texas A&M web application for students) allows eligible students to register online. Students can access MyLeo through the university's main webpage or [here](#).

The academic year is divided into two long semesters, fall and spring, and a summer semester of two terms. Additional mini-terms may be available.

Courses: Definition, Value and Number

Semester Hour: The semester hour is a unit of credit. It is defined as one hour of lecture per week, or its equivalent in laboratory work, for one semester or its equivalent, as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Each course has a value of three semester hours unless otherwise specified.

Course Numbers: Graduate courses are numbered at the 500, 600, 700, 5000, and 6000 levels.

Graduate Student Course Load

During the fall or spring semester, a student taking nine (9) or more graduate semester credit hours is considered full-time. The maximum course load for a full-time graduate student during the fall or spring semester is fifteen (15) graduate semester credit hours. To enroll in more than fifteen (15) graduate semester credit hours, the student must have approval from the Dean of the Graduate School. A student taking six (6) graduate semester credit hours is considered half-time.

The maximum course load for a full-time graduate student during each summer term is seven (7) graduate semester credit hours. A student taking six (6) graduate semester credit hours in a summer term (summer I or II) is considered full-time for that term. A student taking nine (9) graduate semester credit hours (combination of summer I and II) is considered full-time for the entire summer (summer I and II).

A graduate student holding a full-time graduate assistantship enrolled in six (6) graduate semester credit hours is considered a full-time student. Graduate students must be enrolled in nine (9) graduate hours to be considered full-time for **financial aid**. See the section "Graduate Assistantships" for information about course loads for graduate assistants.

The maximum course load for a mini-term is three (3) graduate semester credit hours.

Student Class Schedule Adjustments

Students are expected to make all necessary adjustments in their class schedules by the 4th class day of a fall or spring semester and the 2nd class day of a summer term. Eligible students may use [MyLeo](#) (East Texas A&M University Web Applications for Students) to process drops/adds. Students not eligible to use [MyLeo](#) may submit an online drop/add sheet to the [Registrar's Office](#). The student must obtain approval to add and drop courses from the department/instructor and submit the drop/add sheet to the Registrar's Office. Students may add classes until the 4th class day during the fall and spring semesters and 2nd class day during the summer terms. Students may drop a class with a full refund (if remaining enrolled) until the 12th class day during the fall and spring semesters and 4th class day during the summer terms.

The student desiring to add a course(s) after the 4th class day of a regular semester or 2nd class day of a summer term should submit an online drop/add sheet to the [Registrar's Office](#). The student should obtain department/instructor approval and then dean approval. The drop/add sheet is then routed to the Registrar's Office. Students will not be allowed to add classes after the 12th class day during fall/spring or the 4th class day during a summer term.

No course may be added to student schedules after the last day to change schedules as stated in the university calendar, except in very special cases and then only by approval of the instructor and appropriate dean.

Withdrawal from the University

A student wishing to withdraw from all courses **before the end** of a semester or summer term for which he/she is registered must clear his record by filing an application for voluntary withdrawal on a form, which can be secured online at the following link: <https://dms.tamuc.edu/Forms/withdrawalform>. This is a withdrawal from the semester, not the university.

This action must be taken by the date stated in the <https://calendar.tamuc.edu/> as the last day to drop a class or withdraw. Any student who withdraws from the University is subject to the conditions outlined in the section regarding Scholastic Probation or Suspension. **It is the students' responsibility to withdraw from classes if he/she does not plan to attend during the semester in which they have enrolled.** A student has one year from the first day of a semester to appeal a withdrawal refund.

Earning Graduate Credit

Grading System

Grade Marks	Grade Meaning	Grade points Per Semester Hour
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C*	Average	2
D*	Passing (Minimum)	1
F	Failure	0
X	Incomplete	0
I	Incomplete (thesis & dissertation only)	0
W	Withdrew	0
S	Satisfactory	0
U*	Unsatisfactory	0
NG	No Grade Assigned	0
Q	Course Drop	0

- No grades below C can be used towards a graduate program.
- No more than 3 graduate courses with a grade of C can be used toward a Master's or specialist degree.

Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory (S-U) Grading

In certain graduate courses, students will be evaluated on a satisfactory-unsatisfactory (S-U) grading basis rather than by the traditional letter grade system. Students in these specially designated courses will receive the grade of "S," or "satisfactory," for graduate level work equivalent to a regular "B" grade or better. Grades of "U," or "unsatisfactory," will be assigned to those students whose work falls below the "B" level. In such courses, only a grade of "S" may be counted toward fulfillment of degree requirements. Neither "S" nor "U" grades will be included in the calculation of grade point average to determine academic standing.

Incomplete Grades (Grades of X)

Students, who because of circumstances beyond their control are unable to attend classes will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of "X" (incomplete) in all courses in which they were maintaining passing grades.

When an "X" is given for a grade in a course, the credit hours are not included for up to one year when calculating the grade point averages. A grade of "X" converts to a grade of "F" one year from the close of the semester/term in which the grade was originally recorded if the course requirements have not been satisfied. The hours are included in the number of hours attempted.

Recording a grade of "X" requires the filing of a plan for completion. The plan will be submitted with the official grade record sent to the department head who will forward it to the dean's office. The plan will include: (1) why the grade was given, and (2) steps necessary for the student to receive the final grade.

Once an incomplete has been assigned, the course cannot be dropped; a grade must be assigned.

A grade of "I" will only be given for the courses in thesis and dissertation (518 and 718) at the end of the terms/semesters in which the student has been accurately recorded to have completed **more than 60%** of the term/semester. A grade of "I" will be given for terms/semesters prior to the term/semester in which the final document is completed. Once the final document is completed, the number of hours required for 518 (6 sch) or 718 (9-12 sch) will convert to an "S" indicating satisfactory completion of the thesis or dissertation. The time limit imposed on the grade of "X" (one year) does not apply for these courses.

Transfer of Credit and Experiential Credit

Credit for work taken in other graduate schools is granted in accordance with an evaluation by the Graduate School and upon approval by the student's advisory committee and the Dean of the Graduate School; however, under no circumstances will a course with a grade lower than "B" be transferred. Transfer course content must be in academic areas taught by East Texas A&M. While there are no limitations on the number of hours that can be transferred, a minimum of forty-five hours of graduate credit must be earned from East Texas A&M.

Awarding of experiential credit will be based solely on experiential learning that is part of an official agreement between the University and another national, state, or regionally accredited institution or certifying agency.

Correspondence Courses

Credit earned by correspondence will not apply toward a master's or specialist degree.

Independent Studies

Registration in an individual studies (589), research, or similar course shall imply an expected level of effort on the part of the student comparable to that associated with an organized class with the same credit value. The maximum number of individually arranged (589) hours permissible toward a master's or specialist degree program is 25% of the required course work. Exceptions must be initiated in writing by the department head and approved by the appropriate academic dean and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Repeating a Course

When a course is repeated, only the last enrollment for the course will be used in computing the grade point average. Any student who enrolls in the same course a second time must notify the Registrar's Office during the semester in which the course is being repeated. When the semester is completed, the Registrar's Office will then update the grade point average to reflect the duplication of the course. After a degree is conferred, courses taken before the degree was conferred (regardless of whether the course is applied to the degree) cannot be repeated and the grade point average cannot be recalculated.

Academic Rules and Processes

Enrollment Limitation or Administrative Withdrawal

Enrollment in any graduate course is subject to approval by the department offering the course, the instructor teaching the course, and the Dean of the Graduate School, whether or not such is specifically stated in the course description. A student may be prevented from enrolling in the course, or dropped from the course if it is already in progress, if the Graduate Dean, Department Head, or a faculty member considers the student physically or mentally incapable of performing satisfactorily or safely in a course, or if the student becomes a threat to the instructor or others in the course or is disruptive in any way. In such cases, the Graduate Dean will confer with the faculty member and Department Head involved and then take appropriate action. Any tuition refund to which the student is entitled will be determined according to the University schedule for refunds and will be based on the date on which the student was dropped from the course.

Good Academic Standing

Good Standing is defined as follows for graduate students enrolled at East Texas A&M University. Entering students who have been fully admitted (without any type of conditional admission, provisional status, or other restriction) will be considered in good standing. A student will remain in good standing if, and only if, he or she has a cumulative graduate grade point average of at least 3.00 and is free of the following holds: holds indicating delinquent financial indebtedness, academic suspension, academic probation, provisional status, and disciplinary suspension. A graduate student must be in compliance with ethical and professional standards as

determined by the student's academic department and university rules and procedures, University Procedure [13.99.99.R0.13 Good Academic Standing](#).

Students who are not in good standing are not eligible to graduate until good standing has been achieved.

Academic Probation and Suspension from Master's or Specialist Degree Programs

Academic probation grants students the opportunity to enroll for the next term while requiring them to raise their overall graduate GPA to 3.0 by the end of that term.

Academic suspension is when a student is not allowed to enroll for future terms due to their overall graduate GPA being below a 3.0, unless they submit an appeal and are approved by their Academic Department and Graduate Dean to continue taking courses while on suspension. If a student is placed on suspension a second time they will not be able to take courses until the suspension period is over.

- Students with **full admission status** who fail to achieve and maintain an overall graduate GPA of 3.00 after the completion of twelve graduate semester hours of graduate enrollment will be placed on academic probation. A student who fails to achieve a 3.00 overall graduate GPA by the end of the next semester of enrollment will be placed on academic suspension for a period of two semesters (Two summer terms are one semester).
- Students with **conditional admission status** who fail to achieve a 3.00 graduate GPA after the completion of twelve graduate semester hours will be suspended and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate study in a degree program for one year.
- Students with **conditional admission status** who fail to achieve a 3.00 graduate GPA after the completion of twelve graduate semester hours will be suspended and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate study in a degree program for one year.
- All courses completed while the student is on probation, a one-time approval to enroll during suspension, or reinstatement must be appropriate to the degree sought.
- Courses taken from other institutions will not be transferable if taken during a period of suspension from East Texas A&M University.
- Students on academic probation or suspension are not eligible to change their degree or major.
- Individual departments may reserve the right to dismiss from their programs students who, in their judgment, would not meet the professional expectations of the field for which they are training.
- A graduate student seeking admission or readmission who has not been enrolled for a period of at least six cumulative years with an overall graduate GPA of less than 3.0 may petition the Dean of the Graduate School to have previous graduate grades eliminated from the calculation of the official grade point average. No courses eliminated from such calculation could be used toward a graduate degree.

Class Attendance Rule

As found in the [Graduate School catalog](#), students are expected to be present for all class meetings of any course for which they are enrolled. Students are responsible for learning about and complying with the

attendance policy stated in the catalog, *Student's Guidebook*, and/or faculty syllabus. Faculty members will provide details on requirements and guidelines for attendance in their classes in their course syllabi. Faculty members will keep students' attendance records.

Students are responsible for requesting makeup work when they are absent. They will be permitted to make up work for absences that are considered excused by the faculty member. The method of making up this work shall be determined by the faculty member.

The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. The faculty member then determines the validity of the reason(s) for the absence and whether the student is to be excused for the absence. Faculty members may consider the following as excusable reasons for absence:

1. Participation in a required/authorized university activity.
2. Verified illness.
3. Death in a student's immediate family.
4. Obligation of a student at legal proceedings in fulfilling responsibility as a citizen.
5. Others determined by individual faculty to be excusable (e.g., elective University activities, etc.).

Appeals can be made through normal administrative channels by speaking first with the instructor, and as necessary the head of the instructors department, then the dean of the college.

A record of excused and unexcused absences will be maintained by a faculty member since certain financial assistance and other programs may require attendance records.

When requested by the student, faculty will inform the student who has been absent whether make-up work is allowed and whether absences jeopardize the student's standing in a class.

It is the prerogative of the faculty to drop students from courses in which they have accrued excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus. In such cases, faculty recommend through the Department Head to the appropriate College Dean, that a student be dropped from a class. The faculty member will document absences and will make a reasonable effort to communicate with the student prior to recommending the drop. If approved, the College Dean will forward the recommendation to the Registrar's Office.

Students who wish to drop a course or withdraw from the university are responsible for initiating this action.

If a student believes a final course grade is unfairly impacted by attendance requirements, an appeal can be made. This appeal process is explained in University Procedure [13.99.99.R0.05 Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation](#).

Academic Honesty

Graduate students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. Faculty and staff members are expected to uphold and support student integrity and honesty by maintaining conditions that encourage and enforce academic honesty. Conduct that

violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academically dishonest. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to:

CHEATING: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise. Unauthorized materials may include anything or anyone that gives a student assistance, and has not been specifically approved in advance by the instructor.

COMPLICITY: Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

ABUSE AND MISUSE OF ACCESS AND UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS: Students may not abuse or misuse computer access or gain unauthorized access to information in any academic exercise.

FABRICATION: Making up data or results, and recording or reporting them; submitting fabricated documents.

FALSIFICATION: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such as that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

FORGERY: Making a fictitious document, or altering an existing document, with the intent to deceive or gain advantage.

MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS: Submitting substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor of the class for which the student submits the work.

PLAGIARISM: The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING GROUP PROJECTS: If someone in a group commits academic misconduct the entire group could be held responsible for it as well. It is important to document clearly who contributes what parts to the joint project, to know what group members are doing, and how they are acquiring the material they provide.

UNIVERSITY RULES ON RESEARCH: Students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at East Texas A&M University must also adhere to standards set forth in University Procedure [15.99.03.R1 Ethics in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work](#).

VIOLATION OF DEPARTMENTAL OR COLLEGE RULES: Students may not violate any departmental or college rule relating to academic matters.

If a graduate student is accused of academic dishonesty, the University Procedure [13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty](#) will be followed.

Second Master's Degree

Subject to the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School and the Department Head, students holding master's degrees from a regionally accredited graduate institution in the United States may apply certain courses that were a part of a previously earned graduate degree toward a second master's degree, provided such courses are not more than 6 years old at the time the second master's degree is conferred.

The number of courses permitted will be as follows:

- For 30-semester-hour programs, no more than 9 approved hours.
- For 36-semester-hour programs, no more than 12 approved hours.
- For 60, 61 & 62-semester-hour programs, no more than 20 approved hours.
- For the 63 & 64-semester-hour programs, no more than 21 approved hours.
- For the 66-semester-hour program, no more than 22 approved hours.
- All remaining courses applied to satisfy the requirements for the second master's degree must be East Texas A&M University courses.
 - A thesis completed for a previous degree cannot be used for a second master's degree.
 - A 595 Research Literature and Techniques course can only be used for a second master's with departmental and Graduate School approval. A 595 Research Literature and Techniques course cannot be transferred in from another institution.

The second master's degree will be subject to the general regulations governing master's degrees except as stated above.

After a degree is awarded, courses taken before the degree was awarded (regardless of whether the course is applied to the degree) cannot be repeated and the grade point average cannot be recalculated.

If a course is repeated after a master's/specialist degree is conferred, both courses are included in the graduate GPA calculation.

If a course is repeated after a master's/specialist degree is conferred and the repeated course is included in the second degree, the repeated course is considered a shared course and is included in the one-third of credit hours used from a previous degree.

Students that have applied for graduation and are concurrently enrolled at another institution during the final semester in a program will be required to submit an official transcript before final clearance can be completed and a degree can be awarded.

Thesis Proposal Process

The thesis proposal process is a major step in the academic advancement of a master's or specialist students completing a thesis at East Texas A&M University. Below are guidelines to help students navigate through this important process. Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of research conduct and strictly adhere to all federal, state, and local regulations involving research.

The Graduate School is responsible for reviewing the formatting of all theses and dissertations and for the development of supportive services for graduate students as they move through the thesis or dissertation process. Services provided by the Graduate School include training and support to faculty, students, and staff, including materials and approaches to fit each unique discipline. The Graduate School is located on the first floor of the McDowell Business Administration Building in room 140A.

Thesis Process

Before work on the thesis can begin, students must select a thesis advisory committee and complete and submit the digital form Thesis Committee Selection Form for review and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Next, to ensure integrity and compliance in research, before collecting data, all students involved in research activities must successfully complete training in **Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship** (<https://inside.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/ResponsibleConductInstructions.aspx>). This training is required of all students and is good for three (3) years. Students conducting studies that do not require IRB, IACUC, or IBC approval may begin data collection after receiving approval from their advisor to do so and after completing the Responsible Conduct in Research training. Proof of completion of training is required when submitting the thesis proposal for Graduate School/TDS review and approval. Data collection prior to completion of the required training is an ethical violation and the use of those data will be disallowed.

Graduate students whose research involves human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards, and recombinant DNA must adhere to the University research compliance procedures and complete additional training. Students conducting studies using human participants, animal subjects, or biological agents must work with his or her advisor to seek approval from the IRB, IACUC, or IBC research committee, as applicable. Data collection may begin only after the student's advisor receives approval from the appropriate reviewing body is received. The letter of approval is required when submitting the thesis proposal for Graduate School/TDS review and approval. Data collection prior to completion of the required trainings and receipt of the required approvals is an ethical violation and the use of those data will be disallowed. For questions or clarification about the student's responsibilities regarding research compliance, please contact the [Office of Sponsored Programs](mailto:ResearchCompliance@tamuc.edu) at ResearchCompliance@tamuc.edu. Additional information is located online at Office of Sponsored Programs.

Research Compliance. If a student's research/study involves human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards, and recombinant DNA, approval from the applicable research committee must be obtained by the student's advisor. The following is the process for obtaining the required research committee approval:
A student and his or her advisor must complete the following if the proposed research/study involves one of the following:

A student and his or her advisor must complete the following if the proposed research/study involves one of the following:

1. **Human Subjects:** Human Subjects research is defined as a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalized knowledge, which involves the collection of data from or about living human beings. In addition, all student research involving human subjects outside the classroom is considered to be in this category
(see: <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/protection-human-subjects-training.aspx>).
 - a. Students must complete the Human Subjects online training **and** gain approval for the inclusion of human subjects in their research /study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. The online training can be accessed at the following website: (<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/protection-human-subjects-training.aspx>).
 - b. Students must gain IRB approval for their study. The process to gain approval from the IRB includes completion of the protocol application forms by the student's advisor, and the protocol

application forms. These forms are submitted to the IRB committee (ResearchCompliance@tamuc.edu) for review and approval. The Departmental IRB Representative and/or IRB committee may require revisions. The IRB approval letter must be included with a student's thesis proposal submissions. The IRB approval letter is not the same as Graduate School/TDS approval.

1. **Animal Subjects:** Animal subjects are defined as any live, vertebrate animal (see: <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/AnimalCareInstructions.aspx>)
 - a. Students must complete the Animal Subjects online training **and** gain approval for the inclusion of animal subjects in their research/study from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The online training can be accessed at the following website: (<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/AnimalCareInstructions.aspx>.)
 - b. Students must gain IACUC approval for their study. The process to gain approval from IACUC includes completion of the protocol application forms and submission by the student's advisor to IACUC (ResearchCompliance@tamuc.edu) for review and approval. The Departmental IACUC Representative and/or IACUC may require revisions. The IACUC approval letter must be included in with a student's thesis proposal submissions. The IACUC approval letter is not the same as Graduate School/TDS approval.
2. **Biological Agents:** If a student conducts research involving any of the agents/materials listed below, the student must have approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) prior to initiation of the research (see <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/biosafetybiosecurity.aspx>.)
 - a. Agents that require approval are the following:
 - Pathogens and potential pathogens of humans, animals, or plants;
 - Materials potentially containing human pathogens (including human and non-human primate blood, tissue, and cell lines);
 - Recombinant DNA and RNA, including creation or use of transgenic plants and animals;
 - Select agents and toxins listed by CDC; and
 - Any material requiring a CDC license to import or a USDA permit.
 - b. Students must complete Biosafety training online and gain approval from IBC before commencing any work. Online training can be accessed at <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/biosafetybiosecurity.aspx>.
 - c. IBC approval for a student's study includes training, self-assessments, safety concerns, required biosafety levels, risk, analysis, and emergency procedures. Detailed information regarding the training can be found under Office of Sponsored Programs website. In addition, the process to gain approval from IBC includes completion of the protocol application forms and submission by the student's advisor to IBC (ResearchCompliance@tamuc.edu) for review and approval. The Departmental IBC Representative and/or IBC may require revisions. Final approval rests with IBC. The IBC approval letter must be included in with a student's thesis proposal submission. The IBC approval letter is not the same as Graduate School/TDS approval.

Submission of Thesis Proposal

Students must gain proposal approval from the Graduate School/TDS at least one semester prior to the semester they defend and submit their final thesis for approval. To gain proposal approval for a semester, submission of the thesis proposal and related documents must be received by the Graduate School/TDS by the

deadline for that semester. The Graduate School recommends beginning the submission process no less than 3-5 business days prior to the applicable deadline.

Deadlines can be found on the Deadlines for Thesis and Dissertation Submissions webpage. If student or faculty have questions regarding the submission process, they should review the Thesis and Dissertation Submission Guide or contact TDS at TDS@tamuc.edu.

Proposal Submission. To submit a thesis proposal packet, a student must complete the digital form. Thesis Proposal Submission Form, and upload all required documents. The proposal submission form can be found on the TDS/Thesis webpage (www.tamuc.edu/Thesis). Select item 3. and scroll to the links below the text and click on the hyperlinked form. Thesis Proposal Submission Form. Complete the digital form and upload the required documents listed below. For more information about the submission process, see the Thesis and Dissertation Submission Guide or contact TDS@tamuc.edu. The following is a list of documents to be uploaded with the digital form:

- Thesis proposal document (Word format, unless using LaTeX),
- Proof of completion of [CITI](#) trainings,
- IRB, IACUC, or IBC approval letter (if applicable; see ResearchCompliance@tamuc.edu), and
- iThenticate similarity report (and score justification provided by the advisor if the similarity score is above 12%).

Access to iThenticate requires a license, so students are not permitted to run an iThenticate report for themselves. The thesis advisor or another member of the student's advisory committee must run and interpret the report for the student. Faculty who need to obtain a license to access the site or who are experiencing difficulty accessing their iThenticate account should contact Tina Freeman (Tina.Freeman@tamuc.edu) in the Office of Academic Technology. Contact the Graduate School at TDS@tamuc.edu with questions regarding how to print, interpret, or share the report with the Graduate School/TDS.

Proposal Approval. TDS will conduct a format-only review based on the Graduate School/TDS thesis/dissertation template and the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide. When the review is completed, the student will receive an email from TDS to the student's LeoMail email with a Reviewer's Checklist and a copy of the Proposal Approval Form. Revisions noted in the Reviewer's Checklist should be incorporated into the final document. Students can contact TDS at TDS@tamuc.edu for questions regarding the Reviewer's Checklist..

Submission of Final Thesis

The following are the required steps to follow in order to receive final thesis approval from the Graduate School. If students or faculty have questions regarding the submission process, they should review the Thesis and Dissertation Submission Guide or contact TDS at TDS@tamuc.edu.

Final Thesis Defense. The digital form, Notification of the Final Thesis Defense must be completed, submitted, and received by TDS no less than 7 days prior to the date the defense is to be held. Students must be in good academic standing with the Graduate School and have a proposal approved by the Dean of the Graduate School to be eligible to defend.

Submission of Final Thesis: Following a successful defense and acceptance by the advisory committee, the student will complete all requested revisions. Initial submission of a final thesis packet must be made by the deadline for the semester the student wishes to graduate. The Graduate School recommends beginning the

submission process no less than 3-5 business days prior to the applicable deadline. Deadlines can be found on the Deadlines for Thesis and Dissertation Submissions webpage. To submit the final documents, go to the TDS/Thesis webpage (www.tamuc.edu/Thesis), select item 5, and scroll to the links below the text. Click on the hyperlinked Final Thesis Submission Form and complete the digital form and upload the required documents listed below.

- Final thesis in Word format (or PDF if using LaTeX).
- iThenticate similarity report (with score justification provided by the advisor if score is above 12%).
-

Access to iThenticate requires a license, so students are not permitted to run an iThenticate report for themselves. The thesis advisor or another member of the student's advisory committee must run and interpret the report for the student. Faculty who need to obtain a license to access the site or who are experiencing difficulty accessing their iThenticate account should contact Tina Freeman (Tina.Freeman@tamuc.edu) in the Office of Academic Technology. Contact the Graduate School at TDS@tamuc.edu with questions regarding how to print, interpret, or share the report or how to share the report with the Graduate School/TDS.

It is the student's responsibility to submit the final thesis and all required documents to the Graduate School/TDS by the deadline.

Final Approval. TDS will conduct a format-only review based on the Graduate School's thesis/dissertation template and the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide. The final thesis will be reviewed as many times as necessary until the document conforms to the Graduate School's formatting requirement and is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. After each review TDS student will communicate with students via their LeoMail email to provide them with a Reviewer's Checklist with revisions to make. After each round of revisions, the student will resubmit, with advisor approval, his or her corrected thesis for review and eventual approval. Once the Graduate School has given final approval of the thesis, the student will upload an approved PDF of the final thesis to ProQuest, pay for copyrighting (if applicable), and pay for the university copy of the bound thesis (for the advisor). Students are responsible for payment of any personal copies ordered.

Graduation

Filing for Graduation

Commencement exercises are held three times each academic year in May, August, and December. Students must apply for graduation online through MyLeo during the semester they plan to graduate. Students will be approved for graduation and the degree conferred after they have satisfactorily completed all degree requirements and they have been approved by the Graduate Committee of the department and the Graduate School. Please check the University [Academic Calendar](#) for deadline dates for filing for graduation. Graduation information and the graduation application are available [online](#). Students may apply for graduation through [MyLeo](#). A student must be in good academic standing in order to complete graduation requirements. Participation in the commencement ceremony does not guarantee conferring of any degree. East Texas A&M University has the right to rescind any conferred degree if the University becomes aware that the student did not meet degree requirements.

Submitting an Application for Graduation

The graduation application is available online through your [MyLeo](#) account during the following time periods: Spring/fall first three weeks of the semester; summer, first two weeks of semester. Once the application period has ended, the Graduate School will begin reviewing your application.

A \$40.00 application fee is required from the student upon submission of the graduation application each time an application is filed. Should a student have to reapply the next semester, a \$40 reapplication fee will be required.

The Graduate School will notify the student of their official graduation status. If the student does not fulfill the degree requirements, he or she will be removed from the graduation list and will need to reapply for another term.

Resources for Master's/Specialist Students

University Website

<http://www.tamuc.edu/>

The Graduate School Website

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/>

Graduate School Resources Page

<https://www.tamuc.edu/gradresources>

Library

<https://www.tamuc.edu/library/>

Writing Center

<https://www.tamuc.edu/writing-center/>

Counseling Center

<https://www.tamuc.edu/counseling-center/>

Thesis and Dissertation Services

Karin Thomas

Dissertation and Thesis Specialist

Karin.Thomas@tamuc.edu

903-886-5968

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (IRB, etc.)

903-886-5766