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# Graduate Programs

## Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following general academic requirements apply to all graduate programs. Requirements that apply specifically to the master's degree or to the doctoral degree are discussed later in this chapter. More detailed information about the requirements for individual degree programs may be found in the sections pertaining to those programs.

#### Graduation Under a Particular Catalog

A graduate student may receive a degree upon satisfying the requirements of the catalog under which the student enrolled in the program, provided the catalog is no more than seven years old when the degree is conferred and the University still offers programs and required curriculum described in that catalog. A student may petition to graduate under a subsequent catalog under which credit was earned because of a preference to meet newer degree requirements.

Certification or licensure requirements are subject to change. Students enrolled in programs leading to certification or licensure must meet all current certification and licensure requirements, regardless of the catalog chosen.

#### Transfer of Credit

Course work transferred or accepted for credit toward a graduate degree must represent graduate course work relevant to that degree, with course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's own graduate degree programs. The following rules apply to all graduate transfer courses.

- Transferred graduate credit must have been earned at a regionally accredited institution.
- The student must have earned a grade of B or better in the transfer course work. Courses lacking letter grades (e.g., courses graded pass/no pass, credit/no credit, or satisfactory/unsatisfactory) will not be accepted as transfer credit.
- The course work must be less than 7 years old at the time the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi degree is awarded.

Additional limitations on transfer of credit are discussed in "Requirements for Master's Degrees" and "Requirements for Doctoral Programs."

All transferred work (with accompanying grades or marks) will be translated into Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi terms. If an equivalency has not already been established, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research will consult with the appropriate graduate program that represents the course content to determine the course equivalency and transferability. Should the Graduate Dean determine that a student has taken courses of similar level and content at more than one institution (duplicated work), the grade of the second course attempted will be the grade of record, and all others will be recorded without credit. Transfer work will become a part of the student's record only after matriculation and then only when the student has established a course of record.

#### Correspondence and Extension Credit

Extension, correspondence study credit, continuing education unit (CEU) and similar professional credits will not be applied toward graduate degrees.

#### Academic Advisement

Graduate advisers or advisory committees are assigned by the graduate office in each college. Graduate advisers are graduate faculty members designated to advise students on matters related to their graduate programs. Advisers serve as contact persons for information on admission, degree requirements and financial support where applicable. The graduate

program coordinator or equivalent may assist the adviser in matters of program administration and may serve as a temporary adviser to new students.

### **Graduate Courses**

Graduate courses are numbered 5000 or higher. Courses at the 5000 level are open only to students with graduate standing and senior students who meet specific criteria. Courses at the 6000 level and higher are limited to students admitted to a doctoral program, or with permission from the program coordinator.

### **Graduate Credit for Undergraduate Courses**

Certain 4000-level undergraduate courses under the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Education, and Science and Technology may be designated for graduate credit. The catalog descriptions of such courses generally include the phrase “May be taken for graduate credit.” Students taking these courses for graduate credit will be required to complete extra course assignments. If a graduate student registers for a 4000-level course, the student will be assumed to be taking the course for undergraduate credit unless he or she receives permission from the course instructor and academic advisor to take the course for graduate credit. Permission must be granted and the request processed through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research at the time of registration, but no later than the 12th class day during a fall or spring semester or the 4th class day during a summer session.

A graduate-level designation for a 4000-level course does not automatically indicate approval for the course to be included in a graduate degree plan. Each course in a degree plan must be approved in advance by the student’s graduate advisor or committee.

### **Graduate Study by Undergraduates**

#### *1. Reservation of Work for Graduate Credit*

A senior student in the last session of undergraduate work may enroll in graduate work and reserve the course work for graduate credit provided that

- 1) the student has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better,
- 2) the dean of the college in which the work is offered has granted written approval, and
- 3) the graduate work is not used to fulfill undergraduate degree requirements.

#### *2. Graduate Work for Undergraduate Credit*

A senior student in the last semester or summer session of undergraduate work may enroll in graduate work to be applied toward the baccalaureate degree provided that

- 1) the student has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better,
- 2) the dean of the college in which the work is offered has granted written approval,
- 3) the chair of the student’s major department and the dean of the student’s undergraduate college have granted written approval, and
- 4) the student has not reserved the course work for graduate credit.

Graduate credit hours used to meet the requirements of a baccalaureate degree may not be used to meet the requirements for a graduate degree.

### **Maximum Course Load**

A graduate student may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester without the approval of the appropriate college dean.

A student may not register for more than 6 hours of course work in a single session of summer school without the approval of the dean of the college in which the student is majoring. A student may not register for more than a total of 12 hours of course work in the combined summer sessions (not counting maymester) without the approval of the dean.

### **Repetition of a Course**

*Repetition of a Course to Raise a Grade:* A course in which the final grade is C or lower may be repeated for a higher grade. A course in which the final grade is a B may be repeated

for a higher grade only with the permission of the Graduate Dean. A graduate student may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study in the University. The student may repeat each course only one time. All grades received for the course will be computed in the grade point average.

*Repetition of a Course for Multiple Credit:* A course may be repeated for multiple credit towards graduation only when so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty adviser.

### **Maximum Hours Graded Credit/No Credit**

See “Credit/No Credit Grading” in the catalog section “General Academic Policies and Regulations” for information on the maximum number of semester hours graded credit/no credit permitted for graduate degrees.

### **Protection of Human Research Subjects**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must ensure that research subjects are properly informed of their rights, do not bear any inappropriate risk, have properly consented to their involvement, and are provided a favorable climate for participating in scientific inquiry. In compliance with federal regulations, the University requires all research involving human subjects to be approved by the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board (IRB). See University Procedure 15.99.01.C1.01, Assurance of Protection of Human Research Subjects, accessible at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university\\_rules/research/159C11.htm](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/research/159C11.htm), for information on this topic, including a statement on student research.

Research conducted by students must follow the same ethical guidelines as all university research. The responsibility for the ethical conduct of student research is jointly held by the instructor and the student, each being fully responsible for the research.

### **Academic Requirements for Graduate Work**

*Good Standing:* Graduate students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students, are considered in “good academic standing,” making satisfactory academic progress, if they maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work; earn a 3.0 semester average on all course work; and earn a grade of S, IP, or CR on all course work that does not affect grade point average. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in the discussion below.

*Minimum grade requirement.* Only grades of A, B, C, S (Satisfactory), and CR (Credit) are acceptable for graduate credit. IP (In Progress) is considered acceptable with respect to the minimum grade requirement. Grades of D, F, U (Unsatisfactory) or NC (No Credit) are not accepted for graduate credit at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. No more than two grades of C earned at this university will be accepted as credit for any graduate program.

*Other scholastic requirements.* Satisfactory academic performance may also include specific program requirements which can include, and are not limited to, satisfactory research performance, a satisfactory GPA in the major, satisfactory performance in examinations, such as the comprehensive examination, satisfactory performance in the program capstone course, or other specific program requirements.

*Computation of Grade Point Average:* The graduate GPA is computed **both** on all graduate work taken at this University **and** in the student’s present program of study.

### **Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal**

*Placement on Scholastic Probation:* A graduate student will be placed on scholastic probation if, at the end of any semester or term, the student’s cumulative graduate grade point

average falls below 3.0 and/or the student's semester grade point average is below 3.0 (or higher GPA set by the program). A graduate student receiving a grade of U (Unsatisfactory) in research, or a second C grade or lower will be placed on scholastic probation.

**Removal from Scholastic Probation:** A student must achieve a cumulative 3.0 GPA (or higher GPA if required by the program) within completion of the next 9 semester credit hours to be removed from scholastic probation if scholastic probation was due to unsatisfactory GPA. The courses included in the 9 semester hours must be approved by the program faculty for degree-seeking students.

A student who receives a grade of U in research or two grades of C or less may be removed from scholastic probation after one (1) year if the student achieves a cumulative 3.0 GPA (or higher GPA if required by the program) or subsequently receives grades of S in research.

A student will not be placed on scholastic probation in a graduating semester if the cumulative GPA is 3.00 or higher and there are no more than two C's for courses on the degree plan.

**Placement on Enforced Withdrawal:** A student who is on scholastic probation will be placed on enforced withdrawal if

- the student's grade point average for any subsequent term or semester falls below 3.0, or
- the student receives a second grade of U in research, or
- the student receives a third grade of C or lower, or
- the student does not achieve the required cumulative GPA (3.0 or higher if required by the program) within completion of 9 semester hours.

A student who is removed from scholastic probation will be placed on enforced withdrawal if the student receives a second grade of U in research or a grade of C or less.

Enforced withdrawal is reflected on the student's academic record.

**Reinstatement:** A student on enforced withdrawal may not enroll in any graduate program for a minimum of 12 consecutive months. A student must reapply, meet current requirements for degree-seeking students, and be accepted by the University and the program to enroll for graduate studies following the period of enforced withdrawal. The application may be submitted prior to the requested enrollment date. Colleges or programs may develop additional procedures or requirements related to re-enrollment following enforced withdrawal. Please see the appropriate college or program section of the catalog for specific requirements.

**Effect of Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal on Financial Assistance or Veterans Benefits:** Students receiving financial assistance should see "Suspension Policy" in the "Financial Assistance" chapter of this catalog. For additional information, they may contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance. Students receiving veterans' benefits for education should contact the Office of Veterans Affairs for specific policies concerning VA status if placed on scholastic probation or enforced withdrawal.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER'S DEGREES

In addition to the general requirements above, the following requirements apply specifically to the master's degree.

### Total Hours.

Master's programs normally require a minimum of 36 semester hours of approved graduate credit, 24 of which must be from courses at the 5000 level or higher.

### Transfer of Credit

In addition to the general Transfer of Credit Policy, the following regulations will apply to master's degree course work: No more than twelve semester hours of graduate level study may be transferred. All transfer work must be appropriate to the degree being sought. Specific programs may limit the number of transfer courses allowed to less than twelve. Please consult the college for additional information on transfer credit.

### **Recency of Credit**

Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. The seven-year period is calculated from the date of degree conferral. In rare cases, special conditions allow for exception from this seven-year policy, provided the courses were completed at this university. However, this action will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception, with written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college from which the degree is offered, and the Graduate Dean. The preferable process is revalidation, as discussed below.

### **Revalidation of Courses Beyond the Seven Year Limit**

Courses listed on the plan of study completed more than seven years prior to graduation are considered dated. The advisor or graduate committee may recommend a revalidation plan. Revalidation will verify that the student's knowledge in a specific subject area is current. Written examinations normally are required. Successfully revalidated courses may be included in the student's plan of study. Graduate students will not be permitted to submit more than 12 semester hours of their programs' required courses for revalidation. Courses must have been completed at this university to be eligible for revalidation. All revalidation plans must be approved by the students' advisor, the department chair, the college dean, and the Graduate Dean.

### **Degree Plans**

A copy of a degree plan, developed by the time a student has completed half of the course work in the program, should be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

### **Exit Requirements:**

#### **Comprehensive Examination/Capstone Experience/Creative Project/Thesis**

All programs have a culminating experience. In addition to successful completion of all courses required for graduation, students are required to pass a comprehensive written examination taken during their final semester of enrollment or, if specified by the program, successfully complete a capstone experience or creative project or defend a thesis.

#### **Second Master's Degree**

A student who holds a master's degree may take a second MA or MS degree only if the second degree is in a distinctly different field of study. The MA in Interdisciplinary Study, MBA, MPA, MAcc, and MSN degree may be earned only once.

Students who already hold a master's degree and who wish to receive a master's degree of a different type must complete all college and University requirements for the degree, including a minimum of 24 additional semester hours at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Upon the recommendation of the program coordinator and/or advisor, students may apply up to a maximum of 9 semester hours of related graduate credit from an earlier degree earned at this university to a second master's degree at this university. Such credit may be applied to a second master's degree only if it falls within the recency of credit policy and is approved by the program coordinator and /or advisor as appropriate course work for the degree sought. Some degree programs do not permit any credit from an earlier degree to be applied to a second master's degree. Please consult the specific program for details. Credit from a degree earned at another institution will not be applied to a second master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS**

The goal of doctoral degree programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is to provide students with a comprehensive discipline-specific knowledge base and extensive training in the methods of research. The programs are designed to encourage doctoral students to make contributions that advance their field of expertise.

The student is expected to demonstrate an ability to conduct independent research, and the ability to express thoughts clearly in both verbal and written formats. In addition, to earn

a doctoral degree, candidates must successfully complete all requirements, demonstrate a high level of professional skill and performance in their academic work and their internship experience (if required), and submit a dissertation acceptable to the doctoral committee.

### **Residency**

Doctoral students will be required to continuously register in courses for a minimum period of one year, or longer if specified by the requirements of the program. The purpose of the doctoral residency is to permit professional interaction with program faculty and students. The doctoral residency provides an opportunity for sustained intellectual effort by enhancing exposure to new concepts in the discipline, to research methodologies and to development of research competency with the outcome resulting in a dissertation containing original research.

### **Time Limit to Degree**

The requirements for a doctoral degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the doctoral program. Graduate courses listed on the degree plan that are more than seven years old are reviewed to determine whether they apply toward degree completion.

### **Revalidation of Courses Beyond the Seven Year Limit (for Doctoral and Other Terminal Degrees)**

Degree plan courses completed while the student is enrolled in a doctoral or other terminal degree program are normally considered dated if the courses were completed more than 7 years prior to graduation. In some cases, the advisor or doctoral committee may recommend revalidation of dated courses. Revalidation will verify that the student's knowledge in a specific subject area is current. Written examinations normally are required. Successfully revalidated courses may be included in the student's plan of study. Graduate students will not be permitted to submit more than 12 semester hours of their programs' required courses for revalidation. Courses must have been completed at this university to be eligible for revalidation. All revalidation plans must be approved by the students' advisor, the department chair, and the Graduate Dean.

### **Credit Hour Requirement**

Normally a doctoral degree will consist of a minimum of 90 hours beyond the bachelor's degree for students admitted to a doctoral program directly after completion of the undergraduate degree. For students who have completed a master's degree, a minimum of 60 hours is required for the doctoral degree. The majority of the doctoral degree plan course work must be doctoral-level courses.

### **Transfer of Graduate Credits**

In addition to the general Transfer of Credit Policy, specific requirements must be met for courses that may transfer for doctoral credit. The following rules apply to these courses, with the exception of degrees offered jointly. (See Educational Leadership.)

- The student must have been enrolled as a doctoral student when the course work was completed.
- The maximum amount of transfer credit from another doctoral degree program accepted toward the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi degree is one-fourth of the credit hours required for the A&M-Corpus Christi degree.

### **Doctoral Committee**

The student will choose a doctoral committee chair from among the regular graduate faculty members of the doctoral program. Doctoral committees will be composed of a minimum of four Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi graduate faculty members and will include the doctoral committee chair, two other graduate faculty members selected by the student and the doctoral committee chair, and a graduate faculty representative from a different discipline selected by the Graduate Dean. The Graduate Dean will officially appoint the doctoral committee. Normally, the student's advisor and the committee members

recommended by the student and the advisor will be faculty members from the program offering the degree. Persons with unique and appropriate expertise may be appointed to the dissertation committee upon approval of the Graduate Dean for the dissertation portion of the doctoral program. All doctoral committee members representing the student's discipline are required to review and approve degree plans and participate in examinations such as qualifying, comprehensive and final exam including defense of dissertation and all are required to participate in and sign relevant documents for each of these two exams. More than one dissenting vote in the comprehensive exam or final exam (which includes dissertation defense) will constitute failure. The graduate faculty representative will not be required to attend or evaluate materials related to the comprehensive examination. The signatures of the doctoral committee members and the student are required on degree plans.

### **Graduate Faculty Representative**

The Graduate Faculty representative helps ensure that the quality of the graduate degree is appropriate for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and that students receive fair and reasonable treatment in their graduate experience. All committee members will be provided a copy of the dissertation two weeks before the defense of dissertation and final exam.

### **Degree Plan**

All students will develop a degree plan that is consistent with the requirements of the program. Degree plans should be developed by the time students have completed half of the course work in the program, and copies should be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. The plan is then reviewed and approved by the doctoral committee and the Graduate Dean. The degree plan must be submitted prior to completing 18 months in the doctoral program. All doctoral degrees will have a minimum of 90 credits beyond the bachelor's degree. For students who have completed a master's degree, a minimum of 60 credits beyond the master's degree is required for the doctoral degree plan. In the case of a 90-credit-hour doctoral degree plan, up to 30 hours may be from a master's degree program in an appropriate field of study. Changes in the degree plan must be approved by the doctoral committee chair and the Graduate Dean.

### **Comprehensive Exam**

Each student must take a written comprehensive exam. The timing and content of the exam will be determined by the program faculty and will focus on the field in which the degree is taken. All faculty members responsible for portions of the written exam will provide a response of satisfactory or unsatisfactory (or other grade) within one calendar week and inform the advisor of reasons for the unsatisfactory grade if such a grade is given. The doctoral committee members representing the student's discipline will then determine the outcome. More than one dissenting vote in the comprehensive exam constitutes failure. The examination result must be reported to the Graduate Dean within 3 weeks of the exam. In the event of a failure, one repetition will be permitted and a reexamination date will be negotiated with the doctoral committee and will not be sooner than four months from the first exam.

### **Candidacy**

A student is advanced to candidacy after completion of the comprehensive exam and all requirements of the plan of study.

### **Dissertation Proposal**

A research proposal must be submitted in written format and be presented in a meeting between the student and the doctoral committee. The dissertation should include the application of sound research strategies applied to identified problems within one's discipline. Dissertation research typically adds to the literature in one's field of study. A copy of this proposal signed by all members of the doctoral committee must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research for endorsement by the Graduate Dean. The proposal must be submitted no fewer than two semesters prior to the student's anticipated graduation.

### **Dissertation Defense/Final Examination**

The comprehensive exam must be passed and courses in the plan of study completed with a GPA of not less than 3.0 before the dissertation defense/final examination will be scheduled. The dissertation defense/final examination must cover the dissertation but need not be limited thereto.

It is the responsibility of the student to apply to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research in order to schedule the defense. Prior to scheduling the defense/examination, the following should occur:

1. The student must obtain preliminary approval from his/her Faculty Advisory Committee. All committee members must receive a copy of the candidate's dissertation two weeks prior to providing the preliminary approval signature.
2. After reviewing the dissertation, committee members will sign the form titled Preliminary Approval of Dissertation indicating preliminary acceptance of the dissertation. Preliminary approval indicates that major changes will not be required in the final copy of the dissertation. The Preliminary Approval of Dissertation form will not be signed if major changes are required in the dissertation, or if committee members determine that further study is necessary.
3. After the Preliminary Approval of Dissertation form is signed by the committee members, the student must submit the form to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research by the deadline specified in the academic calendar (normally twelve weeks prior to graduation).
4. Upon receipt of the signed form, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research will announce the dissertation defense/final examination. The defense must be scheduled for a minimum of four weeks prior to graduation. Unless the deadline is met, the student will not be permitted to graduate until the following semester.
5. Oversight for the dissertation defense/final examination will be the responsibility of the dissertation chair. All members of the dissertation committee and a representative of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research will attend the meeting. The meeting will be open to all members of the university community. However, at some point the meeting will close to permit the completion of the examination by the doctoral committee. The dissertation chair will submit a final report of the outcome to the Graduate Dean.

Subsequent to the dissertation defense/final examination, the student will submit a copy of the dissertation, not later than two weeks prior to graduation, to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research where it will be reviewed and given final approval and acceptance by the university. Students will be required to provide additional copies as required by their programs. The format of the submitted dissertation must conform to university guidelines, which are available at the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. A fee for binding and archiving will be collected. Two copies of the dissertation will be forwarded to the Mary and Jeff Bell Library and one to the national archiving service. If corrections are required, the dissertation will be returned to the student for revision, at which point, three copies are required.

### **Application for Degree**

The doctoral degree is awarded at each semester's graduation ceremony: spring (May), fall (December), and summer (August). Students must submit a completed application for graduation to the Office of Admissions and Records by the deadline indicated in the class schedule. When it has been determined that the student has met all requirements for the doctoral degree, his or her name will be added to the list of graduating students. The student must complete all requirements for the degree at least three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the degree will be conferred.

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## Specific Program Requirements

The University offers four doctoral degrees:

*Doctoral Degrees in Education* - The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Ph.D. in Counselor Education, and Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction are awarded in recognition of the completion of academic preparation for practice in a wide range of educational and professional settings. The doctorates are professional degrees and promote practice based on original research and an in-depth understanding of research methodologies.

*Doctoral Degree in Science* - The Ph.D. in Coastal and Marine System Science is an interdisciplinary program drawing from the natural and computational sciences using GIS and mathematical tools to better understand and predict the dynamic evolution of large-scale coastal and marine systems. The degree is designed for students from multidisciplinary backgrounds and serves to integrate research from all of the environmental sciences with modern computational tools and predictive mathematical models.

Information on the specific degree requirements for each program may be found later in this catalog.