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 section. 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 for masters students and ten years old for doctoral students, 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. Students who stop out of a program and reapply must meet the degree requirements of the new catalog under which they are readmitted.

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

Coursework completed before the student applies for admission at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, or completed at another institution after admission to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is considered 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.

- The student must have earned transferred graduate credit 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 for Master's degrees and less than 10 years old for Doctoral degrees at the time the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi degree is awarded.
- Credit from a degree earned at another institution will not be applied to a graduate degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Additional limitations on transfer of credit are discussed in “Requirements for Master's Degrees” and “Requirements for Doctoral Programs”, below.

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 College of Graduate Studies 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 cannot be applied toward graduate degrees.

Academic Advisement

Graduate faculty advisors/mentors or advisory committees are assigned within individual graduate programs in each college. Faculty advisors/mentors are available to exchange ideas about courses of value as related to career plans, act as liaisons with other faculty members, refer students to other departments on campus as needed, and provide input if students experience difficulty with their studies, as well as address questions regarding their degree plans. Specific questions related to degree requirements may also be handled by the academic advisors/mentors or the graduate program coordinator or equivalent in the respective college.

Graduate Courses

Graduate courses are numbered 5000 or higher. Courses at the 5000 level are open only to students with graduate standing and senior undergraduate students who meet specific criteria. Courses at the 6000 level and higher are limited to students admitted to a doctoral program, or graduate students who meet specific criteria. Please consult the specific program for additional details or requirements.

Graduate Credit for Undergraduate Courses

Certain 4000-level undergraduate courses under the Colleges of Liberal Arts and the College of Education and Human Development 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 College of Graduate Studies 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 and meet university requirements.

Graduate Study by Undergraduates

1. Reservation of Work for Graduate Credit

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

a. The student has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better,

b. The dean of the college in which the work is offered has granted written approval, and
c. The graduate work is not used to fulfill undergraduate degree requirements unless enrolled in a 3+2 program.

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
a. The student has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better,
b. The dean of the college in which the work is offered has granted written approval,
c. The chair of the student’s major department and the dean of the student’s undergraduate college have granted written approval, and
d. The student has not reserved the course work for graduate credit unless enrolled in a 3+2 program.
e. Graduate credit hours used to meet the requirements of a baccalaureate degree may not be used to meet the requirements for a graduate degree unless enrolled in a 3+2 program.

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 college 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 or program advisor as designated by the College in which the student is enrolled.

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.

Responsible Conduct of Research
All faculty, staff, and students conducting research at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi are responsible for ensuring ethical conduct in 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. Approval to conduct research involving human subjects, animals, or biohazards, which may require Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, and/or Institutional Biosafety Committee review. Review must be obtained prior to conducting any data collection. The determination concerning requirement for review is made by the Compliance Officer and not by the researcher. Training is available at https://www.citiprogram.org. Contact the Compliance Officer for additional information at 361-825-2497.

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 (https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/15.99.01.c1_use_of_human_subjects_in_research.pdf), Use of Human Subjects in Research, for information on this topic.

Protection of Animals in Research
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) that meets all federal requirements, as defined in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The IACUC is responsible for the oversight, evaluation, and assurance of compliance for the institution’s animal care and use program. In compliance with federal regulations, the University requires all research involving vertebrates to be approved by the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi IACUC committee. See University Procedure 15.99.01.C1.01, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, accessible at http://research.tamucc.edu/iacuc/index.html (http://research.tamucc.edu/iacuc/), for information on this topic.

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 and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress), or CR (Credit) 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, and CR are acceptable for graduate credit. IP 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 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.

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 (or higher GPA set by the program). A graduate student receiving a grade of U or NC for the second time 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 received two or more grades of U or NC 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) and subsequently receives grades of S or CR.

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 Cs for courses on the degree plan.

A student who is removed from scholastic probation is not eligible for placement on scholastic probation a second time.

Placement on Enforced Withdrawal: A student who is or has been 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 third grade of U, NC, or NP, or
• Other scholastic requirements are not met (see Other Scholastic Requirements section), 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.
• The student does not meet the specific program requirements as stated in their conditional enrollment agreement.

A student who is removed from scholastic probation will be placed on enforced withdrawal if the student receives a third grade of U or NC, or if the graduate grade point average falls below 3.0 (or higher GPA set by the program).

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. Some colleges or programs may not permit reinstatement from 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 "Financial Assistance Suspension Policy" in the "Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance" section 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.

Scholastic Probation and Registration
Students whose TAMUCC GPA causes their academic standing to reflect Scholastic Probation (below 3.0 GPA) [please see section on Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal] are not allowed to register for courses in the short session/s (August and January). If registration is found for short sessions, the Office of the University Registrar will administratively drop those courses in short session/s.*

Changing Degree Programs
If a student wishes to change a degree program, the student must submit an application for admission, pay the application fee, and comply with all program requirements as identified under the University and Degree Program Graduate Admission Criteria. No more than 12 semester hours of coursework taken in non-degree seeking, certificate seeking, or previous master's seeking status may be applied to any master's degree and no more than one-fourth of the credit hours required may be applied to any doctoral degree.

Leave of Absence
Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events are encouraged to consult with their department chair and request a leave of absence in writing from the College of Graduate Studies, especially if the leave will impact recency of credit determinations. Evidence of successful continuous progress towards the degree, programmatic changes, and faculty availability will affect consideration of requests submitted after the degree time limit has expired. A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence must be approved in advance by the faculty advisor, the Program Coordinator, the College Dean, and the Graduate Dean. If the Graduate Dean approves the petition, the registration requirement will be set aside during the period of leave. Leaves will be granted only under conditions that require the suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree including use of university facilities and faculty mentoring/advice. Counting of the time to the completion of the degree ceases when a leave of absence is granted and resumes when the student re-enrolls to continue the program. Unapproved leaves of absence may result in the student being required to re-apply to his/her program.

In case of extenuating circumstances, a one-semester leave of absence can be extended to a maximum of two full semesters by the student's Faculty Advisor and or Program Coordinator and the Graduate Dean. A student who returns to the University after an approved leave of absence will not be required to submit an application for readmission to the College of Graduate Studies. An international student should visit with an advisor in the Office of International Education to find out how a leave of absence may affect his/her stay or his/her re-entry into the U.S.

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, 30 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 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.

**Time Limit to Degree and Recency of Credit for Master’s Degrees**

The requirements for a Master’s degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master’s degree. Exceptions provided the courses were completed at this university, will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as a revalidation plan. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college offering the degree, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

**Revalidation of Courses Beyond the Seven Year Limit for Master’s Degrees**

Courses listed on the plan of study completed more than seven years prior to graduation are considered dated. In order to have dated courses revalidated, the Department Chair or Program Coordinator recommends a revalidation plan, which will verify that the student's knowledge in a specific subject area is current and documented. Options for course revalidation include a written examination, a paper, a project, a course retake, or other equally rigorous academic means appropriate to the discipline to determine the student learning outcomes have been met. Revalidation requests should be submitted on the Revalidation Request Form and accompanied by a written justification, updated degree plan, revalidation plan, and documentation used for revalidation. All revalidation requests and plans must be approved by the student’s advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost. The student’s advisor, department chair, and College Dean are responsible for determining whether the student demonstrated sufficient course knowledge necessary for successful course revalidation. Successfully revalidated courses may be included in the student’s plan of study. Failure to follow all designated requirements of the revalidation agreement may result in dismissal from the program. Subsequent requests for revalidation may be considered, but will be denied absent a showing of extraordinary hardship. Graduate students will not be permitted to submit more than 12 semester hours of the program’s courses for revalidation. Students will be required to repeat courses beyond the 12-semester hour limit. Only courses completed at this university are eligible for revalidation.

**Degree Plans**

A copy of a degree plan, developed by the time a student has completed half of the course work in the program, must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies.

**Thesis Committee**

Students who choose the thesis option within their program of study must form a thesis advisory committee. All committee members must hold graduate faculty status at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and are required to participate in all thesis-related activities as applicable (e.g., proposal hearings, final thesis defense/final examinations). More than one dissenting vote in the thesis defense/final examination will constitute failure. Some programs may require a passing vote from all thesis committee members. Contact the program coordinator for more information.

**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.

The thesis must be reviewed for plagiarism and be approved by the thesis committee prior to the defense.

Students must be enrolled during the semester in which the thesis defense/final examination occurs and in the semester in which they graduate.

**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 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 30 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 or terminal 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 Terminal Degree Programs**

There are seven doctoral programs and one Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Program at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. The College of Education and Human Development offers three doctoral degrees: a Ph.D. in Counselor Education, Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, and an Ed.D in Educational Leadership. The College of Science and Engineering offers three degrees: a Ph.D. in Coastal and Marine System Science, an interdisciplinary program drawing from the natural, social, and computational sciences, a Ph.D in Geospatial Computing Sciences, and a Ph.D in Marine Biology, an interdisciplinary degree program in collaboration with Texas A&M University-College Station and Texas A&M University- Galveston. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences offers a DNP, Doctor of Nursing Practice. The College of Liberal Arts offers the Masters of Fine Arts.

The goal of terminal 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/creative output. The programs are designed to encourage 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 and/or creative formats. In addition to earning a terminal 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/creative product acceptable to the committee. Specific program requirements are located in the appropriate sections of the catalog.

**Texas 99 Hour Rule**

The Texas State Legislature has enacted a rule that provides that students at all state universities with over 99 doctoral hours may be subject to the payment of nonresident tuition. A student will generally be able to study at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi full-time for five complete academic years, including summers, before being affected by the 99-hour rule. For students staying beyond five years, in a number of cases there is still the possibility of a programmatic or individual exemption from the rule. For more information, contact the individual Program Coordinators.

**Continuous Enrollment and Residency**

Unless on an approved leave of absence, students in terminal degree programs must be registered continuously for a minimum of 3 semester credit hours per long semester (fall and spring semesters) during the academic year and pay the designated tuition and fees. Individual programs may have additional credit hour requirements. Students working on research/scholarly activity toward their dissertation should enroll in the number of credit hours that reflects the extent of study or research activity. International students may have additional registration requirements depending on their visa status and should consult with the Office of International Education to obtain current information. Unapproved Leaves of Absence may result in the student being required to re-apply to his/her program.

In addition, some terminal degree programs require that students continuously register in courses for a minimum of two consecutive terms, which may include summer. The purpose of the residency is to permit professional interaction with program faculty and students. The residency provides an opportunity for sustained intellectual effort/creative output by enhancing exposure to new concepts in discipline, to research methodologies, and to development of research competency with the outcome resulting in a dissertation containing original research or a solo MFA final thesis and exhibition. For specific residency requirements, consult the degree requirements sections of the individual terminal degree programs.

Students must enroll during the semester in which the dissertation defense/final examination occurs and in the semester in which they graduate.

**Time Limit to Degree and Recency of Credit for Terminal Degree Programs**

The requirements for a terminal degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within ten years subsequent to admission to the terminal degree program. The ten-year period begins with the first semester in which the student enrolls and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Students have a maximum of five years to advance to candidacy and a maximum of 5 years from candidacy to successfully defend the dissertation. Students who exceed the candidacy deadline may request an extension. Candidacy extensions require strong justification in writing from the student and must include a plan for timely completion of the comprehensive examination, the proposal, and the final dissertation. The extension must be approved by the student’s advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, and the Graduate Dean. Credit that is more than ten years old will not count toward a terminal degree. Exceptions will only be considered for, courses completed at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as a revalidation plan. Written approval from the major department chair, the Dean of the college from which the degree is offered, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

**Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit (for Terminal Degrees)**

Courses listed on the plan of study completed more than ten years prior to graduation are considered dated. The department chair or program coordinator recommends revalidation of dated courses. Revalidation will verify that the student’s knowledge in a specific subject area is current and documented. Options for course revalidation include written examinations, 3-5 page essay, a project, course retake, or other equally rigorous academic means appropriate to the discipline to determine that the student learning outcomes have been met. Revalidation requests should be submitted on the Revalidation Request Form and accompanied by a written justification, updated degree plan, revalidation plan, and documentation used for revalidation. All revalidation requests and plans must be approved by the student’s advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost. The student’s advisor, department chair, and College Dean are responsible for determining whether the student demonstrated sufficient course knowledge necessary for successful course revalidation. Successfully revalidated courses may be included in the student’s plan of study. Failure to follow all designated requirements of the revalidation agreement may result in dismissal from the program. Subsequent requests for revalidation may be considered, but will be denied absent a showing of extraordinary hardship. Graduate students may not submit more than 12 semester hours of their program’s courses for revalidation. Courses beyond the 12-semester hour limit must be repeated. Only courses completed at this university are eligible for revalidation.

**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 course work must be doctoral level courses.

An MFA degree consists of 60 hours beyond the bachelor’s degree.

**Transfer of Graduate Credits**

In addition to the general Transfer of Credit Policy, specific requirements must be met for courses that may transfer for terminal degree credit. The following rule applies to these courses, with the exception of degrees offered jointly.

- The student must have been enrolled as a terminal degree student when the coursework 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 and a Graduate Faculty Representative, selected by the Graduate Dean from a different department or college and not with another doctoral program. 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 may be required to review and approve degree plans and participate in qualifying examinations, proposal hearings, comprehensive and final examinations, including defense of dissertation, and all are required to sign relevant documents. More than one dissenting vote in the dissertation defense/final examination will constitute failure. The Graduate Faculty Representative will not be required to attend or evaluate materials related to the comprehensive examination. The signature of the student is required on the degree plan.

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 allowing for a two-week turnaround 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. A degree plan must be developed by the time the student has completed half of the course work in the program, and copies should be forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies to be approved by the Graduate Dean. 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, the College Dean, 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 2 weeks of the completion 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.

Candidacy
A student is advanced to candidacy after successful completion of the comprehensive exam. Doctoral students have a maximum of five years to advance to candidacy.

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. The proposal should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the proposal hearing and 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 College of Graduate Studies in order to schedule the defense. Prior to the defense/examination, the following should occur:

1. The student submits a copy of the dissertation to each committee member for review allowing for a two-week turnaround (normally a minimum of 8 weeks prior to graduation).
2. After reviewing the dissertation, the dissertation committee chair will sign the form titled Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Dissertation Defense 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 Agreement to Schedule Dissertation form is signed by the dissertation chair and the program coordinator or department chair, the student must submit the form to the College of Graduate Studies by the deadline specified in the academic calendar (normally eight weeks prior to graduation). Upon receipt of the signed form, the College of Graduate Studies will announce the dissertation defense/final examination. The defense must be scheduled a minimum of six weeks prior to graduation. Unless the deadline is met, the student will not be permitted to graduate until the following semester.
4. The dissertation needs to be reviewed for plagiarism and approved by the dissertation committee prior to the defense.
5. Oversight of the dissertation defense/final examination will be the responsibility of the dissertation chair. All members of the dissertation committee will attend the dissertation defense/final examination. One committee member, excluding the chair, may participate electronically. The dissertation defense/final examination will be open to all members of the university community. However, at some point the dissertation defense/final examination 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 an electronic copy of the dissertation, no less than four weeks prior to graduation, to the College of Graduate Studies where it will be reviewed and given final approval and acceptance by the university. The format of the submitted dissertation must conform to university guidelines, which are available at the College of Graduate Studies website. If corrections are required, the dissertation will be returned to the student for revision.

**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 Academic Calendar.

**Pathways to the Doctorate**

Pathways to the Doctorate is a program dedicated to increasing the number, quality, and diversity of master’s and doctoral graduates across all disciplines within The Texas A&M University System. Consisting of eleven universities and seven state agencies, the System spans the State of Texas. This enables the System to recruit top students from a variety of geographic, socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and cultural environments. The Pathways to the Doctorate program is one approach to meeting the goals of the state’s higher education plan, Closing the Gaps. The goal of Pathways to the Doctorate is to attract high achieving students within The Texas A&M University System to pursue careers in higher education.

Through a variety of activities such as seminars and workshops, inter-institutional exchange programs, a mentoring program, and an annual research symposium with system-wide participation, the Pathways program aims to:

- Create a pathway for talented students to pursue graduate education
- Foster opportunities for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students to collaborate and to foster innovative research and interpersonal communication skills
- Enlighten and encourage students and teachers (K-12 through college) to see that science and technology are essential to lead a life of discovery and fun
- Help meet faculty needs as post-secondary enrollment grows and current faculty retire.

**Graduate Assistantships**

There are three types of graduate assistants at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi: graduate teaching assistants, graduate research assistants, and administrative assistants. Students interested in serving as graduate assistants should contact the coordinator of their graduate program, as well as Career Services, to check availability. Graduate students interested in becoming teaching assistants in the First-Year Seminar Program should contact University College for information. Graduate assistants receive a stipend to help them finance their graduate studies.

Any student serving as a graduate assistant with a 50% FTE appointment during a regular semester (fall or spring) must be enrolled for at least 6 hours of graduate-level coursework in that semester. Individual colleges or programs may have additional credit hour requirements. Any student serving as a graduate assistant with a 50% FTE appointment during the summer must be enrolled for at least 3 hours of graduate level coursework during the combined summer terms. Any exceptions to these rules must have the approval of the Graduate Dean.

Teaching assistants must meet the enrollment requirements in the previous paragraph and must make steady progress toward the completion of an advanced degree. Any exceptions to this rule must have the approval of the Graduate Dean.

Non-resident or international students holding a 50% FTE graduate assistantship receive in-state tuition and fees at the rate charged to Texas residents for the semester in which they hold the assistantship appointment.