

General Requirements for Graduation with a Master's Degree

Graduate degree candidates must obtain clearance and must apply online for candidacy via Blue and Gold. Clearance to graduate follows recommendation by the official Graduate Coordinator/adviser(s) and Department Chairperson to the Graduate Dean. Students may apply online for candidacy six months in advance of the day of graduation and must have created a final degree plan in DegreeWorks.

A master's degree may be earned by completing one of the three degree plan options described below. A Master of Science degree is awarded to candidates who complete only the requirements specified below for one of these degree plan options. A Master of Arts degree is awarded to candidates who, in addition to the requirements for one of these degree plan options, complete four college-level courses in a single foreign language with grades of C or better, or who have the equivalent in advanced placement. It is the student's responsibility to submit to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies the proper documentation showing the completion of four college-level courses taken in a single foreign language before processing the candidacy application.

Other master's degrees exist: the Master of Music (described under Music), the Master of Business Administration (described under Business Administration), the Master of Education (described under Education), Master of Social Work and the Master of Engineering (described under Engineering).

Research that involves human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Training in the use of human subjects in research is available through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and the National Institute of Health (NIH). Training is mandatory, either through CITI or NIH. Visit the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs' website for further information: <http://www.tamuk.edu/osr>.

Thesis Option

- a. Thirty semester hours of approved graduate courses, with at least 18 semester hours (including 6 hours of Thesis 5306 research) in a major subject.
- b. No more than 6 semester hours of credit for special problems courses may be accepted.
- c. A research thesis must be prepared under the direction of a professor in the major subject area who is the student's thesis adviser. A thesis proposal approved by the thesis adviser must be completed for a letter grade (A, B, C) to be assigned in the first 3 hours of Thesis Research 5306. The student must submit the Thesis Proposal Defense form and the abstract page to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies via DocuSign.
- d. The student must be registered for the thesis course during the semester of graduation.
- e. The thesis must be accepted by a committee of at least 3 faculty members including the thesis adviser and at least, one other professor from the major area. Other committee member(s) may be selected from the major field area or other. The student will make an oral defense of the thesis and comprehensive exam before the committee no later than five weeks before commencement. The thesis defense form must be submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies via DocuSign. The student may submit a hard or soft copy of the signature page to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (for soft copy to graduatestudies@tamuk.edu).
- f. Thesis 5306 is used solely by 'Thesis Option' students. The thesis requires 6 semester credit hours of grades, the first 3 semester credit hours consisting of a proposal and the last 3 semester credit hours consisting of a thesis. The students should be enrolled in 5306 during semesters or summer terms when the student is receiving supervision from the thesis adviser, thesis committee or is receiving a research stipend.
- g. The final submission of each thesis must be approved by the Graduate Dean for style, format and scholarly merit. A copy of the first page of the Turnitin report signed by the thesis adviser has to be submitted via DocuSign as well as the entire Turnitin report. Instructions concerning the DocuSign forms to be used and details to be followed in preparing the thesis may be obtained from the Graduate Studies website.

Courses-Only Option

- a. Thirty-six semester hours of approved graduate courses, with at least 24 semester hours in a major subject area. Each student's degree plan must be approved by the program coordinator and the department chair.
- b. Each department will make sure that the graduate courses in the major provide students with knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ensure student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences will be required.
- c. Without special permission from the program coordinator, the department chair and the graduate dean, no more than 6 semester hours of credit for special problems or independent study courses may be accepted. Courses such as 5305 and 5306 cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of Courses-Only option.
- d. A common written comprehensive examination that illustrates knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ensures student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences will be required. It will be conducted by a departmental committee comprised of at least two faculty members. The comprehensive exam should be taken by each student in the last semester. The comprehensive exam form must be submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies via DocuSign.

Project Option

- a. Thirty-six semester hours of approved graduate courses, with at least 24 semester hours (including 3 hours of Project 5305 research) in a major subject area. Each student's degree plan must be approved by a faculty advisor, the graduate program coordinator and department chair.
- b. Without special permission from all members of the student's committee and the graduate dean, no more than 6 semester hours of credit for special problems courses may be accepted.
- c. A project report produced as a major assignment in a 3 hour 5000-level course from a department-approved list of courses including 5305 is required.
- d. Upon recommendation of the project adviser, the project report must be approved by a faculty member in the major, the graduate program coordinator and department chair. The project will demonstrate knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ensure student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.
- e. One copy of the approved research project will be placed in the student's file in the major department. The Research Project Final Submission form, the first page of Turnitin report, and a completed comprehensive exam form must be submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies via DocuSign.
- f. An Oral and/or written comprehensive examination that illustrates knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ensures student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences will be required. It will be conducted by a departmental/project committee comprised of at least two faculty members. The comprehensive exam should be taken by each student in the last semester.

Conditions Applicable to Graduate Degrees

Final Degree Plan

Once a final degree plan has been created via DegreeWorks for processing of candidacy, the final degree plan cannot be changed during the semester of candidacy without the graduate dean's review and written permission.

Comprehensive Examination(s)

Each graduate student must demonstrate proficiency in the major subject by passing comprehensive examinations approved by the appropriate graduate coordinator(s) and administered by the student's program committee. Comprehensive exams for the supporting area are at the discretion of the program/department.

The comprehensive examination(s) and thesis final defense should be completed no later than the first week of April (for May candidates), July (for August candidates) and November (for December graduates).

Required Component of All Graduate Curricula

Each program recognized by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies must design the graduate curriculum so that it requires its students to analyze, explore, question, reconsider and synthesize old and new knowledge and skills. The curriculum must be composed of discrete courses so as to provide the graduate student an education above and beyond that offered to undergraduate students. In this manner, the graduate curriculum will afford the depth of education, the specialized skills and the sense of creative independence that will allow the graduate student to practice in and contribute to a profession or field of scholarship.

Stacked Courses

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies requires that there be a substantial difference between undergraduate and graduate instruction and that graduate study be at a level of complexity and generalization that extends the knowledge and intellectual maturity of graduate students. A limited number of 4000 (undergraduate) level and 5000 (graduate) level courses may be approved to be taught as "stacked" courses. The syllabus for the graduate course must indicate a higher level of complexity and have different student learner outcomes. Graduate students must be registered in the 5000-level course in order for the course to be applicable towards the degree.

Residency Requirements

The graduate student will comply with the residency policy established by the individual graduate program. Students may consult with the graduate dean for additional information.

Registration

Graduate students must be registered in the semester of graduation. Graduate students must be registered in at least a one credit hour graduate course during the semester of their comprehensive exams. If a student successfully completed all the coursework and passed the comprehensive exam but failed to apply for candidacy, the student will be required to enroll in at least a one credit hour course the semester of graduation.

Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships

A Graduate Assistant must be enrolled as a full-time graduate student (9 credit hours during the long term and 3 credit hours during each summer session). If the graduate student drops below the full-time course load requirements, the assistantship may be terminated. The student may carry a maximum 6-hour teaching load in the long term and a maximum 3-hour teaching load each summer session as long as the combined hours of course

load and teaching load do not exceed 15 hours in a long semester and 6 hours in each summer session. Graduate Teaching Assistants must have completed 18 semester hours of graduate course work in order to teach.

Graduate Fellowships require that the graduate student be enrolled for a minimum of six semester graduate credit hours during the long terms and six semester graduate credit hours during the summer session.

Course Longevity (Master Degrees)

A master's degree student must complete all requirements for each specific graduate degree within seven years of initial registration for that degree. Graduate credits older than those stipulated are not applicable toward a graduate degree without written approval from the Graduate Dean.

Graduation Under a Particular Catalog

Students receive a graduate degree when they satisfy the requirements of the first or any subsequent catalog under which they earned credit for the degree, as long as that catalog is not more than seven years old.

Application for Degree

Graduate degrees are conferred at the close of each regular semester and second summer session. Candidates for advanced degrees who expect to complete their work must first seek approval from their graduate adviser/coordinator to apply for graduation online via Blue & Gold, and create a final degree plan in DegreeWorks, it is the student's responsibility to be informed and meet graduation deadlines which are published in the Academic Calendar in an earlier section of this Catalog and in the Class Schedule each semester. A student cannot graduate with an *I*, *S*, *U* or *F* notation on their academic record in the last semester prior to graduation.

Use of Official Name

Students applying for graduation must use their official name as listed on their permanent record in the Office of the Registrar. No nicknames or any other informal name will be allowed. All printed information, including diplomas, transcripts, and commencement programs, will list a student's official name. Students requesting a name other than their official name on their diploma must change their name on their permanent record.

Graduation in Absentia

Graduation in absentia will be permitted only under special conditions stated in writing and approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Authorship and Copyright

Students shall own the copyright on their theses or dissertations. Primary authorship on manuscripts derived from a dissertation, thesis or research project must be agreed upon in writing by the mentor and the student prior to submission for publication. Data collected in the process of research shall be the mutual property of all collaborators unless otherwise stated in writing. It is the responsibility of the mentor to be proactive in this particular case and file any letter or agreement on a timely basis with the Graduate Office.

Topic Courses vs. Special Problems Courses

Selected topics courses are organized courses which are taught in a regular classroom environment, and which meet regularly according to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved contact hours per semester hour of credit. The primary modes of instruction of an organized class are lecture, laboratory, seminar or by electronic communication.

Special problems courses are independent study or individual instruction courses which may or may not meet regularly and which usually involve one-on-one professor-student contact. Library study and/or research data collection leading to either research paper(s), a thesis or formal testing is the appropriate format for such courses.