

# GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE

Graduate degree candidates must obtain clearance and complete a Degree Candidacy form at the College of Graduate Studies. Clearance to graduate follows recommendation by the official graduate advisor(s) to the College of Graduate Studies. Students may apply for candidacy with the College of Graduate Studies six months in advance of the day of graduation by presenting a signed, final degree plan.

## Final Degree Plan

Once a final degree plan has been submitted to the College of Graduate Studies for candidacy completion, the final degree plan cannot be changed during the semester of candidacy without the review and written permission from the College of Graduate Studies.

## Shortened-format Classes

Shortened-format classes are limited to a maximum of six semester hours of graduate credit that a student may use on a degree plan.

## Comprehensive Examination(s)

Each graduate student must demonstrate proficiency in the major subject (and supporting field area if it includes nine semester hours or more) by passing comprehensive examinations approved by the appropriate graduate coordinator(s) and administered by the student's program committee.

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

Comprehensive Exam deadlines, instructions and information are provided on the University website, College of Graduate Studies. (<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/college-of-graduate-studies/thesis.html>)

## Graduate Internships

The requirement for a student to complete a graduate internship varies by college and degree program. You should consult with your assigned graduate program coordinators to determine if you are required to complete an internship as part of your degree program or if it simply would be beneficial for your professional and academic growth.

Internships for academic credit will require submission of an internship application packet and supporting documentation to the graduate internship coordinator for the respective College and Program. Please speak to the graduate internship coordinator for the respective deadlines for submission of the internship packet and registration process.

The Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement provides graduate students assistance with internship search through the use of Handshake software. Please make an appointment with a career advisor for further assistance in creating your Handshake profile and navigating the software.

## Required Component of all Graduate Curricula

Each program recognized by the College of 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 to provide the graduate student with 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

There must be a substantial difference between undergraduate and graduate instruction, and graduate studies must be at a level of complexity and generalization that extends graduate students' knowledge and intellectual maturity. A limited number of 4000-level and 5000-level courses may be approved to be taught as stacked courses.

If a student takes an approved 4000-level course for graduate credit, the syllabus for the graduate course must indicate a higher level of complexity and have *different student learning outcomes*.

## Use of Transfer Credit, Extension, and Certain Other Courses for Master's Degrees

If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree under the following limitations. Some departments may have more restrictive requirements for transfer work. The transfer of credits must be approved by the student's Program Coordinator, the Dean of their college, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

1. The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for transfer credit is 12 hours or one-third (1/3) of the total hours of a degree plan (whichever is lower). The following restrictions apply.
  - Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses with a final grade of B or greater taken in residence at an accredited United States institution or approved international institution will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the student was in degree-seeking status at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, or the student was in degree-seeking status at the institution at which the courses were taken, and if the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
  - Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for degree plan credit.
2. The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree seeking status at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, which may be considered for application to the degree plan, is 12.
3. For graduate courses of three weeks' duration or less, taken at other institutions, up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day week of coursework. Each week of coursework must include at least 15 contact hours.
4. Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.

5. Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.

To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University-San Antonio, students must earn at least two-thirds or more of the total credit hours required for the program through the institution's own direct instruction.

## Residency Requirements

The graduate student will comply with the residency policy established by the individual graduate program. Students may consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships

A Graduate Assistant must be enrolled as a graduate student (at least 6 credit hours during the long term and 6 credit hours during the summer session) and be in good academic standing making satisfactory academic progress in their academic degree program. If the graduate student drops below the course load requirements or is placed on academic probation or academic dismissal, the assistantship may be terminated.

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

## Course Longevity (Master's Degrees)

A master's degree student must complete all requirements for each specific graduate degree for which they were admitted within **five years** of initial registration. Graduate academic credits older than five years from the date of admission are not applicable toward a graduate degree without written approval from the College of Graduate Studies.

## 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 five 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 advisor/coordinator. To apply for graduation, students must complete a Graduation application online via JagWire. It is the student's responsibility to be informed and meet graduation deadlines 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" or "F" notation on their academic record in the last semester before graduation.

## Use of Official Name on Diploma

Diplomas will be printed with the legal name on file, unless the graduation application indicates a change to the first name as a preferred name has been declared. Name changes can be submitted to the Registrar's office to update, and for graduation purposes, changes need to be made at least 3 months prior to the end of the semester.

Students may use a preferred **first** name on their diploma regardless of whether they have legally changed their name. Students who want the preferred **first** name on their diploma must submit this information by the deadline for their graduation application.

## 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 thesis. Primary authorship on manuscripts derived from a thesis or research project must be agreed upon in writing by the mentor and the student before submission for publication. Data collected in the research process shall be the mutual property of all collaborators unless otherwise stated in writing. It is the mentor's responsibility to be proactive in this particular case and file any letter or agreement on a timely basis with the College of Graduate Studies.

## Topic Courses

Selected topic courses are organized courses 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 independent study.

## Master's Degree Plans

A Master's degree may be earned by completing one of the plans described in the Programs A-Z section of the Graduate Catalog. This section provides an overview of the degree, admission requirements to the program, degree requirements, and a plan of study. Should you have additional questions, please feel free to email us at [graduate.studies@tamusa.edu](mailto:graduate.studies@tamusa.edu)

## The Master's Thesis

Thesis 5306 is used solely by Plan I 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 student should be enrolled in 5306 during semesters or summer terms when the student receives supervision from the research advisor or thesis committee or receives a research stipend. Students who complete two semesters of thesis and need to continue in a thesis course must contact their respective Graduate Program Coordinator to facilitate enrollment in GRAD 5101, a thesis continuation course.

A thesis proposal signed by the student and the thesis committee constitutes the minimum requirement for the student to receive a letter grade on the first three hours of thesis credits.

The College of Graduate Studies must review each thesis submission. This review ensures that all theses meet university guidelines regarding the thesis's formatting, structure, and composition. Instructions concerning the form to be used and details to be followed in preparing the thesis may be obtained from the College of Graduate Studies.

The final graduate thesis is submitted to the College of Graduate Studies via Digital Commons [https://digitalcommons.tamusa.edu/masters\\_theses/](https://digitalcommons.tamusa.edu/masters_theses/) on or before the published deadline. Deadlines for submitting completed theses are typically three weeks before the end of the semester. Specific deadlines are published on the College of Graduate Studies Website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/college-of-graduate-studies/thesis.html>).

Research activities involving live animals, biohazards, or human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Texas A&M University–San Antonio regulatory research committee (i.e., IRB, IACUC, IBC) **before** the activity can commence. This requirement applies to activities conducted at A&M-SA and at non-A&M-SA facilities or institutions. In both cases, students are responsible for working with the relevant A&M-SA research compliance program to ensure and document that all A&M-SA compliance obligations are met before the study begins. Specific forms, instructions, and additional information are provided online: Research Compliance (<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/research-and-health-sciences/research-compliance/>).

#### Plan I-A (with thesis, major, and supporting field):

1. Thirty semester hours of approved graduate courses, with 18 to 24 semester hours (including 6 hours of Thesis 5306 research) in a major subject area and 6 to 12 semester hours in a supporting field subject area, are required. The supporting field may be divided between two subject areas, with 6 semester hours each.
2. At least 24 of the 30 semester hours must be in graduate-level courses. No more than three semester hours of credit for special problems courses (other than the thesis courses) may be accepted unless the special problem course is identified as a repeatable course when the topic changes. No credit extension or correspondence courses will be accepted.
3. A research thesis must be prepared under the direction of the professor in the major subject area, who is also the student's thesis committee chair. A thesis proposal approved by the thesis committee chair must be completed for a grade to be assigned in the first 3 hours of Thesis 5306. The thesis must be accepted by a committee consisting of the committee chair, at least one other professor from the major area, and one professor from the supporting field area (or one from each of the supporting field areas).
4. The student will make an oral defense of the thesis before the committee no later than five weeks before *commencement*.

#### Plan I-B (with the thesis and major):

1. Thirty semester hours of approved graduate courses, with at least 24 semester hours (including 6 hours of Thesis 5306 research) in a major subject area are required.
2. At least 24 of the 30 semester hours must be in 5000-level courses. No more than 3 semester hours of credit for special problems courses (other than the thesis courses) may be accepted. No credit for extension or correspondence courses will be accepted.
3. A research thesis must be prepared under the direction of the professor in the major subject area who serves as the student's thesis committee chair. A thesis proposal approved by the program chair must be completed for a grade to be assigned in the first 3 hours of Thesis 5306. The thesis must be accepted by a committee consisting of the program chair and at least two other professors from the major area.
4. The student will make an oral defense of the thesis before the committee no later than five weeks before *commencement*.

## Graduate Research Projects

Course number 5305 may be used for the selection, planning, and conduct of a research project to fulfill research requirements under Plan II and Plan III programs. The graduate research project requires a grade in 3 semester credit hours of 5305 or other courses identified by the degree plan. The student should be enrolled in 5305 during semesters

or summer terms when the student is receiving supervision from the research advisor or graduate research committee or is receiving a research stipend.

For Plan II, the graduate research project must be approved and signed by a committee consisting of the program chair and at least one other professor from the major area. For Plan III, the graduate research project must be approved and signed by the program chair. In both Plan II and Plan III, the graduate research projects must have the department chair's signature. One copy of the approved research project will be placed in the student's file in the program department.

In Progress (*IP*) grades are assigned in 5305 when appropriate until a letter grade is assigned. *IP* grades remain indefinitely on a student's transcript and cannot be changed with a change-of-grade card. Students must be actively enrolled in 5305 to receive the letter grade.

#### Plan II (with major and supporting field):

1. Thirty to thirty-six semester hours of approved graduate courses, with 21 to 24 semester hours in a major subject area and 12 to 15 semester hours in a supporting field subject area, are required. The supporting field may be divided between two subject areas, with at least 6 semester hours in each.
2. At least 21 semester hours in the major subject area and at least 9 semester hours in the supporting field subject area must be in 5000-level courses. Without special permission from all members of the student's committee and the graduate director, no more than 6 semester hours of credit for special problems courses may be accepted. No more than 6 semester hours of credit for extension courses of this University may be accepted.
3. A research project, produced as a major assignment in a 3-hour 5000-level, research-titled course (which may be a special problems course) or Research Project 5305 in a major subject area, is required.

#### Plan III (with major and resource areas):

1. Thirty to thirty-six semester hours of approved graduate courses, with at least 24 hours in a major subject area. (This plan requires resource areas rather than supporting field subject areas. A resource area consists of no more than 6 semester hours of graduate credit in a concentrated area.)
2. At least 27 of the 36 semester hours must be 5000-level courses. Without special permission from the appropriate graduate coordinator and the graduate division, no more than 6 semester hours of credit for special problems courses may be accepted. No more than 6 semester hours of credit for extension courses offered by A&M-San Antonio may be accepted.
3. A research project, produced as a major assignment in a 3-hour 5000-level, research-titled course (which may be a special problems course) or Research Project 5305 in the major subject area, is required.