



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**ADVISOR HANDBOOK**



**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

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## Admission

### Graduate Certificates

- Students may concurrently pursue a graduate certificate and a graduate degree.
- In some cases, students in a degree program are not required to reapply for admission to a certificate program. In such cases, admission is based on the recommendation of the certificate program advisor.
- Some certificates do require students to reapply for admission. Please check with the certificate program advisor.
- Upon completion of certificate requirements, students submit an Application for Graduate Certificate to the Graduate School.
- Certificates are awarded at the end of each term just like degrees.
- Once awarded, the certificate is awarded and noted on the transcript.
- A Graduate School certificate signed by the Dean of the Graduate School will be issued and mailed to the student.

### Post-Master Certificates

- Students pursuing a post-master certificate must apply for admission to the post-master certificate program.
- The student is required to have a master's degree for any post-master's certificate.
- Upon completion, the student must submit an Application for Graduate Certificate to the Graduate School.
- Certificates are awarded at the end of each term just like degrees.
- Once awarded, the certificate is noted on the transcript.
- A Graduate School certificate signed by the Dean of the Graduate School will be issued and mailed to the student.

### Fast-Track Combined Bachelor's Master's Program

- Fast-track combined Bachelor's to Master's program is available to outstanding undergraduate UTEP students interested in transitioning from a bachelor's degree to a graduate degree.
- Eligible undergraduate students may receive up to 15 hours of dual undergraduate and graduate credit.
- Students must have successfully completed at least 90 hours of undergraduate coursework toward their degree with a minimum of 24 of those hours earned at UTEP.
- Students must have and maintain the same GPA requirement in the major as for the university honor's certificate, which is an undergraduate GPA equal to or greater than 3.30.
- Participating in graduate programs may have additional requirements including specific GRE scores.
- Financial aid may be available if enrollment in graduate courses is less than half of the total credit hours for the semester.

### Fast-Track Application

- Students complete the Fast Track Combined Bachelor's/Master's Program Student Application form and obtain required signatures.
- Students apply for admission to the graduate program of their choice using the online admission application located on the Graduate School website and submit a scanned copy of the Fast Track Combined Bachelor's/Master's Program Student Application form.
- Students must be advised each semester at the departmental level by both the undergraduate and graduate advisors and cleared for registration in graduate courses by the Graduate School.
- Students must earn a B or better in the graduate course to count as graduate credit.
- The course and earned grade will appear on both the undergraduate and graduate transcripts and calculated in both transcripts. If the grade is a C, it will not count toward the graduate degree but will still count toward the undergraduate degree.
- Tuition will be based on the level of the course, not the level of the student and financial aid may be adjusted accordingly.
- Financial aid may be available if enrollment in graduate courses is less than half of the total credit hours for the semester.
- Exceptions to these guidelines will be handled through an appeal process established by the participating graduate program.
- Upon completion of the bachelor's degree, the student must submit all pending required documentation for full admission to the graduate program such as official test scores, recommendation letters, resume, etc.

### Reservation for Graduate Credit

- This option is limited to one term/final term.
- Undergraduate students within twelve hours of completing the baccalaureate degree may request to enroll in graduate-level courses.
- Undergraduate students requesting to reserve graduate courses must have a 3.0-grade point average in all upper-level courses.
- Total enrollment including courses reserved for graduate credit must not exceed fifteen hours during a spring or fall session or nine hours during a summer session.
- Graduate research, individual studies, seminar, or thesis courses cannot be reserved for graduate credit.
- Courses reserved for graduate credit cannot be used to satisfy undergraduate degree requirements.
- Courses reserved for graduate credit will appear on a separate graduate-level transcript to be used towards the completion of a graduate or doctoral degree.
- Enrollment in courses reserved for graduate credit must be processed through the Graduate School.
- This program is not eligible for financial aid.

### Change of Major

- Students choosing to change their major program of study must reapply for admission to the new program.
  - Students must complete one full semester in their current program before applying for admission to a new program.
  - Admission fees are assessed for every application submitted to the Graduate School.
- Request to change program level from master's to doctoral or doctoral to master's within the same program, does not require a new application, only the approval of the Graduate Advisor or Program Director.

### Leave of Absence

- A request for a Leave of Absence should be submitted by the Graduate Advisor or Program Director.
- The maximum leave granted is one year.
- Students returning from an approved Leave of Absence should check in with the Graduate School to reactivate records.
- A student who is absent for more than one year must reapply for admission.

### Returning Students

- A student who fails to enroll for twelve or more months without an approved leave of absence must reapply for admission. Admission fees are assessed for every application submitted to the Graduate School.
- At the discretion of each program, the program may elect to waive resubmission of other admission materials such as letters of recommendation, test scores, etc.

## Enrollment

### Degree Plan

- The official degree plan consists of a series of courses used to satisfy degree requirements as stated in the Graduate Catalog.
- Program-specific degree plans are available on-line and we strongly encourage the use of the Goldmine on-line degree evaluation in place of paper forms.
  - Students and advisors/directors are encouraged to review the on-line degree evaluation in Goldmine to assess degree progression.
  - Revisions to the official degree plan, such as course substitutions or changes from thesis to non-thesis option, require department or program approval only but please notify the Graduate School of changes.
- All coursework completed at the graduate level is part of the graduate academic record/transcript, and all grades earned are part of the cumulative grade point average (CGPA). This applies to all courses completed at the graduate level even if the courses are not part of degree requirements.
- Graduate transcripts include both a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and a program grade point average.
- Repeat enrollment of a course for grade replacement or CGPA recalculation is not an option at the graduate level. In cases of repeated enrollment, each enrollment appears on the transcript, and each grade is calculated as part of the CGPA. For degree completion purposes, only the most recent enrollment counts towards degree requirements.

### Leveling Courses

- As proposed by the Graduate Studies Committee, a student may be required to complete leveling courses to qualify for admission to a graduate program. These hours are in addition to those required of the degree.
- Leveling courses do not count towards graduate degree requirements.
- Undergraduate courses taken for leveling purposes appear on a separate level transcript and do not affect the graduate level cumulative grade point average.

### Undergraduate Courses Approved for Graduate Credit

- A maximum of nine hours of upper-division approved-for-graduate-credit undergraduate courses may be used for graduate degree purposes. University policy (in accordance with SACS policy) requires that the Graduate School document the additional work that graduate students undertake when they take undergraduate courses for credit toward their graduate degrees. Additional coursework is not required in cases where these courses are leveling or prerequisites and thus are not included in the graduate degree plan.
- Faculty and students are required to provide a copy of the syllabus to document additional work requirements.
- [Undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit](#) are located on the Graduate School website.

- Please note that undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit are not recognized for dual credit credentialing purposes so advise students accordingly.

### Transfer Credit Courses

Upon the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor or Program Director, students pursuing a master's degree may transfer up to fourteen semester credit hours from an accredited institution towards the fulfillment of the master's degree. Doctoral students are advised to consult their respective doctoral program for information on the transfer of credit.

Graduate Advisors or Program Directors initiate and forward the request for transfer credit to the Graduate School.

- The request should identify the transferring institution and courses and specify the UTEP courses substituted by the transfer courses.
- Courses approved for transfer credit must be graduate level and must fall within established time limits for Masters and doctoral programs. (see Time Limits below)
- Only courses with a grade of "C" or higher are transferable.
- Only credit hours transfer. Grade points earned at other institutions do not transfer.
- Courses used to fulfill requirements for a graduate degree at another institution cannot be used to fulfill requirements for another same level degree at UTEP.
- Correspondence courses are not transferable nor accepted for graduate credit.

### Courses Counted for another Degree

- Double counting is not allowed so a course used to fulfill requirements for one graduate-level degree cannot be used to fulfill requirements for another same level graduate degree.
- Prescribed courses completed as part of an earned graduate degree and duplicated on a second degree do not have to be repeated. The program advisor/director may assign appropriate substitutions so that the total number of hours required of the second degree is not reduced.

### Courses Taken on a Pass/Fail Basis

- A student may elect to take a course on a Pass/Fail basis (S or U grade mode).
- The Pass/Fail option is not available for all courses. Check with the appropriate academic department or the Records Office for a listing of available courses.
- A Pass/Fail course cannot count as leveling work or as part of minimum degree requirements except for internships or practicum when designated by the department.
- Requests for the Pass/Fail option route through the Records Office by or before the Census date listed in the Class Schedule.

### Time Limits

- Master's degree requirements must be completed within one six-year period. This includes any transfer work completed before admission to the program.



- Master's degree students who have not completed degree requirements within established time limits may request an extension from the Graduate School through the Graduate Advisor or Program Director.
- Doctoral degree requirements must be completed within one eight-year period. This includes any transfer work completed before admission to the program.
  - Doctoral degree students who have not completed degree requirements within established time limits should submit an [IDP](#) and may request an extension from the Graduate School through the Program Director.
  - Doctoral students who have not completed degree requirements and have accumulated ninety-nine earned credit hours are ineligible for state-funded assistantships.
- Work over six/eight years old may be revalidated only with special permission from the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the respective committee on graduate studies. The student should submit an [IDP](#) in collaboration with the program and request an appeal through the Dean of the Graduate School.

### Registration Restrictions

- The Graduate School assists students experiencing issues with registration level restrictions, which is limited to fast-track enrollment, reservation for graduate credit enrollment, and post-baccalaureate non-degree enrollment.
- The following registration restrictions require clearance by the Graduate Advisor or Program Director or approved departmental representative by entering the appropriate waiver in the student's SFASRPO Banner record:
  - Departmental Restrictions
  - Major Restrictions
  - Prerequisite/Test Score
  - Restrictions
  - Capacity/Closed Course Restrictions
- Level Restrictions should only be cleared by the Graduate School.

### Registration Holds

- Advising Holds can only be removed by the Graduate Advisor or Program Director or approved departmental representative by revising the Hold start or end date in the student's SOAHOLD Banner record.
- Other miscellaneous Holds should be referred to the specific unit identified in SOAHOLD Origination Code.

### Course Load Capacity

Registration in excess of the maximum load as indicated in the Goldmine registration screen requires Program approval then Graduate School approval.

### Enrollment Verification

Minimum hour requirement as listed below must be in Master's or doctoral level courses or undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit that apply towards graduate degree requirements. [Undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit](#) are located on the Graduate School website.

### **Maximum Course Load**

Fall and Spring	Full-time	9 or more hours per semester
Fall and Spring	Part-time	8 or fewer hours
Fall and Spring		The maximum course load is 15 semester hours.
Maymester and Wintermester	Full-time	3 or more hours per term
Maymester and Wintermester	Part-time	2 or less hours
Maymester and Wintermester		The maximum course load is 6 hours.
Summer and 10 weeks	Full-time	3 or more hours per term
Summer and 10 weeks	Part-time	2 or less hours
Summer and 10 weeks		The maximum course load is 6 hours.

### **Enrollment Status and Verification**

For enrollment verification to financial aid, loan agencies, insurance companies, scholarships, etc., the following categories will be followed.

<b>Fall and Spring</b>		<b>Hours per Semester/Term</b>
Full-time	=	9 or more hours per semester
Part-time	=	7-8 hours
Half time	=	4.5 - 6 hours
Less than half	=	1- 4 hours

### ***Maymester and Wintermester***

Full-time	=	3 or more
Part-time	=	2 hours
Less than part	=	1 hour

### ***Summer Sessions***

Full-time	=	3 or more
Part-time	=	2 hours
Less than part	=	1 hour

### Enrollment Verification for Financial Aid Eligibility (FAE)

**To maintain financial aid eligibility, all graduate students must enroll for a minimum of six (6) hours every Fall and Spring semester, and six (6) total hours in Summer sessions.** Students enrolled in accelerated, online, or other special programs that use "parts-of-term" are considered

full-time if they are enrolled in at least three (3) credit hours in any given part of term **and** also meet the full-term requirements noted above.

**Summer Enrollment:** Graduate students enrolled in three (3) hours during one of the summer semesters are classified by the Graduate School as full-time for the entire summer. Students continuously enrolled on a full-time basis immediately preceding fall and spring semesters are not required to enroll during the summer term if degree applicable course offerings are not available during the summer term. **To maintain financial aid eligibility during the summer, all graduate students must enroll for a minimum of six (6) total hours in Summer sessions.**

#### Thesis Students

Master's degree students are classified by the Graduate School as full-time equivalent for financial aid purposes for up to four semesters of continual enrollment in thesis only. Students enrolled in three (3) hours of thesis are financial aid eligible and may receive loans and loan deferments. Thesis students must be enrolled in a thesis course during the semester the thesis is defended and completed, and during the semester of graduation.

#### Non-Thesis Students

Students will not be financial aid eligible if enrolled in less than six (6) hours every semester including the final semester. Non-thesis students must be enrolled during the semester of graduation.

#### Dissertation Students

Doctoral degree students are classified by the Graduate School as full-time equivalent for financial aid purposes for up to five semesters of continual enrollment in dissertation only. Students enrolled in three (3) hours of dissertation are financial aid eligible and may receive loans or loan deferments. Dissertation students must be enrolled in dissertation during the semester the dissertation is defended and completed and during the semester of graduation.

#### Non-Dissertation Students

Students will not be financial aid eligible if enrolled in less than six (6) hours every semester including the final semester. Non-dissertation doctoral students must be enrolled during the semester of graduation.

#### Career and Professional Development Services and CO-OP courses

Students who participate in the Career and Professional Development Services Cooperative Education Program and who are only enrolled in a CO-OP course will be classified as full-time for the term. Enrollment in CO-OP only beyond two semesters requires Graduate School approval. International students with assistantships seeking to enroll in CO-OP must obtain approval from the Graduate School before enrolling in CO-OP.

### Reduced Course Load

A request for reduced course load will only be considered during the final term/graduation term. For verification purposes, a student requesting a reduced course load must submit a final degree plan and, if applicable, apply for graduation

## Academic Standing

- Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (CGPA) to remain in good academic standing.
- Academic standing is based on the CGPA not the term or major grade point average.
- All graduate coursework is part of the graduate academic record or transcript, and all respective grades are part of the graduate cumulative GPA.
- At the graduate level, courses cannot be repeated for GPA recalculation.
- Students requesting authorization from the Graduate School for approval of co-op, TA/RA, or other types of employment or assistantships must have a 3.0 cumulative grade point average.

### Academic Probation

- A graduate student in a Master's or doctoral program who fails to maintain a 3.0 CGPA is on probation.
- A student on academic probation must earn at least a 3.0 CGPA by the conclusion of the next nine semester hours of enrollment or possibly face dismissal from the Graduate School.
- A non-degree seeking student (post-baccalaureate, certificate, or teacher certification) who fails to maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is on probation.
- A non-degree student on probation must earn at least a 2.5 CGPA by the conclusion of the next nine semester hours of enrollment or possibly face dismissal from the Graduate School.

### Academic Dismissal

- Dismissal occurs after the probationary period of nine hours of enrollment beyond initial probation and the CGPA remains below 3.0 or 2.5.
- The Graduate School notifies programs when a student record is flagged for dismissal.
- The program then submits a recommendation for continued probation or dismissal. The Graduate School then notifies the student accordingly.
- Dismissal is not automatic but access to enrollment is temporarily suspended until the program submits a recommendation for continued probation or dismissal.
  - A student may resume enrollment in cases of continued probation.
  - With dismissals, enrollment is administratively withdrawn, student records inactivated, and the graduate admission changed from admitted to dismiss.
- Dismissal also occurs based on a student's failure to meet program-specific academic standards as stated in the Graduate Catalog or if a conditionally admitted student fails to fulfill admission conditions.
- Programs may only recommend dismissal. The Graduate School generates an official notification of dismissal.
- At the graduate level, students are dismissed, not suspended.

## Appeals, Reinstatement, Readmission

- A dismissed student may petition the program for reinstatement after a full semester not enrolled at UTEP.
- The student in collaboration with the program submits an [Appeal](#) to the Dean of the Graduate School for reinstatement.
- If reinstated, the student remains on probation and must meet the conditions stated on the Appeal form or face permanent dismissal.
- A dismissed student has the option of immediately applying to a different graduate program by submitting a new application and paying the application fee.
  - If admitted to a new program, the student remains on academic probation.
  - [Academic Fresh Start](#) is not an option at the graduate level.
  - A student may file a formal grade grievance through the [Dean of Student's Office](#).

## Grades

- Only grades of A, B, and C generate graduate credit although individual programs may have additional grade requirements.
- Repeat enrollment of a course for grade replacement or CGPA recalculation is not an option at the graduate level. A student may elect to repeat a course; both enrollments and grades will appear on the transcript and affect the cumulative grade point average, but only the most recent enrollment is used to meet degree requirements.
- Students cannot be cleared for graduation with grades of I [Incomplete] or N [No grade assigned] on the final transcript or P [in progress] grade if the course with the P [in progress] grade is required for degree completion.
- Graduation candidates with an I [Incomplete] grade on the final transcript will be awarded the degree the semester the I [Incomplete] grade is removed from the final transcript and final requirements are completed, which may be different from the originally intended semester of graduation.

### Pass/Fail Grade Mode: S – Satisfactory or U - Unsatisfactory

- The Pass/Fail grade mode appears in Goldmine/Banner with a Grade Mode indicator of “P”.
- At the end of a pass/fail course, a final grade of S [Satisfactory] or U [Unsatisfactory] shall be awarded.

### Standard Grading Mode: A, B, C, D, F, I, N, P, W, CR

- The Standard grade mode appears in Goldmine/Banner with a grade mode indicator of “S”.
- At the end of a course with a standard grade mode, a final grade of A, B, C, D, F, I, N, P, W, CR shall be awarded.
- Please note that a “P” grade does not stand for *Pass*. P grade stands for in-Progress. A P in-Progress grade does not affect the cumulative grade point average or Earned Hours. P grades are “Attempted” hours and should be assigned in courses where continual

enrollment until completion is required such as thesis or dissertation. Upon successful completion of the thesis or dissertation, the instructor of record shall award an appropriate standard letter grade or pass/fail grade.

#### [P \[in-Progress\] Grades for Thesis/Dissertation Courses](#)

- The research and writing of the thesis/dissertation requires six hours of credit in the following thesis or dissertation courses: 5398 and 5399 or PSYC 5395 and PSYC 5396, or 6398 and 6399 or GEOL 6320 and GEOL 6321.
- To obtain the six hours of thesis/dissertation credit, the student must enroll in 5398, PSYC 5395, 6398, or GEOL 6320 when work on the thesis/dissertation initiates. Thereafter, the student must enroll in 5399, PSYC 5396, 6399, or GEOL 6321 during each semester of active work until completion.
- Thesis/dissertation courses should reflect a *P-In-Progress* grade while the student works to complete the document.
- Upon successful completion, the supervising professor assigns an appropriate standard letter grade or pass/fail grade to the final enrollment of thesis or dissertation.
- That letter grade applies to previous enrollments of thesis or dissertation for a maximum of six (6) credit hours of thesis and twelve (12) credit hours of dissertation.
- Additional enrollments in thesis or dissertation in excess of the six or twelve hours as noted above will be graded on a Pass/Fail (S [Satisfactory] or U [Unsatisfactory]) basis.

#### [P \[in progress\] Grade Update](#)

- Upon approval of the graduation application, the Graduate School flags the student record with a code that prompts a script running in Banner to update thesis or dissertation P grades after the semester during roll-to-history.
- The Banner P [in progress] Grade Update program updates P grades provided the professor of record assigns the appropriate grade (standard or pass/fail) to the final enrollment of thesis or dissertation.
- If the professor of record fails to assign the correct grade, the Records Office requires a grade change form to update each P grade before the student can be awarded the degree.

# Graduation

## General Information

- The student initiates the graduation process with the submission of the graduate advisor-approved Application for Graduate Degree.
- Graduate degree candidates continuously enroll through the final semester.
- Degrees conferral takes place at the end of each long semester and the end of the summer semester.
- Formal commencement ceremonies in May are for spring candidates and in December for summer and fall candidates.
- Summer candidates who are lacking six hours for degree completion may walk early and participate in May commencement.
- Summer candidates participating in May commencement should apply for graduation by the published deadlines for spring commencement.
- Names of summer candidates appear in the fall commencement program even if summer candidates obtained permission to participate in spring commencement.

## Doctoral Students

- Doctoral degree candidates who participate in commencement must defend the final dissertation two weeks before Dead Day of the intended term of graduation.
- Summer doctoral degree candidates must defend the dissertation two weeks before Dead Day of the spring semester to participate in spring commencement.
- The final committee and Graduate School approved dissertation is due on Dead Day of the intended term of graduation.

## General Graduation Requirements

- All coursework listed on the approved official degree plan successfully completed with a 3.0 or higher cumulative grade point average (CGPA).
- Degree candidates continuously enrolled through the final graduation term.
- Thesis or Dissertation students enrolled in thesis or dissertation:
  - The semester of defense.
  - The semester of completion.
  - The semester of graduation.
- Non-thesis students must submit a Completion/Defense Form to demonstrate successful completion of final non-thesis requirements such as coursework, capstone, portfolio, report, project, comprehensive exam, etc.

## Applying for Graduation

The student consults with the graduate advisor for a review of the Goldmine on-line degree evaluation and approval of the Application for Graduate Degree.

- The candidate applies for graduation by submitting the Application for Graduate Degree to the Graduate School by posted deadlines of the intended term of graduation.



- The diploma fee and, if applicable, the thesis or dissertation on-line publishing fee, is billed to the student's Goldmine account by the Graduate School.
- Candidates applying for graduation after the posted deadline are assessed a late fee.
- The graduation application is valid for one semester only.
  - The graduation application cannot be deferred, only withdrawn. Graduation fees are reversed in such cases.
  - A student who withdraws the graduation application or who does not graduate must reapply for graduation.

Applying for graduation indicates that the student's academic career is concluding so as part of the graduation application process, student records are inactivated. It is very important to notify the Graduate School when a student does not complete degree requirements so that the Graduate School reactivates records to allow re-enrollment.

### Thesis/Dissertation Requirements

- Students are allowed to use any publication style appropriate to the given discipline when writing the thesis or dissertation.
- Theses and dissertations are subject to the approval of the supervising committee and ultimately to the approval of the Graduate School.
- Students continuously enroll in thesis or dissertation until work concludes.
  - Initial enrollment is in thesis or dissertation I – 5398, PSYC 5395 or 6398, or GEOL 6320.
  - Continual enrollment is in thesis II, 5399 or PSYC 5396 or dissertation II, 6398, or GEOL 6321, until completion.
- Students may not simultaneously enroll in thesis I and thesis II or dissertation I and dissertation II.
- Students may only enroll in three hours of thesis or dissertation at any one time.
- Students must be enrolled in thesis or dissertation:
  - The semester of defense.
  - The semester of completion.
  - The semester of graduation.
- Two format checks are required, before the defense and after the defense.
  - The format check consists of checking the layout of the document, not the writing or citation style.
  - The writing and citation style such as MLA, APA, etc. is discipline-specific, so the student must consult with his/her committee for guidance.
- The student must obtain approval from the Graduate School to finalize the submission of the PDF thesis or dissertation file.
  - After final approval is obtained, the Completion/Defense form and the signature page is submitted to the Graduate School at [gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu](mailto:gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu)
  - The thesis or dissertation PDF file is submitted for online publication at the [ProQuest/UMI website](#).

- Once approved and submitted, theses and dissertations are regarded as publications and will be displayed and made available to the public.
- Credit in thesis or dissertation courses is granted after successful completion and approval of the thesis or dissertation.

Programs may have supplemental graduation requirements. It is the responsibility of the program and the student to ensure successful completion of all requirements and to notify the Graduate School in a timely manner if requirements are not met.

#### Non-thesis/Non-Dissertation Program Requirements

- The Graduate School does not require the submission of capstone or final projects, professional or internship reports, or other similar formal papers.
- Submission of a Completion/Defense form is required of students enrolled in a non-thesis or non-dissertation program.

#### Final Examination

- All degree candidates successfully complete an oral and/or written examination.
- The examining committee shall consist of at least three graduate faculty members.
- One member of the examining committee must be from outside the department or with College and Graduate School approval, from another university.
- All committee members must be current members of the Graduate Faculty.

#### Awarding of the Degree

- Degrees post on transcripts approximately thirty days after graduation.
- Diplomas mail approximately ninety days after graduation.
- Students cannot be cleared for graduation with grades of I, N, or P on the final transcript even if the course with the I, N, or P grade is not required for degree completion.
  - A degree candidate with an I - Incomplete grade on the final transcript is awarded the degree the semester the I - Incomplete grade is removed from the final transcript, which may be completely different from the intended semester of graduation as indicated on the graduation application.
  - Pending grade changes may affect the official awarding term of a degree candidate.
  - Pending graduation records are not carried across academic years and are deleted at the end of every semester.
  - The University reports awarded degrees to state and federal agencies at the end of the summer. After official degree reports are submitted, a degree cannot be retroactively awarded so issues with grades must be resolved in a timely manner.
- Requests for Completion Letters must be submitted through email at [gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu](mailto:gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu).

## Assistantships

1. Students must be admitted into a program of study at UTEP with a Plan of Study on file in the Graduate School. The Graduate School is located in the Mike Loya Academic Services Building, Room 223. They can be reached by calling 915-747-5491 or by emailing [gradschool@utep.edu](mailto:gradschool@utep.edu).
2. Students must maintain good academic standing (overall GPA of 3.0 or better) at UTEP.
3. Students must be enrolled in course work that meets degree requirements and be enrolled during the semester of the student appointment.
4. Students must be enrolled on a full-time basis. This typically includes a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours during the fall and spring semesters or three (3) semester credit hours during the thesis/dissertation phase.
5. Students must complete a criminal background check. All student employment positions are subject to criminal background check clearance.
6. Summer Employment:
  - Graduate students who will be returning in the fall do not need to be enrolled during the summer as long as they were enrolled at UTEP during the preceding spring and are enrolled for the upcoming fall. The department should utilize the appropriate graduate student title (i.e. Graduate Research Assistant).
  - Graduate students who graduated in the spring semester may be allowed to work during the summer to complete projects started during the 9-month academic year, with the approval of the Dean of Graduate School. The department should utilize the appropriate graduate student title (i.e. Graduate Research Assistant). Please note that international students who recently graduated may not work after their graduation date unless they have been granted permission to work by the U.S. agency corresponding to their visa type, and the permission document must be physically in-hand and provided to Human Resources prior to commencing employment.
  - Graduate students are eligible for employment at the university for up to 40 hours/week during the summer.

### ***Maximum weekly employment hour limits for graduate student employment (fall and spring semesters)***

- A 19-hour per week limit applies to the Master's Assistant job title. These positions are non-benefit eligible and paid on an hourly basis.
- A 20-hour per week limit applies to all other masters and doctoral job titles. These positions are eligible for employee insurance coverage, in-state tuition, and are paid on a salary basis.

On rare occasions, graduate student employees may work in excess of the hours noted above but only after prior approval has been secured from the Dean of the Graduate School. Except as noted above for the summer immediately following graduation, students are no longer eligible for graduate student employment after graduating.

International students may not work past the last day of their final semester (defined at UTEP as the day of their last final exam) or past the expiration date on their I-20 form, whichever is earlier. The exception applies to the continuation of summer employment as long as the student meets all the requirements noted above.

## Graduate Student Health Insurance

### **Eligibility**

1. Active enrollment as a Graduate Student and attending classes through at least the 12th day of the fall 2020 semester.
2. Appointed to and actively working a **minimum of 50%** (20 hours per work) for **at least 4.5 months** (135 calendar days) in a **Graduate (Master's/Doctoral) Job Title**.
3. Graduate student employees are required to enroll in a health insurance plan every semester as coverage is not automatic.

## Other Information

### [Doctoral Milestones](#)

All doctoral students are required to submit a Milestones agreement during the first year of enrollment. The Milestones agreement details academic expectations within a specified time limit. Doctoral programs are required to conduct annual reviews and each student must receive a written evaluation regarding degree progression. A program may recommend dismissal when a student fails to meet the required milestones. Programs are encouraged to implement an internal tracking system to ensure students are successfully meeting Milestones.

### [Doctoral Candidacy](#)

Requirements for candidacy usually consist of completion of all pertinent coursework, the passing of comprehensive or qualifying examinations, and the successful defense of the dissertation proposal. Policies leading to candidacy are program-specific. Each doctoral program has specific policies and requirements leading to candidacy. Students are encouraged to consult with their respective program director on policies guiding proposal format and presentation, timelines, and committee membership.

### [Application for Candidacy](#)

- The student submits the candidacy application to the Graduate School after successfully defending the dissertation proposal. Candidacy status is noted on the transcript.
- The student and advisor are encouraged to verify that the information on the Goldmine online degree evaluation is correct and up-to-date.

Once admitted to candidacy, the doctoral candidate continuously enrolls in dissertation:

- Initial enrollment is in 6398 or GEOL 6320 the first semester of dissertation only.
- Thereafter continuous enrollment in 6399 or GEOL 6321 until work on the dissertation is complete.
- The doctoral candidate cannot enroll in 6398 and 6399 or GEOL 6320 and GEOL 6321 simultaneously nor enroll in more than three hours of dissertation per semester.

### [Helpful Graduate School Forms](#)

Forms are located on the Graduate School website under Forms.



Contact information:

Mike Loya Academic Services Building, Room 223  
(915) 747-5491 (915)747-5788 Fax

<http://utep.edu/graduate> - Graduate School website  
[gradschooladmissions@utep.edu](mailto:gradschooladmissions@utep.edu) – for questions regarding admissions  
[gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu](mailto:gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu) – for questions regarding graduation

The information contained in this handbook is available for review and updated as required.  
Please direct any comments, suggestions, or concerns to [gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu](mailto:gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu)