



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

**ADVISOR HANDBOOK**



**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

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# Admission

## Graduate Certificates

A student may concurrently pursue a graduate degree and a graduate certificate.

- A student in a degree program is not always required to reapply for admission to a certificate program. In such cases, admission is based on the recommendation of the certificate program advisor.
- Some certificate programs do require a student to apply for admission. Please check with the certificate program advisor or the Graduate School.
- Upon completion of certificate requirements, a student submits the Application for Graduate Certificate to the Graduate School.
- Certificates are awarded at the end of each semester just like degrees.
- Once awarded, the certificate is noted on the transcript and a certificate signed by the Dean of the Graduate School is mailed to the student.
- Please note that not all graduate certificate programs are I-20 eligible. Please visit OIP website [Certificate Programs](#) for a list of I-20 eligible certificate programs.

## Post-Master's Certificates

A student pursuing a post-master's certificate must apply for admission to the post-master's certificate program.

- Admission to a post-master's certificate program requires a master's degree.
- Upon completion, a student submits an Application for Graduate Certificate to the Graduate School.
- Post-master's certificates are awarded at the end of each semester just like degrees.
- Once awarded, the certificate is noted on the transcript and a certificate signed by the Dean of the Graduate School is mailed to the student.

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

- Fast-track combined Bachelor's to Master's programs are available to 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 applicable towards the undergraduate and graduate degree.
- 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 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.

- Students who possess an undergraduate degree are not eligible to participate in a fast-track program.

#### 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 fast-track graduate program of their choice using the Fast-track 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.
- Refer to the Graduate Catalog or Graduate School for a list of graduate courses that are approved for fast-track.
- 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.

#### Post-Baccalaureate Non-Degree Admission

- Post-baccalaureate non-degree admission is an unclassified status indicating no major or program of study.
- Post-baccalaureate non-degree admission allows a student to complete prerequisite work or to demonstrate ability to do graduate-level coursework.
- Post-baccalaureate non-degree students must obtain departmental permission to enroll in graduate-level courses.
- If subsequently admitted into a degree program, the program advisor may recommend that up to nine (9) hours of graduate level coursework or undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit, completed prior to formal admission to the program, be used toward graduate degree requirements.

- Admission as a post-baccalaureate non-degree student does not constitute admission into a graduate degree program of the Graduate School.
- Post-baccalaureate non-degree admission is not available to international students who need a visa (F-1/M-1 and I-20) to attend school in the United States.

### Post-Baccalaureate Non-Degree Admission and Financial Aid Eligibility

- A post-baccalaureate (PB) non-degree student who is enrolled in undergraduate leveling courses may be *considered* financial aid eligible, but only for a period of one academic year.
- Enrollment in leveling courses is to gain admission to a graduate program.
- Student must take at least six credits per semester, and all the courses must be part of the leveling courses.
- A combination of leveling courses with other non-leveling (graduate) courses is not accepted. If a student enrolls in graduate courses, they are considered a graduate student and therefore not eligible for financial aid for their undergraduate leveling courses.
- A student should complete a [Statement of Academic Intent](#) and meet with the Office of Financial Aid as soon as they are notified that they require leveling courses in order to determine whether the courses will be eligible for financial aid. Contact Jennifer Miller [jrmiller3@utep.edu](mailto:jrmiller3@utep.edu)

### Reservation for Graduate Credit

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 for use towards the completion of a master's or doctoral degree.
- Enrollment in courses reserved for graduate credit is processed through the Graduate School.
- Reservation for graduate credit is not eligible for financial aid.
- This option is limited to one term – the final term.

### 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

- The Graduate Advisor or Program Director submits Leave of Absence requests to the Graduate School.
- The Graduate School updates the admission to reflect Leave of Absence (LA) and inactivates the registration record.
- The student is responsible for withdrawing or dropping all current enrollment.
- International students must also notify the Office of International Programs of the leave.
- The maximum leave granted is one year.
- A student 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 supplementary admission materials such as letters of recommendation, test scores, etc.

## International Students and Summer Admission

- Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)/Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have confirmed that international graduate students that begin a graduate program in the summer MUST maintain a full course of study.
- In other words, they must enroll in a minimum of 9 credits for the (entire) summer.
- International students automatically fall in a violation of status when they enroll in less than nine (9) hours during the summer.

# Enrollment

## Degree Plan

- The official degree plan consists of a series of courses used to satisfy degree requirements as stated in the Graduate Catalog and reflected in the Goldmine online degree evaluation.
- [Program-specific degree plans are available on-line.](#)
  - Students and advisors/directors are encouraged to review the on-line degree evaluation in Goldmine to assess degree progression.
  - Revisions to the online degree evaluation, such as course substitutions or changes from thesis to non-thesis option, require department or program approval. The Graduate School should be notified of all 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 GPA 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.
- Financial aid is disbursed only for courses that are part of the official degree plan as reflected in the Goldmine online degree evaluation. Refer to [Understanding your Degree Plan and Eligibility for Financial Aid.](#)

## Leveling or Prerequisite Courses

- As proposed by the Graduate Studies Committee, a student may be required to complete leveling or prerequisite courses to qualify for admission to a graduate program. These hours are in addition to those required of the degree.
- Leveling or prerequisite 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.

## Financial Aid Eligibility and Levelling or Prerequisite Courses

- A student in a Post-Baccalaureate (PB) non-degree seeking program may have their undergraduate leveling courses for a graduate program *considered* for financial aid eligibility, but only for a period of one academic year.
- Student must take at least six credits per semester, and all the courses must be part of the leveling courses.



- A combination of leveling courses with other non-leveling (graduate) courses is not accepted. If a student enrolls in any graduate courses they are considered a graduate student and therefore not eligible for financial aid for their undergraduate leveling courses.
- A student should complete a [Statement of Academic Intent](#) and meet with the Office of Financial Aid as soon as they are notified that they require leveling courses in order to determine whether the courses will be eligible for financial aid. Contact Jennifer Miller [jrmiller3@utep.edu](mailto:jrmiller3@utep.edu)

### 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 SACSCOC 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 identify 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 completed 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.

### Credit for a Master's Degree

- Students admitted with a master's degree or with master's coursework can request that a number of those credit hours be applied toward the doctoral degree.

- Students submit the request for master's credit to their respective program. The program notifies the Graduate School of their recommendation for transfer credit.
- Credit granted from a master's degree appears in the Goldmine online degree evaluation as Waive Transfer Credit (WCT).
- Refer to the Graduate Catalog for doctoral programs who grant credit for a master's degree and for the specific number of hours granted by each program.

### 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, 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, 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 and Graduate School approval.

## Enrollment Verification

Minimum hour requirement as listed below must be in masters 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.

Fall and Spring	Hours per Semester/Term
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 following 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.
- VA Education Benefits: Students receiving VA education benefits should consult the Military Student Success Center. VA education benefits do not cover courses that are not part of the official degree plan.

### Enrollment Verification for Thesis and Dissertation

- Reduced Course Load (RCL): A request for reduced course load for international students will only be considered during the final term/graduation term. For verification purposes, and if applicable, a student requesting a reduced course load must also apply for graduation.
- 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.

### Enrollment Verification for TAs, RAs and CO-OP

- Eligibility for Teaching and Research Assistants: Teaching and research assistants must be classified as full-time students as a criterion for employment, as well as for receipt of stipends, scholarships, and financial aid. This represents a minimum standard, and individual programs may require students to enroll in more hours.
- 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.

## Academic Standing

- Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 program grade point average (PGPA) to remain in good academic standing.
- All graduate coursework is part of the graduate academic record or transcript, and all respective grades are part of the graduate cumulative grade point average.
- 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.

## Grades

- Only grades of A, B, and C generate graduate credit although individual programs may have more stringent grade requirements.
- Repeat enrollment of a course for grade replacement or grade point average 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 conclusion 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, 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, W, CR shall be awarded.
    - Please note that a “P” grade does not stand for Pass. P grade stands for In-Progress. P In-Progress grades do not affect the cumulative grade point average or Earned Hours. P in Progress grades can only be assigned to thesis or dissertation courses. 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: CRIJ 5397, or PSYC 5395/6395 and PSYC 5396/6396, or all subjects 5398 and 5399, or GEOL 6320 and GEOL 6321, or all subjects 6398 and 6399.
- To obtain the six hours of thesis/dissertation credit, the student must enroll in CRIJ 5397, PSYC 5395/6395, GEOL 6320, or all subjects 5398 or 6398, when work on the thesis/dissertation initiates.  
Thereafter, the student must enroll in PSYC 5396/6396, GEOL 6321, or all subjects 5399 or 6399, or 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 enters a code in the graduating student's Banner record that prompts the Banner P Grade Update script to update thesis or dissertation P grades during end of term roll-to-history.
- The Banner P Grade Update script updates P grades only if the professor of record assigns the appropriate grade (standard or pass/fail) to the final enrollment of thesis or dissertation.
- When the professor of record fails to assign the correct grade, the Banner P Grade Update script bypasses the record and the P grades will remain on the transcript.
- The Records Office requires a grade change form to update each P grade before the student can be awarded the degree.
- The Banner P Grade Update script runs only once every semester – during end of term roll to history.

#### P [in Progress] Grade Reversal Script

- In cases where the instructor of record assigns a final grade in a thesis or dissertation course and the student has not applied for graduation and the student is not enrolled in the final semester of thesis or dissertation, the Banner P [in Progress] Grade Reversal Script changes the standard or Pass/Fail grade to a P in Progress grade.



## Academic Probation

- A graduate student in a master's or doctoral program who fails to maintain a 3.0 program grade point average is on academic 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 academic probation.
- A non-degree student on academic 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

- A student admitted into a graduate program whose program grade point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation.
- The student must return the program grade point average to a 3.0 after completion of the next nine (9) hours of study.
- Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.
  - Appeals for reinstatement are submitted by the respective graduate studies program committee, in conjunction with the student, to the Dean of the Graduate School.
  - Appeals must include a plan of action describing intervention to ensure student success. If readmitted, the student must raise the program grade point average to a 3.0 as specified in the appeal or face permanent dismissal from the Graduate School.
  - Only the Dean of the Graduate School can approve the reinstatement of a dismissed student.
  - Use this link to submit an appeal for reinstatement to the Dean of the Graduate School: <https://waiverrequest.questionpro.com/>
- Once dismissed, the Graduate School generates an official notification of dismissal.
  - The dismissed student's enrollment is administratively withdrawn, the student record inactivated, and the admission changed from admitted to dismissed.
- 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.
- A student may file a formal grade grievance through the [Dean of Student's Office](#).

## Graduation

- The student initiates the graduation process with the submission of the electronic [Application for Graduate Degree](#).
- Degree 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).
- Thesis or Dissertation students must be 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 I, CRIJ 5397, PSYC 5395/6395 or 5398, dissertation I, or GEOL 6320 or 6398.
  - Continual enrollment until completion is in thesis II, 5399 or PSYC 5396/6396 or dissertation II, 6398 or GEOL 6321.
- 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 should consult with his/her committee for guidance.
- **New Graduation Requirement for Thesis and Dissertation Students:**
  - Starting Fall 2022, all students must run a plagiarism check on the thesis or dissertation.
  - Students log into Blackboard to access "UTEP Graduate School SafeAssign Submission" to conduct the plagiarism check.
  - The results of the check must be shared with the committee and submitted to the Graduate School along with the defense form and signature page.

- 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](#), the [signature page](#) and the SafeAssign check results are 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. (Refer to P in Progress grade section.)

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 are mailed 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 on Census Day of the subsequent 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 should be submitted through email at [gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu](mailto:gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu).

## Other Information

### Doctoral Milestones

All doctoral students in Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs 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.

### Student Employment

- Graduate Student Employment
- Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan
- Student Employment Exception Request (for students who do not meet HR employment guidelines)



Contact information:

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

<https://www.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 update as required. Please direct any comments, suggestions, or concerns to [gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu](mailto:gradschoolgraduation@utep.edu)