Graduate Degree Program Policies and Procedures

Program of Studies/Degree Plan

Each student admitted to a graduate program will have a specific program of studies, outlined in the current graduate catalog that is agreed to in consultation with the appropriate committee, graduate advisor, or administrator for that degree program, except in those Schools with standard degree plans. Students enrolled in master's degree programs must have a completed "Program of Studies/Degree Plan" filed in and approved by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education prior to the student's registration for his or her 19th semester credit hour in the degree program. The form will be completed and revised, if necessary, each semester under the guidance of the student's graduate advisor.

Some academic units designate a set of courses or a concentration that focus on an in-depth study centering on a discipline or a program of studies. The term concentration is often used interchangeably with other similar terms, such as designation, emphasis, option, pathway, specialization, or track. The concentration allows students to pursue a program of interdisciplinary specialization in addition to the program of studies they are pursuing. Concentrations are available only to students enrolled in the program of studies under which the concentration is listed. Graduate students should check with their graduate advisor about course applicability and restrictions.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Program of Studies.

Milestones Agreement Form

For each student enrolled in a doctoral degree program, the academic advisor in consultation with the student, will prepare and submit a completed and updated "Milestones Agreement Form" annually to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education. The completed form will define academic milestones and timeline required to earn the doctoral degree and the progress being made by the student in meeting each requirement.

Change of Program

A student must be in good academic standing to change from his/her admitted graduate program to another one within the same graduate department. A student wishing to change programs within their same UT Dallas School must see their advisor and obtain necessary approvals. If the change of program is approved, the student will then be responsible for meeting all program requirements and course prerequisites of the catalog in effect at the time of the change. The student and advisor will prepare a new degree plan.
Transfer of Credit

A degree-seeking student may petition to have graduate coursework taken at another institution be counted towards satisfying the master's or doctoral degree requirements. To qualify for transfer of credit the student had to be enrolled in a graduate degree program at an institution of higher education and the grade earned in the course must be a B or better. Grades of B- are not transferrable and the course must not be a correspondence or extension course.

Petitions for transfer of credit must be prepared by the Graduate Program. An official transcript and an official explanation of the course numbering system at the school where the credit was earned should accompany the transfer request and be submitted to school’s advising unit for processing and approval by the program faculty and the School's Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Transfer of credit petitions are subject to the following limitations:

- No more than 25% of the total requirement of a master's degree may be transfer credits. Some degree programs have more restrictive transfer of credit requirements.
- Transfer of master's level credit into a doctoral program is limited to a maximum of 36 semester credit hours.
- No more than 15 semester credit hours taken as a non-degree student at UT Dallas can be subsequently applied to a degree program at UT Dallas.

Exceptions to these transfer policies may be granted only on petition to the Dean of Graduate Education.

All petitions for transfer of credit for coursework taken prior to enrolling at UT Dallas should be submitted to the student's Program Graduate Advisor by the student prior to filing a Program of Studies; however, acceptance of transfer of semester credit hours will not occur until after the student has completed 9 semester credit hours at UT Dallas with a grade point average of at least 3.0. All petitions must be processed and approved no later than the semester prior to anticipated graduation. Accordingly, requests to take courses at another institution during the semester a student plans to graduate cannot be approved because the grades may not be received in time to certify the student for graduation.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Transfer Credit

Evaluating and Awarding Credit for Non-Credit Coursework Not Originating from the Institution

The University of Texas at Dallas awards academic credit for non-credit coursework not originating from the institution only in instances in which a signed cooperative agreement exists between the entity offering the non-credit work and the institution. The cooperative agreement must be reviewed and approved by the program faculty, the school administration, Graduate Council, the Committee on Educational Policy, Academic Senate, the Provost's Office, the University Registrar, and the University Attorney. Terms of the agreement must specify the responsibilities of the outside entity, including their obligation to send instructor credentialing information, course syllabi with articulated outcomes and participant deliverables, and verification of participants' completion, to the institution. Academically qualified UT Dallas faculty provide annual oversight of the outside entity's content to ensure that non-credit work is comparable in both content
and rigor for the awarding of an equivalent UT Dallas graduate credit experience in the respective degree program. Such transfer credit is awarded for purposes of executive education only.

General Degree Requirements

The student will be deemed to have completed the coursework degree requirements when he or she completes the previously filed program of studies with acceptable grades.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Degree Requirements

Required Semester Credit Hours

The minimum semester credit hours required for the degree in a Program of Studies will be those shown in the catalog applicable to the student at the time of his or her admission or readmission to the program. In no case will a student be allowed to graduate with less than 30 approved graduate semester credit hours (including approved graduate transfer credit hours) for the master's degree.

Enrollment in doctoral study at UT Dallas for a minimum of three, consecutive long terms and for a minimum of 18 doctoral semester hours are required for graduation with a doctoral degree. Additional requirements for the doctoral degree may be specified by the faculty of each program as described in the individual degree program sections of this catalog.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Registration Requirements

Required Grade Point Average

In order to qualify for graduation, students must maintain a minimum 3.00 grade point average in their degree program's core courses. However, individual programs may have more stringent grade point requirements in selected courses, which must be satisfied for graduation.

The minimum acceptable university grade point average for graduation is 3.00 for all graduate courses taken at UT Dallas. Students changing graduate programs may petition the Graduate Dean if their cumulative grade point average is below a 3.00.

Registration Requirements: Examinations or Proposal Presentation

A student must be registered for at least three semester credit hours of graduate coursework during the semester in which any major degree examination, such as the Qualifying Examination or comprehensive exam is taken. A student must also be registered for at least three semester credit hours of graduate coursework during the semester in which the Dissertation Proposal is submitted for approval.

Time Limits

All requirements for a graduate degree, including transfer credit, must be completed within the specified time period. Students exceeding the specified time limit will not be eligible for their degrees and will be
dismissed from the graduate program. An approved leave of absence will not alter the time limits placed on graduate degrees.

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within one six-year period. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within one ten-year period. Students whose master's degrees are accepted for full credit toward a PhD must complete all requirements for the doctoral degree within one eight-year period. Work exceeding these limits, whether done at this University or elsewhere, will not count towards the degree.

Individual programs may set shorter time limits. Exceptions to time limit specifications must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Education.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Time Limits

Additional Master's Degrees

Students are encouraged to pursue additional master's degrees at The University of Texas at Dallas. To the extent that the requirements of some master's degrees overlap, some of the semester credit hours taken in pursuit of previously earned master's degrees at UT Dallas may be counted toward an additional master's degree. The only limitation is that more than one-half of the semester credit hours for any master's degree earned at UT Dallas must be satisfied by new coursework. A student is required to develop an approved plan of studies through the department or program offering the master's degree prior to enrolling in that degree. Similarly, a student wishing to earn two master's degrees concurrently must develop an approved plan of studies through both relevant departments and programs. All coursework for any degree must meet the academic standards of that degree.

Supervising Committee for Thesis and Dissertation

A supervising committee will be appointed to approve a research topic, provide advice, and periodically assess progress and accomplishments for students pursuing degree options requiring a written master's thesis, a doctoral dissertation, or a research practicum report. The composition of the Supervising Committee must follow the guidelines contained in the UT Dallas policy memorandum, "Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree" (UTDPP1052), and must be submitted by the appropriate committee or administrator of the degree program to the Dean of Graduate Education for approval. A student may obtain copies of this policy from their department or program office.

The Supervising Committee must meet at least once annually to assess the student's progress, and send a written report to the Dean of Graduate Education. This report should describe any problems which could delay the student's research beyond its anticipated completion date. A copy of this report must also be sent to the student.

The student may request a meeting of the Supervising Committee through a written request to the appropriate committee or administrator of the degree program.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Supervision
Master's Thesis

The Master's thesis should integrate relevant scholarship and demonstrate research competence, including the potential to add to knowledge in the student's field with respect to either its intellectual substance or professional practice.

MFA Thesis: The MFA thesis project must demonstrate aesthetic and technical competence that integrates coursework and demonstrates an intellectual synthesis of the work in context. The MFA thesis project, as the culminating project of a terminal degree, should be of such standard as to warrant individual exhibition, festival screening, or the equivalent.

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

The research potential and ability of each doctoral student to both understand and integrate previous coursework will be evaluated before a student can be formally admitted to doctoral candidacy. The format of this evaluation, hereafter referred to as a qualifying examination, varies amongst the degree programs and can be obtained from the student's Graduate Program office. A student failing the Qualifying Examination is terminated as a doctoral student in that Graduate Program unless a two-thirds majority of the examining committee votes that a second examination be permitted. All committee members should have all evidence of the student's academic record and Qualifying Examination performance prior to this vote. The second examination must be taken no sooner than two months after the student receives the written results of the first examination, and no later than one year. A student failing the second examination will not be allowed to pursue a doctoral degree in that program. Under no circumstances will a third examination be allowed. The student will have advanced to candidacy when she or he has:

- passed the Qualifying Examination;
- been assigned an approved Supervising Committee;
- satisfied any other program or school candidacy requirements.

Candidacy must be achieved before a student is eligible to enroll in dissertation or in the chemistry internship practicum courses.

Doctoral Dissertation

Each doctoral candidate must prepare and submit for examination a written dissertation meeting the guidelines specified in the "Guide for the Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations." A copy of the guide can be obtained from the office of the Dean of Graduate Education or visit graduate.utdallas.edu.

The dissertation manuscript for the Doctor of Philosophy degree must demonstrate an independent research competence on the part of the candidate that substantially adds to knowledge in the candidate's field with respect either to its intellectual substance or professional practice. The dissertation should be of such standard as to warrant publication in peer reviewed journals or scholarly books or monographs or equivalent.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Thesis and Dissertation Requirement
Final Oral Examination for Doctoral Candidates

The presentation and defense of the Dissertation will constitute the Final Oral Examination for the doctoral candidate. Specifics on the scheduling and conduct of the examination are contained in the "Guide for the Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations." The initial phase of the examination will be open to the public. Following the public presentation, the candidate's research will be examined by the members of the examining committee. This part of the examination is not open to the public. Depending upon the school's policy, other members of the faculty may also attend that part of the examination. This portion of the examination will be chaired by the representative of the Dean of Graduate Education. The examination will focus primarily on the candidate's research contribution, although aspects of the general field in which the candidate’s research was conducted may also be covered.

One of five possible results of the examination will be reported:

1. passed the oral examination and manuscript accepted,
2. passed the oral examination and manuscript accepted pending specified revisions,
3. second oral examination required, but manuscript accepted or accepted with specified revisions,
4. major revisions of the manuscript and a second oral examination required,
5. or oral examination failed, manuscript not accepted and the committee recommends dismissal from the program.

If a recommendation for re-examination is made, the second Final Oral Examination must be taken between six months and one year after the first examination. In no cases will a third Final Oral Examination be given. See also "Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree" (UTDPP1052), in the University's Handbook of Operating Procedures and/or the "Guide for the Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertation" or visit graduate.utdallas.edu.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Final Oral Examination

Required Copies of Dissertation and Thesis

A final, approved electronic version of the dissertation/thesis is required by Office of Graduate Studies. An electronic copy of the dissertation/thesis will be held by the library and available to the public.

An electronic copy must be submitted to UMI/ProQuest. UMI will publish and make the dissertation/thesis available to the public for purchase both on the web and in hard copy.

For more information on this policy please review UTDPP1052 - Policy on Procedures for Completing a Graduate Degree: Thesis and Dissertation Requirement

Intellectual Property Rights

In order to protect patent or other intellectual property rights, the Dean of Graduate Education may, upon request, delay for a period of up to one year the binding, distribution, and/or publication in microform of the thesis, dissertation, or research practicum report. This request must be supported by a written recommendation of the Supervising Professor.