THESIS AND DISSERTATION GUIDE: FOCUS ON PROCESSES
AND PROCEDURES

by

The Graduate College of Texas State University

Effective for the 2020-2021 Academic Year

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Eric Paulson, Associate Dean
Patti Giuffre, Assistant Dean
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2020
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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

Purpose of the Guide

This guide provides general information about forming a committee, advancing a topic, and the requirements and deadlines that thesis and dissertation students must adhere to. It is also important, however, for students to consult with their departments regarding departmental requirements outside The Graduate College’s requirements outlined in this guide. Students are responsible for adhering to both The Graduate College’s requirements and their departmental requirements in order to graduate from Texas State University.

Revisions to the Guide

Texas State University reserves the right to make changes to the requirements in this guide. If changes are considered necessary, they will become effective immediately and will apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. Current students must not reference old manuals as some requirements or processes may have changed.

Forms Referenced in the Guide

Forms referenced in the guide may be obtained from The Graduate College website: http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/forms.html.

Resources for Thesis/Dissertation Students

Texas State offers a variety of resources to support students in their thesis/dissertation work, including the Writing Center (www.writingcenter.txstate.edu) and the Student Learning Assistance Center, or SLAC (www.txstate.edu/slac). In this section, we focus on two resources provided by The Graduate College: Shop Talks and Thesis/Dissertation Research Support Fellowships.
**Graduate College Shop Talks**

Shop Talks are optional workshops, seminars, and presentations organized by The Graduate College that are specific to the graduate student experience. These experiences include strategizing efficient degree completion, finding research support, disseminating scholarship, and career planning. There are three categories of Shop Talks, degree success, research development, and career prep. There are no cost to any of the shop talks, but some may require students to register in advance. Students can also earn a Certificate of Completion by attending a certain number of Shop Talks in each category, writing a reflection, and submitting their attendance log and reflection on The Graduate College’s online portal. The Certificate can be displayed in students’ professional portfolios on items such as a resume, CV, cover letter, ePortfolio, and anywhere else professional development is listed. For information about Shop Talks, navigate to www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/events/shoptalks.html.

**Research Support Fellowship**

The Graduate College has a competitive Research Support Fellowship program for students in Ph.D./Ed.D. programs and thesis master’s programs. Funds provided by the fellowship are intended to cover a portion of the expenses directly related to thesis research. Recipients will submit a final report to Associate Dean Paulson that details their progress and the use of their funds. The fellowships are offered twice per year. For information about the Thesis Research Support Fellowship, navigate to www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/funding/scholarships/thesis-research.html. For information about the Doctoral Research Support Fellowship, navigate to www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/funding/scholarships/doctoral-research.html.
Additional Guides

In addition to this document, two other guides are available to assist students in the later stages of preparing their theses or dissertations. These guides are also subject to revision, however, so students must not reference old manuals as some requirements or processes may have changed. These guides can be accessed from The Graduate College website: https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/resources.html

Thesis/Dissertation Guide: Focus on Formatting

This document will inform students of the various formatting requirements for their thesis or dissertation. There are also examples of common mistakes that students should be mindful of. This document is essential, as theses or dissertations with formatting errors will not be approved.

It is also encouraged that students reference the formatting guide when submitting their proposal (see Chapter IV). Doing so will help ensure students are familiar with formatting requirements and will help prepare them for when they need to format their committee approved thesis or dissertation.

Thesis/Dissertation Guide: Focus on Vireo Submission

The vireo guide will instruct students on how to submit their final thesis or dissertation in Vireo. Additionally, this guide also provides information about the corrections process including how to access feedback documents and submit revised versions of theses and dissertations.
II. ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE

Committee Chair

The first steps in writing a thesis/dissertation are to find a viable research topic and a committee chair. As students are taking courses in their program, they should look for areas of interest and problems that need to be solved. The thesis/dissertation topic must also have a clear relationship to literature in the major field of study. Students should discuss potential research topics with graduate faculty members in the department/graduate program and identify a faculty member willing to serve as their committee chair. Students should also see their programs for any additional requirements needed to form a committee.

Thesis students obtain the consent of a graduate faculty member in the major department to serve as their thesis committee chair. Co-chairs are also allowable but are not required. The thesis committee chair(s) must hold at least Regular Graduate Faculty status within their master’s program. Similar to thesis students, Ph.D./Ed.D. students obtain the consent of a graduate faculty member in their doctoral program to serve as the dissertation committee chair. Co-chairs are more common in Ph.D./Ed/D. programs, but they are not required. The dissertation committee chair(s) must hold Core Doctoral Graduate Faculty status for their doctoral programs. The Dissertation Committee Chair Assignment Form must be completed and signed by the student, the proposed dissertation committee chair, doctoral program director and the department chair. The final form will then be submitted to The Graduate College to be approved by the Dean or Associate Dean.
Selection of Other Committee Members

The student, in consultation with the thesis/dissertation committee chair, will establish a thesis/dissertation committee. All committee members must be approved by The Graduate College as graduate faculty.

Thesis Committee Composition

In addition to a committee chair, thesis students will obtain the consent of a minimum of two additional members to serve as committee members. If students have a minor, one of the two other committee members must be from the students’ minor department. Otherwise, the student’s thesis committee chair can help guide the student in forming the committee with members who are chosen from graduate faculty in the major department, from another Texas State department, or external to the university (there is usually no more than one external member on each committee). At a minimum, the thesis committee will have three members: a committee chair and two other committee members. However, students can choose to have a thesis committee with more than three members. The thesis committee is officially formed and approved by the department chair and the Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College when the Thesis Proposal Form is submitted to The Graduate College (see Chapter IV). Refer to Table 1 for requirements and procedures for committee members outside the student’s major department or external to the university.
Table 1. Thesis Committee Members Outside of Student’s Major Department or External to Texas State University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Committee Members who are Texas State faculty outside the student’s major department at Texas State:</th>
<th>- Must be approved and current Texas State graduate faculty.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis Committee Members who are external to the university and are nominated as Adjunct Graduate faculty:</td>
<td>- Must hold professional credentials equivalent to those associated with graduate faculty status in the student’s major department.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The department chair should submit the Graduate Faculty Nomination Form (specified in AAPPSS 04.01.30 <a href="http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/faculty-staff/nomination.html">http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/faculty-staff/nomination.html</a>) to appoint an outside committee member who is not affiliated with Texas State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The form must be accompanied by a written statement, wherein the member states that they are willing to serve on the student’s committee and that they understand that the university will not be responsible for expenses associated with committee service. (The Graduate College will accept verification from the department chair.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The form, curriculum vitae and written statement are submitted to the Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College for approval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation Committee Composition

Members of the dissertation committee must be core doctoral, associate doctoral, or adjunct doctoral graduate faculty. The dissertation committee chair serves as the chair of the dissertation committee. The breakdown for a dissertation committee for the different doctoral programs is as follows:

- **Adult, Professional, and Community Education (APCE):** The dissertation committee includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional committee members. At least two of these members must be from the Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education, and School Psychology.
• **Applied Anthropology**: The dissertation committee includes the dissertation committee chair, two other doctoral faculty members from the anthropology department, and one doctoral faculty from another department or from another university.

• **Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology**: The dissertation committee includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of four additional members. Two of the members must be from the Department of Biology, one must be external to the university, and the last member must be external to the department or university.

• **Computer Science**: The dissertation committee includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional members; one of whom must be outside of the Computer Science Department or the university.

• **Criminal Justice**: The dissertation committee includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional members; one of whom must be from outside the school of Criminal Justice or university.

• **Developmental Education (Ph.D. and Ed.D.)**: The dissertation committee includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional committee members; one of whom must be external to the program.

• **Geographic Education**: The dissertation committee for a student in Geographic Education includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional committee members. Two of the members must be from the Department of Geography and one must be from outside the department.

• **Geographic Information Science**: The dissertation committee for a student in
Geographic Information Science includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional committee members. Two of the members must be from the Department of Geography and one must be from outside the department.

- **Geography:** The dissertation committee for a student in Geography includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional committee members. Two of the members must be from the Department of Geography and one must be from outside the department.

- **Materials Science, Engineering, and Commercialization (MSEC):** The dissertation committee for a student in MSEC includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of four additional members. Three of the members must be from the MSEC doctoral faculty and one must be external to the program of university.

- **Mathematics Education:** The dissertation committee for a student in Mathematics Education includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional members; one of whom must be an external member.

- **School Improvement:** The dissertation committee for a student in School Improvement includes the dissertation committee chair and a minimum of three additional committee members. Two of the members must be from the Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education, and School Psychology.

Refer to Table 2 for requirements and procedures for committee members outside the student’s major department or external to the university.
Table 2. Dissertation Committee Members Outside of Student’s Major Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissertation Committee Members from Texas State departments and schools that do not offer Ph.D./Ed.D. degrees:</th>
<th>- Must be members of the Texas State graduate faculty and must hold professional credentials equivalent to those associated with core or associate doctoral faculty status in the student’s major department.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Dissertation Committee Members who are external to the university and are nominated as Adjunct Doctoral Graduate faculty: | - Must hold professional credentials equivalent to those associated with core or associate doctoral graduate faculty status in the student’s major department.  
- The department chair should submit the Graduate Faculty Nomination Form (specified in AAPPS 04.01.30 [http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/faculty-staff/nomination.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/faculty-staff/nomination.html)) to appoint an outside committee member who is not affiliated with Texas State. |
| Dissertation Committee Members who are external to the university and are nominated as Adjunct Doctoral Graduate faculty: | - This form must be accompanied by a written statement, wherein the member states that they are willing to serve on the student’s committee and that they understand that the university will not be responsible for expenses associated with committee service. (The Graduate College will accept verification from the Department chair.)  
- The form, curriculum vitae and written statement are submitted along with the Dissertation Committee Request Form to the Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College for approval. |

Confirming Dissertation Committee Members

After confirming the committee chair with the [Dissertation Committee Chair Assignment Form](#), doctoral students will need to establish the remaining committee members. To form the dissertation committee, the [Dissertation Committee Request Form](#) must be completed and signed by the student, committee members, committee chair, doctoral program director, and the department chair. The form must then be submitted to The Graduate College for approval by the Dean or Associate Dean.
Changes in Committee Members

If changes in the membership of the thesis committee are necessary, students will need to fill out a Chair/Committee Member Change Request Form and submit it to The Graduate College for approval by the Dean or Associate Dean.

Thesis Students

Thesis students will use the Thesis Chair/Committee Member Change Request Form available on The Graduate College website.

A committee member that retires or resigns from Texas State may remain on the committee with the approval of the student, committee chair, and the department chair. A written request accompanied by a written statement (can be an emailed request) must be submitted to the Graduate College for approval by the Dean or Associate Dean. Within this statement, the member must acknowledge that they are willing to continue serving on the student’s committee and that they understand the university will not assume responsibility for expenses associated with committee service.

Dissertation Students

Dissertation students will use the Dissertation Chair/Committee Member Change Request Form available on The Graduate College website. Committee changes must be made at least sixty days prior to the dissertation defense.

A committee member that retires or resigns from Texas State may remain on the committee with the approval of the student, committee chair, doctoral program director, and the department chair. A written request accompanied by a written statement (can be an emailed request) must be submitted to the Graduate College for approval by the Dean or Associate Dean. Within this statement, the member must acknowledge that they are
willing to continue serving on the student’s committee and that they understand the university will not assume responsibility for expenses associated with committee service.

Availability of Committee Members

Thesis and dissertation students will rely on the advice and knowledge of each committee member. While committee members are committed to working on the thesis/dissertation, they also have other commitments. The student should verify that the committee members will be available at required times.
III. RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

All graduate students should be aware of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). RCR covers the following topics: research misconduct, human subjects and IRB, nonhuman animal subjects and IACUC, conflicts of interest, data management practices, mentor/trainee relationships, collaborative research, authorship and publication practices, and peer review. For information about RCR at Texas State, navigate to the following web page: http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/RCR.html

Plagiarism

Credit must be given for direct quotations, for paraphrases, for information, and for ideas. The exact methods of documenting sources will vary from one style guide to another, but the underlying principle remains the same. It is imperative that credit is given for material that is not students’ own. Students at the graduate level who plagiarize will face severe penalties, per the Texas State Honor Code, UPPS 07.10.01 (www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html).

Using Copyrighted Materials

If students plan to include work that has been created by others in their theses/dissertations, such as text, charts, drawings, photographs, computer programs, music, etc., they have the responsibility to determine whether the intended use qualifies for the Fair Use provision of U.S. copyright law.

Fair Use stipulates that certain uses of copyrighted material are not an infringement. Limited use of copyrighted material for the purpose of criticism, comment, news reporting, and teaching are commonly considered to be fair use. Guidance for making a fair use evaluation may be found in the free resource, Copyright and Your
Dissertation or Thesis: Ownership, Fair Use, and Your Rights and Responsibilities

(online at media2.proquest.com/documents/copyright_dissthesis_ownerhip.pdf). If the intended use is Fair Use, students do not need permission to use the items. If the intended use of copyrighted material does not meet the Fair Use standard, students must secure written permission from the copyright holder prior to using any copyrighted materials. A sample permission letter is available at

media2.proquest.com/documents/UMI_CopyrightGuide.pdf. Written permission(s) should be included in the thesis/dissertation as an Appendix.

An acknowledgement of permission should be included for each item used (e.g. “graph X used with permission of…”). Whether or not permission is needed, proper attribution for each source must be given in the text and references section of the thesis/dissertation.

The Alkek Library has prepared a Copyright Guide, which includes general legal information, links to policies, handouts from the workshops and much more. The guide may be accessed at libguides.txstate.edu/copyright.

Laws and University Regulations

Students are responsible for ensuring that proposed research procedures do not violate laws or university regulations. Students must be aware of and comply with any federal, state, local, or university regulations pertaining to thesis/dissertation related research.

If the thesis/dissertation requires approvals, permits or permission from the university or governmental or private agencies, any necessary approvals, permits and documentation must be obtained before the research project can begin. Students should
be aware that all thesis and dissertation material must be accessible to the general public. They are responsible for ensuring that no exclusive rights to publication are given to the third parties, and no classified information is included in the work. For special cases, students may contact The Graduate College at gcdegspel@txstate.edu.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

If the thesis/dissertation involves the use of vertebrate animals, students and thesis/dissertation committee chairs must understand university regulations governed by the Texas State Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Refer to the Texas State IACUC website at www.txstate.edu/research/orc/animals-in-research.html for additional information and to ascertain whether Texas State IACUC approval is required for the proposed research project. If IACUC approval is required, the IACUC approval code must be included on the Thesis Proposal Form or the Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form submitted to The Graduate College. If the project is using previously collected and/or secondary vertebrate animal data, the student should also contact the Texas State IACUC administrator for guidance on what kind of source documentation (e.g., material transfer agreements, archived samples) is needed.

Institutional Review Board

If the thesis/dissertation involves human subjects, students and thesis/dissertation committee chairs must understand university regulations governed by the Texas State Institutional Review Board (IRB). An application must be submitted and be approved by the Texas State IRB before a research project involving the use of human subjects can begin. Refer to the IRB website at www.txstate.edu/research/orc/IRB-Resources.html for additional information. If the thesis/dissertation requires IRB review, students must attach
a copy of the approval letter sent by the IRB to the student to the Thesis Proposal Form or Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form submitted to The Graduate College. IRB approval letters are found in the applicant’s IRB account.

Shop Talks on the IRB for graduate students are offered periodically. These are announced via The Graduate College website and The Graduate College Bulletin.

**Sponsored or Shared Research Initiatives**

Graduate students should discuss authorship and publication practices with their thesis/dissertation committee chair prior to the onset of the research project. A clear understanding of authorship for both research presentations and publications should exist. If the work is based on data generated through research that is sponsored by or shared with other people, such as the thesis/dissertation committee chair, it is strongly encouraged that students discuss copyright and embargo options with their chair(s), committee and research team prior to submission. Embargos can be given to documents in the electronic submission system to withhold those documents from release to Alkek Library’s Digital Collections. The electronic system offers several different lengths of embargo (e.g., one year, two year). Preparation of publications based on thesis/dissertation data may impact the release date of the students’ thesis/dissertation, so it is important to discuss copyright and embargo options prior to submission.

Unless special permission is obtained from the Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College, embargos may not last more than two years. The exception to this requirement is for theses submitted by students in the Creative Writing program. Creative Writing theses will always have a permanent embargo.
IV. THESIS/DISSertation Proposal

Proposal Preparation

With guidance from thesis/dissertation committees, students will produce a proposal. This proposal states the problem the students intends to address and the means and resources by which the students intends to solve it. In preparing the proposal, the students should use a style structure specific to their disciplines and follow any specific guidelines in their major departments and/or graduate programs.

Required Permits and Approvals

Students are responsible for making sure that proposed research procedures do not violate laws or university regulations. Any necessary permits and approvals (IRB, IACUC, etc.) must be secured prior to beginning the proposed research project.

Submission of the Thesis Proposal

One copy of the Thesis Proposal Form and attached thesis proposal is submitted to The Graduate College, along with any necessary IACUC or IRB approval information. The completed Thesis Proposal Form and attached proposal are submitted to The Graduate College for review by the Dean or Associate Dean.

The Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College reviews the thesis proposal for approval and, if approved, The Graduate College retains the approved Thesis Proposal Form and attached paperwork. Students and committee chairs will be notified via email if the thesis proposal is approved. Students’ degree audits are also updated to reflect The Graduate College’s receipt and approval of the thesis proposal.
Submission of the Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense

After the dissertation proposal is defended by the student to the committee, one copy of the Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form and attached dissertation proposal is submitted to The Graduate College, along with any necessary IACUC or IRB approval information. The completed form and attached proposal are submitted to The Graduate College for review by the Dean or Associate Dean.

The Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College reviews the dissertation proposal and proposal defense for approval and, if approved, The Graduate College retains the approved form and attached proposal paperwork. Students and doctoral program directors will be notified via email once the Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form is approved. Students’ degree audits are also updated to reflect The Graduate College’s receipt and approval of the Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form.

Signature Policy for Paperwork

Electronic signatures and original (wet) signatures are preferred. However, there may be situations in which obtaining signatures is inefficient or has the potential to delay the student's progress. In those situations, the committee members may email the department, from their institutional email account, delegating a committee or department representative to sign on their behalf. A copy of this email must then be provided to the Graduate College along with the relevant form. If this process results in more than one document with signatures, all documents need to be submitted to The Graduate College together. When submitting multiple documents for the same form, however, each document must have the student’s information filled out.
Changes in the Thesis/Dissertation Topic

The research design may need to be modified over the course of the project. Revisions to the proposal are not necessary under such circumstances. However, if the committee chair judges that major changes in the research design are necessary, or if a new topic is selected, the student must submit a new proposal.

For a dissertation topic change which results in submission of a new Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form (see Chapter V for dissertation proposal defense procedures), the student must repeat the procedure to defend the new dissertation proposal.
V. Ph.D./Ed.D. ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY PROCEDURE

Comprehensive Examination

Ph.D./Ed.D. students are required to complete a comprehensive examination to be eligible for advancement to candidacy. The nature and timing of examinations vary among the Ph.D./Ed.D. programs. The examination procedure may be obtained from the doctoral program director.

Following the comprehensive examination, members of the examination committee sign the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Report Form to acknowledge the results of the exam. The form is routed through the doctoral program director and department chair to The Graduate College.

Defense of the Dissertation Proposal

Each Ph.D./Ed.D. program prepares its own procedures for the dissertation proposal defense. The specific procedures may be obtained from the doctoral program director.

The student must defend the dissertation proposal in a public presentation. Each department prepares its own procedures for the defense, and specific procedures may be obtained from the doctoral program director.

Following the dissertation proposal defense, members of the dissertation committee sign the Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form to acknowledge the results of the defense. The form is routed through the doctoral program director and department chair to The Graduate College for review by the Dean or Associate Dean.
Advancement to Candidacy

Once all Ph.D./Ed.D. program requirements for advancement to candidacy have been met, the Application for Advancement to Candidacy Form is completed. The form is routed through the doctoral program director and department chair to The Graduate College for review by The Dean or Associate Dean.

Time limits for advancement to candidacy vary among the Ph.D./Ed.D. programs. Information on time limits is available in the Texas State Graduate Catalog. Students will receive correspondence from The Graduate College confirming their advancement to candidacy. The correspondence will include the time limit by which to complete dissertation requirements.
VI. THESIS AND DISSERTATION COURSES

Required Thesis/Dissertation Credit

Students are required to take thesis or dissertation courses as part of their degree requirements. Each course can be worth between 1-9 credits, however, the amount of coursework credit received should reflect the amount of work being performed by the student. Students should discuss their intentions with their department or committee chair to determine which course is most suitable. For students receiving financial aid, thesis and dissertation courses will always be considered aid-eligible. Students can email any coursework concerns to The Graduate College at gcdegspcl@txstate.edu.

Thesis Coursework

Masters students pursuing a thesis must complete six credit hours of thesis coursework to satisfy master’s degree program requirements. The Thesis Proposal Form and attached proposal are normally submitted to The Graduate College no later than the end of enrollment in Thesis 5399A, the student’s first thesis course. Students should complete Thesis 5399A and then enroll in a Thesis B course until the thesis is approved by The Graduate College. While working on the thesis, students must be enrolled each long semester (and summer if receiving thesis supervision and/or using university resources) for at least one thesis hour until the thesis has been completed, defended, submitted, and approved in accordance with the procedures described in this guide. In the rare case when a student has not previously enrolled in thesis and plans to complete the thesis in one term, the student must obtain permission of the Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College to enroll in both Thesis A and Thesis B simultaneously. Only six hours can be used as credit towards a master’s degree. Additional hours taken cannot be
used for degree credit of any kind.

**Dissertation Coursework**

Each doctoral degree requires a specific number of dissertation hours for completion. Those are listed as follows:

- **Adult Professional and Community Education (APCE):** 12 dissertation credit hours required
- **Applied Anthropology:** 18 dissertation credit hours required
- **Aquatic Resources & Integrative Biology:** 15 dissertation credit hours required
- **Computer Science:** 24 dissertation credit hours required
- **Criminal Justice:** 12 dissertation credit hours required
- **Developmental Education (Ph.D. and Ed.D.):** 12 dissertation credit hours required
- **Geographic Education:** 15 dissertation credit hours required
- **Geographic Information Science:** 15 dissertation credit hours required
- **Geography:** 15 dissertation credit hours required
- **Materials Science, Engineering, and Commercialization (MSEC):** 18 dissertation credit hours required
- **Mathematics Education:** 18 dissertation credit hours required
- **School Improvement:** 12 dissertation credit hours required

Ph.D./Ed.D. students may begin registering for dissertation courses during the semester following completion of all required coursework specified by the Ph.D./Ed.D. program. After advancement to candidacy, students must be continuously enrolled each long
semester (and summer if receiving dissertation supervision and/or using university resources) for at least one dissertation hour until the dissertation has been completed, defended, submitted, and approved in accordance with the procedures described in this guide. Doctoral program directors will assist students in determining the correct dissertation course(s) for registration.

**Registering for Thesis/Dissertation during the Final Semester**

**Thesis Coursework**

All students must be enrolled in a program-approved course during the semester in which their degree is conferred. For thesis students, that course is almost always Thesis B, though there can be exceptions if the program requires an additional course after the minimum number of thesis course credits have been fulfilled and after the thesis is completed, deposited, and approved by The Graduate College (as can happen with programs that have an internship as their final program requirement). Regardless, in all cases, students must be enrolled in a course during the semester in which the degree is conferred. If students are not enrolled in a thesis course in their last anticipated semester, they will be unable to submit their thesis and their graduation will be postponed as a result. If students anticipate a summer graduation, they must enroll in a summer course.

**Dissertation Coursework**

Doctoral students must be registered for dissertation credit during the term that the dissertation is completed and the degree is conferred. The dissertation coursework enrollment requirement stated earlier in this chapter must be met or graduation will be postponed. If doctoral students anticipate a summer graduation, they must enroll in a Summer 1 dissertation course.
Thesis and Dissertation Grades

The only grades assigned for thesis/dissertation courses are PR (progress), CR (credit), W (withdrew), and F (failing). I (incomplete) grades cannot be assigned to thesis/dissertation courses. If acceptable progress is not being made in a thesis/dissertation course, the instructor may issue a grade of F. If the student is making acceptable progress, a grade of PR is assigned until the thesis/dissertation is completed. The grade of CR will be awarded only after the thesis/dissertation has been both approved by The Graduate College and released to Alkek Library.
VII. DEADLINES AND CANDIDACY INFORMATION

Applying for Graduation

Deadlines to apply for graduation are posted online at

www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html. Students can apply to graduate through the commencement website or by doing the following:

- go to the Texas State homepage, www.txstate.edu,
- select Catsweb from the Online Services Menu,
- select “Students” from the Catsweb menu,
- click on “Apply to Graduate” under the “Student Records” section of the next landing page.

**Students will not be able to graduate if they miss the deadline to apply for graduation.**

While exceptions can be made, any requests for late applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Dean of the Graduate College. The request must come from the student’s program advisor who will email The Graduate College on behalf of the student. Please note, the request may still be denied regardless of if all requirements have been met.

Do not miss the deadline to apply.

Students are encouraged to apply to graduate if they anticipate completing degree requirements in any given semester. There is no penalty to students for not completing a degree after applying to graduate; students can simply reapply the next semester. If students know they are not going to finish degree requirements in a semester in which they applied to graduate, they should contact The Graduate College by emailing gcdegspcl@txstate.edu and inform the Degree Audit Specialists accordingly.
Commencement Information

Each semester The Graduate College updates the Commencement Information website at www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/commencement.html. This website provides students with commencement information, as well as other important reminders for potential graduation candidates.

Clearing Candidates for Graduation

The Dean of The Graduate College certifies candidates for graduation after the completion of all degree requirements and with the approval of the department(s) concerned. The Graduate College will determine if all requirements for the degree have been met. If a student has any questions about their degree progression, they will need to contact their graduate advisor.

Thesis/Dissertation Deadlines

Thesis/dissertation deadline dates are posted on The Graduate College website at www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation.html. Students must adhere to these deadlines. Extensions to the thesis/dissertation submission date can be granted if there are extenuating circumstances. Requests will be submitted to Dr. Eric Paulson, the Associate Dean of The Graduate College. Any request for an extension must include a rationale and submitted, via email, by the committee chair, graduate advisor, or doctoral program director. In order for an extension to be considered, the petition must arrive prior to the deadline date for thesis/dissertation submission to The Graduate College.

The Comprehensive Examination for Master’s Students

All candidates for master’s degrees must pass a comprehensive examination. In many thesis graduate programs, the thesis defense is the comprehensive exam, and the
thesis committee is also the examining committee. However, students should check with their departments regarding specific comprehensive examination information, details, and expectations.

The thesis/examining committee members sign the Master’s Comprehensive Examination Report Form to acknowledge the outcome. The report is routed through the department chair to The Graduate College. The results of the comprehensive examination must reach The Graduate College ten business days before commencement. Deadlines are found at www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html.

Dissertation Defense

All candidates for doctoral degrees must successfully defend the dissertation. When each committee member is satisfied that the dissertation is ready for defense, they communicate this to the dissertation committee chair in writing (email is acceptable). After all committee members have communicated to the committee chair that the dissertation is ready to be defended, the committee chair proceeds with scheduling the dissertation defense. The defense must be scheduled and notice posted at least two weeks in advance of the defense. Notice of the time and place of the defense must be posted within the major department and with The Graduate College. The students’ department staff will complete the Graduate College dissertation defense announcement form on behalf of their students. The defense is open to the public and is presided over by the committee chair. All members of the dissertation committee are expected to be present at a dissertation defense. Committee members may attend via Zoom, Skype, other web-based video program, or conference call at the discretion of the committee chair.

Following the dissertation defense, members of the dissertation committee sign
the Dissertation Defense Report Form, which indicates the results of the defense. The form is routed through the doctoral program director and department chair to The Graduate College for processing.

**Time Limit for Completing the Dissertation**

The Graduate College requires successful completion of the doctoral degree to occur within ten years of the student’s entry into a Ph.D./Ed.D. program. After advancement to candidacy, each doctoral program requires a student to complete the dissertation within a specific amount of time. The breakdown is as follows:

- **Adult, Professional and Community Education (APCE):** Five (5) years
- **Applied Anthropology:** Five (5) years
- **Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology:** Three (3) years
- **Computer Science:** Five (5) years
- **Criminal Justice:** Six (6) terms
- **Developmental Education (Ph.D. and Ed.D.):** Five (5) years
- **Geographic Education:** Three (3) years
- **Geographic Information Science:** Three (3) years
- **Geography:** Three (3) years
- **Materials Science, Engineering, and Commercialization (MSEC):** Two (2) years
- **Mathematics Education:** Three (3) years
- **School Improvement:** Five (5) years

Other departmental time limits may apply. Exceptions to these time limits require the approval of the doctoral program director and the Dean or Associate Dean of The
Graduate College. A written request for a time extension to complete degree program requirements is submitted by the committee chair to the doctoral program director and then to the Dean or Associate Dean of The Graduate College for consideration.

99 Hour Rule

In accordance with Texas Education Code, Section 54.066, once a doctoral student accumulates 100 or more doctoral semester credit hours, the doctoral student will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to nonresident tuition for all doctoral semester credit hours exceeding 99. Courses taken by a doctoral student at the master’s or undergraduate level will not count towards the 99 hours. If the student is admitted to a doctoral program from the bachelor’s degree, the count begins after 30 hours of graduate coursework. This tuition structure applies to Texas residents as well as out-of-state residents and international students who were eligible to be charged tuition at the resident rate as a result of scholarship and fellowship awards or employment as graduate assistants. Students should contact the doctoral program director regarding appeals.

Final Submission

Once the final, committee approved, version of a thesis or dissertation is ready for submission, students will submit their document in Vireo. More information about submitting in Vireo can be found on the Graduate College website along with information about formatting and uploading any necessary corrections. Students should ensure that all forms have been submitted to The Graduate College and can reference their degree audits to see what forms have been received and processed.
VIII. OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements for Thesis Students

- The approved Thesis Proposal Form must be on file with The Graduate College.
- The student applies for graduation in the final semester by the deadline on The Graduate College website.
- All required coursework must be completed.
- Six hours of thesis coursework (Thesis A and Thesis B) must be completed.
- The student must be enrolled in Thesis B during the semester of graduation.
- The final thesis draft must reach the committee by the deadline posted or deadline agreed upon by the committee.
- After a successful thesis defense, the Thesis Submission Approval Form must be signed by the student and all committee members and submitted to The Graduate College prior to electronic submission of the thesis.
- The final committee-approved thesis must be submitted by the deadline posted on The Graduate College website.
- Revisions required by The Graduate College must be made and the final thesis approved by the deadline posted on The Graduate College website.
- The Master’s Comprehensive Examination Report Form, indicating pass, must be signed by the committee members, graduate advisor, and the department chair of the major department. It must reach The Graduate College by the deadline on The Graduate College website.
- Please refer to www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html for a full list of each semester’s deadlines for the academic year.
General Requirements for Doctoral Students

• A committee chair must be approved using the Dissertation Committee Chair Assignment Form.

• Other committee members must be approved using the Dissertation Committee Request Form.

• The comprehensive examination must be passed.

• The Dissertation Comprehensive Examination Report Form, with all required signatures, must be submitted to The Graduate College.

• The dissertation proposal must be defended.

• The Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense Form, indicating passage, must be signed by the committee members and routed through the doctoral program director and department chair to The Graduate College for review by the Dean or Associate Dean.

• Once all Ph.D./Ed.D. program requirements for advancement to candidacy have been met, the Application for Advancement to Candidacy Form is completed and routed through the doctoral program director and department chair to The Graduate College for review by the Dean or Associate Dean.

• The student applies for graduation in the final semester by the deadline on The Graduate College website.

• All required coursework must be completed, including the minimum number of dissertation hours required by the program.

• The student must be enrolled in dissertation during the semester of anticipated graduation.
• The dissertation draft must reach the dissertation committee by the posted
deadline or deadline agreed upon by the committee.

• The dissertation defense must be scheduled and notice posted at least two weeks
in advance of the defense. The dissertation defense must be successfully passed.

• The Dissertation Defense Report Form, indicating pass, must be signed by the
dissertation committee, doctoral program director, and by the department chair of
the major department. It must reach The Graduate College by the deadline posted
on The Graduate College website.

• The Dissertation Submission Approval Form must be signed by the student and
all committee members and submitted to The Graduate College prior to electronic
submission of the dissertation, but after the final dissertation defense.

• The final dissertation, approved by the committee, must be submitted by the
deadline posted on The Graduate College website.

• Revisions required by The Graduate College must be made and the final
dissertation approved by the deadline posted on The Graduate College website.

• The Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) must be completed online by 5 p.m. by
the deadline posted on The Graduate College website.

• Please refer to www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html for a full list
of each semester’s deadlines for the academic year.