



School of Graduate Studies and Research

OVERVIEW OF THE GRADUATE CAREER

The careers of graduate students are filled with deadlines and due dates. Graduate students are responsible for knowing policies, procedures, processes, and deadlines of the Graduate School. The basic source of information is the *Graduate Catalog*. Other sources of information include newsletters and supplemental manuals in colleges/schools and departments. **Students should consult their academic advisors each semester.** The following is intended to provide an overview of the entire graduate student career and provide basic information. Reference is made below to *The Graduate School Calendar*. This calendar is found in the front of the *Graduate Catalog*, online at the *Graduate School webpage*, and is also distributed each year as a separate publication, available in the Graduate School Office. Consult the *Graduate Catalog* for details on any of the items below. If there are questions, the first person to ask is one's advisor (assigned at time of admission), then the Department Head, or staff in the Graduate School. The staff in the Graduate School Office will try to answer your questions, by telephone at (615) 963-5901, or by e-mail at gradschool@tnstate.edu.

REGISTRATION FOR CLASSES

First-time graduate students must register for classes during the published registration times for the semester they are entering the University. Graduate students must register according to the schedule printed in the *Class Schedule*; All registration is done online by computer (myTSU), following procedures printed in the *Class Schedule* and posted on the TSU Web site. Enrolled students are encouraged to take advantage of early registration provided by the University. Dates for early registration are available in the Graduate School, the Office of Admissions and Records, and posted on the TSU Web site.

PROGRAM OF STUDY/ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Master's Degrees

The *Graduate Catalog* states:

Admission to candidacy is an important step in the student's progress toward a degree... Students must apply for admission to candidacy after they earned at least nine (9) semester hours of graduate credit but before having earned fifteen (15) credit hours. **The Program of Study and Advancement to Candidacy** form should be completed in consultation with the advisor, signed by the appropriate persons and returned to the Graduate School... Changes in the approved program of study must be made on the **Change of Program or Personnel** form which requires the written approval of the advisor and the Dean of the Graduate

School. (Both the above mentioned forms may be obtained at the Graduate School or online at: <http://www.tnstate.edu/interior.asp?mid=1482&ptid=1>. Courses taken after the term in which the fifteen hours were completed may not apply toward the completion of the requirements for the degree... No student will be permitted to graduate the same semester in which Candidacy is achieved (p.31).

Educational Specialist Degrees

The policies on submission of **Programs of Study** are the same as for Master's degrees.

Doctoral Degrees

See specific sections of the *Graduate Catalog* for policies related to Program of Study and Candidacy for doctoral programs.

EXAMINATIONS

Master's Comprehensive Examinations

All master's candidates, except those writing Projects or Theses, must take Comprehensive Examinations. These exams are typically given in November, March, and June. Consult the Graduate School Calendar for application deadlines, and specific examination dates.

Doctoral Examinations

Qualifying/Preliminary/Comprehensive Examinations

Doctoral candidates must take Qualifying, Preliminary and/or Comprehensive Examinations. Since rules and regulations for these vary by discipline, please consult the *Graduate Catalog* for section dealing with doctoral programs in the College of Education, Biological Sciences, Computer and Information Systems Engineering, and Public Administration.

THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Students who write theses and dissertations must consult their academic advisors in the selection of an advisory committee and an appropriate topic for investigation. A proposal for the thesis/dissertation is a formal process which involves a hearing before the advisory committee and which result in filing the appropriate proposal form with the Graduate School. The proposal form must be signed by all members of the advisory committee, including the outside reader.

Master's students who write theses must adhere to the deadlines found in the Graduate School Calendar for: (a) filing (or registering) the thesis with the Graduate School, (b) defending the thesis before the student's committee, and (c) submitting the final thesis electronically at <http://dissertations.umi.com/tnstate>.

All doctoral students must write a dissertation and must adhere to the deadlines for (a) filing (or registering) the dissertation with the Graduate School, (b) defending the dissertation before the student's committee, and (c) submitting the final dissertation electronically at <http://dissertations.umi.com/tnstate>.

Students must register for thesis or dissertation hours continuously until the thesis or dissertation is complete and approved by the Graduate School. A reduction in fees for registration occurs after completion of required thesis hours (multiple dissertation registrations for doctoral students is permitted, see *Graduate Catalog* for details).

All dissertations, theses and projects must be prepared in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by the Graduate School in the current edition of [*Guidelines for Preparing Dissertations, Theses, Projects, and Course Papers*](#) and, for electronic submission only, the [*Addendum to the Guidelines for Electronic Theses and Dissertations*](#). All research involving Human Subjects must be approved prior to initiating data collection, in accordance with guidelines and procedures available on the Office of Sponsored Research Web site: www.tnstate.edu/osr/

GRADUATION

A student is ready to graduate when all course work is complete, when all examinations have been passed, when Internships have been completed (verifications required), and when the thesis or dissertation has been finally approved. Students should consult the Graduate School Calendar for deadlines related to graduation. A detailed list of graduation deadlines and events is published each semester and may be obtained from the Graduate School office or website.

NON-DEGREE STATUS CHANGE

Those students who have entered the Graduate School as Non-Degree Seeking students and who intend to become degree seeking in a program must file certain forms with the Graduate School before completing nine (9) hours. The *Graduate Catalog* states: “Credits earned in the non-degree category are not ordinarily requirements for degrees. If subsequently, a student classified as non-degree is accepted into a degree program, the student may petition, and if approved, carry forward not more than nine (9) semester hours of credit earned as a non-degree student” (p. 25). In order to change status, a Change of Program or Personnel form must be filed in the Graduate School. The student is then referred to the graduate program to which s/he is seeking admission for consideration by the Graduate Faculty in that unit. In addition to an application, other required documents include transcripts of all previous college work, the test scores required by the program (e.g., the GRE or MAT) and any other form or documentation required by a particular program. Students may check their admission status in the Graduate School Office or with an instructor in whose class they are enrolled (the class roll indicates the admission status of each student). The non-degree designation on a class roll is “SPG”.

Departments may restrict non-degree students to designated courses only. Non-degree students must have the approval of the Department Head (or designee) to enroll in a class.

