

THESIS AND DISSERTATION GUIDE: FOCUS ON PROCESSES  
AND PROCEDURES

by

The Graduate College of Texas State University

Effective for the 2024-2025 Academic Year

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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 fulfilling the requirements and deadlines for thesis and dissertation students. 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-Forms webpage](#).

### **Resources for Thesis/Dissertation Students**

Texas State offers a variety of resources to support students in their thesis/dissertation work, including [the Writing Center](#). The Writing Center offers 1-on-1 consultations that focus on the technical components of writing such as paper structure, sentence clarity, and citation styles. In addition, the Center offers dedicated writing sessions for students called Write Time. [Write Time](#), held on weekdays each semester, can help students increase productivity, stay accountable to their goals, and receive support from their academic community. See the [Writing Center](#)

[website](#) to view the semester schedule for Write Time or schedule an individual appointment.

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 virtual workshops 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 costs 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 [The Graduate College-Shop Talks](#) webpage.

### **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 the research. Recipients will submit a final report to Assistant Dean Patti Giuffre that details their progress and the use of their funds. The fellowships are offered twice per year. You can find more information regarding [Thesis Research Support Fellowship](#) on The Graduate College website. For information about the Doctoral Research Support Fellowship, navigate to [The Graduate](#)

[College-Doctoral Research Support Fellowship](#) webpage.

### **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-Thesis & Dissertation Information](#) page.

#### **Thesis/Dissertation Guide: Focus on Formatting**

This document will inform students of the various formatting requirements for their thesis or dissertation. It includes common mistakes in thesis and dissertation submissions. Adhering to the requirements described in this document is essential, as theses or dissertations with formatting errors will not be approved.

Students should also reference the formatting guide when submitting their proposal (see [Chapter V](#)). 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 refer to their program's handbooks or other resources 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. At least one dissertation committee chair must hold Regular 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 Dean Designee.

### 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. 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. 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 majority of committee members should be internal to Texas State. The thesis committee is officially formed and approved by the department chair and the Dean or Dean Designee of The Graduate College when the [Thesis Proposal Form](#) is submitted to The Graduate College (see [Chapter V](#)). Refer to Table 1 for requirements and procedures for committee members external to the university.

**Table 1. Thesis Committee Members External to Texas State University.**

Thesis Committee Members who are <i>external to the university</i> and are nominated as Courtesy Graduate faculty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Must hold professional credentials equivalent to those associated with graduate faculty status in the student's major department.</li><li>- The department chair should submit the Graduate Faculty Nomination Form (specified in AAPPS 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.</li><li>- 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.)</li><li>- The form, curriculum vitae, and written statement are submitted to the Dean or Dean Designee of The Graduate College for approval.</li></ul>
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**Dissertation Committee Composition**

Members of the dissertation committee must be Regular Graduate, Associate Graduate, or Courtesy Graduate faculty. The majority of committee members must be internal to Texas State. Specific dissertation committee requirements for each doctoral program can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Refer to Table 2 for requirements and procedures for committee members external to the university.

<b>Table 2. Dissertation Committee Members External to Texas State University.</b>	
Dissertation Committee Members <i>who are external to the university</i> and are nominated as Courtesy Graduate faculty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must hold professional credentials equivalent to those associated with graduate faculty status in the student’s major department.</li> <li>- The department chair should submit the Graduate Faculty Nomination Form (specified in AAPPS 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.</li> <li>- 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.)</li> <li>- The form, curriculum vitae, and written statement are submitted along with the Dissertation Committee Request Form to the Dean or Dean Designee of The Graduate College for approval.</li> </ul>

### **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 Dean Designee.

### **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 Dean Designee.

## **Thesis Students**

Thesis students will use the [Thesis Chair/Committee Member Change Request Form](#) available on [The Graduate College website](#).

A committee member who 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 Dean Designee. Within this statement, the member must acknowledge that they are willing to continue serving on the student's committee, and 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 who 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 Dean Designee. Within this statement, the member must acknowledge that they are willing to continue serving on the student's committee and 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 Division of Research website](#).

#### **Plagiarism**

Credit must be given for direct quotations, paraphrases, information, and 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](#).

#### **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 ["Copyright & Fair Use" chapter](#) of the free resource, *University Libraries for New Faculty and Graduate Students*. 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 online. 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 [Library Guides-Copyright: Basics](#).

### **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 their 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 [gcdegspcl@txstate.edu](mailto:gcdegspcl@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 follow university regulations governed by the Texas

State Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Refer to the [Texas State IACUC website](#) 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 follow 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](#) 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. Embargoes can be given to documents in the electronic submission system to withhold those documents from release to the University Scholarship repository. The electronic system offers embargo lengths from one to five years. The author may request a two-year extension from the University Libraries if more time is needed when the embargo is near expiration. The extension can be granted two times with a maximum embargo period of nine 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. Preparation of publications based on thesis/dissertation data may impact the release date of the students' thesis/dissertation, so students should discuss copyright and embargo options with their committee chair prior to submission.

### **Brief Overview of Embargoes**

In academia, an "embargo" is a restriction placed on a thesis or dissertation that typically allows only the title, abstract and citation information to be released to the public, while the full text of the work is kept hidden for a limited period of time. At this time, no information is released until an embargo is over. On the other hand, if a dissertation has an embargo of 1 year, 2 year, or none it will have abstract & title display in ProQuest databases until the embargo period is over. Dissertations which have any other embargo type will not be sent to ProQuest. **Students should discuss the appropriate embargo with their committee chair and committee members before submitting the thesis/dissertation to Vireo.** Each field has different practices related to embargo selections; thus, the library and Graduate College generally do not give

recommendations on particular students' embargo selection. The selection of the embargo is important because it determines how long the work will be unavailable to the public.

The library has some [general guidelines](#) for selecting the correct embargo. Most theses and dissertations are *not* embargoed but are made publicly available following students' formal defense as part of completing a masters or doctoral degree.

**Some reasons to not embargo a thesis or dissertation include:**

- The author makes the work available to be read online, which can offer some immediate advantages.
- It establishes when the student's work was created and published, which can help combat plagiarism and enforce the copyright.
- Open access to a thesis/dissertation can help build an academic and professional reputation.
- When the thesis or dissertation is openly available, it is easier for others to find and cite.

**Some reasons to embargo a thesis or dissertation include:**

- The university wants to patent something described in the work.
- The author wants to publish the work in whole or in part *in the future* and is concerned that making the work public will interfere with the publication process.
- The author has *previously* published the work in whole or in part, and the publisher is restricting public release of the work in some way.
- The thesis/dissertation includes data covered by a nondisclosure agreement for a specified period of time, including personal information, company secrets, or intellectual property.

- There are ethical or political concerns, such as protecting subjects or protecting the student.

\*Information compiled from library webpages at [Texas State University](#), [Georgia Southern University](#), [Florida Tech University](#), and [University of Oklahoma](#).

#### IV. OPTIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

Throughout the thesis/dissertation guides, we will refer to the structure of the thesis/dissertation and the format of the thesis/dissertation. The structure of the thesis/dissertation refers to how knowledge, research, and/or creative works are organized. For example, the structure of a thesis based on poetry will have a different structure compared to a thesis based on an empirical study. The format, on the other hand, concerns how the thesis/dissertation looks and includes all items in the formatting checklist and guide. For example, no matter what structure you follow, all theses/dissertations have the same front matter per Graduate College formatting rules. All must have a Table of Contents in the front matter, and all must use a sequential pagination, among other required formatting items. For specific formatting requirements and guidelines, refer to the thesis/dissertation guide on formatting.

Students have several options for the structure of their thesis/dissertation and should consult with their committee chair and members about the proper structure to follow. While there are options that are discipline-specific, two common structures are (1) a traditional structure or (2) an article-based structure. **In a traditional structure**, theses and dissertations present the findings of original research in a monograph, often consisting of five distinct chapters (i.e., introduction, literature review, methodology, presentation of findings, and a concluding discussion). **An “article-based” thesis/dissertation structure** is an alternative structure to a “traditional” thesis/dissertation. Although most article-based theses/dissertations retain the introductory and conclusion chapters, the middle chapters are each self-contained units, each having their own introduction, literature review, findings, and concluding discussion sections. The term “article-based” describes the structure that allows any of the middle chapters to be able to be formatted as a free-standing journal article.

Students must consult with their committee chair and members about which structure is best and do not need to seek approval from the Graduate College about whether they should use a traditional structure, article-based structure, or some other commonly used structure in their field.

Utilizing a thesis/dissertation as an article-based structure must be approved by each student's thesis/dissertation committee, as with other aspects of the thesis/dissertation. The appropriateness of the article-based structure may differ by discipline and context of the thesis/dissertation, as well as other deciding factors. As with all theses/dissertations, the thesis/dissertation committee is the arbiter of quality of all parts of the document, including any previously published work that may be included in the thesis or dissertation.

In most cases, the thesis/dissertation committee will require that an article-based thesis/dissertation includes a thorough introduction chapter and a comprehensive conclusion chapter in addition to the other article chapters. These chapters provide framing for the thesis/dissertation as a cohesive work, as opposed to an anthology of different articles. An article-based thesis/dissertation is normally comprised of several articles, each as a freestanding chapter (in addition to an overall introduction and conclusion chapter). The number of article chapters within a given thesis/dissertation is highly dependent upon the student's research and the expectations of the discipline and the program and must be approved by the student's committee.

Articles used as chapters in an article-based thesis/dissertation may be considered "to be submitted later" (i.e., to be submitted to a publication source at a later time) or "forthcoming/already published" (accepted, forthcoming, or already published in a journal or other publication source). As with all theses/dissertations, the thesis/dissertation committee must

confirm that work must have been done while the student was enrolled in the current degree program at Texas State. For example, articles published or submitted to a journal prior to the student's matriculation in the degree program at Texas State are not eligible for inclusion in the student's thesis/dissertation. Likewise, the committee will confirm that work done previously as part of another degree's requirements is not included as an article chapter in the current degree's thesis/dissertation. The student's thesis/dissertation committee is the arbiter of quality and appropriateness for all articles under consideration for inclusion.

## **V. THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

### **Proposal Preparation**

With guidance from thesis/dissertation committees, students will produce a proposal. This proposal states the problem the students intend to address and the means and resources by which the students intend 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 Dean Designee.

The Dean or Dean Designee 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 Dean Designee.

The Dean or Dean Designee 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 Policies 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 include the student's information.

The Dissertation Defense Report Form, Thesis Submission Approval Form, and Dissertation Submission Approval Form require signatures from all committee members.

Approval of the thesis or dissertation does *not* require approval from all committee members; one committee member (who is not the Chair/Co-Chair) may dissent. However, the dissenting committee member must sign the form(s) to indicate acknowledgement of the majority's decisions.

### **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 IV](#) for dissertation proposal defense procedures), the student must repeat the procedure to defend the new dissertation proposal.

## **VI. 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 Dean Designee.

## **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 Dean or Dean Designee.

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.

## VII. 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 [gcdespcl@txstate.edu](mailto:gcdespcl@txstate.edu).

### Thesis Coursework

Master's students pursuing a thesis must complete at least six or nine credit hours of thesis coursework to satisfy master's degree program requirements (depending on the program). 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 Dean Designee of The Graduate College to enroll in both Thesis A and Thesis B simultaneously. Additional thesis hours beyond degree requirements cannot be used for degree credit of any kind.

## **Dissertation Coursework**

Each doctoral degree requires a specific number of dissertation hours for completion. Required dissertation credit hours vary among the Ph.D./Ed.D. programs. Information on required credit hours for each major is available in the [Texas State Graduate Catalog](#).

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 usually 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 a student is marked as never attending or participating in a thesis/dissertation course, the Registrar will assign a grade of DA (dropped administratively). 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.

## VIII. DEADLINES AND CANDIDACY INFORMATION

### Applying for Graduation

Deadlines to apply for graduation are posted online on the [Graduate College website](#).

Students can apply to graduate through the [commencement website](#) or by doing the following:

- go to the [Texas State homepage](#),
- 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 that 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](mailto:gcdegspcl@txstate.edu) and inform the Degree Audit Specialists accordingly.

### Commencement Information

Each semester, the [Commencement website](#) is updated with the most current information. This website provides students with commencement information, such as ceremony schedules

and details to purchase regalia, 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 students have 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](#). 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. Patti Giuffre, Associate Dean of The Graduate College. Any request for an extension must include a rationale and be 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 on the [Graduate College website](#).

### **Dissertation Defense**

All candidates for doctoral degrees must successfully defend their 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. Specific information on dissertation time limits for each Ph.D./Ed.D. program is available in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Other departmental time limits may apply. Exceptions to these time limits require the approval of the doctoral program director and the Dean or Dean Designee 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 Dean Designee 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.

## IX. 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.
- The minimum number of thesis hours (at least 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 the [Deadlines webpage](#) for a full list of each semester's deadlines for the academic year.

## General Requirements for Dissertation 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 Dean Designee.
- 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 Dean Designee.
- 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 the [Deadlines webpage](#) for a full list of each semester's deadlines for the academic year.