General Degree Requirements

Return to: The Graduate School (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/grad/the-graduate-school/)

- Degree Plan (p. 1)
- Time Limits and Catalog Changes (p. 1)
- Coursework Requirements (p. 1)
- Thesis Requirements (p. 3)
- Dissertation Requirements (p. 4)
- Final Examinations (p. 4)
- Doctoral Milestones (p. 5)
- Graduation Requirements (p. 5)
- Posthumous Degree (p. 7)

Degree Plan

Graduate students seeking a degree or a graduate certificate are required to submit a graduate advisor and college dean approved preliminary degree plan to the Graduate School by the conclusion of the first semester of study. Doctoral students must submit a preliminary degree plan at the conclusion of the first year. The degree plan lists required coursework, as recommended by the Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Catalog, including leveling courses that the student is required to complete prior to graduation.

Nine semester hours of upper-division undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit are the maximum allowable in any master's program. Undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit require additional work, the amount and nature of which to be determined by the instructor. Undergraduate courses that are not approved for graduate credit cannot be used to satisfy graduate degree requirements. Doctoral students should consult program policies regarding enrollment in undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit.

The Graduate School discourages students from working toward more than one graduate degree at the same time. If eligible for financial aid, only one program of study will be funded.

Time Limits and Catalog Changes

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period, including any transfer work or work completed prior to admission to the program; doctoral degree requirements must be completed within one eight-year period. Coursework exceeding these time limits is lost and can be reinstated only by special permission of the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the committee on graduate studies.

General and specific requirements for degrees in the Graduate School may be altered in successive catalogs. Provided the requisite courses continue to be offered, the student is bound only by the course requirements of the catalog in force at the time of admission or re-admission within a six or eight year limit, unless, with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, the student elects to be bound by the course requirements of a subsequent catalog. This regulation applies to course requirements only.

Coursework Requirements

Prerequisites

Every master's degree program is based on the assumption that the student participating in it already possesses a general college education through the baccalaureate level. Accordingly, the first prerequisite for the entering student is a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. A second prerequisite is that the entering student must have taken at least 12 semester hours of advanced undergraduate courses in the area of study in which he or she proposes to pursue a graduate major. Some areas may require more semester hours of undergraduate preparation. Students must earn at least a 3.0 grade point average in any deficiency or leveling work required. If a student without adequate preparation is admitted to a given graduate program, admission will be conditional until such time as the student has completed the courses of preparatory work designated by the graduate advisor. These courses will be in addition to the 30 hours (or more) required for the master's degree itself.

Course Load

Registration in excess of 15 semester hours during a long semester, or six (6) semester hours in a summer term requires the approval of the departmental graduate advisor, the college dean, and the Graduate School.

At least 30 semester hours of upper-division and/or graduate instruction are required for any master's degree. Nine (9) semester hours of upper-division undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit are the maximum allowable in any program of study. Undergraduate courses taken for
graduate credit will require additional work, the amount and nature of which are determined by the instructor. Every proposed program of study needs the approval of the Graduate School. The Graduate School discourages students from working toward more than one graduate degree at the same time except for the case of dual degree programs. If eligible for financial aid, only one program of study will be funded.

**MAX COURSE LOAD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Hours per Semester/Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall and Spring</td>
<td>9 or more hours per semester</td>
<td>8 or fewer hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maymester and Wintermester</td>
<td>3 or more hours per term</td>
<td>2 or less hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer and 10 weeks</td>
<td>3 or more hours per term</td>
<td>2 or less hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enrollment Status and Verification**

For enrollment verification to financial aid, loan agencies, insurance companies, scholarships, etc., the following categories will be followed.

**Fall and Spring**

- **Full-time**: 9 or more hours per semester
- **Part-time**: 8 or fewer hours
- **Half-time**: 5 hours
- **Less than half**: fewer than 5 hours

**Maymester and Wintermester**

- **Full-time**: 3 or more hours
- **Part-time**: 2 hours
- **Less than part**: 1 hour

**Summer Sessions**

- **Full-time**: 3 or more hours
- **Part-time**: 2 hours
- **Less than part**: 1 hour

To maintain financial aid eligibility, all graduate students must enroll for a minimum of six hours every Fall and Spring semester, and six total hours in Summer sessions. Students enrolled in accelerated, online or other special programs that use “parts-of-term” are considered full-time if they are enrolled in at least 3 credit hours in any given part of term and also meet the full-term requirements noted above.

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

VA Education Benefits users should consult the Military Student Success Center. Minimum enrollment must be in courses that fulfill graduate degree requirements.

Reduced Course Load: A request for reduced course load will only be considered during the final term/graduation term. For verification purposes, a student requesting a reduced course load must submit a final degree plan and, if applicable, apply for graduation.

Career and Professional Development Services and CO-OP courses: Students who participate in the Career and Professional Development Services Cooperative Education Program and who are only enrolled in a CO-OP course will be classified as full-time for the term. Enrollment in CO-OP only beyond two semesters requires Graduate School approval. International students with assistantships seeking to enroll in CO-OP must obtain approval from the Graduate School before enrolling in CO-OP.

Summer Enrollment: Graduate students enrolled in three hours during one of the summer semesters are classified by the Graduate School as full time for the entire summer. Students continuously enrolled on a full-time basis the immediate preceding fall and spring semesters are not required to enroll during the summer term if degree applicable course offerings are not available during the summer term. Students who are appointed during the summer must be enrolled. To maintain financial aid eligibility, all graduate students must enroll for a minimum of six total hours in Summer sessions.
UTEP Connect Students

Graduate students enrolled in on-line programs offered through UTEP Connect take courses in 7 week terms throughout the year. The maximum course load is 15 hours per term. UTEP Connect students adhere to Graduate School standards for enrollment status.

Enrollment Verification for Thesis and Dissertation Students

This full time classification is a criterion for employment as teaching and research assistants and for receipt of stipends, scholarships and financial aid. It represents a minimum standard and individual programs may require students to enroll in more hours to qualify for support.

Thesis Students

Master's degree students are classified by the Graduate School as full time equivalent for financial aid purposes for up to four semesters of continual enrollment in thesis (5398 & 5399) only. Students enrolled in only three hours of thesis are financial aid eligible and may receive loans and loan deferments. Thesis students must be enrolled in thesis during the semester the thesis is defended and completed and during the semester of graduation.

Non-Thesis Students

Students will not be financial aid eligible if enrolled in less than 6 hours every semester including the final semester. Non-thesis students must be enrolled during the semester of graduation.

Dissertation Students

Doctoral degree students are classified by the Graduate School as full time equivalent for financial aid purposes for up to five semesters of continual enrollment in dissertation (6320 & 6321, or 6398 & 6399) only. Students enrolled in only three hours of dissertation are financial aid eligible and may receive loans or loan deferments. Dissertation students must be enrolled in dissertation during the semester the dissertation is defended and completed and during the semester of graduation.

Non-Dissertation Students

Students will not be financial aid eligible if enrolled in less than 6 hours every semester including the final semester. Non-dissertation doctoral students must be enrolled during the semester of graduation.

Thesis Requirements

The candidate must be accepted into a graduate program prior to pursuing the thesis. The candidate for the master's degree writes a thesis under the direction of a supervising committee, consisting of at least two departmental representatives and one member from outside the department. All members of the supervising committee must be members of the graduate faculty. The thesis is subject to the approval of the committee and ultimately to the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. The research and writing of the thesis involves six (6) semester hours of credit, successful completion of thesis course I (5398) and thesis course II (5399). To earn the six (6) hours of thesis credit, the student must register in course 5398 when work on the thesis is begun. Thereafter, the student must register for thesis II, 5399, during each semester or term in which work on the thesis is conducted. Students cannot enroll in 5398 and 5399 simultaneously, nor can they enroll in more than three (3) hours of thesis at any one time. Thesis students must be enrolled in thesis during the semester the thesis is defended and during the semester of graduation.

A copy of the thesis, using any publication style appropriate to the given discipline, must be submitted to the Graduate School for format check prior to the scheduled defense date. The thesis must be prepared according to the Graduate School’s thesis and dissertation manuscript guidelines, which are available at the Graduate School Web site. The student will receive email confirmation from the Graduate School upon approval of the thesis format.

A hard copy of the signature page and defense form signed by the thesis committee must also be submitted to the Graduate School. The signature page must be included in the PDF file, but should not be signed. The Graduate School-approved thesis must also be submitted at the University Microfilms International Web site for online publication (http://dissertations.umi.com/utep (http://dissertations.umi.com/utep/)). Theses are regarded as publications and will be made public once they are approved and submitted to the Graduate School.

If a student has not completed thesis work at the end of two years after the subject has been approved and recorded, the supervisor can require the student to choose another subject. Credit in thesis courses will not be granted until the thesis is completed and approved.

Non-Thesis Option

Some programs require internship reports, professional reports or formal papers prepared in certain graduate seminar or conference-type courses in lieu of a thesis. The non-thesis should be comparable to a thesis in every respect except for the evidence of original research. The non-thesis is reviewed and accepted by the supervising committee and, if required, submitted to the academic graduate department rather than to the Graduate School. The Graduate School does not require the submission of a Completion/Defense form from all students pursuing a non-thesis option. Students are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of their departments. All non-thesis students must be enrolled during the semester of graduation.
Dissertation Requirements

A doctoral candidate must be accepted into a doctoral program prior to pursuing the dissertation. The candidate for the doctoral degree writes a dissertation under the direction of a supervising committee. All members of the supervising committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. For composition of the supervising committee, the student should refer to the section in this catalog that describes their respective doctoral program. Minimum Graduate School requirements consist of three members; two from the major program of study and one from outside the major program of study. The dissertation is subject to the approval of the committee and ultimately to the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. The student must register in dissertation I, course 6320 or 6398 when work on the dissertation is begun. Thereafter, the student must continually enroll in dissertation II, course 6321 or 6399 during each semester or term in which work on the dissertation is conducted. Students may not enroll in 6320 and 6321, or in 6398 and 6399 simultaneously nor may they enroll in more than three hours of dissertation at any one time. Dissertation students must be enrolled in dissertation during the semester the dissertation is defended and during the semester of graduation.

A copy of the dissertation, using any publication style appropriate to the given discipline, must be submitted to the Graduate School for format check prior to the scheduled defense date. The dissertation must be prepared according to the Graduate School’s thesis and dissertation manuscript guidelines, which are available at the Graduate School Web site. The student will receive email confirmation from the Graduate School upon approval of the dissertation format. The defense date must be scheduled on or before Dead Day of the intended term of graduation, if the doctoral candidate plans to participate in commencement activities. Summer candidates wishing to participate in spring commencement must defend by Dead Day of the spring semester. The Defense Form with original signatures must be submitted to the Graduate School after the scheduled defense date or by Dead Day, if the doctoral candidate plans to participate in commencement.

The candidate is required to submit a copy of the Graduate School approved dissertation in PDF format by the deadline as published in the Class Schedule of the intended semester of graduation; Information on submission procedures can be found on the Graduate School website. A hard copy of the signature page with original signatures of the members of the dissertation committee must also be submitted to the Graduate School. The signature page must be included in the PDF file, but it should not be signed. The Graduate School-approved dissertation must also be submitted at the University Microfilms International Web site for on-line publication (http://www.etcadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=95 (http://www.etcadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=95/)). Dissertations are regarded as publications and will be made public once they are approved and submitted to the Graduate School unless the author formally requests otherwise.

Institutional Policy for Doctoral Dissertations in Languages other than English

The language in which doctoral dissertations are written and defended is assumed to be English. The Graduate Faculty recognizes that other languages may be deemed appropriate depending on the context of the research conducted by doctoral students. A language other than English may be proposed to write and defend a dissertation, provided that criteria ensuring the integrity of scholarship are met and the process is properly documented. Additional requirements may be set by each doctoral program.

Minimum Criteria

1. The candidate must exhibit the necessary proficiency in the proposed language to conduct in-depth, quality research as determined by the faculty of the doctoral program.
2. The dissertation committee members are fully able to advise and assist the student in preparing a dissertation on the proposed topic in this language as determined by the chair of the dissertation committee.
3. The dissertation research in the alternative language must be helpful to the candidate’s professional and scholarly development.
4. The prospect of publication of dissertation research findings in the proposed language is important to the discipline.
5. For purposes of dissertation publishing and indexing, the abstract and title of the dissertation will be in English.
6. The process of research protocol must be conducted in English and will not be affected by this exception.

Process

The doctoral candidate’s dissertation committee has the responsibility of determining whether the dissertation meets writing standards in the alternative language. The doctoral student must notify the dissertation chair of the intent to write and defend the dissertation in an alternative language. Upon approval by the dissertation chair, the student will secure signatures from the Graduate Advisor and Graduate School Dean.

Non-Dissertation

Professional doctoral programs may require the completion of an internship or professional report or formal papers in lieu of a dissertation. The Graduate School requires the submission of a Completion/Defense form to verify successful completion. Students are responsible for adhering to the policies of their doctoral programs. All doctoral students must be enrolled during the semester of graduation.

Final Examination

All graduate degree candidates are required to satisfactorily complete an oral or written examination or both. The examining committee, composed of at least three (3) members of the graduate faculty, will usually serve as the student’s supervising committee. One member of the committee must be from outside the major area of study or from another department. Individual departments can elect to drop a student after a first or second failure
General Degree Requirements

of the examination, upon the recommendation of the examining committee; however, under no circumstances will a student be permitted to take the examination more than three (3) times. A student failing such an examination for the third time will be dropped from the program.

Doctoral Milestones

All newly admitted doctoral students are required to meet with their doctoral program advisor and sign a New Doctoral Student Milestones Agreement during the first semester of enrollment in the program. The purpose of the New Doctoral Student Milestones Agreement is to ensure that doctoral students are aware of the academic milestones they are expected to reach in order to earn their doctoral degree.

Students are expected to reach each academic milestone within a specified time period in order to make satisfactory progress through the program. The program's graduate studies committee will provide all students with annual, written evaluations and feedback on milestones that should have been met. Students who are not making satisfactory progress will be granted one full academic year to reach missed milestones. At the conclusion of the probationary period, the graduate studies committee will assess progress made and recommend continuation or dismissal from the program.

Graduation Requirements

Degrees are conferred at the end of each semester and at the end of the summer session. For summer graduates, regardless of the summer session of enrollment, the degree is conferred at the end of the last summer session. Formal commencement ceremonies are held in May for all candidates who complete degree requirements during the spring semester and in December for fall candidates and graduates of the previous summer.

Only summer degree candidates are allowed to walk early and participate in the May commencement ceremony if no more than 6 hours are needed to complete the degree during the summer session. Summer doctoral degree candidates may participate in the May commencement ceremony only if the dissertation is defended by Dead Day of the spring semester. Summer candidates participating in May commencement must complete the application process by the published deadline for May graduation. Summer candidates' names will not appear in the May program but in the December program.

Graduation requirements are as follows:

1. Completion of all required course work as listed on the approved final degree plan.
2. Acceptance of the thesis or dissertation by the Graduate School.
3. Submission of a completion/defense form to verify satisfactory completion of coursework and/or an oral or written exam or both.
4. Filing of a departmental graduate advisor- and college dean-approved Application for Graduate Degree with the Graduate School.
5. Payment of all applicable fees

Degree Application Procedures

Graduate students must begin the application process with their program advisors. Graduate degree candidates must submit an Application for Graduate Degree and final degree plan during the semester they expect to graduate and by the deadline stated in the on-line Class Schedule at www.utep.edu/register (http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/registrar). The forms must be completed by the student and approved by the graduate advisor and college dean. The student must submit the forms to the Graduate School before the published deadline to allow a complete review of the academic record. The diploma fee and if applicable, the thesis/dissertation University Microfilms on-line traditional publishing fee are billed to the student’s Goldmine account upon approval of the Application for Graduate Degree. The Application for Graduate Degree is only valid for one semester.

The University of Texas at El Paso has three conferral dates as listed below:

• May, as published in the Schedule of Classes at www.utep.edu/register, (http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/registrar) for all students who complete degree requirements after February 28 and prior to the May Commencement date.
• August 15, for all students who complete degree requirements after June 30 and prior to August 15.
• December, as published in the Schedule of Classes at http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/registrar (http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/registrar), for all students who complete degree requirements after October 31 and prior to the December Commencement date.

Students who wish to graduate must complete the application process and pay the fee described below:

• Master's and doctoral students – To be considered for graduation, students must submit the completed and signed graduation application for processing to the Graduate School and all applicable fees will be assessed by the Graduate School.

Graduation Application Fees:

• $35 if paid by the scheduled deadline.
• $15 Graduation Application Late Fee

Graduation application fee is not refundable. A student who defers graduation to the following term must reapply for graduation. However, the student will not be required to repay the graduation application fee.
Commencement

Formal commencement ceremonies are held in May for all candidates who complete degree requirements during the spring semester and in December for fall candidates. There is no summer commencement, nor are there commencement ceremonies for students whose degrees are conferred in February, June, or October.

- Students whose degrees are conferred in February are invited to participate in the May commencement ceremony.
- Students whose degrees are conferred in June or August (summer candidates) are invited to participate in the May commencement ceremony if no more than six (6) hours are needed to complete the degree prior to August 15. Summer candidates' names will not appear in the May program. Summer candidates who do not participate in May commencement can participate in December commencement. Summer candidates' names will appear only in the December program.
- Students whose degrees are conferred in October are invited to participate in the December commencement ceremony.

If a Nondisclosure of Directory Information (confidential) request on file, the University will not release the candidate's name for any commencement publications that are made available to the public. The candidate can request the removal of the nondisclosure request in Goldmine by clicking Answer a Survey or Complete a Form listed under the Personal Information tab. Select the survey entitled Student Request to Revoke Nondisclosure of Directory Information. The candidate can also email their request using their UTEP email account to registrar@utep.edu.

Degrees are conferred approximately two months following the end of each long semester (December and May) and at the end of the long summer session (August). The degree will be posted to the transcript with the commencement date for each long semester and the last day of finals for the long summer session.

Diploma

The name appears on the diploma as it appears on the official university record. Only legal names can appear on the diploma. The rational is that the diploma is a legal document, and it represents the degree earned. If a graduate displayed her/his diploma, and someone called our office to verify the degree and its authenticity, we would be unable to locate the graduate’s record if the name appears differently on the diploma from the academic record.

The degree title will appear in the center of the diploma below the student’s name. The student’s major(s) will appear on the diploma only if it is not included in the official degree title. Institutional academic honors awarded will appear below the major(s).

Certificates, concentrations, endorsements, minors, honors earned in the department or the University Honors Program will only appear on the student’s academic transcript and not on the diploma.

Approximately two months following the end of each long semester (December and May) and at the end of the long summer session (August), the university awards a diploma to each student upon whom a degree is conferred provided a graduation application has been filed. Diplomas are mailed to the address provided by the student. A complimentary transcript showing the degree earned will be mailed separately. However, for mailing service outside the United States there is a service fee. Fees are listed on the Diplomas Mailing Request and are subject to change. The application is located in the Student Forms block at: http://utep.edu/register

A graduating student who has an outstanding financial obligation with the university will not receive a diploma or transcript until such obligation is satisfied in full. To clear the financial debt, contact the Student Business Services Office at (915) 747-5105.

A graduating student who received a student loan or TEACH grant must complete the Stafford Exit Counseling session. Click Complete Online Student Loan Counseling located at: http://mappingyourfuture.org. A diploma or transcript will not be released until the Exit Counseling session is completed.

Replacement Diploma

If an original diploma is lost, stolen, destroyed, or change of name, the diploma can be replaced for a fee. To order a replacement diploma, you need to file a Diploma Replacement Request. The application is located in the Student Forms block at: http://utep.edu/register

Anyone ordering a replacement diploma also needs to provide a clear copy of proof of identity containing a photo. Examples include a passport or current driver’s license.

The replacement diploma fee is $30.00 each.

For mailing service through express mail or outside the United States there is a service fee. Fees are listed on the Diplomas Replacement Request and subject to change.

It should be noted that a replacement diploma will reflect current diploma format and therefore may not be identical in all respects to the original. The word “This is a Replacement” will appear on the lower center of the diploma.

The completed Diploma Replacement Request, fee, and copy of proof of identity may be mailed to:

The University of Texas at El Paso
Registration and Records Office
The request may also be sent by email attachment to graduation@utep.edu, or faxed to (915) 747-8764.

Unclaimed Diplomas
Unclaimed diplomas will be kept for five years from the date of award. They will then be destroyed. Graduates who request an unclaimed diploma after it has been destroyed will have to pay the replacement fee in effect at the time of their request. It should be noted that a replacement diploma may not be identical in all respects to the original.

Posthumous Degree
Enrolled students whose untimely death prevents degree completion may be awarded a posthumous degree. A posthumous degree can be awarded only if the student was enrolled in courses that would have allowed the student to complete all work for the degree, and if the student had the appropriate grade point average in the required areas for graduation. If an Application for Graduation is not already on file, one may be completed by the deceased student’s major/degree advisor or family member. The major/degree advisor can recommend to the dean that the remaining requirements be waived and the degree awarded. The dean will need to endorse the recommendation and forward it to the Registrar. For further information, individuals should contact the appropriate dean's office and the Graduate School at (915) 747-5491.