



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Hospitality, Hotel
Management and Tourism

2022-2023
Graduate Student
Academic Handbook

Department of Hospitality, Hotel
Management and Tourism
(HMGTT)

Texas A&M University

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• Contact Melyssa-Anne Stricklin for academic policies; registration questions; graduation requirements; DPSS, DocuSign, Adobe Sign, ARCS questions; learning about on-campus resources, or if you don't know where to go.	
• Contact Koy Moser for admissions/application questions, assistantship, scholarships, departmental funding questions, etc.	
• Contact your Faculty Committee Chair to discuss course selection, degree plan approval prior to submitting via DPSS, research/project questions, committee member help, etc.	

Introduction

About this Handbook

Howdy! Welcome to the Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism (HMGT) at Texas A&M University. This handbook is provided to graduate students to familiarize them with department, college, and university policies. It is a resource to help guide you during your academic career.

Familiarize yourself with this handbook and refer to it when you need information on departmental policies. To maintain standards in graduate education, the university has several mechanisms for monitoring your progress. Failure to adhere to university rules can delay graduation and cost you money. The departmental handbook is a living document that is updated annually.

This academic guide provides much of the information you need; however, it is not exhaustive and may not answer all your questions. Requirements change frequently, and this handbook is current as of the date stamped at the bottom of the page. Current information is always available from the HMGT Graduate Academic Advisor or the [Graduate and Professional School](#) (GPS).

Another useful resource is [the Graduate Catalog](#). The Graduate Catalog provides information about the academic programs at Texas A&M University. Included is information regarding admissions, academic regulations and requirements, academic calendars, services available to students, academic offerings, and a list of administrative offices.

****Note: The Department of HMGT tries to keep information in this handbook as up to date as possible. In the unforeseen circumstance that information presented here directly conflicts with university rules and regulations, the university rule supersedes the handbook.**

Your Responsibilities as a Graduate Student

University faculty and staff are here to guide you through the graduate school process, but ultimately your education is your responsibility. Consult with your faculty chair (Chair of your committee) concerning course selection. Frequently check your student account for any holds. Find out what your degree requirements and deadlines are and meet them. Ask questions if you need further explanation. Contact and/or schedule meetings with the HMGT Graduate Academic Advisor early in your program, at key degree-plan times, and anytime you have questions or need assistance. It is your responsibility to know the requirements for your degree and to meet all deadlines.

University Policies

Aggie Code of Honor

For many years Aggies have followed a Code of Honor, which is stated in this very simple verse:
An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.

The [Aggie Code of Honor](#) is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M students toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It only calls for honesty and integrity, characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified. The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies, promoting understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other. Students are expected to be knowledgeable regarding citation of sources and plagiarism, and to follow protocol for academic honesty.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination and is therefore prohibited under Title IX. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile work or educational environment.

Texas A&M University is committed to providing an environment of academic study and employment free from harassment or discrimination to all segments of its community; its faculty, staff, students, guests and vendors; and will promptly address all complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. More information about Texas A&M's Title IX policies can be found [here](#).

All employees who become aware of discrimination, harassment (including sexual violence) and/or retaliation must report it regardless of how they become aware of the information.

Consensual Relationships

The Texas A&M University System is committed to maintaining work and educational environments that are free from conflicts of interest, favoritism, and abuse of authority. The Texas A&M consensual relationships [policy](#) addresses amorous, romantic, and/or sexual relationships that, although consensual, may create actual or perceived ethical, discriminatory, and/or harassing situations disruptive to the member community.

Texas A&M University Student Rules

Each student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and to comply with the [Texas A&M University Student Rules](#).

Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Degrees in HMGT

Thesis-based graduate work in HMGT is offered at both the Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) levels. Research and thesis completion comprise a significant part of each program. At the heart of these degrees is an independent, original research program culminating in a publishable thesis or dissertation.

- The M.S. degree consists of 36 credit hours of combined coursework and research. <https://hmgmt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management-and-tourism-thesis/>
- The M.S. Non- Thesis Option requires of a minimum of 36 semester credit hours of approved coursework. <https://hmgmt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management-and-tourism-non-thesis/>
- The Ph.D. program entails 70 credit hours of combined coursework and research when entering with a thesis-based M.S. in a related field. <https://hmgmt.tamu.edu/ph-d-in-hospitality-hotel-management-and-tourism/>

Doctoral Students

All doctoral students will also be required to meet a [residence requirement](#), successfully complete a preliminary exam, submit a research proposal, be admitted to doctoral candidacy, complete their final defense, as well as submit a Dissertation.

Graduate Committees

M.S. committees require 3 committee members with at least 1 outside member. Ph.D. committees require 4 committee members with at least 1 outside member. The outside committee member must be on the TAMU [Graduate Faculty](#) and their primary affiliation must be with another department. In some cases, a student may want someone from outside of TAMU to serve on their committee. There is a process to add a non-TAMU person to the graduate faculty that can take several months. To initiate this process, the student's faculty chair should contact the Department Head. A non-TAMU member does not meet the requirement for an outside committee member.

Degree Plan

A student regardless of degree program files a degree plan through the Graduate and Professional School through the [Document Processing Submission System](#).(DPSS) The degree plan is the official listing of coursework completed during the degree. It is also the official declaration of the student's committee chair (faculty chair) and members. Students should not list more than the minimum credits for the degree. All courses completed will appear on the student transcript whether or not they are listed on the degree plan. Keep in mind that it is a simple and common process for degree plans to be changed (with committee approval) so you do not have to feel like everything is set in stone if you have submitted a degree plan.

The student should always build the degree plan in close consultation with their faculty chair. There may be additional coursework listed on the degree plan in lieu of research hours.

Enrolling in classes that are not listed on the student's degree plan may impact financial aid packages. A student should consult with the [Scholarships and Financial Aid office](#) about this restriction if applying for federal financial aid.

There is a [limit](#) to the number of [distance courses](#) (e.g. online or web-based) a student can take if enrolled in a non-distance degree program. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they have not exceeded this limit. Thesis-based graduate degrees in HMGT are non-distance programs.

A registration hold/block will be placed on student's account if their degree plan is not submitted and approved by the deadlines below.

College	Master's	Doctoral
Agriculture	During 2 nd Regular Semester	During 4 th Regular Semester

Instructions for Degree Plan Submission

Please follow the steps below to submit your degree plan:

1. Be sure to confirm the number of credit hours and any specific courses required for your specific program. This information is found on your department's website
 - a. PhD: <https://hmgmt.tamu.edu/ph-d-in-hospitality-hotel-management-and-tourism/>
 - b. M.S.: <https://hmgmt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management-and-tourism-thesis/>
 - c. M.S. (Non-Thesis): <https://hmgmt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management-and-tourism-non-thesis/>
2. It is highly recommended that you meet with your Faculty Chair and have a complete committee in place
 - a. Remember, you must have a complete committee to file a degree plan

3. Please go to <https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/degree-completion>
 - a. Bookmark it for future use. You will likely use this website at least once per semester.
 - b. Scroll down to the Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) and click the DPSS button where you will officially file your degree plan

Degree Timelines

All students are expected to meet departmental and Graduate and Professional School (GPS) deadlines to ensure successful completion of degree requirements and graduation. **Resources for degree completion can be found [here](#).** It is important that graduate students stay on top of deadlines for their degree requirements as they matriculate through their chosen program. Each Semester, GPS publicizes the deadlines by which graduate students must complete specific degree requirements in order to be eligible to remain a degree candidate and graduate. GPS calendars for all graduate programs can be found [here](#).

University Requirements

Master's Students

Steps to fulfill Master's Degree (thesis and non-thesis) requirements can be found [here](#).

Doctoral Students

Steps to fulfill Doctoral Degree requirements can be found [here](#).

Requirements for students admitted to the M.S. Program:

Degree Plans: The degree plan is submitted before registering for the third regular semester. A hold is put on the student's account during the 2nd regular semester and is removed when the degree plan is approved by GPS. Degree plans are submitted via the Document Processing Submission System (DPSS).

Thesis Proposal (M.S. only): An approved thesis proposal is submitted before the start of the third regular semester.

Final Defense and Thesis (M.S. only): Students defend (final exam) and submit their approved thesis to The Thesis Office by the end of the fourth semester.

Requirements for Students Admitted to the Ph.D. Program:

Degree Plans: The degree plan is submitted before registering for the fourth regular semester. A hold is put on the student's account during the fourth regular semester and is removed when the degree plan is approved by GPS. Degree plans are submitted via the Document Processing Submission System (DPSS).

Dissertation Proposal and Preliminary Exam: HMGT expects the Proposal and Preliminary Exam be completed by the end of the fifth regular semester.

Final Defense and Dissertation Information

Maintaining Good Standing

Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements

All graduate students have two GPAs and both must be at least 3.0 to be in good standing, to conduct any type of exam, and to graduate:

- **Degree Plan GPA** – includes all courses listed on the degree plan except transfer course work.
- **Cumulative GPA** – computed by using all graded graduate (600- and 700- level) and advanced undergraduate (300- and 400-level) coursework completed at Texas A&M University and eligible to be applied toward a graduate degree. Those involving grades of W-drop (W), Satisfactory (S), Unsatisfactory (U), and Q- drop (Q) shall be excluded.

A graduate student may only receive grades of satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) in graduate courses bearing the numbers 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, and 695 (except for ALEC 695, BUAD 693, AGECE 695, GEOG 695, and IBUS 692). Any other graduate course taken on an S/U basis may not be used on a graduate degree plan. Graduate courses not on the degree plan may be taken on an S/U basis.

Repeat Courses and Grade Exclusions

Only grades of A, B, C and S are acceptable for graduate credit. Grades of D, F or Unsatisfactory (U) for courses on the degree plan must be absolved by repeating the courses at Texas A&M University and achieving grades of C or above or Satisfactory (S). A course in which the final grade is C or lower may be repeated once for a higher grade. If the second grade is higher, the original grade will remain on the student's permanent record, and the most recent grade will be used in computing the cumulative and degree plan GPAs. Grades for repeated courses are not automatically replaced; this must be entered and recomputed manually by GPS.

A student repeating a course in which a grade of B or better was originally earned will not receive grade points for the repeated course, unless the catalog states the course may be repeated for credit.

Scholastic Deficiency and Probation

A degree-seeking graduate student is considered to be [scholastically deficient](#) if:

- 1) Their Cumulative GPA or Degree Plan GPA falls below 3.00 or below a higher standard set by the department or college of affiliation; or
- 2) They fail to show acceptable proficiency in such other requisites for their degree as may be assigned by their graduate committee, department or the [Graduate and Professional School](#) (e.g., qualifying and preliminary examinations, research, writing or a thesis or dissertation, etc.)

The Department of HMGT has the following procedure for scholastic deficiency due to GPA:

- After every semester where a student's GPA falls below 3.0, the student is sent a warning letter from the department reminding them of the University requirements (Student Rule 10.4.3) and informing them they need to raise their GPA to at least a 3.0.
- The student must meet with their faculty chair to create an improvement plan to raise their GPA to at least a 3.0. The plan must be sent to the academic advisor and department head.
- If the minimum GPA is not attained by the end of the next regular semester (e.g. Fall or Spring), the student may be separated from the department, college, and/or university.

Note: Any eligible coursework not applied towards a prior graduate degree, and not exceeding time limits, will be included in the student's GPA for the subsequent degree program.

The Department of HMGT has the following procedure for all non-GPA scholastic deficiencies:

- After every semester where a student receives a grade of U for any 691 credit hours, an unsatisfactory rating from their faculty chair recorded in the Annual Student Evaluation, or other forms of scholastic deficiency as indicated in [Student Rule 12.3](#), the student is sent a warning letter from the department.
- The student must meet with their faculty chair to create an improvement plan to remediate the scholastic deficiency(ies). The plan must be sent to the academic advisor and department head.
- If the scholastic deficiency(ies) is (are) not resolved by the end of the next regular semester (e.g. Fall or Spring), the student may be separated from the university.

Separation of a Graduate Student from the University

For policies and procedures on dismissal of a graduate student please refer to [student rule 12](#).

Degree Classifications

Each student has a classification, which indicates the type of degree program in which the student is enrolled, and reflects the student's progress within that program at the professional level. Most graduate students in the Department of HMGT will be classified as either:

G7: admission to a master's level program of study or admission to a doctoral program of a student who has not yet completed a master's degree or 30 hours of eligible coursework taken at Texas A&M

G8: admission to a doctoral level program of study

A full listing of degree classifications can be found in the [graduate catalog](#).

Registration

Note to All Students

It is extremely important that all students register for classes as early as possible and pay tuition on time. Pre-registration does **not** require early payment of tuition and fees. Pre-registration facilitates planning for students and faculty. Each graduate course must have 5 students enrolled or it will be cancelled. When you pre-register, you allow faculty to foresee if a class will be offered or if it is in danger of being cancelled. The department can then inform you of the status of the course in time for you to register for another class if necessary.

It is your responsibility to register yourself, which includes checking your student account for any holds before you can register. The Associate Department Head can make sure all sections that are needed are open, (e.g. if you need a section of research hours (HMGT 691) under your faculty chair, but there is not one, the Associate Department Head can create the section).

Registering for courses is done via the [Howdy web portal](#). You can use the *My Dashboard* icon, then click *Notifications / Holds* to find your registration times, holds, and action items. You can use the *Registration* icon, then click *Registration* to find Registration Worksheet, Browse Class, Register for Classes, etc..

Your course selection should be made with close consultation of your faculty chair.

Howdy Checklist/Action Items

Each term for which you are trying to register, you must complete the following inside *Howdy > My Dashboard > Notifications / Holds*

- Accept your Terms of Use
- Complete Lab Safety Acknowledgement
- Complete Location Update

Restrictions and Prerequisites

Be sure to click the *course title*, then the *Restrictions* and *Prerequisites* buttons under *each section of every course* to see if you are eligible to register for that section of that course. Each section can have different restrictions and prerequisites, so check all.

Full-Time Students

Graduate students must enroll in nine hours for fall/spring terms and six hours for the 10-week summer term to be considered full-time for assistantship, scholarship, and fellowship purposes. International students holding F-1 or J-1 visas are required by federal regulations to register for and complete a “full course of study” in order to maintain legal immigration status.

Half-Time Students

In order for domestic graduate students to be eligible for financial aid, they must be registered at least half-time. Half-time registration requires:

Fall/Spring – 5 hours

10 Week Summer – 3 hours

5 Week Summer – 2 hours

Continuous Registration

Students in graduate degree programs requiring a thesis, dissertation, internship, or record of study, who have completed all graded course work on the degree plan are required to be in continuous registration for Fall and Spring semesters until all requirements for the degree have been completed. Non-thesis students must maintain continuous enrollment until all degree plan courses are completed but are not held to the continuous registration requirement after that unless the department or college has a requirement to do so. The minimal requirement to maintain continuous enrollment can be satisfied by registering for 1 credit hour. The continuous registration requirement may be satisfied by registering *In Absentia* or *In Residence*. International students should check with ISS for the minimum hours they must be enrolled in for visa purposes. Students on assistantships and many fellowships must maintain full-time enrollment.

A student who does not comply with the continuous registration requirement will be blocked from registration. The student will be allowed to register only after receiving a favorable recommendation from a departmental review committee (not the student's advisory committee), the endorsement of the department head, or Chair of the Intercollegiate Program and the approval of the Graduate and Professional School.

Registering in Absentia

To qualify for *In Absentia* registration, a student must not have access to or use facilities or properties belonging to or under the jurisdiction of The Texas A&M University System at any time during the semester or summer term for which they are enrolled. A student who qualifies for *In Absentia* registration is required to register each subsequent fall and spring semester for a minimum of one and maximum of four credit hours of 691, 684, 685 or 692. Departments and colleges may have additional or higher requirements.

An international student may have additional registration requirements depending on their visa status. The international student should consult with the International Student Services Web site or an International Student Services advisor to obtain current information on these requirements.

Late Drop and Add

Students may drop and add courses via web registration through the 5th class day of a fall or spring semester, or through the 4th class day of a summer term. After the open drop/add period, students must obtain approval from their academic dean to drop or add courses. Students who need to drop or add a course after the open drop/add period should contact their academic dean's office for information on how to submit their request. Extenuating circumstances need to exist to request a late drop or add. Students seeking the Q-Drop option must complete a Q-Drop Request form, which is then processed through your Academic Advisor (not committee chair). International students should consult with ISS before submitting a Q-Drop form.

Note: Graduate students in the department of HMGT are permitted only one Q-Drop for all graduate coursework during their degree program.

Reduced Course Load (International Students Only)

Any F-1 or J-1 student who wishes to drop below full-time enrollment should complete either the [F-1 Reduced Course Load form](#) or the [J-1 Reduced Course Load form](#). The authorized exceptions to the full course of study requirement and the rules for reduced course load are included with the form. The HMGT Department Head approves reduced course load applications only for extenuating circumstances.

Registration Holds

Inside Howdy, you can use the *My Dashboard* icon, then click *Notifications / Holds* to find your registration times, holds, and action items.

Leave of Absence

Under unusual circumstances, a student may petition for a leave of absence. More detailed information on a leave of absence can be found in the [graduate catalog](#).

Funding Opportunities

Financing Your Graduate Education at Texas A&M

Educational expenses for nine months will vary according to your personal needs and course of study. [Scholarships & Financial Aid](#) provides an estimated budget for new graduate students (including tuition and fees, books, supplies, transportation, room and board, incidental and living expenses). For the latest and detailed tuition and fee information, please refer to [Student Business Services](#).

Graduate Assistantships

There are four types of graduate assistantships available at TAMU. Most of these positions require service of 20 hours per week. Graduate students holding assistantships must be registered for a minimum of nine credit hours during a fall or spring semester, or for six credit hours during the summer. Assistantships terminate upon failure to maintain the minimum enrollment requirement. Students serving in these roles are eligible for insurance benefits and in some cases may pay tuition and fees at the in-state rate. Graduate Assistants cannot be employed greater than 50% effort (20 hours per week) without approval from the Department of HMGT, the student's advisory chair, and the Graduate and Professional School.

If the University pays you, you are an employee of the State of Texas. You are bound by state law and university business and ethics policies. All state employees are required to complete Human Resources trainings. A listing of your assigned training course can be found under the Traintraq tab at sso.tamu.edu.

Note: The University requires that GAR, GAT, and GAL graduate assistantships cover 9-credit hours of tuition and all university required fees for Ph.D. students who are within their first four years of study. Tuition and/or fee coverage for M.S. students is not usual; an employee's supervising faculty member may have funding for these purposes on occasion.

Responsibilities of a Graduate Assistant

- You are a half time employee of the State of Texas
- You must register full-time before classes begin to work
- Vacations consist of university holidays, not academic breaks. This means that you may have to perform job duties on days when the university is open, but classes are not in session (e.g. reading days which typically occur around holidays and exams). You should check the [university academic calendar](#) for official university holidays. Please note that there are several US holidays on which the University is still open, (e.g. Labor Day and Good Friday).

Payroll as a Graduate Assistant

Processing payroll paperwork takes time, especially at the beginning of a semester when hundreds of new employees are being added. Your new employee paperwork must be processed before August 16 for Fall, or January 1 for a Spring start, to avoid delaying your paycheck. Like all TAMU employees, Graduate Assistants are paid for work already performed. For new Fall semester students, if you are added to payroll in time, you will receive your first paycheck around September 1 (1/2 month's pay: August 16-31). In subsequent fall semesters, students with no TAMU summer funding will receive their first paycheck on the first workday of October. This means you should arrive in College Station with enough funds to move in, pay any balance on your student bill, and pay your expenses for more than one month.

Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT) – Teaching Assistants in the Department of HMGT typically assist faculty members with undergraduate courses for an average of 20 hours per week, with some weeks exceeding 20 hours and others requiring less than 20 hours.

Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching (GANT) - The student will typically work an average of 20 hours per week completing various non-teaching duties within the department.

Graduate Assistant Research (GAR) – Research Assistants are paid from a research grant to complete research under a specific Principal Investigator (PI). The PI typically is the student's faculty Chair but may be another faculty member. The student will often (but not always) work on a research project that could serve as a Thesis/Dissertation project for the student. The student's stipend is typically covered by the research grant.

Graduate Assistant Lecturer (GAL) – This type of assistantship is restricted to Doctoral students with a M.S. degree in a related field or Doctoral students admitted to Doctoral candidacy (passed the preliminary examination, completed all degree plan coursework, have an approved proposal on file with the GPS office, and have met the required residency and /or ELPE requirements). A GAL has full classroom responsibilities for a 3-credit hour course. GALs are appointed at the discretion of the Department Head in consultation with the GAT coordinator and the student's faculty Chair.

TA Training

All new GATs and GALs are required to take a mandatory [training course](#) provided by the Center for Teaching Excellence at Texas A&M University prior to teaching. Additionally, all GATs and GALs (new and returning) are required to participate in a departmental training each semester

Graduate Student Health Insurance

All students holding graduate assistantships will be eligible for [health insurance](#). The university will cover a portion of the monthly premium with the employee being responsible for the remaining amount.

Other Funding Opportunities

The Graduate and Professional School maintains a detailed [list](#) of TAMU and external funding opportunities for new and current graduate students including information on fellowships, scholarships, financial aid, and awards.

Research and Presentation (RAP) Travel Award

The Graduate Student Research and Presentation Travel Award program supports graduate student travel to make presentations or conduct research by reimbursing students for some of the eligible expenses incurred. Detailed information regarding this grant and applications can be found [here](#). Additionally, HMGT offers “[mini-grant](#)” funding to assist graduate students in defraying conference expenses.

Non-Resident Tuition Waivers

A student may qualify for a non-resident tuition waiver if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Employed as a Graduate Assistant (GAT, GAL, GAR) and enrolled full time
- Receive a competitively awarded university, college, or departmental scholarship of \$1,000 or greater

International Students

Once admitted to the graduate program, international students will work closely with [International Student Services](#) (ISS) to obtain a visa and any additional requirements. The Department of HMGT is not involved in the visa process, nor can it expedite the process. Questions about the visa process should be directed towards your assigned International Student Services Advisor.

English Language Proficiency Requirements

All international graduate students whose native language is not English must fulfill an English proficiency requirement through either English Proficiency Verification or English Proficiency Certification. English Proficiency Certification is [required by the State of Texas](#) before a graduate student is eligible to serve as a GAT, GAR, or any other position considered to be a teaching position (e.g., instructor, lecturer, etc.). All other students must be either English Proficiency Verified or English Proficiency Certified. Minimum requirements to meet English Proficiency Verification and Certification can be found [here](#). Students who do not meet English Language Certification by the TOEFL or IELTS speaking score, may take the [English Language Proficiency Exam \(ELPE\)](#).

International Student Funding

Visit the International Student Services website for information on [financial resources](#).

Course Waivers

A student that has previously completed required courses may be allowed to waive the course. Students should consult their faculty chair on whether to seek a course waiver.

Note: A student should not list waived courses on their degree plan because they will not enroll in and receive a grade for the course. The student will still need to complete the number of required degree hours. In many cases, a Ph.D. student will replace the waived credit hours with research credits (HMGT 691) on the degree plan. However, a M.S. student typically needs to add additional graded courses (e.g. non-research hours) to their degree plan to replace the waived course credit hours so they do not exceed the GPS rule of a maximum of 8 research hours on a Master's degree plan.

Transfer Coursework

- Transfer course work may be accepted contingent upon the approval of the student's advisory committee, department head, and the GPS office. Transfer work is handled on a case-by-case basis.
- Course(s) must be completed at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a grade of A or B and must be graduate level or upper-level undergraduate courses.
- In most cases, Master's students may transfer in 12 hours with the approval of their graduate committee, department, and GPS. Students should refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific transfer limitations by degree.
- A final official transcript (with grades) must be received by the Office of Admissions for all transfer work listed on the degree plan. A degree plan listing transfer work "to be taken" will be approved pending receipt of the final official transcript listing such work. Once the transcript has been received, it will be used to verify that the courses in question meet all eligibility criteria.
- Master's degree students who are scheduling their final exam and are currently registered for transfer work must have confirmation of registration in the course from the attending university on file with GPS prior to approval of the final examination. Notification may be in the form of an unofficial transcript or a copy of the student's registration. Doctoral students are not eligible to transfer in course work during their last semester or the semester of their final examination.

Q-Drop Limits

Graduate students in the department of HMGT are permitted only one Q-Drop for all graduate coursework during their degree.

Note: Graduate students who are expected to maintain full time enrollment (e.g. Graduate Teaching/Research Assistants, F-1 visa holders) cannot Q-drop a course if it drops their total

credit hours below full-time status (9 credit hours in Fall and Spring, 6 credit hours in Summer). Check with ISS before submitting a Q-drop form.

The Preliminary Exam

A [preliminary examination](#) is required of doctoral students. For PhD students, the preliminary examination often has a written portion and an oral portion. The preliminary exam is given no earlier than a date when the student is within approximately six credit hours of completion of the formal course work (i.e., all course work on the degree plan except 681, 684, 690, 691, and 692 courses). It is recommended that the preliminary examination be completed no later than the end of the semester following the completion of the formal course work on the degree plan.

Prior to scheduling the preliminary examination with the other committee members, the committee chair will review with the student the eligibility criteria, using the [Preliminary Examination Checklist](#) to ensure that the student is eligible for the examination.

The chair will report the results of the examination using the Report of Preliminary Examination form, with the signatures of all committee members, and the Preliminary Examination Checklist. These forms must be submitted to GPS **within 10 working days of the scheduled oral examination date, and at least 14 weeks prior to the date of the final examination.** A positive vote by members of the graduate committee, with at most one dissention, is required to pass the exam.

If a student fails the preliminary examination, there is no obligation for a re-examination. At their discretion, the advisory committee and GPS may allow re-examination when adequate time has passed to allow the student to address inadequacies emerging from the first examination (normally six months). It is highly recommended that a written summary of the deficiencies noted on the failed preliminary exam, along with recommendations for further study, be provided to the student within one week of the first examination.

Examination schedules must be arranged so that all members of the Advisory Committee can be present for the preliminary exam. Substitutions should be requested only as an absolute necessity. Unless emergency circumstances exist, arrangements for a substitution should be made by the individual member of the Advisory Committee who is to be absent—not by the student involved, the Chair of the Advisory Committee, nor the Head of the student's major department. If a member must be absent from any scheduled examination, he or she should arrange with a Member of the Graduate Faculty from his or her department to sit at the examination as a substitute and should notify the Committee Chair. **No substitutions for the Chair will be approved.** If a Chair cannot attend a scheduled examination, or if two (or more) members of an Advisory Committee must be absent, the examination must be rescheduled.

After passing the required preliminary examination for the doctoral degree, the student must complete all remaining requirements within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination. With the approval of the advisory committee and department head or chair of the interdisciplinary program, the student may request an extension

of the four years' time limit with the submission of a Petition for Extension of Time Limits to GPS.

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have: (1) completed all formal coursework on the degree plan except for any remaining 681, 684, 690 and 691, (2) a Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than C in any course on the degree plan, (3) passed the preliminary examination (written and oral portions), (4) submitted an approved dissertation proposal, (5) met the residence requirements. The final examination will not be authorized for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

Filing a Petition

There are two types of petitions offered by the GPS office. The "MDD Petition" (MDD: Major, Degree, or Department) and the "Long Form Petition". All petitions are to be submitted online at <https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/>. Please be aware that a student may only have one petition in process through the DPSS system at one time. The GPS office must approve the petition before a new petition of either type may be created.

MDD Petition

The MDD Petition is used to request a change of major, degree or department. A tutorial on how to create a MDD petition can be found [here](#).

1. Go to the Grad School's homepage <https://grad.tamu.edu/>
2. Click on Academics and scroll down to Degree Completion
<https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/degree-completion>
3. Scroll down to Document Processing Submission System (DPSS)
<https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/>
4. Login, find the drop-down box, and click on Long Form Petition. This is where you will update your degree plan
5. Once I have approved your petition, it will go to your Faculty Chair then your committee. I suggest you email your Faculty Chair and committee, collectively, and let them know their approval will be needed on your petition.

Long Form Petition

This petition allows a student to submit requests for any one or a combination of Committee Changes, Course Changes, Extension of Time Limits or for a Waiver/Exception of rules. A tutorial on how to create a Long Form Petition can be found [here](#).

1. Go to the Grad School's homepage <https://grad.tamu.edu/>
2. Click on Academics and scroll down to Degree Completion
<https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/degree-completion>

3. Scroll down to Document Processing Submission System (DPSS).
<https://ogsdps.tamu.edu/>
4. Login, find the drop-down box, and click on Long Form Petition. This is where you will update your degree plan
5. Once I have approved your petition, it will go to your Faculty Chair then your committee. I suggest you email your Faculty Chair and committee, collectively, and let them know their approval will be needed on your petition.

Once the student submits a petition, it will be routed for approval. Some departments have a pre-committee staff approver (e.g. the Academic Advisor) that the petition must pass through before being routed to the committee chair. The chair must approve the petition before the rest of the committee members will have access to approve, and all committee members must approve before the department head/ departmental approver can approve. Once all approvals have been added, the document is then routed to the GPS office for processing and approval.

Final Examination (Final Defense)

It is strongly recommended that you meet with your Academic Advisor at the beginning of the semester you intend to defend to discuss deadlines and ensure you have met all degree requirements. To be eligible to take a final exam (final defense), students must have at least a 3.00 GPA for courses on the degree plan and for all courses completed at Texas A&M eligible to be applied to the degree plan, and there must be no unresolved grades of D, F, or U for any course listed on the degree plan. They must also have completed or be currently registered for all the courses listed on their degree plan and have met all English language requirements. In addition, doctoral students must be formally admitted to candidacy before a final exam can be requested.

A **Request and Announcement of the Final Examination** must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the scheduled date of the exam. GPS must be notified in writing of any cancellation or change to the scheduled examination date.

Final examination results are reported through **DocuSign**. The chair of the committee will receive an email to approve the form from DocuSign. Committee members should not approve the final examination until after the defense has finished. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee, with at most one dissent, is required to pass the final exam. Examinations that are not completed and reported to GPS within 10 business days of the scheduled examination date will be recorded as failures. A Master's student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination and it must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester. A doctoral student is allowed only one opportunity to take the final exam. Final examinations must be passed by the deadlines announced each semester or summer term by GPS in order for the student to graduate in that semester.

Note: Per University rules, the final defense may not be administered before the thesis/dissertation is available to all members of the student's advisory committee in substantially final form, and all members have had adequate time to review the document. This means your advisory committee needs to receive a near final copy of your thesis/dissertation **2 weeks before** the final defense.

Substitutions at the Final Defense

Examination schedules must be arranged so that all members of Advisory Committee can be present for the Final Examination. Substitutions should be requested only as an absolute necessity. Unless emergency circumstances exist, arrangements for a substitution should be made by the individual member of the Advisory Committee who is to be absent—not by the student involved, the Chair of the Advisory Committee, nor the Head of the student's major department. If a member must be absent from any scheduled examination, he or she should arrange with a Member of the Graduate Faculty from his or her department to sit at the examination as a substitute and should notify the Committee Chair. **No substitutions for the Chair will be approved.** If a Chair cannot attend a scheduled examination, or if two (or more) members of an Advisory Committee must be absent, the examination must be rescheduled.

Timeline for Submittal and Graduation

Master's and Doctoral students have one year from successfully completing the final examination to clear the Thesis Office and graduate. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the final examination. With the approval of the advisory committee and department head or chair of the interdisciplinary program, the student may request an extension of the one-year time limit with the submission of a Petition for Extension of Time Limits to GPS.

Thesis Office

The Thesis Office reviews each electronic Thesis, Dissertation and Record of Study (ETD) for uniformity, consistency, and adherence to University guidelines for quality. In addition, the office also provides a wide range of preparation support and coordinates the timely release of the ETD for public access. Details on how to prepare and submit your Thesis/Dissertation can be found on the Thesis Office [webpage](#).

Pre-Submittal Conference

Students are strongly encouraged to attend the [pre-submittal conference](#) prior to the oral defense. The pre-submittal conference is designed to provide guidance on preparation, submission and review of the ETD.

Thesis/Dissertation Forms and Information

The following forms are required for M.S. students:

- [Approval of Written Thesis Form - Masters](#)
- [Copyright and Availability Form](#)

The following forms are required for Doctoral students:

- [Approval of Written Thesis Form -Dissertation](#)
- [Copyright and Availability Form](#)

- [Online Survey of Earned Doctorates and AAUDE Survey](#)

Submitting your Thesis/Dissertation

Instructions on submitting the Thesis/Dissertation electronically can be found [here](#). After the student's draft has been reviewed, the student will be contacted by the Thesis Office, and will be informed of any corrections that need to be made. Students will be responsible for submitting their corrections by the deadlines on the GPS calendar for the respective semester in which they plan to graduate. Please be aware that students must have defended their Thesis or Dissertation before any Thesis forms may be submitted.

Graduate and Professional School Required Forms

The Graduate and Professional School (GPS) serves as the main repository for all required forms through the course of graduate study. GPS uses DocuSign for forms requiring signatures of committee members. Detailed information on how to use DocuSign can be found [here](#). All forms must be submitted and approved by the specified dates on the GPS calendar for the respective semester in which the student plans to graduate.

Please follow these steps to submit your Graduate and Professional School DocuSign form:

- 1) Go to either of these pages and select the document you need to submit
 - a. Scroll down to DocuSign Forms via: <https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/degree-completion>
 - b. Search for your form via: <https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/forms>
- 2) Follow the steps and complete the form. **It is important that you use the following contact information** and that you double check that all committee member names and emails are correct so the forms route properly.
 - a. **Staff Graduate Advisor:** Melyssa-Anne Stricklin melyssa.stricklin@tamu.edu
 - b. **Department Head or Intercollegiate Faculty Chair:** Scott Shafer sshafer@tamu.edu
- 3) Finish completing the form and submit it.
- 4) Notify all your committee members, collectively, via email and cc Melyssa-Anne Stricklin that you have routed the form so that everyone who needs to sign can anticipate receiving the DocuSign email. This step is important so that forms do not get held up in faculty members inboxes.
- 5) Please remember a DocuSign form is not considered complete until all signatures have been submitted, so please do not wait until a deadline date to submit your form. <https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/dates-and-deadlines/dates-and-deadlines>

Again, we can't stress enough the importance of entering the correct names and email addresses into the form so that it routes correctly. GPS requires 10 working days to evaluate a document. No guarantee that documents submitted less than 10 working days will be approved.

Most forms are initiated by the student and then routed to the appropriate approvers, usually the committee members and department head. The table below lists all required approvals and a workflow diagram of the approval process can be found [here](#).

DocuSign Form	Email Addresses needed for DocuSign	Who initiates form in DocuSign	Notes
Proposal Approval	-Academic Advisor -All Committee members -Dept. Head (DH)	Student	
Preliminary Exam Checklist and Report	-Academic Advisor -All Committee members -Dept. Head (DH)	Student	
Request for Final Examination	-Academic Advisor -Committee Chair -DH	Student	Must be submitted at least 10 working days in advance of Defense date
Report of Final Examination (Defense)	-All Committee members	Graduate and Professional School	**Form is generated in DocuSign after the <i>Request for Final Examination</i> is approved by GPS
Written Thesis/ Dissertation Approval	-Academic Advisor -All Committee Members -DH	Student	
Thesis/ Dissertation Copyright Availability	-Committee Chair	Student	

Note:

- Only use @tamu.edu emails for **all** committee members, academic advisor, and Department Head. Do not use @ag.tamu.edu. If you have any non-TAMU committee

members, you should also use their @tamu.edu email address. If you submit the DocuSign with the @ag.tamu.edu email addresses, the form will be rejected/cancelled/voided and will need to be reinitiated by the student.

- When filling out the powerform in DocuSign, “Staff Graduate Advisor” or “Graduate Program Assistant” is the AGLS Advising Center 2 Academic Advisor.
- If information is missing from the powerform (e.g. you forgot to list your co-chair), or any information is incorrect (e.g. incorrect Thesis title), the form will be rejected/cancelled/voided and will need to be reinitiated by the student.
- The DocuSign app is the easiest way to track and sign forms.
- Students can [track the progress](#) of any form in DocuSign at any time. It is the student’s responsibility to track the form (not the Academic Advisor’s or Chair’s responsibility).

Preparing to Graduate

Your AGLS Advising Center 2 Academic Advisor will send out an *Intent to Graduate* Google form each semester. When you are approximately two semesters away from graduating, you will fill out the Intent to Graduate form. Please note this survey is for INTERNAL advising purposes only. This does not commit you to graduate in the semester you indicate, but just provides information on students who could possibly be graduating in upcoming semesters. It is NOT an application to graduate and is NOT required by the Graduate and Professional School or the University. The official graduation application opens approximately one week prior to the first day of class for a given semester and must be completed in Howdy.

It is highly recommended that you meet with the AGLS Advising Center 2 Academic Advisor at the start of the semester you plan to defend or graduate. The Academic Advisor can check that you have met all degree requirements including courses on degree plan and residency requirements.

Students planning to graduate at the end of the current semester must apply for graduation. Information about application for degree, cap and gown rental and graduation ceremony dates can be found [here](#). Students are responsible for monitoring application for degree deadlines.

International Students and Graduation/Departure

There are certain requirements & obligations that students holding F- 1 and J-1 visas must meet prior to and after graduation. These requirements and obligations vary from student to student and are handled on a case-by-cases basis. For more information, please visit <http://iss.tamu.edu> or call 979-845-1824.

Letter of Intent

A student completing a graduate degree at Texas A&M who wants to continue in another graduate degree may request to do so by filing an approved letter of intent with GPS if there is

no break in enrollment, or if the break is less than one calendar year. A student, who has an enrollment break of more than one calendar year or longer following graduation, must re-apply through Graduate Admissions.

Students wishing to pursue a degree offered by the Department of HMGT and are eligible to apply via the Letter of Intent will be evaluated on the same criteria used in the admissions process for all other applicants.

Students applying for the Ph.D. program with a M.S. in HMGT

To apply via the letter of intent, the following should be submitted to your Chair:

- Statement of Purpose
- Curriculum Vitae
- Unofficial transcripts
- Letter of support from prospective Ph.D. faculty chair

Note: Students in this category will be considered current students regarding GAT or GAL support and scholarships.

Note: Students who are approved for a Letter of Intent, and do not attend the beginning semester indicated, must file a new Letter of Intent with the new semester indicated (if within one year of graduation). The Letter of Intent can only be approved once all degree requirements have been met. If the student is registered for graded course work in their last semester, the letter may not be able to be approved prior to final grades being submitted.

Office Space

Office space is provided for thesis-based graduate students that hold Graduate Assistantships and/or Fellowships. Reassignment of office space is at the discretion of the department head.

Students that are provided office space will be required to sign out a key with business office staff members. Students are allowed possession of their keys for as long as their office space is occupied. All keys must be returned prior to graduation and/or termination/resignation of Graduate Assistantship or Fellowship privileges.

Students that are granted office space will be provided with a desk and chair by the department. Any other supplies, including computer equipment, will be provided by the student at their own expense. All Texas A&M students are **required to purchase/own a computer with meets the minimum requirements** listed [here](#).

Software

Texas A&M University provides several software products to student for free or discounted pricing. A full list of available software and purchasing instructions can be found [here](#).

Use of Departmental Equipment

Departmental equipment is any equipment that is owned by either the department or the university. All students are entitled to usage of departmental equipment if authorization is obtained beforehand. The department employs a strict rule that all equipment must be returned in good condition. Any damages to departmental equipment must be reported immediately to the proper individual. Failure to use or return equipment properly may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of equipment use privileges.

Building Access, Parking & Computer Usage

Building Access

All graduate students in the Department of HMGT are entitled to building access during regular hours and after hours. Regular hours are from 7:30 A.M. - 5 P.M. Monday –Friday. During this time, students may enter the building through any door. Students who need access to the building after hours must enter through the designated after-hours entrances by swiping their university identification card. To obtain after hours building access, students should contact the Department Business Administrator.

Parking on College Station campus

Parking on campus is heavily monitored 24-hours a day. Students wishing to park on campus must either obtain a parking permit and park in their designated lot, or park in a visitor's lot with associated fees. Parking in an unauthorized area may result in a parking ticket, and/or towing of the student's car at their own expense. For information regarding parking, please see the transportation department website at transport.tamu.edu. It is highly recommended to check the Parking [website](#) before each trip to College Station as special events (e.g. sporting events) can temporarily prohibit usage of some lots.

Official University Travel

Certain trips such as conferences, research symposiums, and fieldwork may qualify as official university travel, and may be partially funded at the expense of the department and/or university. Claiming of such travel is done electronically through CONCUR through the sso.tamus.edu website. Students must receive proper training and authorization before using this website to claim travel as official university travel. A student traveling at university expense will be issued credit cards by the business office for that specific use. Personal travel should not be claimed as official university travel. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain passports, health insurance and /or visas for the respective country they plan to visit when traveling abroad. For more information on obtaining passports and visas, please contact the Study Abroad Programs Office. For more information on official university travel, please contact the HMGT department Business Administrator.

International Students

International students holding F-1 and J-1 visas are encouraged to attend conferences, research symposiums, and conduct fieldwork during their studies at Texas A&M University. It is up to the student to ensure that they have a valid passport, visa, health insurance and

travel signature on their form I-20 or DS-2019 prior to traveling, especially when traveling abroad. Failure to remain in compliance with ISS and DHS policies may result in the loss of an international student visa, and/or the privilege to study at Texas A&M University. For more information on international student travel both domestically and internationally, please contact International Student Services.

Student Grievances

Texas A&M University is committed to providing an educational and work climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual. To further that commitment, the university has developed procedures for students to pursue grievances within the university community. A list of the types of grievances as well as procedures can be found [here](#).

Within the Department of HMGH, there are several avenues to report a grievance. The HMGH Associate Head and Department Head have long-standing “open door” policies and are willing to speak with students about the proper channels to handle grievances. If a student does not feel comfortable speaking with the Associate Department Head or the Department Head, they should address their questions with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean of Graduate Affairs.

Ombuds Officer

The Ombuds Officer serves as an informal, neutral and confidential resource for graduate students to discuss questions and concerns related to their graduate experience. The university is a large and complex institution and graduate students often play multiple roles (e.g., student, research collaborator, instructor, technician, peer). Misunderstandings and conflicts can arise in any one of these roles. Having a safe, off-the-record conversation with an Ombuds Officer can be a first step if you do not know where to turn. The Ombuds Officer is here to help graduate students identify options for addressing concerns and will promote a fair and impartial process for all parties involved. Further information can be found [here](#).

Quick Reference: Whom to Contact with Questions (updated 6/23/2022)

Academics (classes, registration holds, GPS requirements, etc.)

Primary contact: Melyssa-Anne Stricklin, (melyssa.stricklin@tamu.edu)

AGLS 463 | 979-458-8515

[Virtual Office](#)

Backup contact: Kelsey Hirsch, (kelseyhirsch@tamu.edu)

AGLS 465

Graduate Program Concerns & Signing Authority

Mrs. Kelly Kyle, Lecturer and Undergraduate Program Leader (kelly.kyle@ag.tamu.edu)

Backup contact: Dr. Brian King, Department Head (brian.king@ag.tamu.edu)

AGLS 417 979-845-7324

Building and Room Access/Reservations

Ms. Debbie Barnes (deborah.barnes@tamu.edu)

AGLS 416 979-845-7324

Payroll

Mr. Clara Aguilar, Business Coordinator I (claraaguilar@tamu.edu)

AGLS 422 979-845-5771

HMGT Teaching Assistantships & Scholarships

Mrs. Kelly Kyle, Lecturer and Undergraduate Program Leader (kelly.kyle@ag.tamu.edu)

Travel

Ms. Kathy Junek, Business Associate I (kathy.junek@tamu.edu)

AGLS 424 979-8458-5593

