TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Arch H. Aplin III '80 Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management & Tourism

2026-2027

Graduate Student Academic Handbook

Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism (HMGT)

Texas A&M University

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Introduction

About this Handbook

Howdy! Welcome to the Arch H. Aplin III '80 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 TAMU 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. Students are strongly encouraged to monitor all departmental and Graduate and Professional School (GPS) deadlines, including degree plans, proposals, examinations, candidacy, final defense, and thesis/dissertation submission requirements. Regular communication with the faculty chair and academic advisor is recommended to ensure timely degree progress.

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. Such concerns may arise when one individual has direct or indirect supervisory, instructional, evaluative, funding, mentoring, or advisory authority over another individual.

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. or https://mentalhealth.tamu.edu/

Degrees

Degrees in HMGT

HMGT offers three-degree programs: MS-Thesis, MS-Non-Thesis, and Doctor of Philosophy. 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. Thesis consists of 30 credit hours of combined coursework and research. https://hmgt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management-and-tourism-thesis/
- The M.S. Non- Thesis Option requires of a minimum of 30 semester credit hours of approved coursework. https://hmgt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management- and-tourism-non-thesis/
- The Ph.D. program entails 64 credit hours of combined coursework and research when entering with a thesis-based M.S. in a related field. https://hmgt.tamu.edu/ph-d-in- hospitality-hotel-management-and-tourism/

Doctoral Students: All doctoral students must satisfy the University's residence requirement, complete the preliminary examination (Appendix 1), submit and defend a dissertation proposal (Appendix 11), achieve admission to doctoral candidacy, successfully defend their dissertation, and submit the final approved dissertation in accordance with Graduate School requirements.

The Department encourages and expects doctoral students to complete their preliminary examinations and dissertation proposal defense within the first 30 months of enrollment and to successfully defend and submit their dissertation within five years of their official program start date. These milestones reflect the expected progression through the doctoral program and help support timely degree completion, sustained research productivity, and continued good academic standing.

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.

Please refer to Appendix 10 for instructions on submitting the degree plan.

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

Degree Plans: PhD-HMGT

Core Research Method & HMGT Specific Courses (27 credit hours):

1. HMGT 613 - Innovation and Service Experience Design in Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation
2. *HMGT 614 - Research Methods in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management
3. HMGT 616 - Tourism Economics
4. HMGT 630 - Contemporary Perspectives in Qualitative Research within Hospitality & Tourism
5. HMGT 632 - Contemporary Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Human Resources Management
6. HMGT 635 - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation
7. *HMGT 636 - Evaluation and Measurement of Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Services
8. HMGT 637 - Experimental Design and Analysis
9. HMGT 672 - GIS Applications in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation

** If students have completed equivalent courses in a previous master's program, they may substitute these with other approved electives in consultation with their faculty chair.*

Elective Courses (15 credit hours):

Elective courses must be selected in consultation with the student's faculty chair and must directly support the doctoral candidate's academic and research goals. Electives are expected to be chosen from graduate-

level offerings within the HMGT department to ensure disciplinary depth, methodological rigor, and alignment with program competencies. Courses outside of HMGT may be approved only in exceptional cases and require prior approval from the faculty chair and the Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs. Students must meet all prerequisites and adhere to course restrictions. Final selection of electives must be jointly approved by the doctoral researcher and their faculty chair/advisor, ensuring clear alignment with the student's dissertation focus.

Committee Requirements:
The doctoral committee must consist of a minimum of four graduate faculty members, including the chair/main advisor. At least one member must be from outside the HMGT department to comply with TAMU Graduate and Professional School requirements. Committee composition must be approved by the faculty chair and the Graduate and Professional School.

HMGT Research Forum-Non-Coursework Expectations:
All full-time graduate students in residence are required to attend and actively participate in the HMGT Research Forum, which serves as a core component of their academic engagement. The forum will convene a minimum of three times each Fall and Spring semester. Regular attendance and active involvement are expected as part of the program's professional development requirements.

Graded Coursework: 42 credit hours of course work

Research Hours: Minimum of 22 hours of HMGT/RPTS 691 (Research)/Dissertation

Total Degree Plan Credit Hours: 64 credit hours

Degree Plans: MS-HMGT-Non-Thesis

Core Research Method & HMGT Specific Courses (24 credit hours):

1. HMGT 604 - Food Service Delivery Systems in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management
2. HMGT 613 - Innovation and Service Experience Design in Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation
3. HMGT 631 - Marketing in the Digital Age in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management
4. HMGT 632 - Contemporary Human Resource Management in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation
5. HMGT 636 - Evaluation and Measurement of Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Services
6. HMGT 650 - Financing Services in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management
7. HMGT 672 - GIS Applications in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation
8. HMGT 685 - Capstone Project or internship

Elective Course (6 credit hours):
The elective course must be selected in consultation with the faculty chair and must support the candidate's academic and research goals. Electives are expected to be selected from offerings within the HMGT department to ensure alignment with program competencies and disciplinary depth. Courses outside of HMGT will be considered only in exceptional cases and require prior approval from the faculty chair and Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs, with clear justification demonstrating their relevance to the student's academic objectives. Students must meet all prerequisites and adhere to course restrictions.

Committee Requirements:
The non-thesis MS degree requires that a faculty chairperson serve as the overall program supervisor, ensuring consistency in the academic quality and interpretation of capstone projects across faculty.

HMGT Research Forum-Non-Coursework Expectations:
All full-time graduate students in residence are required to attend and actively participate in the HMGT Research Forum, which serves as a core component of their academic engagement. The forum will convene a minimum of three times each Fall and Spring semester. Regular attendance and active involvement are expected as part of the program's professional development requirements.

Total Degree Plan Credit Hours (30 credit hours)
**No more than 3-credit hours counting toward the degree plan can be taken outside of HMGT without approval from both the student's Faculty Chair and the Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs*
**MS Students may take up to 9 credit hours of 300-400 level HMGT courses, but this is only allowed in extreme circumstances and must be approved by the faculty chair and the Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs*

Degree Plans: MS-HMGT-Thesis

Core Research Method Courses (12 credit hours):

1. HMGT 614 - Research Methods in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management
2. HMGT 630 - Contemporary Perspectives in Qualitative Research within Hospitality & Tourism
3. HMGT 635 - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation
4. HMGT 636 - Evaluation and Measurement of Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Services

Elective Courses (6 credit hours):
The elective course must be selected in consultation with the faculty chair and must support the candidate's academic and research goals. Electives are expected to be selected from offerings within the HMGT department to ensure alignment with program competencies and disciplinary depth. Courses outside of HMGT will be considered only in exceptional cases and require prior approval from the faculty chair and Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs, with clear justification demonstrating their relevance to the student's academic objectives. Students must meet all prerequisites and adhere to course restrictions.

Committee Requirements:
The MS thesis committee must consist of a minimum of three graduate faculty members, including the chair/main advisor. At least one committee member must be from outside the HMGT department, in accordance with TAMU Graduate and Professional School requirements. Committee composition must be approved by the faculty chair and the Graduate and Professional School.

HMGT Research Forum-Non-Coursework Expectations:
All full-time graduate students in residence are required to attend and actively participate in the HMGT Research Forum, which serves as a core component of their academic engagement. The forum will convene a minimum of three times each Fall and Spring semester. Regular attendance and active involvement are expected as part of the program's professional development requirements.

Professional Study: 3 credit hours of HMGT 693 Professional Study

Research Hours: Minimum of 9 hours of HMGT/RPTS 691 (Research)/Dissertation

Total Degree Plan Credit Hours: 30 credit hours
**No more than 3-credit hours counting toward the degree plan can be taken outside of HMGT without approval from both the student's Faculty Chair and the Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs*
**MS Students may take up to 9 credit hours of 300-400 level courses, but this is only allowed in extreme*

circumstances and must be approved by the faculty chair and Associate Department Head of Graduate programs

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://hmgt.tamu.edu/ph-d-in-hospitality-hotel-management-and-tourism/
   b. M.S.: https://hmgt.tamu.edu/m-s-hospitality-and-hotel-management-and- tourism-thesis/
   c. M.S. (Non-Thesis): https://hmgt.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

Please refer to Appendix 10 for instructions on submitting the degree plan.

Committee Chair Change

At some point during the degree program, it may become necessary to administratively transfer to a new dissertation or thesis chair. The first step would be to meet with your original chair to discuss a proposed transition and work together with your chair to identify a suitable alternative. All thesis or dissertation faculty chair must be credentialed and admitted members of the graduate college. In the event of personal conflict between the student and chair, it is advised to consult the department chair to mediate the process. Once a suitable new chair has been identified, contacts, and agrees to assume dissertation or thesis advising responsibility for the student, the next step is for the student to log into the graduate college's degree approval system (DPSS) system to submit to longform petition.

Submit change by electronically filling out the required forms in DPSS, specifying the outgoing chair and indicating the new chair. Upon submission, the DPSS system will automatically initiate the process. Both the original committee, department head and the proposed new chair will then receive the request through the DPSS system, electronically. They will provide their electronic signatures or approvals directly within the DPSS system, ensuring a seamless and documented transition. Once the new chair is approved in the DPSS system, they must then approve any further changes to the committee and review the degree program in the DPPS.

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. Thesis only): An approved thesis proposal is submitted before the start of the third regular semester. HMGT expects students to publicly defend their research proposal to their committee (HMGT faculty and graduate students are invited to attend).

Final Exam (defense): Students defend (final exam) their thesis (M.S. Thesis) or professional paper/project (M.S. Non-Thesis). HMGT expects students to publicly defend their final exam to their committee (HMGT faculty and graduate students are invited to attend).

To schedule the final exam (defense), the following conditions must be met:

- Have an approved degree plan
- Complete all coursework or be registered for the remaining coursework on the degree plan
- Apply for graduation
- Degree Plan GPA and Overall GPA must be above minimum GPA requirements.

The previous milestones must be completed.

- Degree Plan
- Preliminary Exam (doctoral only)
- Proposal
- Residency
- Admission to candidacy (doctoral only)

Thesis (M.S. only): Students submit their approved thesis to The Thesis Office by the deadlines set by the Graduate and Professional School during your final 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 APPENDIX
. Degree plans are submitted via the Document Processing Submission System (DPSS).

Preliminary Exam: Students must submit the Preliminary Exam Request in ARCS prior to starting their exam. To schedule the preliminary exam, the following conditions must be met:

1. Have an approved degree plan

2. Be registered for the semester or 5-week term during which the exam occurs
3. Degree plan GPA and overall GPA must meet or exceed minimum requirements (3.0)
4. At the end of the semester in which the exam is given, have no more than 6 hours of graded coursework remaining on the degree plan (this can be waived with the approval of the department head)

Research Proposal: Students must submit the Research Proposal Approval Form in ARCS prior to defending their research proposal to their committee. HMGT expects students to publicly defend their research proposal to their committee (HMGT faculty and graduate students are invited to attend) To submit the research proposal, the following conditions must be met:

1. Have an approved degree plan
2. Have no open requests in DPSS

IRB: Any data collection requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. For further information, please visit https://research.tamu.edu/research-compliance/human-research-protection-program/my-irb-contact/

Dissertation Proposal and Preliminary Exam: HMGT expects the Proposal and Preliminary Exam (Appendix 1 and 12) be completed by the end of the fifth regular semester. Following the preliminary exam, a determination will be made regarding the student's continuation in the program.

Final Defense and Dissertation Information

To schedule the final exam (defense), the following conditions must be met:

- Have an approved degree plan
- Complete all coursework or be registered for the remaining coursework on the degree plan
- Apply for graduation
- Degree Plan GPA and Overall GPA must be above minimum GPA requirements.

The previous milestones must be completed.

- Degree Plan
- Preliminary Exam (doctoral only)
- Proposal
- Residency
- Admission to candidacy (doctoral only)

Note: Doctoral students are expected to submit at least one academic journal manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal before the final defense. The submitted manuscript must successfully pass the initial editorial desk review stage. This expectation is intended to support students' scholarly development and academic research preparation.

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. Course levels included in the GPAs are 300, 400, 600, 700, and 900. Courses NOT included in the GPAs are transfer courses and 100-200 level courses. See Student Rule 10.4.3.

- Degree Plan GPA – includes only courses listed on the degree plan except transfer course work.
- Cumulative GPA (Program GPA) – includes all graduate level course work completed at TAMU

Unless otherwise stated, students in graduate degree programs and post-baccalaureate non-degree students (G6 classification) must maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA (computed as specified in Student Rule 10.4.3). Degree-seeking students also must maintain a GPA of at least 3.00 on all courses listed on the degree plan. Departments and colleges may establish higher GPA requirements for their students in graduate degree programs and for post-baccalaureate non-degree students (G6 classification).
A graduate student will not receive graduate degree credit for undergraduate courses taken on a satisfactory / unsatisfactory (S/U) basis. A graduate student may not receive grades other than satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) in graduate courses bearing the numbers 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, 695, 697 and 791 (except for ALEC 695, BUAD 693, AGEC 695, GEOG 695, and IBUS 692). These officially designated S/U courses may be listed on the degree plan, along with other courses approved and noted as S/U in the graduate catalog. Graduate courses not on the degree plan may be taken on an S/U basis.
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 and achieving grades of C or above or Satisfactory (S). If a course has been taken more than once and a grade of D or F was earned and then repeated for a grade of C or higher, the original grades of D or F will be excluded from the GPA calculation for the degree plan (if applicable) and cumulative GPA, but remain on the student's permanent record. A course in which the final grade is C may be repeated for a higher grade. If the second grade is higher, the original grade will be excluded from the GPA calculation for the degree plan (if applicable) and cumulative GPA but remain on the student's permanent record.
Grades for repeated courses are not automatically replaced; the change must be entered and recomputed manually by the Graduate and Professional School. Whenever a student has repeated a course and qualifies for the original grade to be replaced, please contact your staff academic advisor.
The cumulative GPA for a graduate student is 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.
If either a student's cumulative GPA or the GPA for courses listed on the degree plan falls below the minimum of 3.000, the student will be considered to be scholastically deficient. If the minimum GPA is not attained in a reasonable length of time, the student may be dropped from graduate studies. The procedures for dismissal are explained in the Texas A&M University Student rules (refer to the website http://student-rules.tamu.edu/academicrules).

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 Registration Readiness icon to find your registration holds, and action items. Very important: be sure that the "selected semester" is the term for which you are trying to register. It will default to the current semester and you need to manually change it to the next. You can use the Registration Schedule Builder icon, then Aggie Schedule Builder (class search and registration).
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 > Registration Readiness. Accept your Terms of Use

- Complete Lab Safety Acknowledgement
- Complete Location Update

Restrictions and Prerequisites

Be sure to click the blue information icon to view restrictions, prerequisites, course descriptions, etc. Click the blue information icon on each section of every course to see if you are eligible. 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.Please refer to Appendix 9 for further information.

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 Semesters	
Full-time	9 hours
Three Quarter Time	7 hours
Half-time	5 hours

Summer	
Full-time	6 hours
Three Quarter Time	5 hours
Half-time	3 hours

Also see: https://aggieonestop.tamu.edu/registration-and-records/classes/enrollment-status-definitions

Continuous Registration

Students in graduate degree programs requiring a thesis, dissertation, internship, or record of study who have completed all coursework on a degree plan – other than 684 (Internship), 691/791 (Research), or 692 (Professional Study) – are required to maintain continuous registration until the completion of all requirements for a degree. Registration for zero-credit 681 (Seminar), 684, or 685 (Directed Studies) courses only does not satisfy the continuous registration requirement for students in graduate degree programs requiring a thesis, dissertation, internship, or record of study. Other courses, including 691/791 hours, are not eligible for zero credit. The Continuous Registration Requirement may be satisfied by registering either In Absentia or In Residence.

Unless a student plans to take examinations or use university resources – which includes any interaction with their graduate committee – registration during the Summer is not required to fulfill the continuous registration requirement; however, colleges, departments, or intercollegiate faculty may have additional or stricter requirements.

Students who do not comply with the continuous registration requirement will be blocked from registration. A student may register again after receiving favorable recommendation from a departmental review committee (not the student's advisory committee), endorsement of the department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and approval of the Graduate and Professional School. If a break in enrollment occurs for one academic year or longer, the student must apply for readmission to the university through the Office of Admissions.

In Absentia Registration

To qualify for In Absentia registration, a student must not have access to or use of 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 the student is enrolled. A student who qualifies for In Absentia registration must register in each subsequent Fall and Spring semester for a minimum of one and maximum of four credit hours of 684, 685, 691, or 692. Departments, interdisciplinary degree programs, and colleges/schools may have additional or stricter requirements.

In Residence Registration

A student subject to In Residence registration (i.e., on campus) must register in each subsequent Fall and Spring semester, and each 10-week Summer semester, for at least one credit hour. Departments, interdisciplinary degree programs, and colleges/schools may have additional or stricter requirements.

International Student Registration Requirements

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

In Absentia

A student may register In Absentia if enrolled in a course which is offered on an individual basis and conducted away from the College Station campus, System campuses, or facilities such as Agricultural Research and Extension Centers, Research Stations, or other properties under the jurisdiction of the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS). Such courses may include – but are not limited to – internships, directed studies, practicums, etc.

To qualify for In Absentia registration, a student must not have access to or use of facilities of the

TAMUS at any time during the semester or Summer term for which he or she is enrolled. The definition of "facilities" includes human resources and services such as those provided by graduate advisory committee members responding to drafts of theses, dissertations, or records of study material, etc. A student holding a fellowship or assistantship may not register In Absentia. International students who want to work in another student title when registered In Absentia should contact both the Division of Human Resources & Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) and International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) for information about their eligibility. International students with questions about maintaining legal status while registered In Absentia should consult with ISSS. A student going outside the United States and registering In Absentia should register their experience on the Education Abroad portal where they will complete online emergency notification information so university assistance is available during crisis situations. Additional details are available on the Education Abroad website.

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.

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. The entire advisory committee, if formed, and head of the department or chair of the Intercollegiate Program, if appropriate, must approve the petition and send it to the Graduate and Professional School. If the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School approves the petition, the registration requirement will be set aside during the period of leave. Leaves will be granted only under conditions that require the suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree. For certain types of approved leave, such as medical, the time period of the completion of the degree will stop with the leave and begin when the student returns to the program. Other types of leave may not stop the time limit for the degree. A student should refer to the Graduate and Professional Catalog section on Time Limits for their respective Master's or Doctoral program. A leave of absence is granted for one (1) year. In case of extenuating circumstances, the leave of absence can be extended by the student's committee and the Associate Provost and Dean for the Graduate and Professional School. A student who returns to the University after an approved leave of absence will not be required to submit an application for readmission to the Office of Admissions. An international student should visit with an International Student and Scholar Services advisor regarding how a leave of absence may impact his/her stay in or his/her re-entry into the U.S. There are several different types of leave of absence. All requests must be submitted on the Petition for Waivers or Exceptions explaining the need for leave along with the appropriate approvals.

- Medical leave may be approved up to one (1) year and will 'stop the clock' on the 7- and 10-year time limit (this includes leave following childbirth or adoption of a child).
- Deployment leave may be approved up to one (1) year and will 'stop the clock' on the 7- and 10-year time limit.
- Personal leave may be approved with the proper request and justification. If approved, the 7- and 10-year time limit count will NOT stop.

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 Texas A&M University: Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT), Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching (GANT), Graduate Assistant Research (GAR), and Graduate Assistant Lecturer (GAL). Most assistantships are appointed at 50% effort and typically involve an average workload of 20 hours per week.

Graduate assistants must maintain enrollment requirements established by Texas A&M University, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Graduate and Professional School, and any applicable funding source. Enrollment requirements may vary based on appointment type, semester, degree classification, funding source, and university policy. Students are responsible for verifying current enrollment requirements with the department and Graduate and Professional School each semester.

Graduate assistants may be eligible for health insurance, tuition support, non-resident tuition waivers, and other employment-related benefits in accordance with university policies and available funding. Eligibility and benefit levels may vary depending on assistantship type, funding source, and university regulations.

Graduate assistants may not be employed above 50% effort (20 hours per week) without approval from the Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism, the student's faculty 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.

Guidelines for International Temporary Work Location (ITWL) for Graduate Assistants
Note: Tuition and fee support associated with graduate assistantships is governed by university, college, departmental, and funding-source requirements and may change from year to year. The amount of tuition and fee support available may vary depending on assistantship classification, degree program, funding source, student eligibility, and applicable university policies. Students should consult with their faculty chair, principal investigator, department, and business office regarding current tuition and fee support associated with their specific appointment.

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. GATs are typically not employed during the summer semesters. Enrollment requirements, tuition support, and appointment conditions are governed by current university and college policies and may vary by semester.

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. Enrollment requirements, tuition support, and appointment conditions are governed by current university and college policies, applicable grant requirements, and may vary by semester.

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

Students on Teaching Assistantship- Faculty Credentialing

Colleges/Schools and departments are responsible for ensuring faculty and graduate assistants who serve as instructors of record have proper qualifications to teach the courses assigned. Faculty Affairs assumes responsibility for the final verification of the teaching qualifications of all instructors of record. Faculty Affairs uses the federal Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes to determine whether or not an instructor's educational background is in the same discipline as courses that instructor teaches. The CIP codes for courses are maintained in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's course inventory for Texas A&M University. The CIP code of each instructor's highest earned degree is maintained in the Faculty Affairs faculty database.

Prior to the first day of classes, the credentialing section of the Faculty Affairs Portal compares the CIP code for each instructor's earned degrees to the CIP code for course sections the instructor is assigned to teach. If degrees and course CIP codes are not an exact match (four digits), Faculty Affairs checks the crosswalk to determine whether or not the instructor is qualified to teach the course because the disciplines are similar. If the degree and course CIP codes still do not match, the unit must provide a detailed justification that relates the instructor's education (including certificates) and professional experience to the course content in order to verify and document the instructor's qualifications to teach. For graduate assistants, Faculty Affairs verifies, through the credentialing portal, that all those serving as instructors of record have a minimum of 18 graduate semester credit hours in the teaching discipline.

For additional guidance, review the attachment.

CIP Code References. To search for the CIP code of any course in the Texas A&M University Inventory, visit the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Degree Program Inventory.

To find the CIP code for a specific discipline, visit the National Center for Education Statistics.

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 should discuss Q dropping a course with their faculty chair prior to submitting the Q drop request.

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have:

- Completed all formal coursework on the degree plan with the exception of any remaining 681, 684, 690 and 691, 692 (Professional Study), or 791 hours
- A 3.0 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
- Passed the preliminary examination
- Submitted an approved dissertation proposal
- Met the residence requirements.

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
3. https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/degree-completion
4. Scroll down to Document Processing Submission System (DPSS)
5. https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/
6. Login, find the drop-down box, and click on Long Form Petition. This is where you will update

your degree plan

7. 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 prior to the start 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 Final Exam Defense Request form 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 the Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS). The chair of the committee will receive an email to approve the form from ARCS. 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 dissention, 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.

For more details, kindly refer to Appendix 13.

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 ARCS for forms requiring signatures of committee members. Detailed information on how to use ARCS 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.

1. Please see the links below for the steps to your degree, as well as the ARCS forms from the Graduate and Professional School:

- Master's Degree Requirements/Steps to Master's Degree
- Steps to Doctoral Degree

2. Follow the steps and complete the forms. 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.
- Senior Academic Advisor: Melyssa-Anne Stricklin melyssa.stricklin@tamu.edu
- Associate Department Head: Prof. John Crompton john.crompton@agnet.tamu.edu
- Associate Department Head: Prof. James Petrick jpetrick@tamu.edu
- Department Head: Prof . Brian King brian.king@ag.tamu.edu

3. Finish completing the forms 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 ARCS email. This step is important so that forms do not get held up in faculty members inboxes.
5. Please remember an ARCS 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.

Preparing to Graduate

Your Specialty Programs (GRSP) Hub 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 Hub 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

Students completing a graduate degree who wish to enroll in pursuit of another graduate degree at Texas A&M University should initiate the process of filing a Letter of Intent with the admitting department for the subsequent graduate degree. Letters of Intent are common when students apply to pursue a subsequent degree within the same department and college/school, but may not be acceptable for students applying for a subsequent degree in a different discipline from their current degree. A Letter of Intent, when approved by the head of the department or chair of the intercollegiate faculty (if applicable) in which the student intends to study, will be viewed by the Graduate and Professional School as an admission to the program specified in the letter. A student must use the Letter of Intent Form available through the Graduate and Professional School website.
If a student wishes to enroll in a department where a Letter of Intent is not the accepted practice, the admitting department should consult with the Office of Admissions and the Graduate and Professional School to pursue an alternate process for admission.

If a break in enrollment occurs for one academic year or longer following graduation, the student must apply for admission to another graduate degree program through the Office of Admissions before enrolling in another graduate degree program.

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.

Email

Please use the correct email signature format for both your @ag.tamu.edu email address as well as the @tamu.edu email address. This link will direct you to the correct guidelines.

Office Space

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) will be assigned shared office spaces, with assignments reviewed each semester. PhD and MS students without TA or RA appointments may be assigned a graduate carrel based on availability and need. All space assignments are subject to review each semester. Office assignments can be changed at the discretion of the department head.

Students are allowed possession of their keys for as long as their office space is assigned. All keys must be returned prior to graduation and/or termination/resignation of Graduate Assistantship or Fellowship privileges.

Students will be provided with a desk and chair. Any additional supplies, including equipment, are the responsibility of the student.

All Texas A&M students are required to purchase/own a computer that 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 damage 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. Equipment and furniture should not be moved from one office to another.

Building Access & Parking

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 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 HMGT, there are several avenues to report a grievance. The HMGT 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

Academics
Academic policies;
Registration questions;
DPSS, Adobe Sign, ARCS questions;
Learning about on-campus resources, or if you don't know where to go;
Primary contact: Lauren Johnson (lauren.johnson@ag.tamu.edu), AGLS 408B*
979-854-3712
Virtual Office
*Students: please check in for appointments at the cubicle in the waiting area next to the kitchen

Graduate Program Concerns & Signing Authority
Dr. Babak Taheri, Associate Department Head of Graduate Programs and Professor (babak.taheri@agnet.tamu.edu), AGLS 444, 979-845-5411

Backup contact: Prof. Brian King (brian.king@ag.tamu.edu), Department Head, AGLS 417, 979-845-7324

HMGT Administrator
Ms. Deanna Crawford, Administrator, (deanna.crawford@tamu.edu) AGLS 420 979-314-3271

Scholarships and Assistantships
Mr. Michael Liske, Program Coordinator II, (Michael.liske@ag.tamu.edu), AGLS 422, 979-314-3246

Building and Room Access/Reservations
Ms. Kristen Treider (kristen.treider@ag.tamu.ed) AGLS 416, 979-314-8150

Travel
Mrs. Kathy Junek, Business Associate I (kathy.junek@tamu.edu) AGLS 424
979-8458-5593

Appendix 1. Doctoral Preliminary Examination Procedures

After completion of an advisor-directed study of readings including academic journal articles and demonstration of a comprehensive understanding of the foundational literature and social theories, students will write either: a) a systematic literature review (or other organized review approaches such as meta-analysis, bibliometric analysis, or citation/co-citation analysis); or b) a scoping or critical literature review on a topic relevant to their doctoral studies. The resulting document must be written in a format suitable for a journal article in the student's area of interest. While publication in a hospitality and tourism journal is strongly encouraged, it is not mandatory. The exam will proceed in three stages: proposal, final proposal, and final defense.

Before students start their preliminary exam process, they must first submit the Preliminary Examination Request form via ARCS. Students must also fill out the Research Proposal Approval form via ARCS in order to get credit for their proposal.

Stage 1: Preliminary Exam Proposal

For the "proposal", the student will submit a 10-page background including the area of their interest and rationale for their systematic literature review or the scoping literature review. The proposal will demonstrate their understanding of the broader hospitality and tourism literature, theory, and importance/significance of an understudied area and/or research gap and a description of methods to be used to complete a systematic or scoping literature review process.

When the proposal is prepared, the advisor will send it to the committee for review and approval. The committee will evaluate the prospectus, provide feedback, and specify issues or topics that should be included or addressed in the full literature review.

Once the proposal is sent to committee members, if can have one of the following outcomes: 1. The committee may approve the proposal; 2. The committee may allow the student to proceed, taking into consideration specific feedback and revisions; 3.The committee may request a meeting with an average 15- minute oral presentation and approximately 10-15 slides prepared; 4. The committee may require the student to propose again, should the idea require revisions substantial enough that the committee determines another review is necessary.

Stage 2: Final Preliminary Proposal

After the student is approved to proceed following the proposal meeting, she or he may move into the independent writing phase of the exam. The preliminary exam should reflect the students' work, apart from input from her committee members. Students are also required to use the resources provided by the Texas A&M Writing Center, including the individual consultation sessions the Writing Center provides.

Supervisory committee members will not review drafts throughout the process or contribute any writing. The student will have a grace period of five working days following approval to move forward, in which s/he may consult committee members (e.g., clarify any feedback from the proposal meeting). After the grace period, a two-month clock begins to produce the full paper and submit it to the committee, via email.

Stage 3: Preliminary Examination Defense

The student must allow the committee **at least two weeks** to review the document before meeting for the defense. The student must also present her/his committee with **a list of all courses completed** during her/his doctoral studies two weeks in advance of the defense. The preliminary exam defense will follow a traditional defense format, in which the student will provide an average 15-minute presentation of the paper and then field questions from the committee.

The defense can have one of three outcomes: 1. Pass without revisions, in which case the preliminary exam concludes; 2. Pass with revisions, in which case the committee determines the time frame and procedures for reviewing revisions; or 3. Fail, in which case the student will be required to start the process over, with a new idea (or may pursue an alternative format for the preliminary exam).

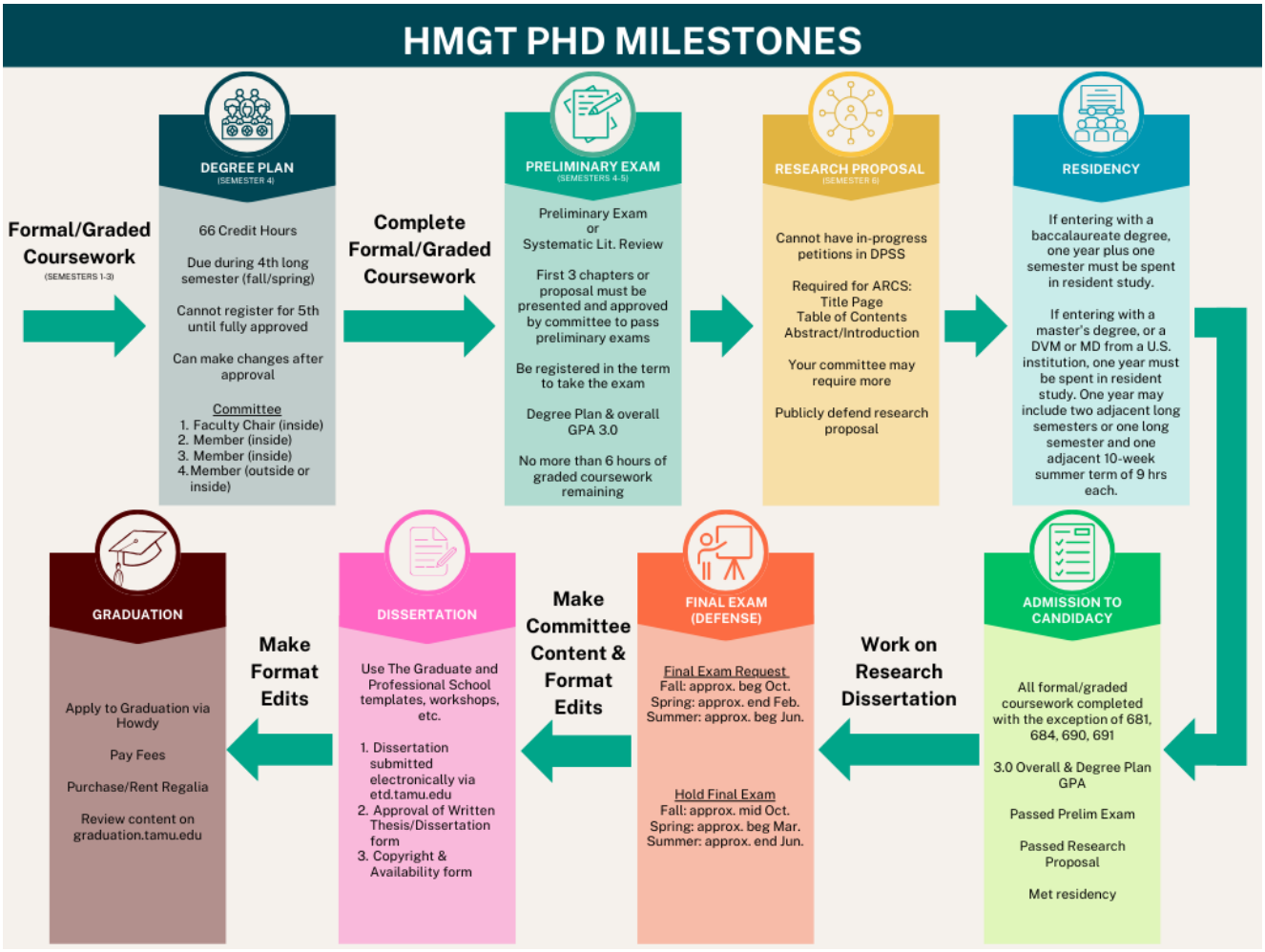
Evaluation Criteria

At the final defense, the supervisory committee will evaluate the student's command of the topics she/he studied during her/his doctoral program, as well as the quality of the paper submitted. Students who pass their exams will demonstrate the following:

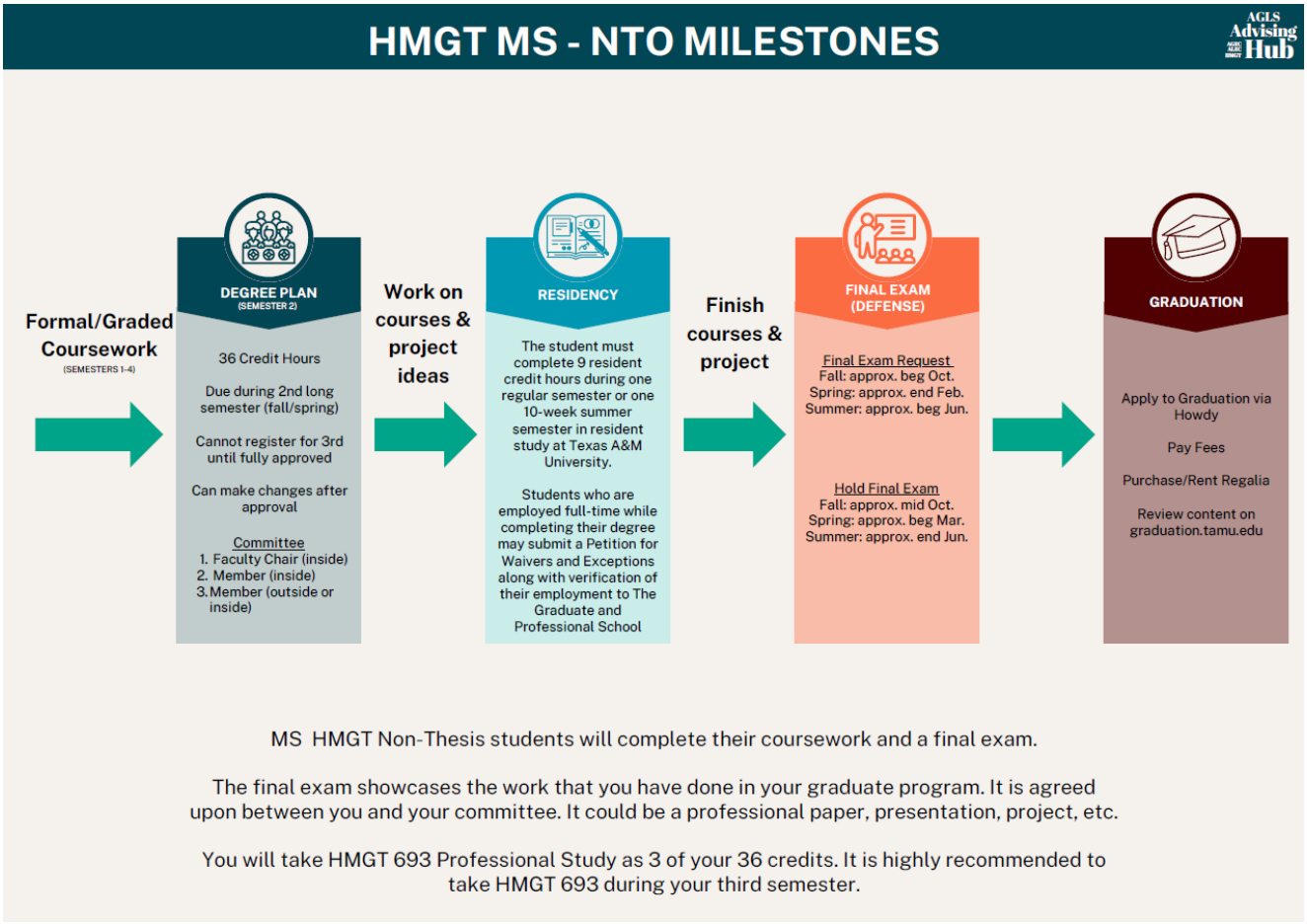
1. Deep understanding of behavioral science methods, including both conceptual and empirical dimensions
2. Ability to critique behavioral science research
3. Ability to communicate effectively in writing
4. Understanding of the structure of formal theory and conceptual models
5. Ability to use theory and conceptual models to develop explanations of behavior
6. Ability to apply knowledge from doctoral coursework to research and professional practice
7. Command of foundational knowledge and theory in youth development
8. Ability to verbally explain and justify propositions and conclusions contained within the paper

The doctoral researcher and their supervisor may mutually agree on submitting the outcomes to any high-ranked journal within the field of hospitality and tourism.

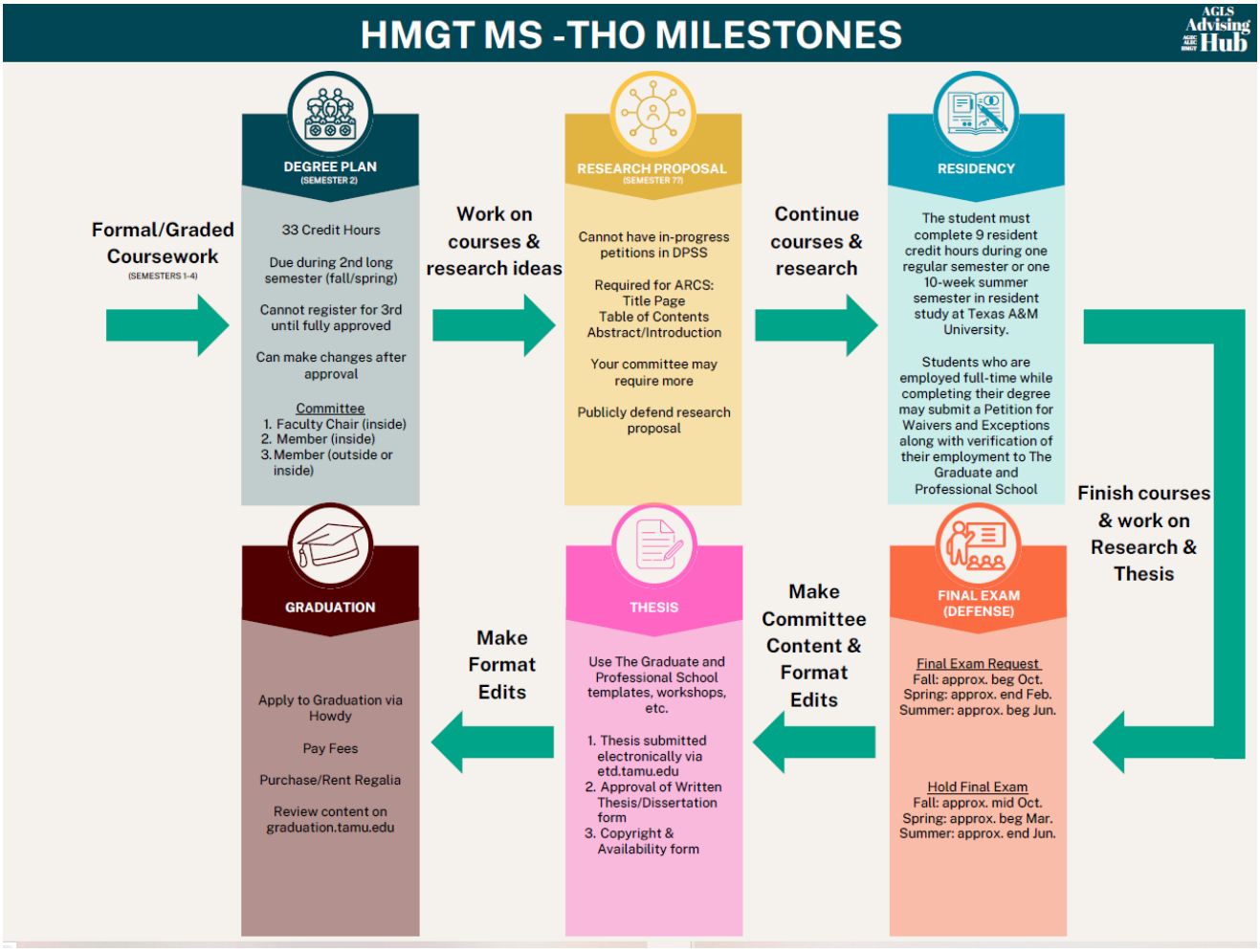
Appendix 2. HMGT PhD Milestones



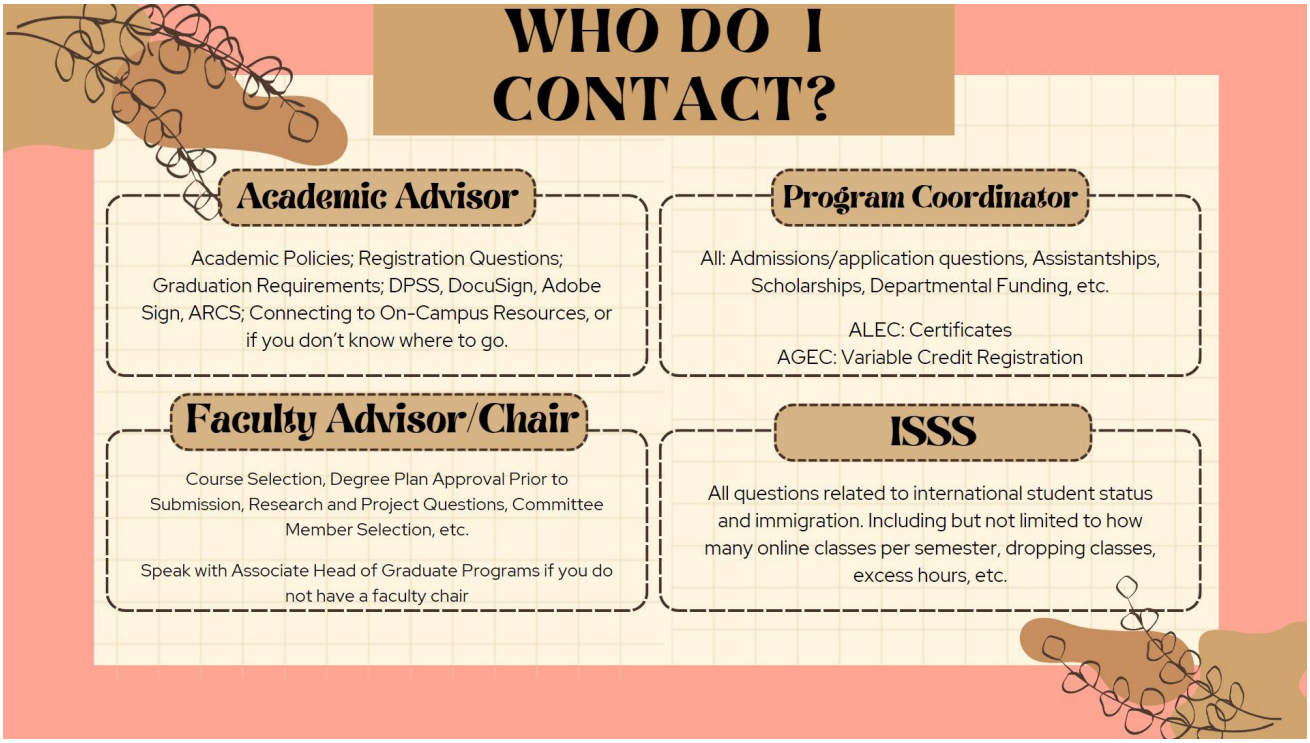
Appendix 3. HMGT MS Non-Thesis Milestones



Appendix 4. HMGT MS- Thesis Milestones



Appendix 5. Who Do I Contact?



Appendix 6. Graduate and Professional School Resources

The Graduate and Professional School (GPS) is the entity that oversees graduate and professional studies at Texas A&M University. The Graduate and Professional school maintains the Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS), establishes and posts dates and deadline requirements for degree completion, and monitors graduation clearance among numerous other duties.

Steps to Degree Completion
All students are required to complete the steps listed below for their respective program.

Steps to a Thesis-Based Master's Degree
Students must maintain continuous registration until all degree requirements have been met.

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester registration.	Graduate advisor
2	Establish advisory committee; submit your degree plan online.	Following the deadline imposed by the student's college and approved no later than 90 days prior to the request of final oral or thesis defense; see the Graduate and Professional School calendar.	Advisory committee, department head, and the Graduate and Professional School
3	If thesis is required, submit thesis research proposal and Research Proposal Approval Form to the Graduate and Professional School.	Must be submitted no later than 20 working days prior to submitting the request and announcement of final examination.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, Research Compliance and Biosafety, and the Graduate and Professional School
4	Apply for a degree online at the Howdy portal; pay graduation fee.	During the first week of final semester; pay graduation fee after graduate application is submitted; see the	The Graduate and Professional School

		Graduate and Professional School calendar.	
5	Check to make sure degree program and advisory committee are up-to-date, and course work is complete.	Well before submitting request to schedule final examination.	Advisory committee, graduate advisor and department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty
6	Complete residence requirement. (Check with your department to determine if there is a residency requirement.)	If applicable, before or during final semester.	The Graduate and Professional School
7	Submit Request and Announcement of Final Examination to schedule final examination to the Graduate and Professional School.	Must be received by the Graduate and Professional School at least 10 working days before exam date.(See The Graduate and Professional School calendar for deadlines.)	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and the Graduate and Professional School
8	Successfully complete final examination.	The Report of the Final Exam form should be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School within 10 days following the exam date by the department.	Advisory committee and the Graduate and Professional School
9	If required, upload one approved final copy of thesis as a single PDF file to etd.tamu.edu and submit signed thesis approval form to the Graduate and Professional School.	See The Graduate and Professional School calendar for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty and the Graduate and Professional School

10	Graduation; arrange for cap and gown. More information		

Steps to a Non-Thesis-Based Master's Degree

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester registration.	Graduate advisor
2	Establish advisory committee; submit your degree plan online.	Following the deadline imposed by the student's college and approved no later than 90 days prior to the request of final oral or thesis defense; see the Graduate and Professional School calendar.	Advisory committee, department head, and the Graduate and Professional School
3	Apply for a degree online at the Howdy portal; pay graduation fee.	During the first week of final semester; pay graduation fee after graduate application is submitted; see the Graduate and Professional School calendar.	The Graduate and Professional School
4	Check to make sure degree program and advisory committee are up-to-date, and course work is complete.	Well before submitting request to schedule final examination.	Advisory committee, graduate advisor and department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty
5	Complete residence requirement. (Check with your department to determine if there	If applicable, before or during final semester.	The Graduate and Professional School

	is a residency requirement.)		
6	Submit Request and Announcement of Final Examination to schedule final examination to the Graduate and Professional School.	Must be received by the Graduate and Professional School at least 10 working days before exam date.(See The Graduate and Professional School calendar for deadlines.)	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and the Graduate and Professional School
7	Successfully complete final examination.	The Report of the Final Exam form should be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School within 10 days following the exam date by the department.	Advisory committee and the Graduate and Professional School
8	Graduation; arrange for cap and gown. More information		

Steps to a Doctoral Degree

Students must maintain continuous registration until all degree requirements have been met.

Step	**What to Do**	**When**	**Approved by**
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester registration.	Graduate advisor
2	Establish advisory committee; submit your degree plan online.	Following the deadline imposed by the student's college and approved no later than 90 days prior to the preliminary exam.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and the Graduate and Professional School
3	Complete course	Before preliminary exam.	

	work detailed on the approved degree plan.		
4	Complete Preliminary Examination and Submit Preliminary Exam Checklist and Report.	The student should complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan. Results must be received by The Graduate and Professional School 10 working days after exam date.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and the Graduate and Professional School
5	Submit research proposal for dissertation or record of study and the Research Proposal Approval Form to the Graduate and Professional School	At least 20 working days prior to submission of the Request and Announcement of Final Examination.	Advisory committee, department head or intercollegiate faculty chair, Research Compliance and Biosafety, and the Graduate and Professional School
6	Complete residence requirement. (Check with your department to determine if there is a residency requirement.)	Before submitting request to schedule final oral examination.	The Graduate and Professional School
7	Apply for a degree online at the Howdy portal; pay graduation fee.	During the first week of the final semester; pay graduation fee after graduate application is submitted; see Graduate and Professional School calendar for deadlines.	The Graduate and Professional School
8	Submit Request and Announcement of Final Examination to	Must be received by the Graduate and Professional School at least 10 working	Advisory committee, department head or intercollegiate

	hold and announce final examination.	days before final exam date; see the Graduate and Professional School calendar for deadlines.	faculty chair, and the Graduate and Professional School
9	Successfully complete final examination.	The Report of the Final Examination form should be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School within 10 days following the exam by the department.	Advisory committee and the Graduate and Professional School
10	Upload one approved final copy of the dissertation or record of study as a single pdf file to etd.tamu.edu and submit the fully signed Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form to the Graduate and Professional School	See the Graduate and Professional School calendar for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or intercollegiate faculty chair, and the Graduate and Professional School
11	Graduation; arrange for cap and gown. | More information		

Appendix 7. GPS Dates and Deadlines

It is important that students stay on top of deadlines for their degree requirements as they matriculate through their chosen programs. Each semester, the Graduate and Professional School publicizes the deadlines by which graduate students must complete specific degree requirements in order to be eligible to remain a degree candidate and graduate. Three semesters are posted at a time, so students are able to see deadlines for an entire academic year. The dates and deadlines documents for Master's Non-Thesis Option, Master's Thesis Option, and Doctoral programs can be found here. **NOTE: Failure to adhere to these deadlines will cause students to not clear for graduation.

Graduate and Professional Catalog

Each academic year, the graduate and professional catalog is updated with program requirements and course descriptions. Students are encouraged to review the catalog for information regarding their degree requirements as well as descriptions of courses available during that academic year.

Document Processing Submission System

The Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) is the primary location for students, staff, and faculty to submit, review, and approve graduate degree plans and related documents. The degree plan defines the coursework goals and the committee for a graduate degree. The degree plan should be submitted: during the second long semester for MS and MAG students, and during the fourth long semester for PhD students. **NOTE: Your department may have deadlines earlier than this. If so, you will need to adhere to departmental deadlines to remain in compliance.

Once students have an approved degree plan on file, the student will gain access to the Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS) located within their Howdy portal.

The following documents are submitted through DPSS:

- Degree Plan
- Committee Change Long Form Petition
- Coursework Change Long Form Petition
- Time Limits Long Form Petition
- Waiver and Exception Long Form Petition
    - Requesting a Leave of Absence
    - Waive the Residency Requirement
    - Unmark Research Courses Applied to Previous Degree That Were Not on the Previous Degree Plan
    - Register for Excess Hours in a Semester
    - Exceeding Hour Limits for Certain Courses
- Change in Major, Degree, or Department (MDD) Petition

The link for DPSS is: https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/

Academic Requirements Completion System

The Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS) is where students track their degree requirements once they have an approved degree plan. It is designed to streamline the process of tracking and fulfilling graduate degree program academic requirements. Once the degree plan has been fully approved, the ARCS icon will appear within the student's Howdy portal. Students will submit the following in ARCS:

- Preliminary Exam Request
- Proposal Approval Form
- Final Exam (Defense) Request

- Final Exam Exemption Request
- Copyright & Availability Form
- Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form

Students will access ARCS through their Howdy portal: https://howdy.tamu.edu/

GPS Ombuds Services

The university is a large and complex institution where graduate and professional students often play multiple roles, such as student, research collaborator, teacher, technician and peer. Misunderstandings and conflicts can arise in any one of these roles, particularly where they intersect with one or more roles filled by others in the graduate and professional community. Each academic department has an ombudsperson available to students, faculty, and staff within that academic department. Please refer to your department's handbook on who to contact for ombuds services within your department.

The Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional Student Ombuds Office serves as an informal, independent, and neutral resource that anyone from the graduate and professional community can use to obtain assistance with a conflict, misunderstanding, concern or issue related to graduate education. The Ombuds Office is located in the Graduate and Professional School in 204 Nagle Hall. Email to schedule an appointment in person, over the phone, or on Zoom. The Ombuds Officer will listen and work with you to create a range of options and strategies for moving forward. Please include UIN, availability, and a brief description of the issue. (Be advised that confidentiality cannot be ensured in email communication. Thus, we discourage you from sending sensitive information via email.)

Contact: ombuds@tamu.edu or 979-845-3631

Appendix 8. Campus Resources

International Student & Scholar Services

Texas A&M University International Student & Scholar Services supports international students, scholars, and their families as they navigate the U.S. immigration system and life in the U.S. They educate on policies and regulations, as well as provide programs to enhance the Texas A&M international community experience.

Any documentation or requests should be submitted directly through the ISSS website. The staff at ISSS are the experts in the U.S. immigration system, and detailed questions regarding immigration should be directed to the ISSS office. If students need a departmental or staff contact to include on ISSS requests, please reach out to your department to inquire about who to include as the appropriate contact.

Some common requests that are submitted through ISSS are:

- DS-2019 or I-20 forms
- Extension of DS-2019 or I-20 forms
- Reduced Course Load (RCL)
- Work authorizations
    - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
    - Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- Leave of Absence or Withdrawal

University Health Services

University Health Services provides health care for students ranging from mental health services, medical services, and prevention & population health services. Students are able to make appointments for various health care needs either through the A.P. Beutel Health Center for primary & specialty medical care or the Student Services Building for counseling & mental health care.

Molly McCann

The College of Agriculture and Life Science has a Licensed Professional Counselor, Molly McCann, embedded within the college. Her office is in the Biochemistry and Biophysics building on West Campus. Her contact information can be found here.

Appendix 9. Registration and Enrollment Requirements

Students will be assigned registration times from the Registrar's Office for which they can register for courses in the following semester. Students can find their upcoming registration times in Howdy under the "Registration Readiness" tab.

Full Time Status

Nine (9) hours fall/spring terms and six (6) hours summer term in any combination for full summer benefits or three (3) hours in any combination for an individual summer session benefit, is required to be considered full-time for assistantship, scholarship, and fellowship purposes.

Half Time Status

In order for domestic graduate students to be eligible for financial aid, they must be registered at least half-time. Half-time registration means:
Fall/Spring – 5 hours
10 Week Summer – 3 hours
5 Week Summer – 2 hours

Continuous Enrollment

Students in graduate degree programs requiring a thesis, dissertation, internship, or record of study, and who have completed all graded coursework 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 they 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. Unless a student plans to take examinations or use University resources, including any interaction with their graduate committee, registration during the summer will not be required to fulfill the continuous registration requirement. However, colleges, departments, or intercollegiate faculty may have additional or higher requirements. International students should check with ISSS for the minimum hours they must be enrolled in for visa purposes. Students on assistantships and many fellowships must maintain full-time enrollment.

Residence Requirement

The residence requirement is the number of hours required to be taken in residence on the approved TAMU campus site for the student's respective degree for a particular graduate degree and differs among degrees. In some degrees, the requirement is full-time enrollment of 9 hours during one or more semesters. For other degrees, it is a total of 12 hours during the degree. The residence requirement for each degree can be found in the self-service degree evaluation available online.
NOTE: Students who are also working full-time while completing their degree may request an exemption from this requirement with submission of a Long Form Petition for Waivers or Exceptions and a letter from their employer indicating that they are a 'full-time' employee with their dates of hire.

Leave of Absence

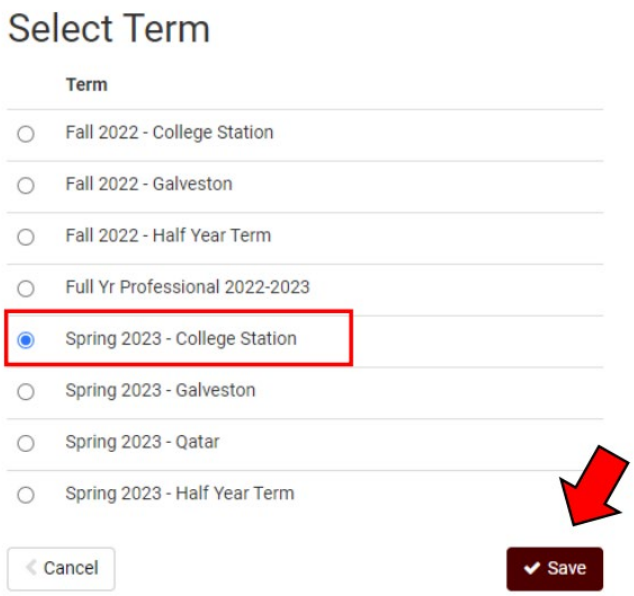
Under unusual circumstances, a student may petition for a leave of absence. The entire advisory committee, if formed, and head of the department or chair of the Intercollegiate Program, if appropriate, must approve the petition and send it to the Graduate and Professional School. If the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School approves the petition, the registration requirement will be set aside during the period of leave. Leaves will be granted only under conditions that require the suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree. For certain types of approved leave, such

as medical, the time period of the completion of the degree will stop with the leave and begin when the student returns to the program. Other types of leave may not stop the time limit for the degree. A student should refer to the Graduate and Professional Catalog section on Time Limits for their respective Master's or Doctoral program. A leave of absence is granted for one (1) year. In case of extenuating circumstances, the leave of absence can be extended by the student's committee and the Associate Provost and Dean for the Graduate and Professional School. A student who returns to the University after an approved leave of absence will not be required to submit an application for readmission to the Office of Admissions. An international student should visit with an International Student and Scholar Services advisor regarding how a leave of absence may impact his/her stay in or his/her re-entry into the U.S. There are several different types of leave of absence. All requests must be submitted on the Petition for Waivers or Exceptions explaining the need for leave along with the appropriate approvals.

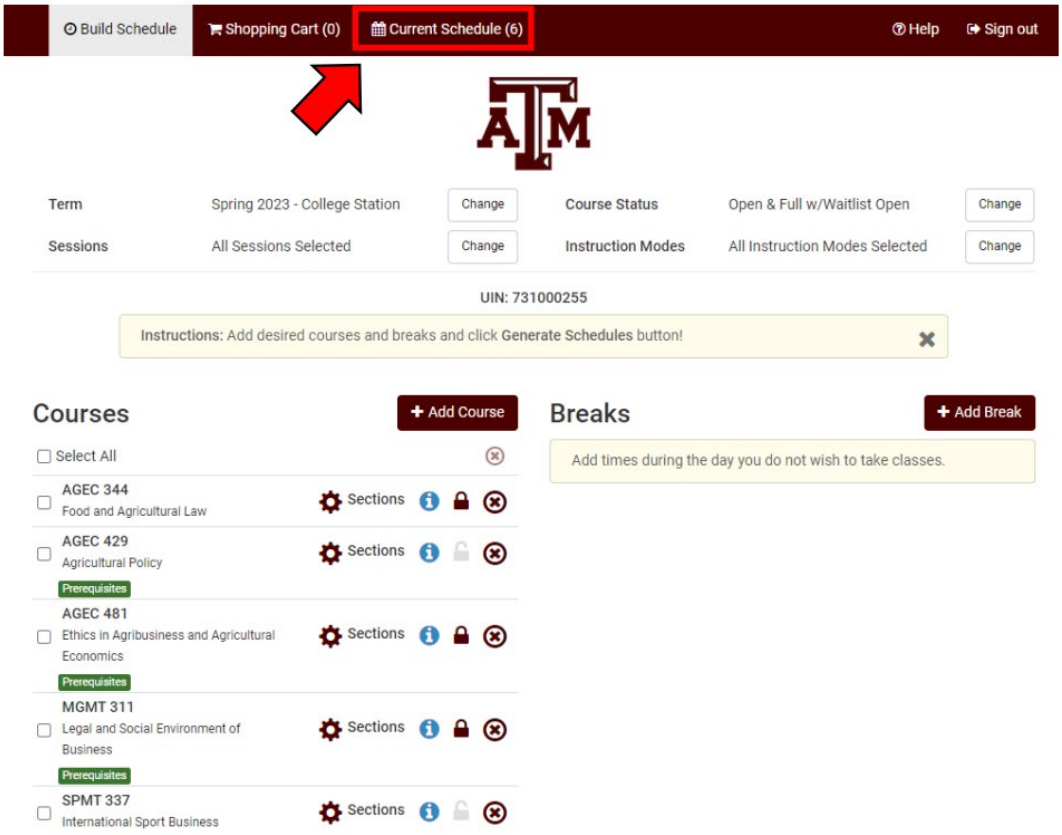
- Medical leave may be approved up to one (1) year and will 'stop the clock' on the 7- and 10-year time limit (this includes leave following childbirth or adoption of a child).
- Deployment leave may be approved up to one (1) year and will 'stop the clock' on the 7- and 10-year time limit.
- Personal leave may be approved with the proper request and justification. If approved, the 7- and 10-year time limit count will NOT stop.

How to Change Variable Credit Hours

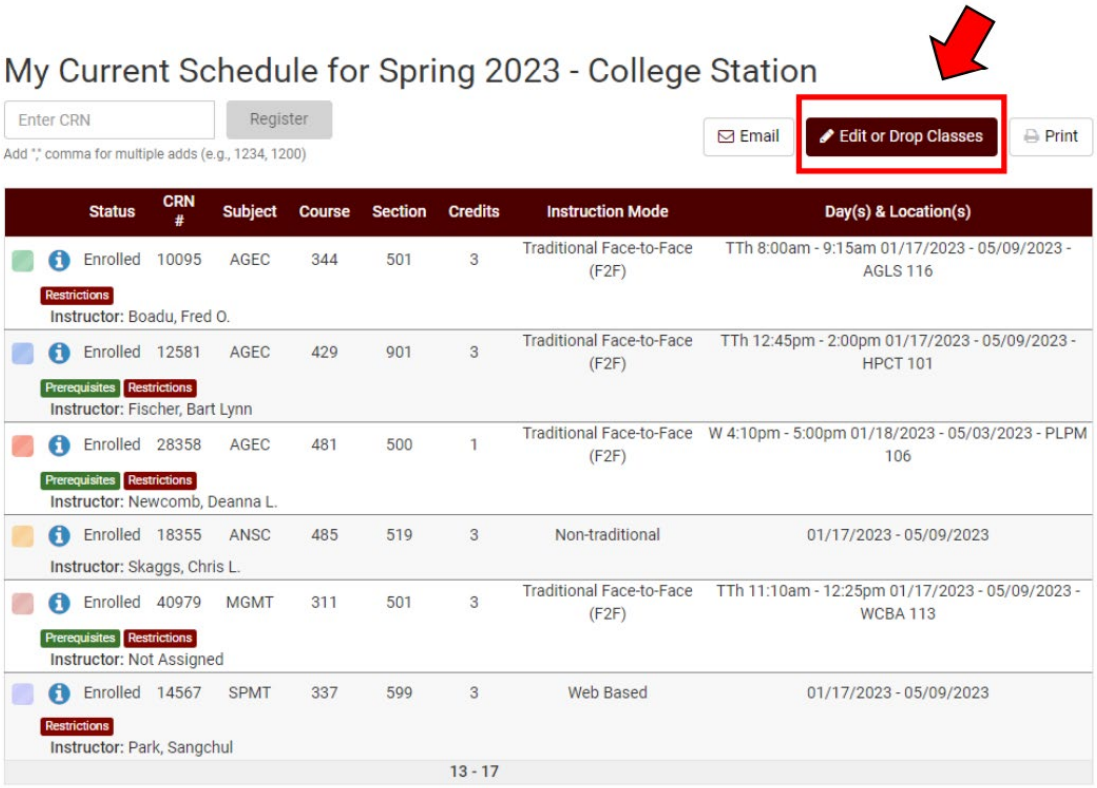
- Go to Aggie Schedule Builder, select the correct term and click save



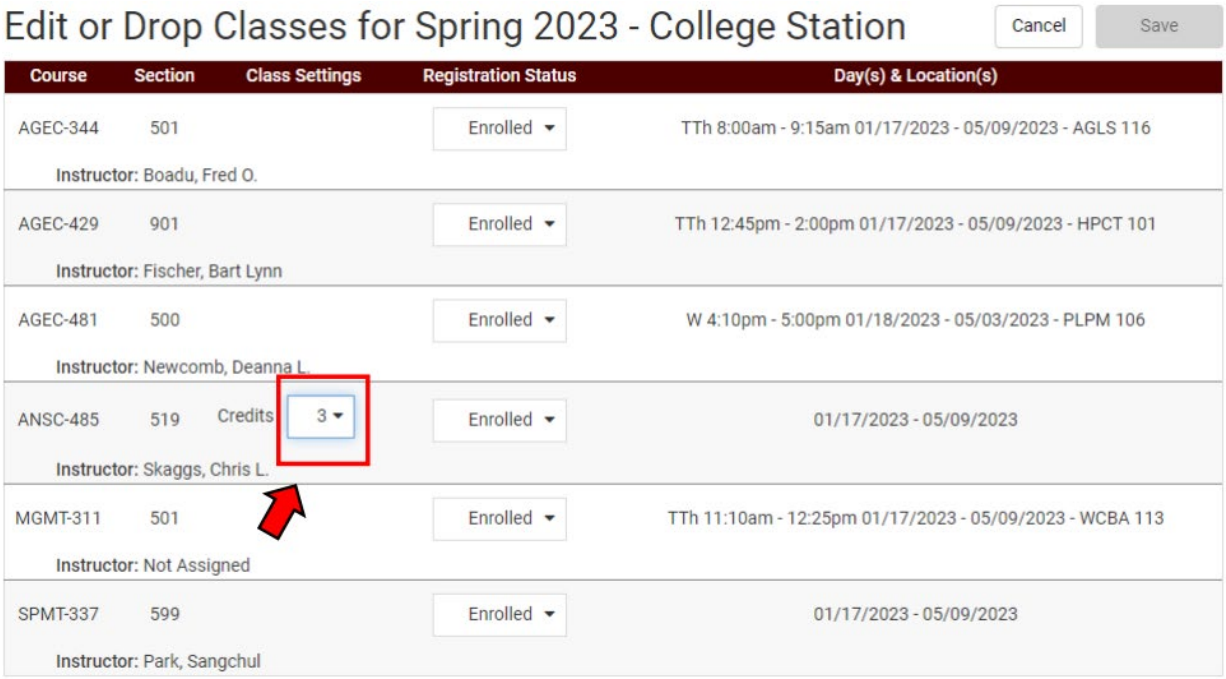
- Click on the "Current Schedule" tab



- Select “Edit or Drop Classes” in the top right-hand corner



- A drop-down list should be available for the variable credit course. From here, you can select the number of hours you would like the course to count for



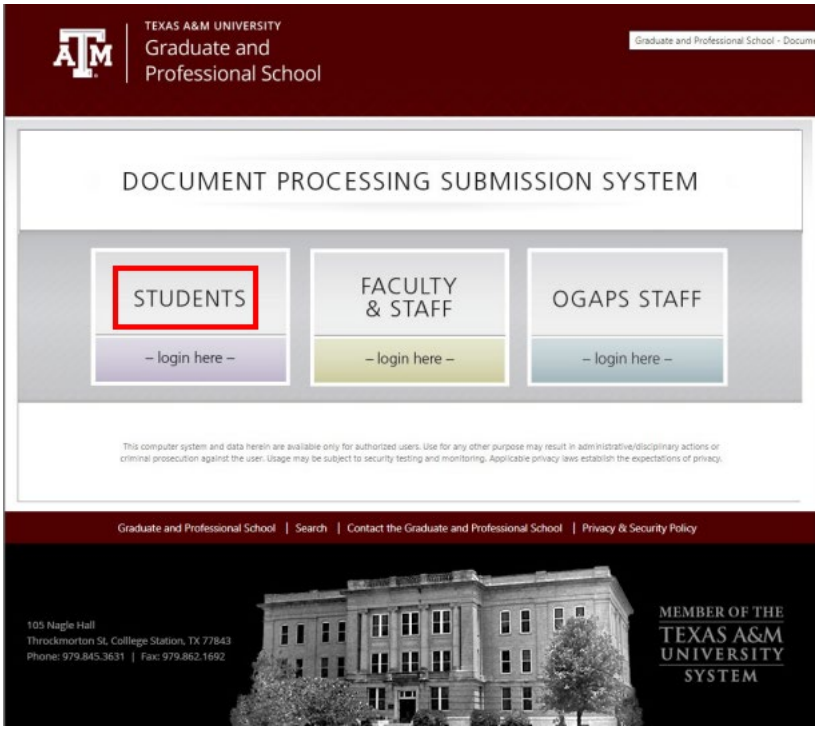
Appendix 10. Submitting Degree Plan

All graduate students must submit their degree plan through the online Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) to establish their graduate committee and plan for coursework.

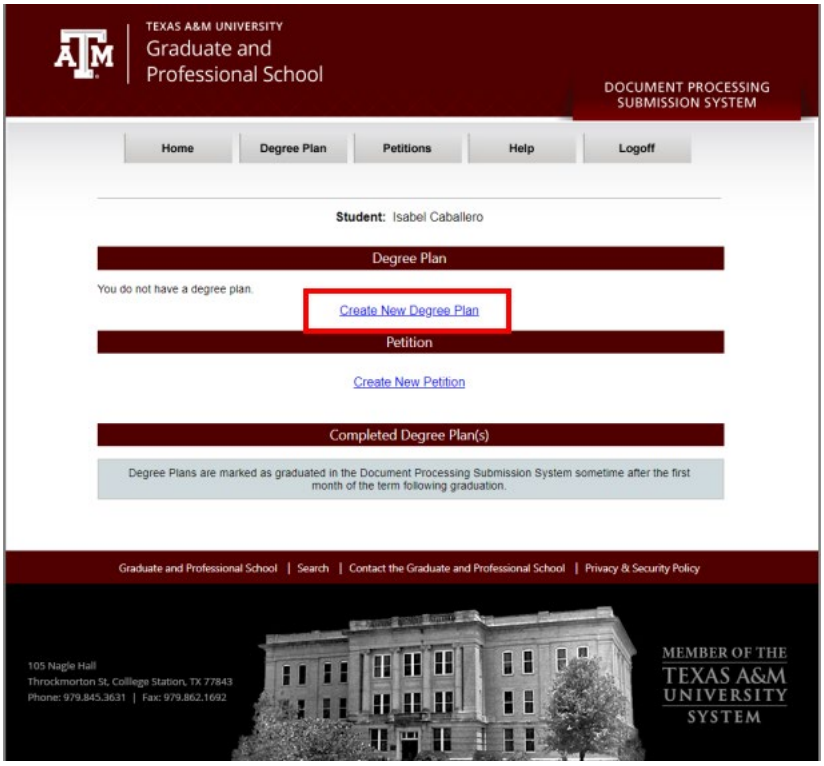
Submitting Degree Plan

Below are basic guidelines for the submission process for the initial degree plan.

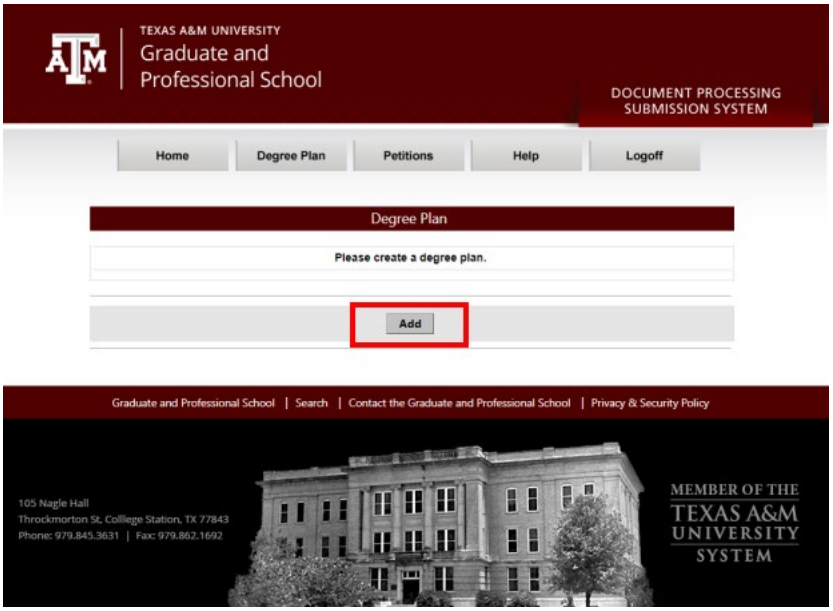
- Go to https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu and select "Students"



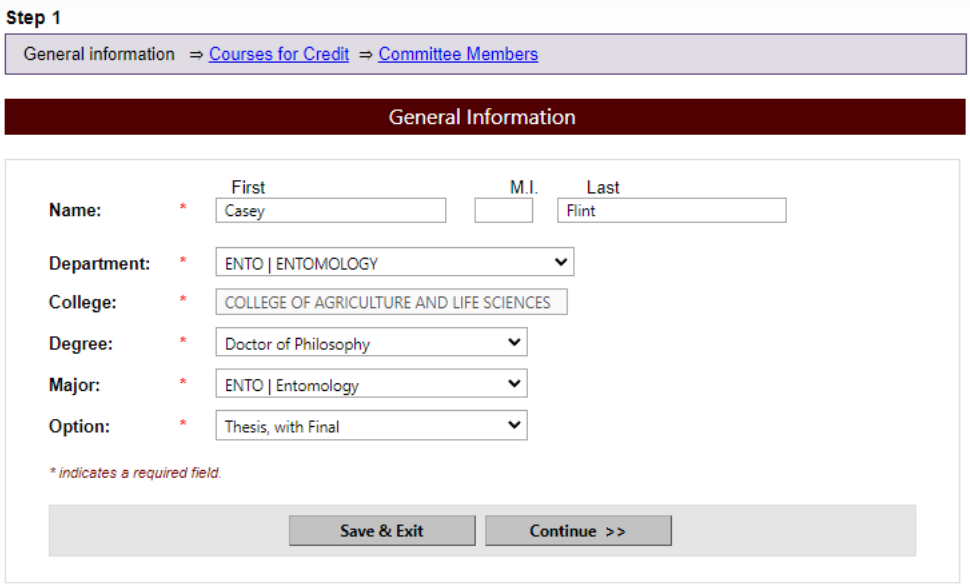
- Log in using your NetID
- Select "Create a New Degree Plan"



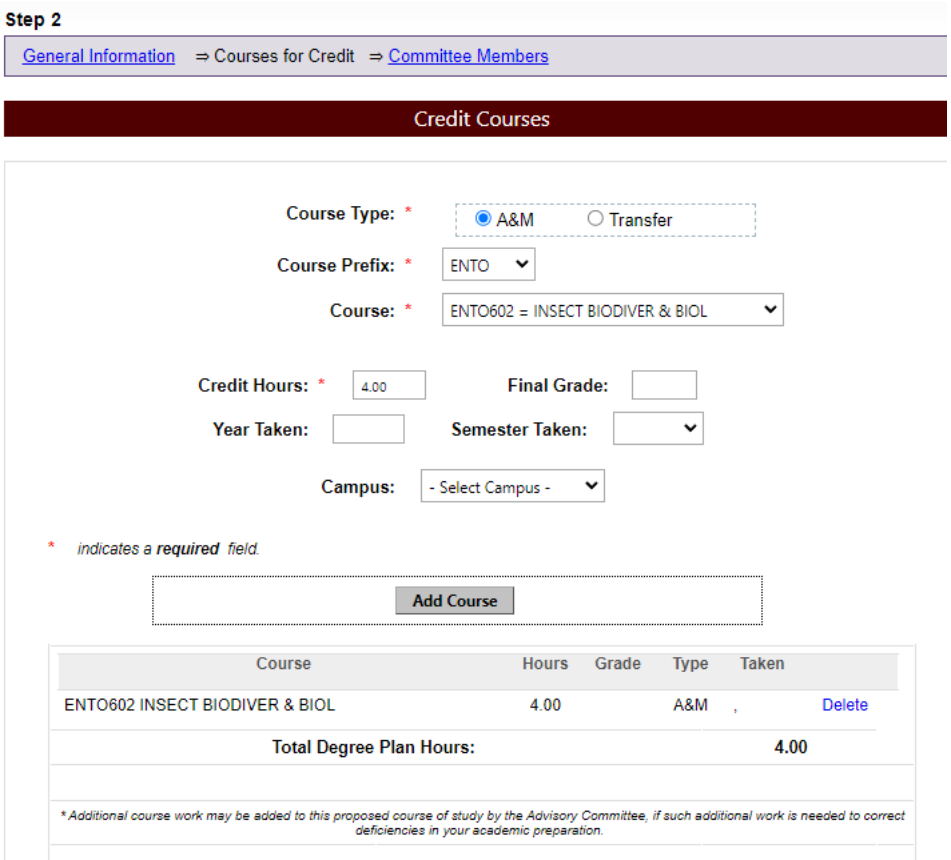
- You will be taken to the Degree Plan page where you will select “Add”



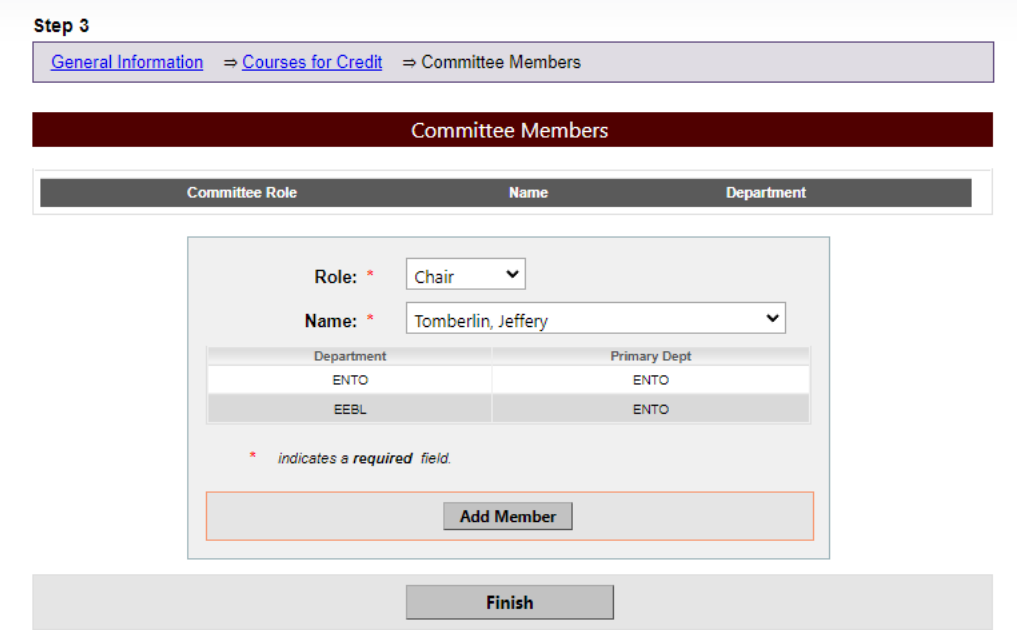
- You’ll move on to the next step and complete the General information fields, starting with your name. You should add Department, College, Degree, Major, and Option.



- You will then move to your course selection, where you will add the course prefix and select the course, then select "Add Course". When adding a variable credit course (695, 691, etc), you will need to designate the number of hours to include on your degree plan. As you add courses, DPSS will tabulate how many hours you have added in total.



- Once you have added all courses, double check that the courses are accurate, there are no duplicates, and the total amount of hours is correct for your program. Once all coursework is verified, select "Continue" to add your committee members.
- You must select the individual's role before you will be able to add their name from a drop-down list. **Note that faculty names will only populate if they are eligible to serve in the role you have selected. ** If you are not able to see a specific faculty member's name, it means they do not have the proper appointment to serve in that role. Please consult with your staff academic advisor.



- Once all committee members have been added, you can choose to "Audit" your degree plan. This means DPSS will compare your degree plan to GPS requirements to determine if your degree plan is in compliance. If it is not, you can give a reason for an exception to be made. **Note that auditing a degree plan does not mean it has been submitted for review and approval.

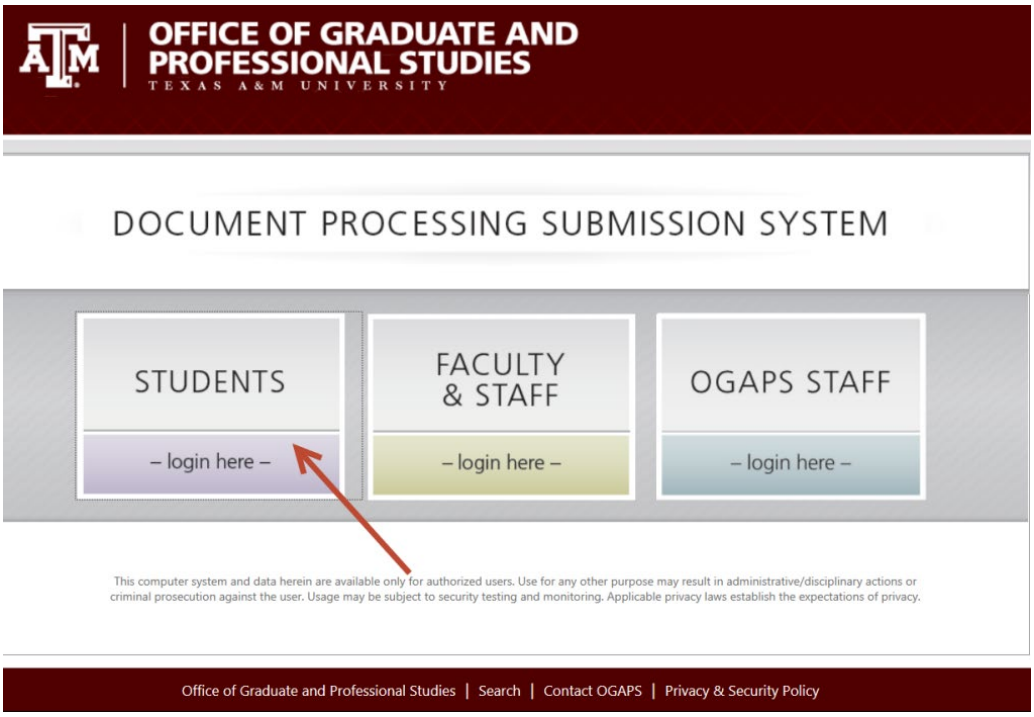
Submitting a Long Form Petition

A Long Form petition is an electronic version of the following four petitions which can be filed in any combination:

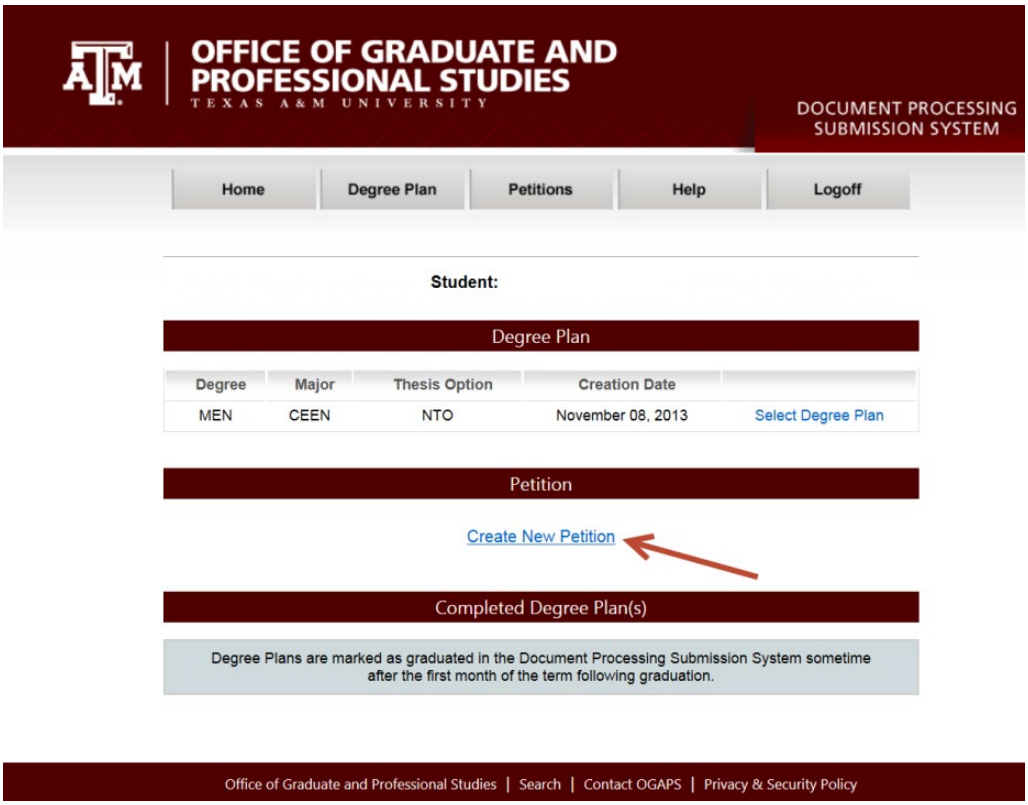
- Petition for Course Change
- Petition to Change your Committee
- Petition of Waivers and Exceptions
- Petition to Extend Time Limits

To submit a Long Form Petition:

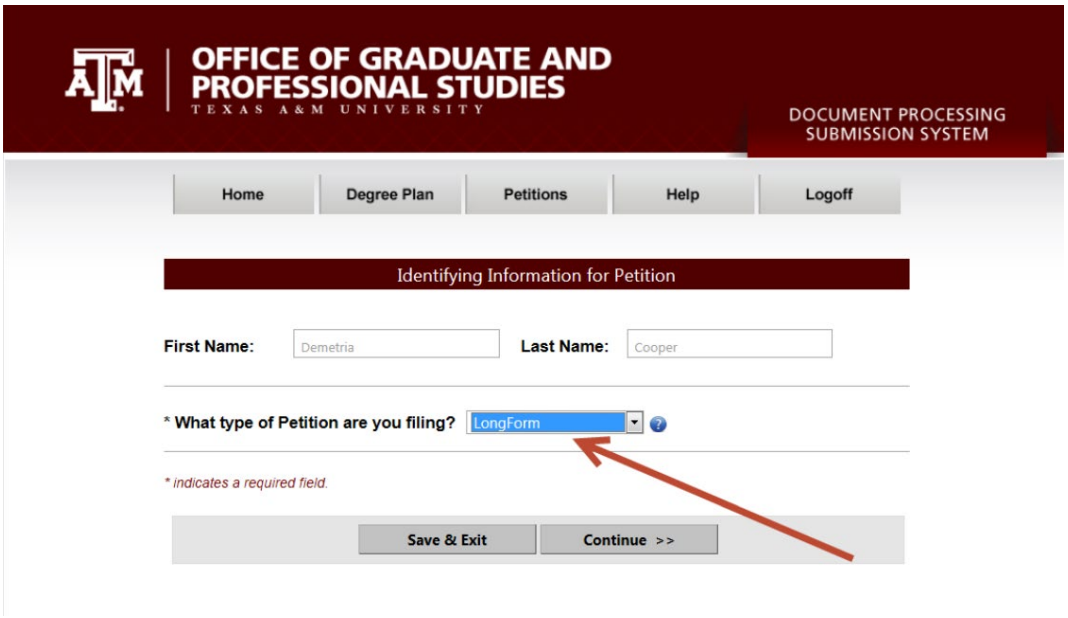
- Go to https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu and login as a student using your NetID and password



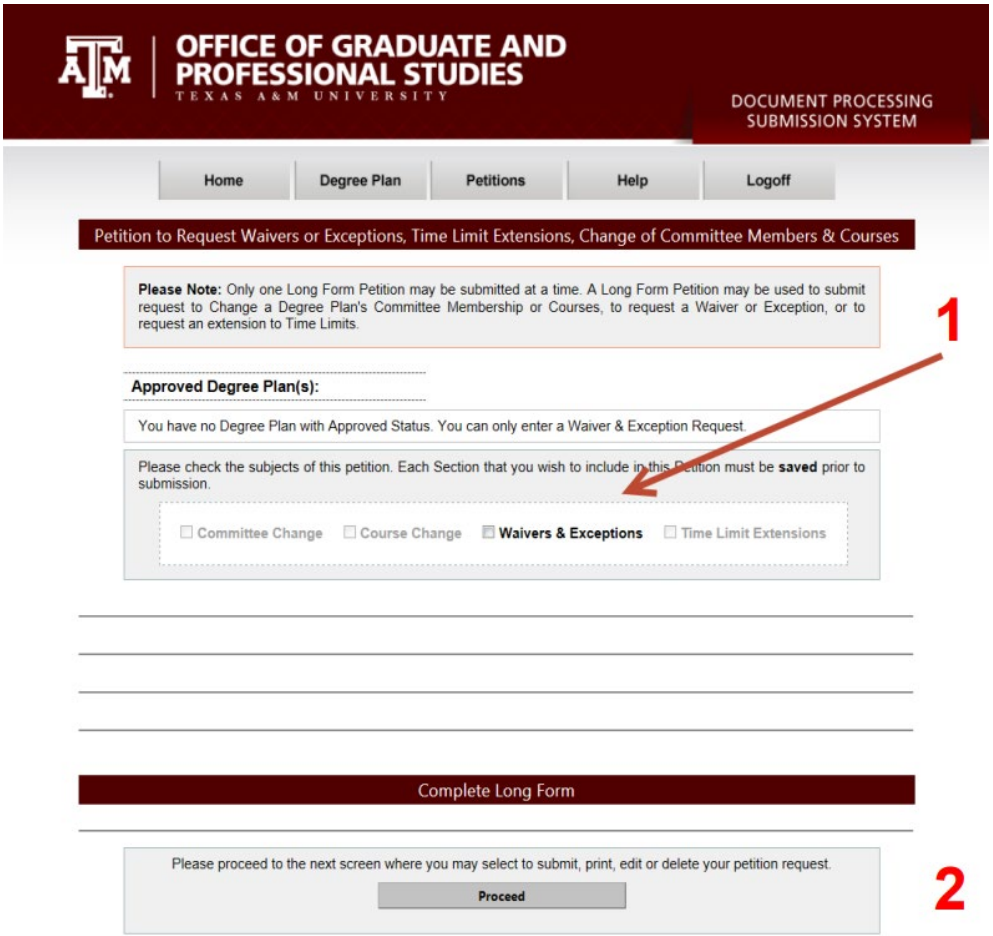
- Click "Create a New Petition"



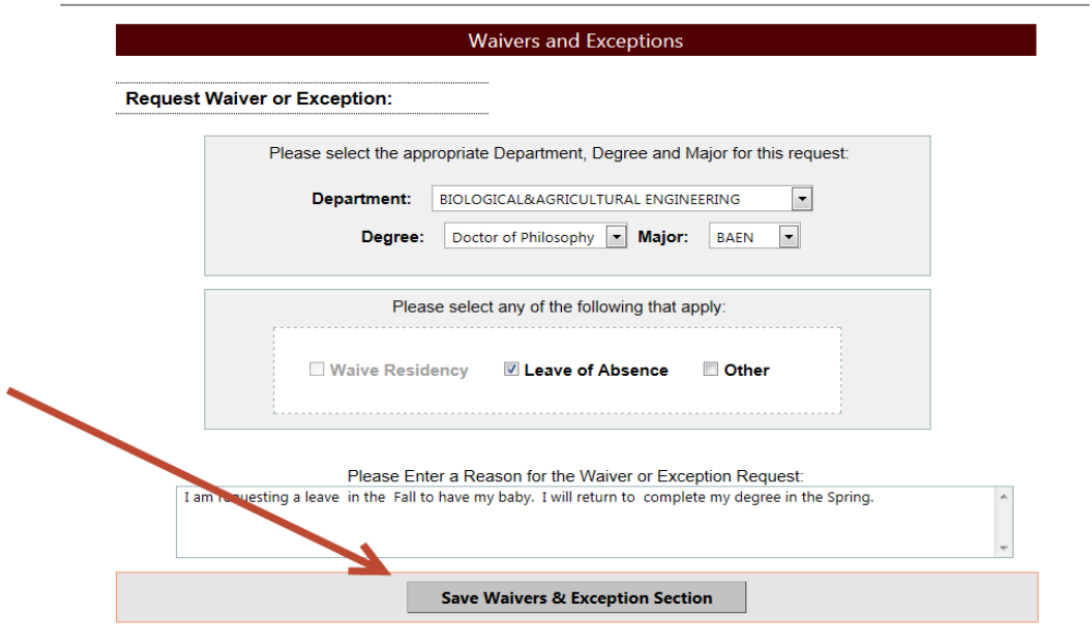
- Select the type of petition that you are submitting (LongForm) and select Continue



- Select the appropriate petitions you would like to file and select Proceed



- Once you have filled in all information for the petition(s) that you are filing, you will be required to save each petition type before proceeding to the next petition (there will be a pop up to indicate that your petition has been saved)



- You will select the Submit button to complete the submission process and then you will receive a confirmation

Once your petition(s) have been submitted, an email notification is sent to the pre-committee staff approver alerting them there is a petition awaiting approval and review. Once the pre-committee staff approved the petition, an email notification is sent to all committee members for approval. Once all committee members have approved the petition, then it is routed to the department for approval. After the department or IDP faculty approves the petition, it is then forwarded to the Graduate and Professional

School for processing and final approval.
Students are able to track where their petition is in the approval process by viewing their petition in DPSS.
NOTE: If a student is filing a Residency Waiver, the student will need to obtain a letter from their employer on company letterhead verifying their full-time employment and hire date. This letter will need to be sent to the Academic Advisor prior to the petition being approved.

6.2.3 Submitting a MDD Petition

A MDD petition is an electronic petition to change majors, departments, or degree programs.
For petitions that result in a change of classification:

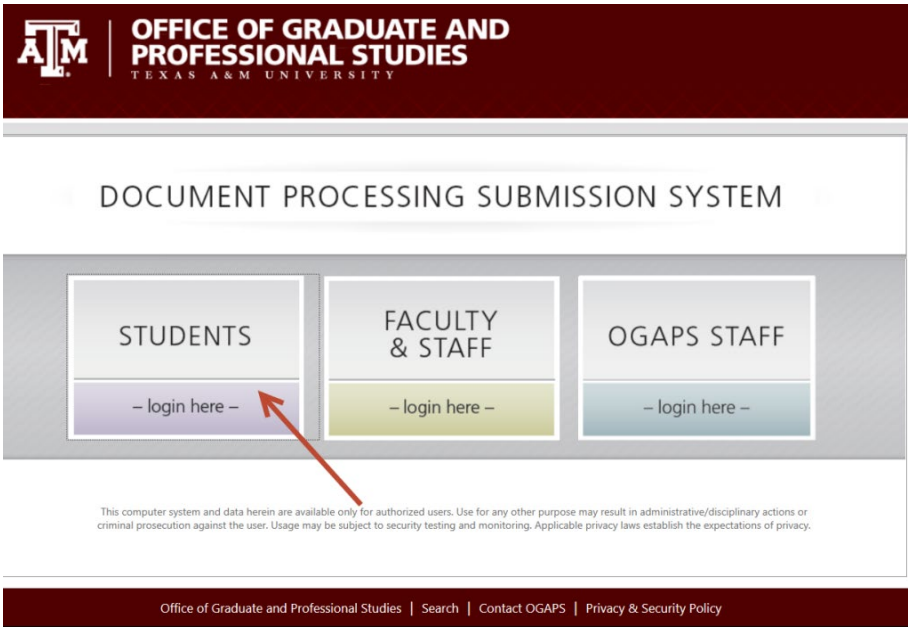
- To be effective in the same semester, students are required to have the MDD approved by GPS no later than the 12th (international students) and 20th (domestic students) class day during the long semesters
- For the summer semester, the petition must be approved by GPS by the 4th (international students) and 10th (domestic students) class day of the 1st summer session.

For same level changes (i.e., Master's to Master's or Ph.D. to Ph.D.):

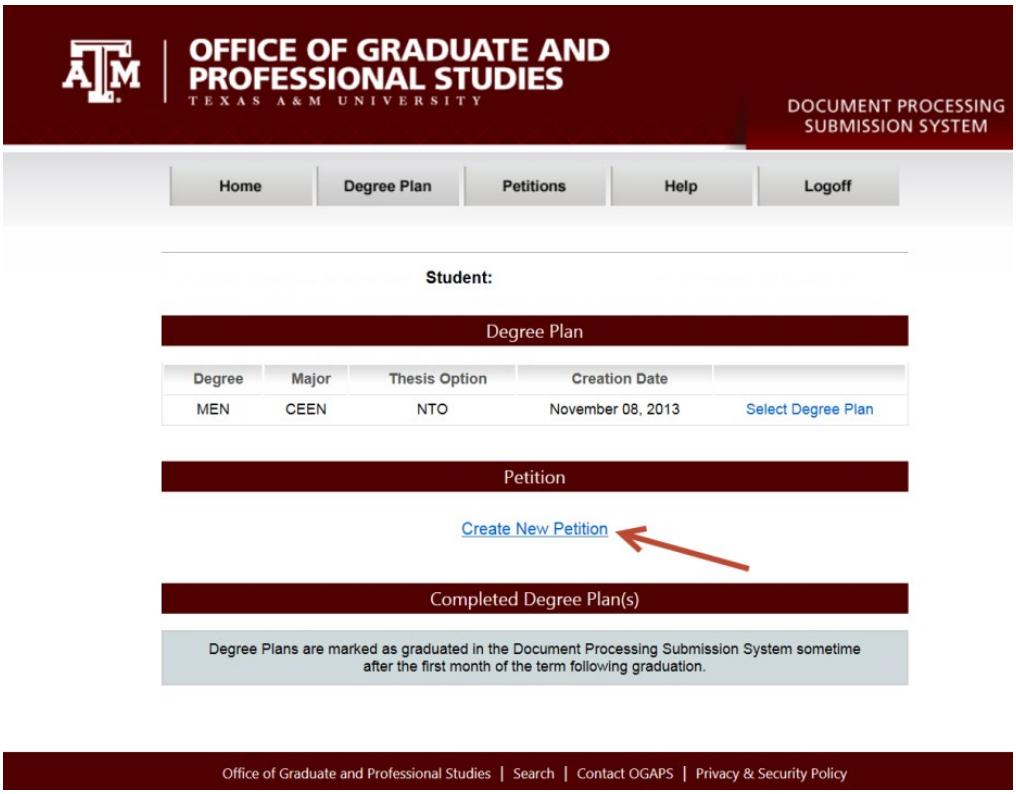
- Changes can be made at any time in the semester

To submit a MDD Petition:

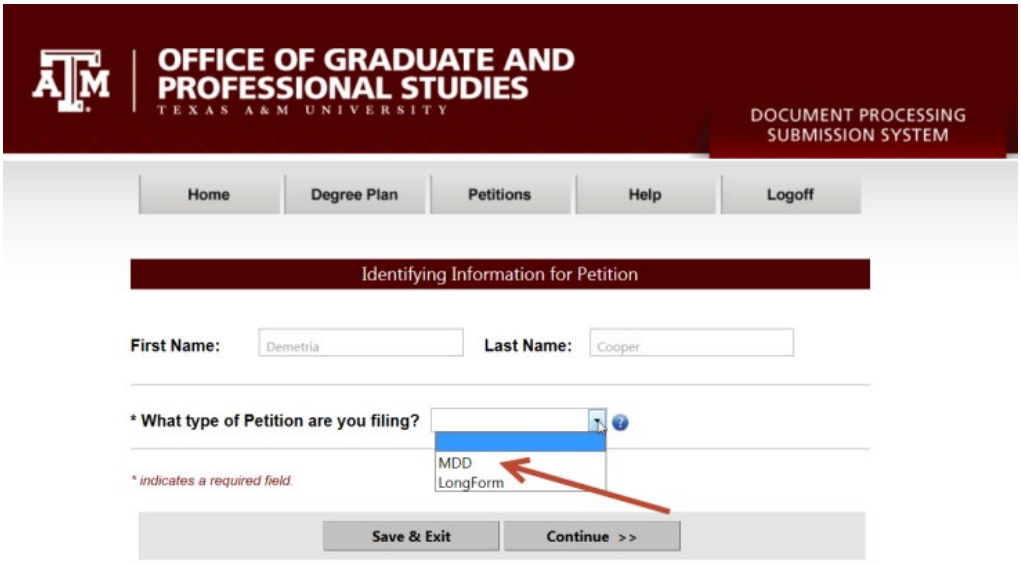
- Go to https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu and login as a student using your NetID and password



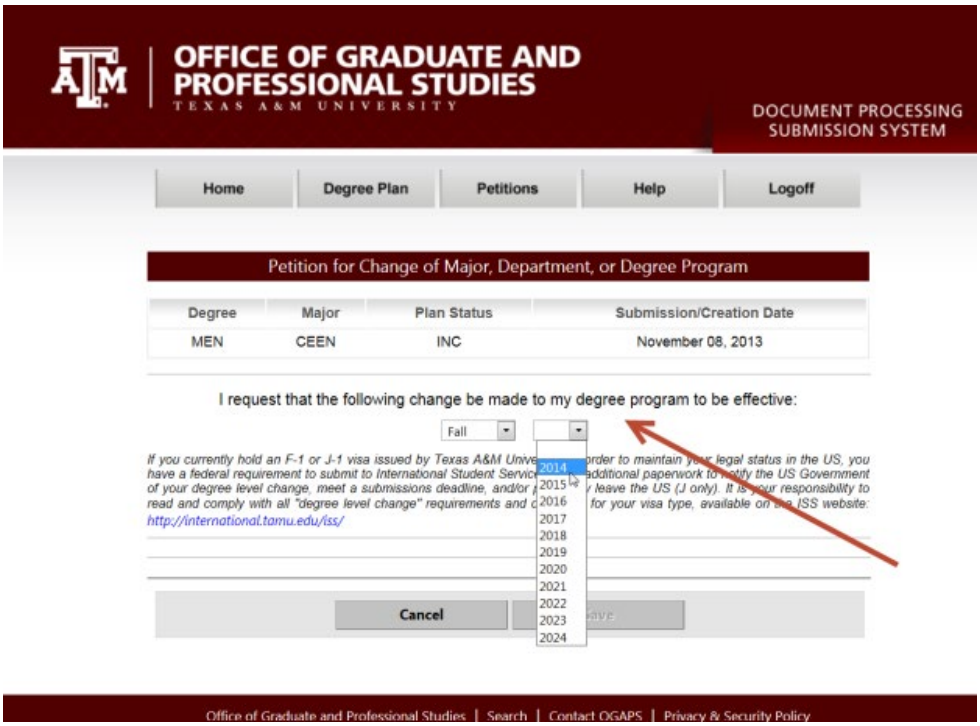
- Click "Create a New Petition"



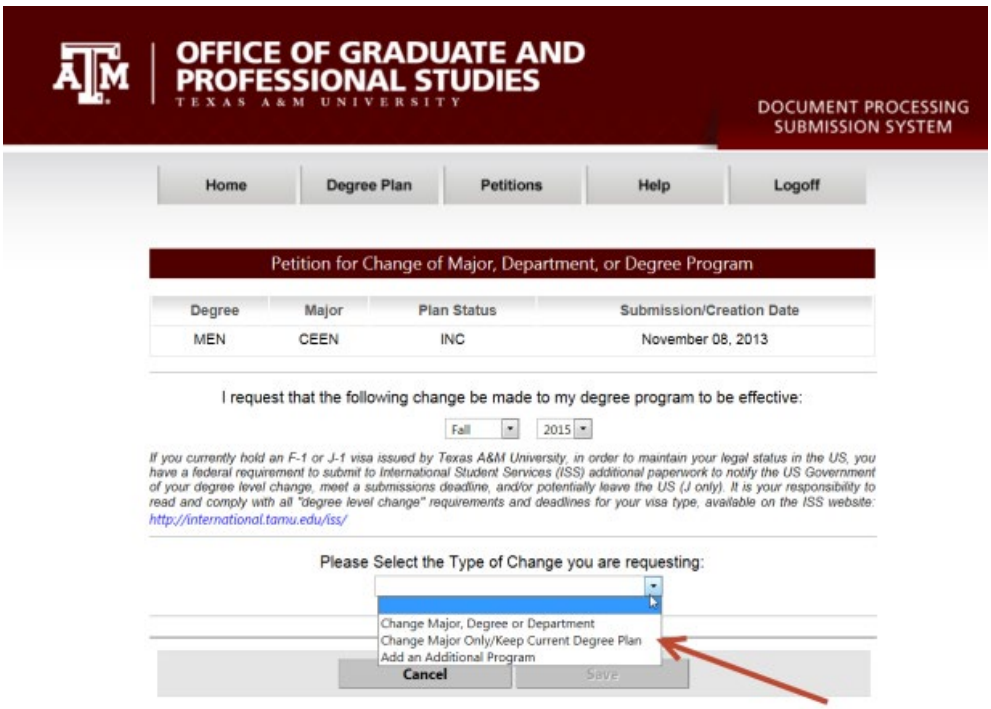
- Select the type of petition that you are submitting (MDD) and select Continue



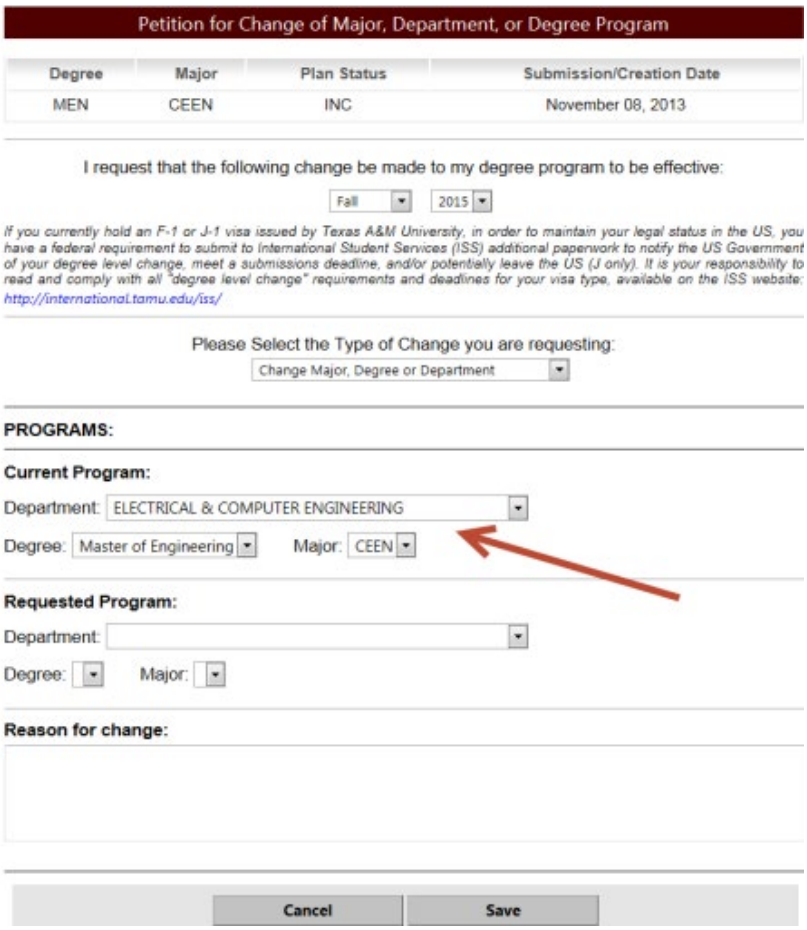
- Select the term and the year in which you would like the change to occur



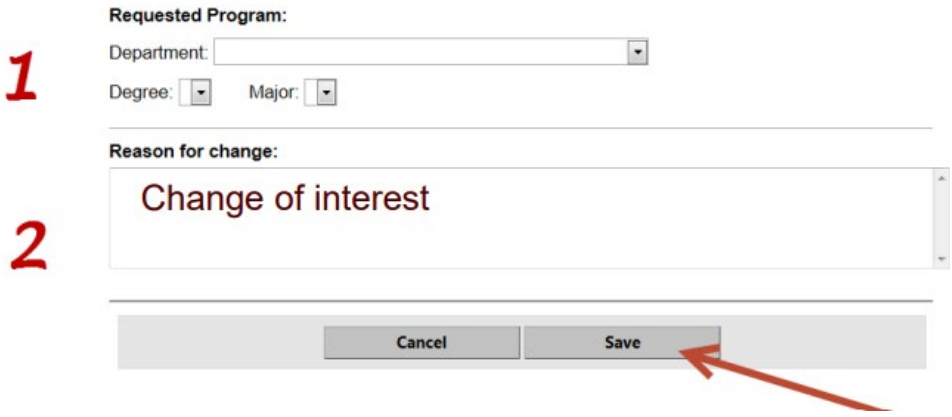
- From the drop down menu, select the type of change that you are requesting: 1) Change major, degree or department, 2) Change major only, keeping the current degree plan, or 3) Add an additional program



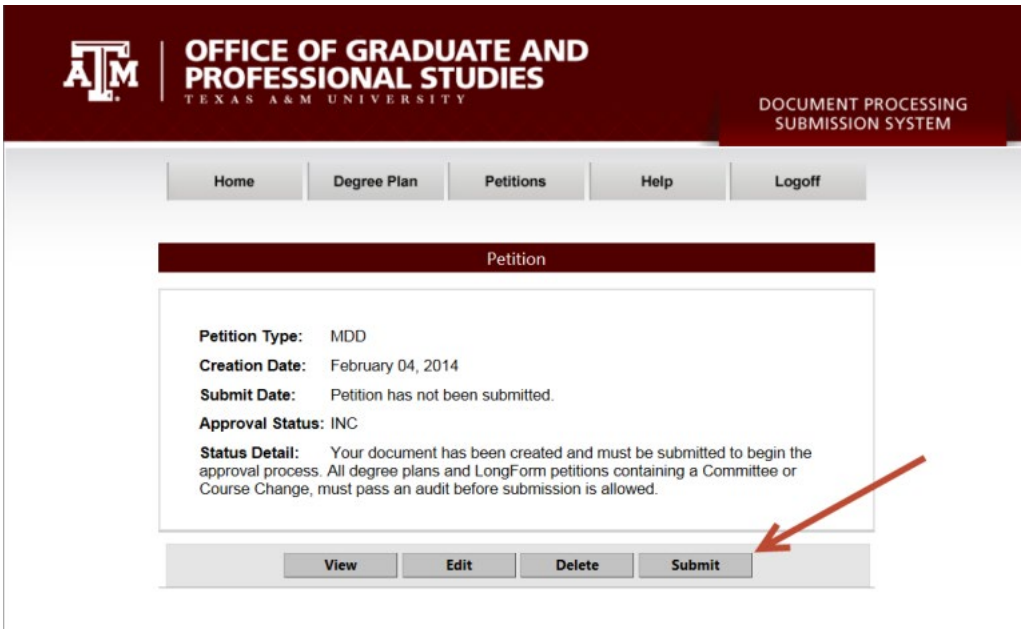
- Select your current program, department, degree and major



- Select the requested program, department, degree and major, then add the reason for change, and select Save



- Once the petition has been saved, go back to the home page to submit the petition



NOTE: Students requesting to change departments may be subject to the requested department's admission requirements. Please contact the requested department or academic advisor prior to submitting a request to change departments.

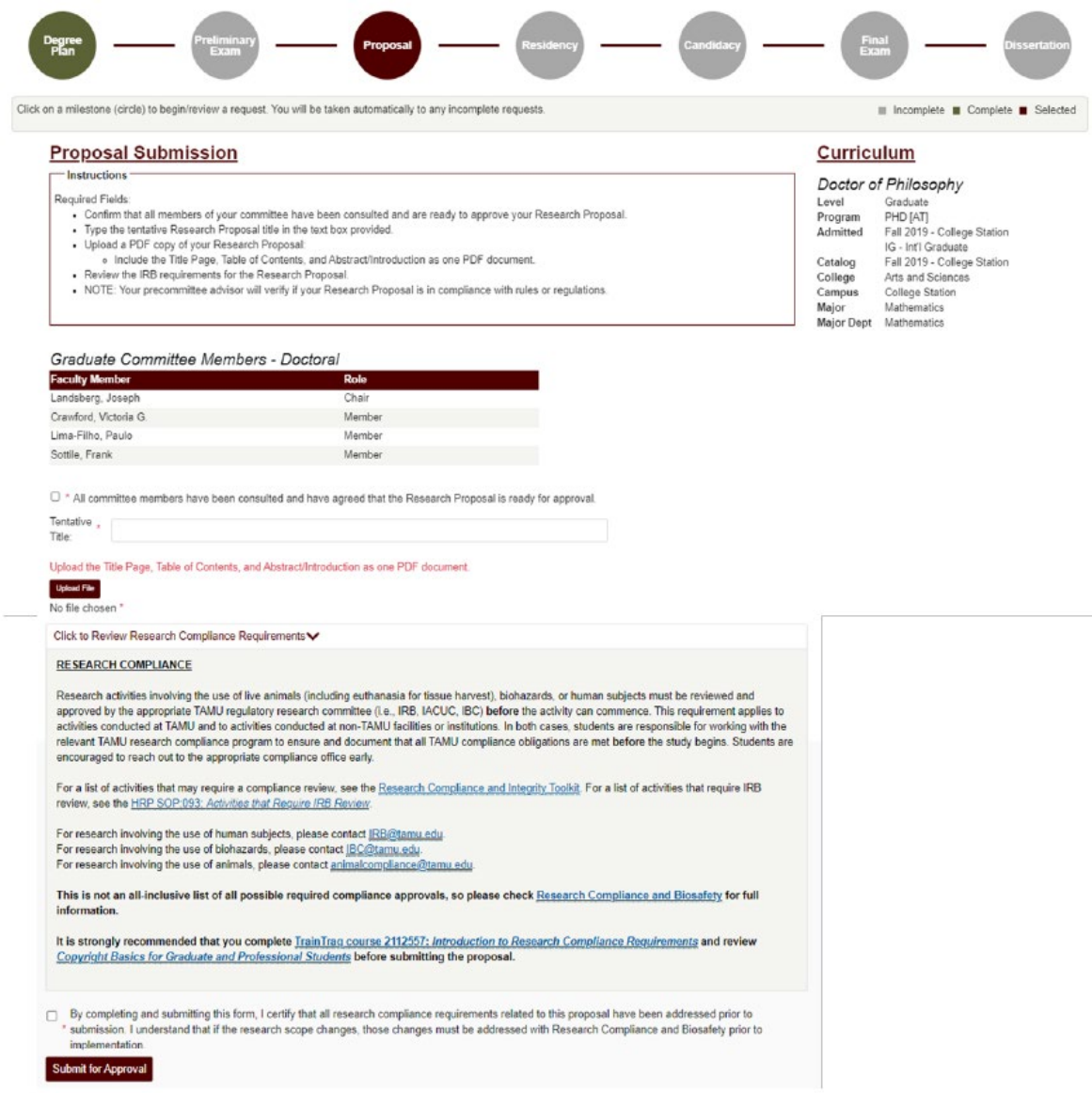
Appendix 11. Submitting Graduate Proposal

Thesis-based M.S. and Ph.D. programs require a thesis or dissertation proposal to be submitted as a degree milestone. Students must have a completed and approved degree plan on file to have access to ARCS in order to submit a proposal document.

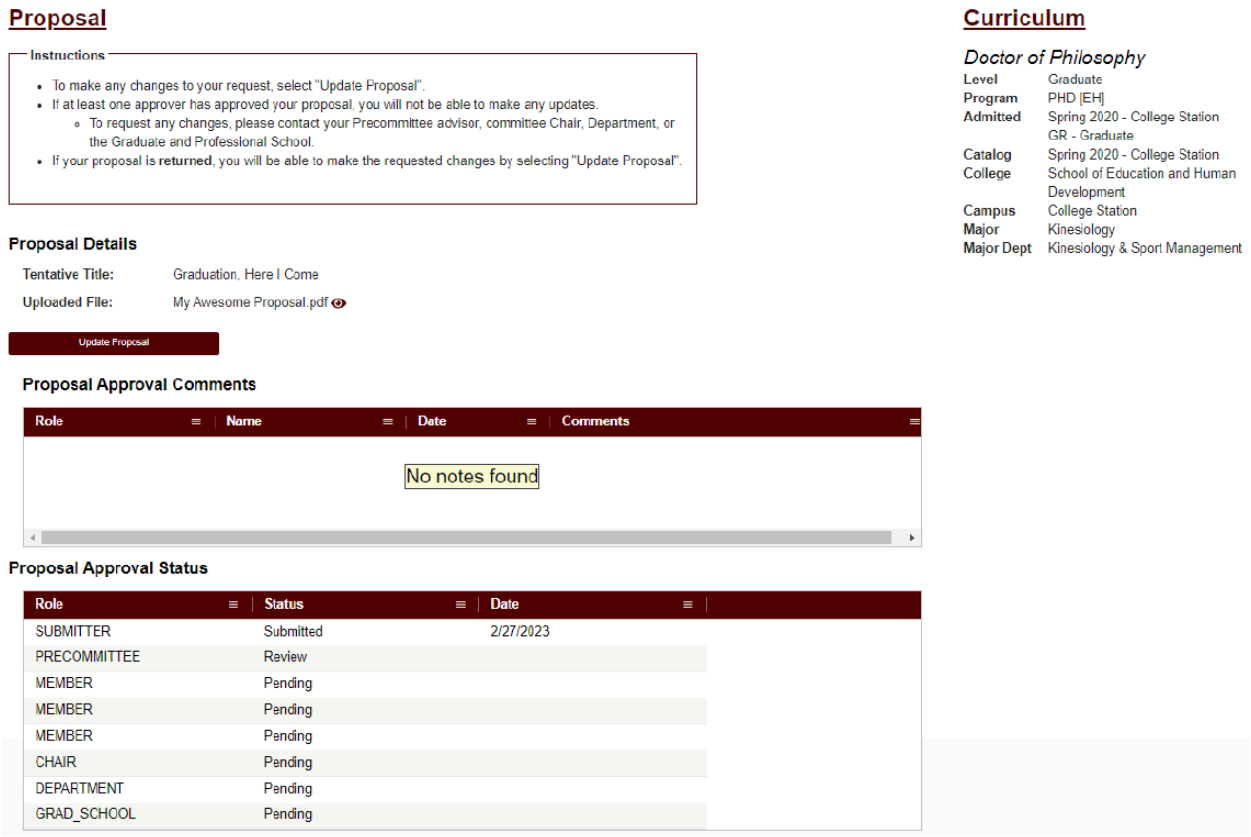
- To open ARCS, log into Howdy and select the "My ARCS" icon at the top of the page

- Once inside ARCS, you will see a list of icons displaying all the milestones for the completion of your degree

- When you click on the "Proposal" milestone, the system will do a brief check to verify that you do not have any open petitions/requests in the Document Processing Submission System (DPSS).
    - Please allow 24 hours for ARCS to update after a degree plan or petition is approved or denied in DPSS.
- On the proposal milestone landing page, the following should be displayed



- Be sure to read through the instructions which provide descriptions for each of the following required fields:
    - Committee Acknowledgement
    - Tentative Title
    - File Upload (can only be in PDF format)
    - Acknowledge research compliance requirements have been completed
- Once all above required fields have been enters, click on “Submit for Approval” and the following page should be displayed:



- On this landing page, you will be able to track the approval status of your proposal in the "Proposal Approval Status" section and update your proposal as needed. Once your department's pre-committee staff approves your proposal, you will no longer be able to make changes to the request yourself.

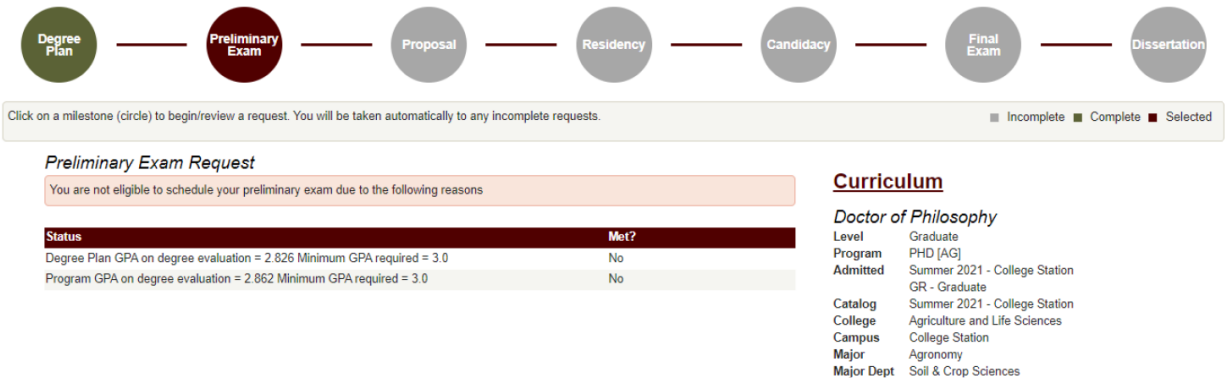
Appendix 12. Completing Preliminary Exams – PhD Only

- To open ARCS, log into Howdy and select the "My ARCS" icon at the top of the page

- Once inside ARCS, you will see a list of icons displaying all the milestones for the completion of your degree

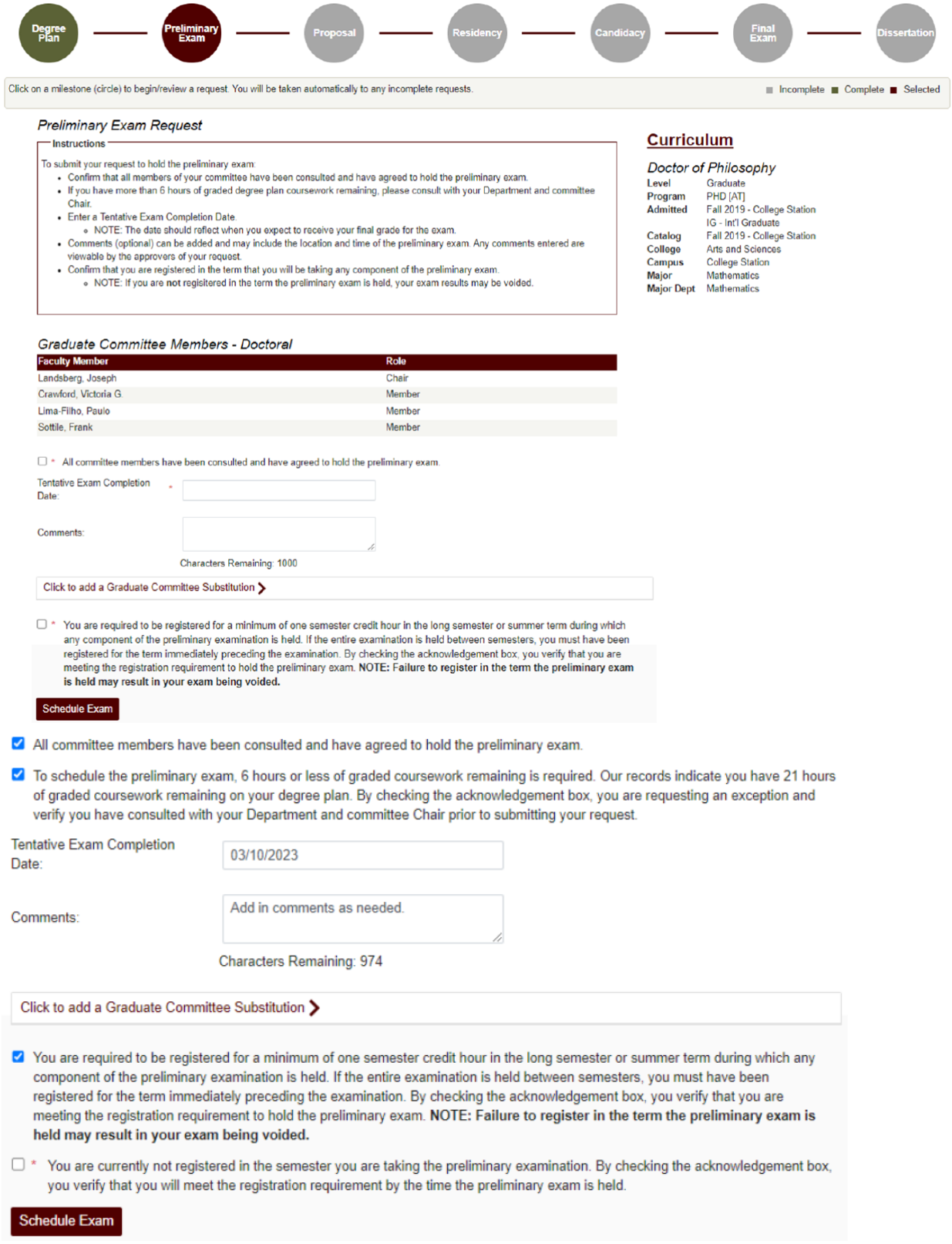
- When you click on the "Preliminary Exam" milestone, the system will perform an audit to verify your eligibility to schedule the preliminary exam.
- After the degree audit has been completed, one of two views will be displayed based on your eligibility to schedule the preliminary exam (see below):

Ineligible to Schedule the Preliminary Exam View



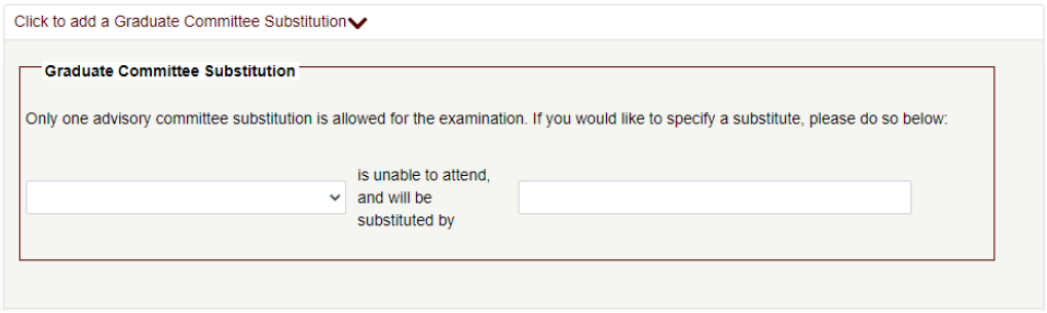
- If you are not eligible to schedule your preliminary exam, you will receive the message, "You are not eligible to schedule your preliminary exam due to the following reasons" (see above). In the "Status" section, you will be provided reason(s) that need to be resolved before you can schedule your preliminary exam.
- If you are eligible to schedule your preliminary exam, you will be taken to the preliminary exam request screen (see below). Be sure to read through the instructions which provide descriptions for each of the following required fields:
    - Committee Acknowledgement
    - Tentative Exam Completion Date
    - Registration Acknowledgement

NOTE: If you have more than 6 hours of graded coursework remaining (based off your degree plan), you will also be required to verify that you have consulted with your Department and Committee Chair on this exception (see below).
NOTE: If you are not currently registered in the semester you wish to take the preliminary exam, you will be required to verify that you will meet the registration requirement by the time the exam is held (Failure to register in the term the preliminary exam is held may result in your exam being voided).



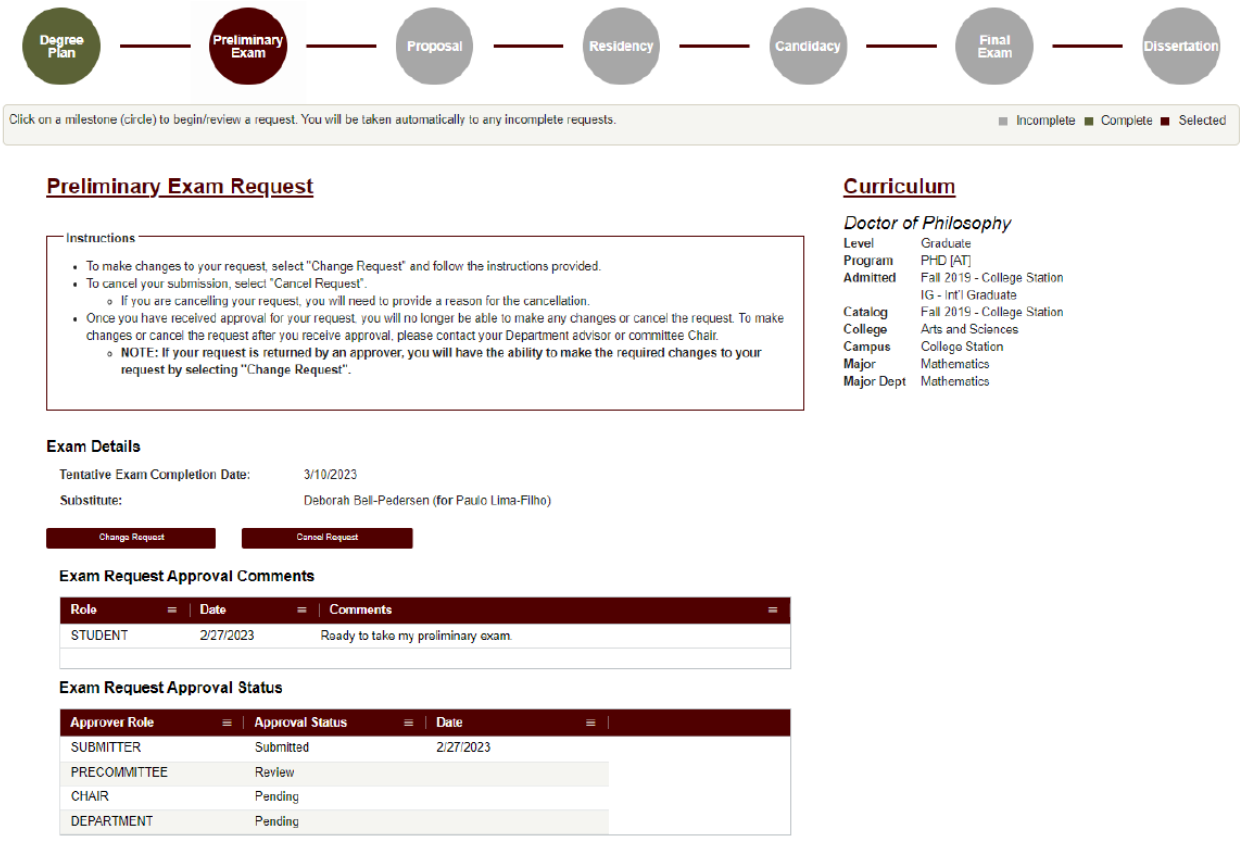
- Once all the above required information has been entered, click on “Schedule Exam”.
    - A second-degree audit will occur, please allow time for the audit to run.
    - If any errors are detected, the fields that need to be corrected will be highlighted.

- If one of your committee members is not able to grade your preliminary exam, please discuss with your committee Chair to determine an eligible substitute faculty member. Additionally, if the unavailable committee member is the only outside committee member, you must substitute that individual with another outside faculty member. Once you have identified an eligible substitute faculty member, use the "Graduate Committee Substitution" option.



NOTE: Your committee chair cannot be substituted.

- Once the second audit finishes successfully, you should be taken to a new page



- On this landing page, you will be able to track the approval status of your preliminary exam in the "Exam Request Approval Status" section, make changes to the request (see Changes to the Preliminary Exam Request), and cancel your request (see Cancelling the Preliminary Exam Request).

NOTE: Once your preliminary exam request receives approval from your department's pre-committee approver, you will no longer be able to make changes to the request yourself.

Appendix 13. Final Examination

Final Examination for Doctoral Students

The candidate for the doctoral degree must pass a final examination by deadline dates announced in the "Graduate and Professional School Calendar" each semester. The doctoral student is allowed only one opportunity to take the final examination.

Grades of D, F, or U for any course cannot be listed on the degree plan. The student must be registered for any remaining hours of 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 791 or other graduate courses specifically designated as S/U in the course catalog during the semester of the final exam. No student may be given a final examination until they have been admitted to candidacy and their current official cumulative and degree plan GPAs are 3.00 or better.

The request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the Graduate and Professional School prior to the submission of the request for final examination.

The student's advisory committee will conduct this examination. The final examination is not to be administered until the dissertation or record of study is available in substantially final form to the student's advisory committee, and all concerned have had adequate time to review the document. Whereas the final examination may cover the broad field of the candidate's training, it is presumed that the major portion of the time will be devoted to the dissertation and closely allied topics. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the chair of the advisory committee, be invited to attend a final examination for an advanced degree. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one (1) dissension is required to pass a student on their exam. A department can have a stricter requirement, provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

Final Examination for Master's Students

A positive evaluation by all members of the graduate committee with at most one (1) dissension is required to pass a student on their exam. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the chair of the advisory committee, be invited to attend a final examination for an advanced degree. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

A student shall be given only one (1) opportunity to repeat the final examination for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms are excluded). A department can have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency among all degree programs within a department.

All committee members must grade the final exam in the Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS).

Thesis Option

For thesis option students, the final examination may cover the thesis and all work taken on the degree plan. At the option of the committee, it may be written, oral, or both. The final examination may not be administered before the thesis 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. The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee. A thesis option student must be registered at the university in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken.

Thesis option candidates may request to be exempt from their final examination provided their degree plan GPA is 3.500 or greater and they have approval of the advisory committee, the head of the student's department, and the Graduate and Professional School. It is recommended that the request for exemption

be submitted the same semester the student intends to submit the thesis. The Request for Exemption of the Final Examination is submitted through ARCS.

Non-Thesis Option

For non-thesis option students, a final comprehensive examination may be required. The final exam cannot be held prior to the mid-point of the semester if questions on the exam are based on courses in which the student is currently enrolled. If a student has completed all required degree plan coursework, the student is not required to be registered for classes in the semester the final examination is administered (unless they hold an assistantship). For specific final examination requirements, students should check the program requirements for the degree they are pursuing.

How to Request a Final Examination

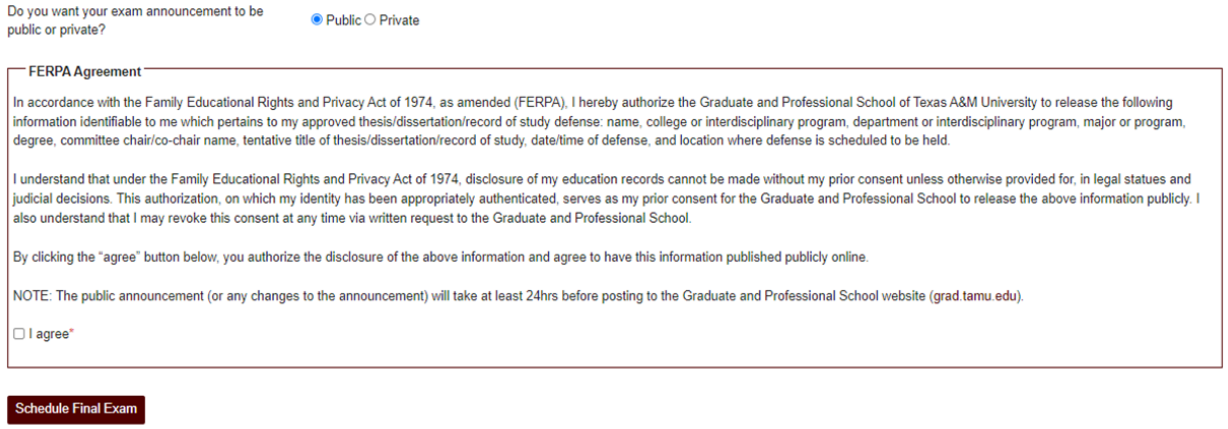
- To open ARCS, log into Howdy and select the "My ARCS" icon at the top of the page

- Once inside ARCS, you will see a list of icons displaying all the milestones for the completion of your degree

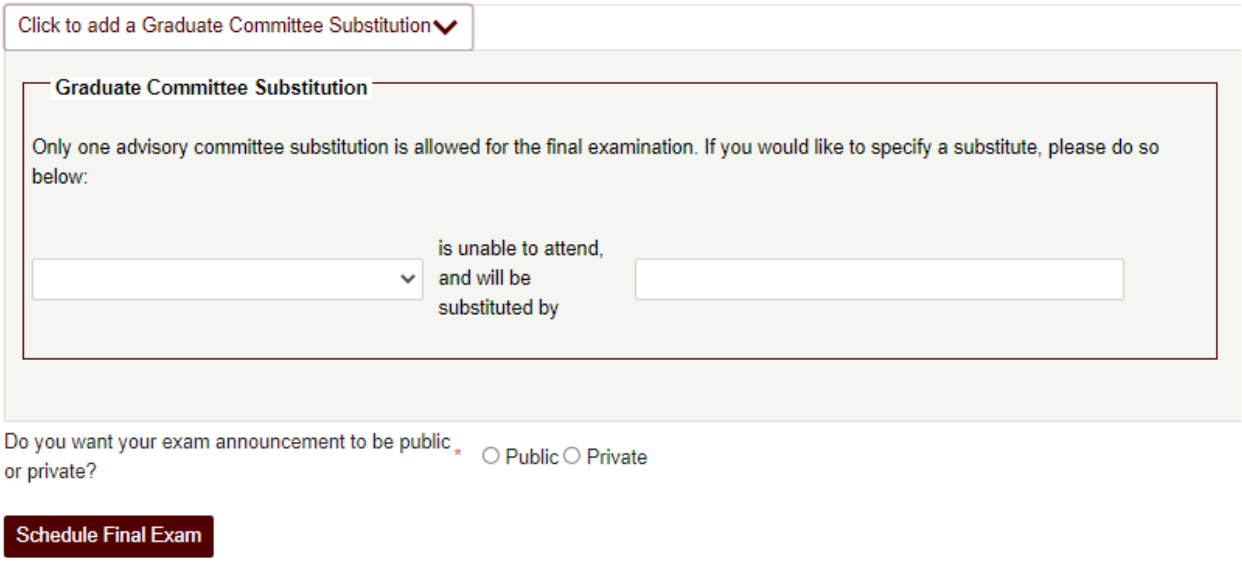
- The system will automatically take you to the Final Exam (Defense) milestone, and a degree audit will begin, determining your eligibility to schedule the final exam. Please allow time for the audit to process.
- After the degree audit has been completed, one of two views will be displayed based on your eligibility to schedule the final exam.
- If you are not eligible to schedule your final exam, you will receive the message, "You are not eligible to schedule your final exam due to the following reasons" (see below). In the "Status" section, you will be provided reason(s) that need to be resolved before you can schedule your final exam.

- If you are eligible to schedule your final exam, you will be taken to the final exam request screen (see below). Be sure to read through the instructions which provide descriptions for each of the following required fields:
    - Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study Title (Tentative) – If applicable
    - Do you plan on graduating this semester?
    - All committee members have been consulted and have agreed to the following schedule
    - Date and Time of the final exam (add location if known)
    - Do you want your exam announcement to be public or private?

- Selecting “Public” will only add your defense announcement to the Graduate School website.
- If you select “Public”, an additional window will open (see below):

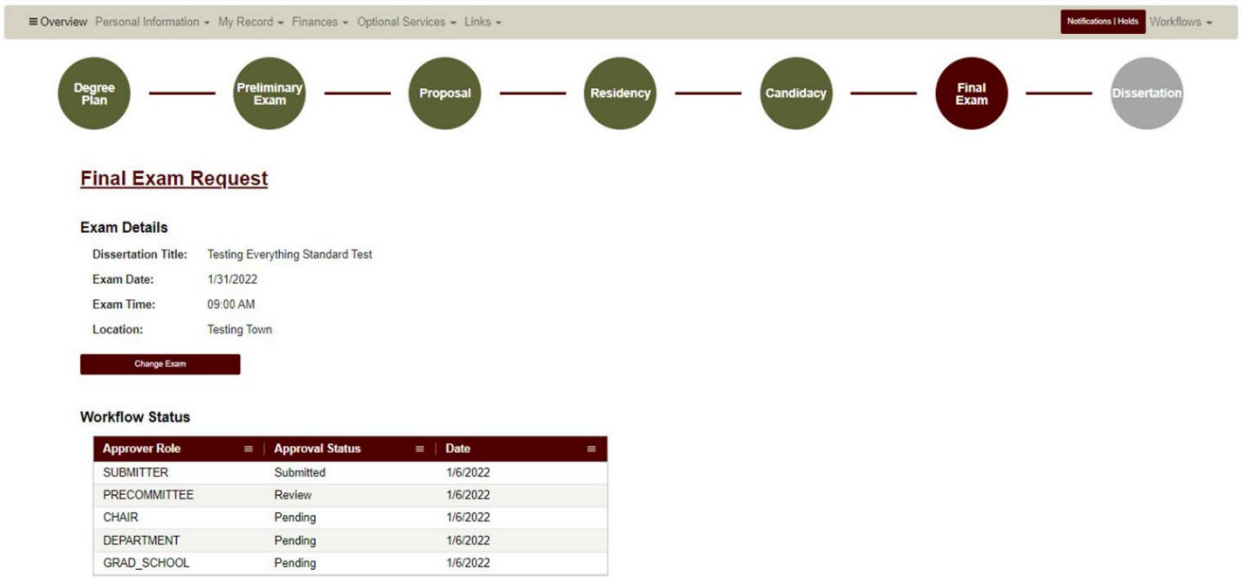


- Once all the above required information has been entered, click on “Schedule Final Exam”. A second-degree audit will occur, please allow time for the audit to run. If any errors are detected, the fields that need to be corrected will be highlighted.
- If one of your committee members is not able to attend your final exam, please discuss with your committee Chair to determine an eligible substitute faculty member. Additionally, if the unavailable committee member is the only outside committee member, you must substitute that individual with an outside faculty member. Once you have identified an eligible substitute faculty member, use the “Graduate Committee Substitution” option.



NOTE: Your committee chair cannot be substituted.

- Once the second audit finishes successfully, you should be taken to a new page



- On this landing page, you will be able to track the approval status of your final exam in the "Workflow Status" section and make changes to the final exam request (see Changes to the Final Exam Request).

NOTE: Once your final exam request receives approval from your department's pre-committee approver, you will no longer be able to make changes to the request yourself.

Copyright and Availability

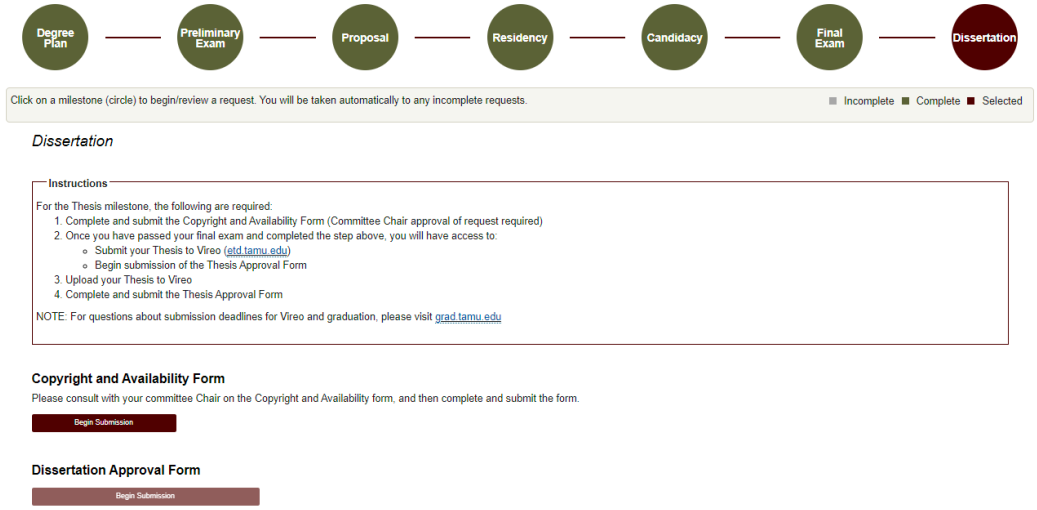
- To open ARCS, log into Howdy and select the "My ARCS" icon at the top of the page.

- Once inside ARCS, you will see a list of icons displaying all the milestones for the completion of your degree.

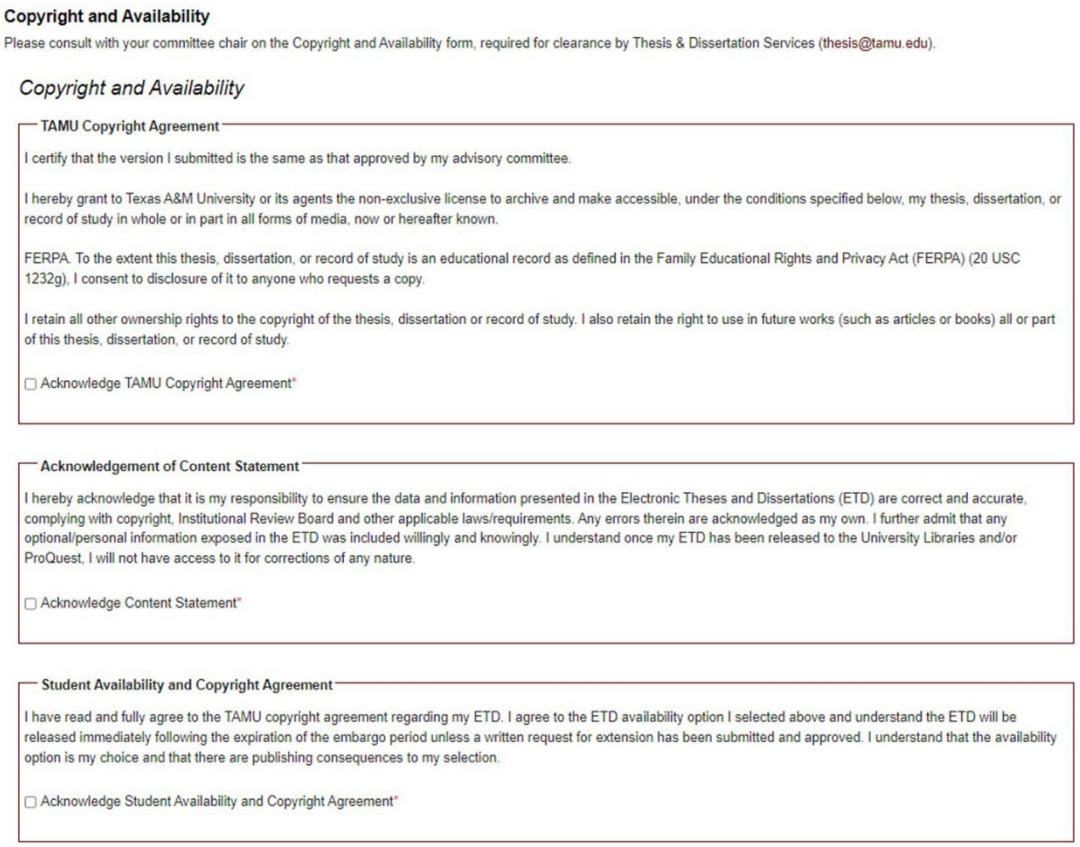
- If you have scheduled your final exam (have an approved final exam request), you will be able to submit the Copyright and Availability (C&A) form prior to taking the final exam.
- To complete the C&A form, click on the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study milestone.

NOTE: If you have not passed your final exam or had your Copyright and Availability (C&A) form approved by your Chair, you will NOT be able to submit the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form.

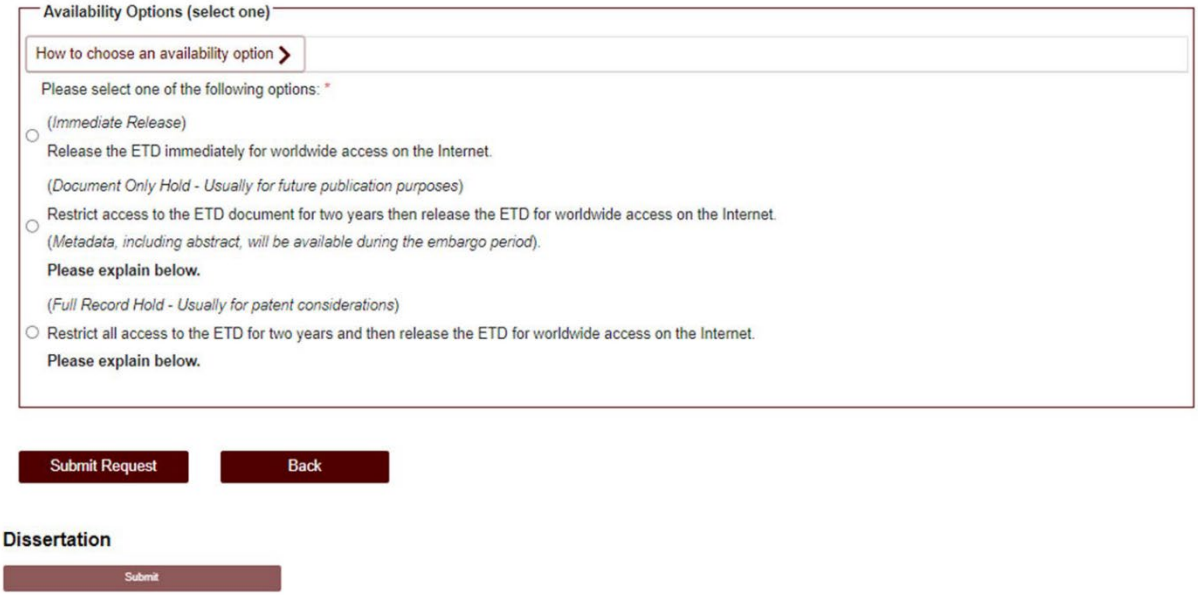
- On the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study milestone, follow the instructions



- To begin submitting your Copyright and Availability Form, select “Begin Submission”. The following screen should appear:



- Read through the “TAMU Copyright Agreement”, “Acknowledgement of Content Statement", and “Student Availability and Copyright Agreement” sections. After reading the information provided, click the required boxes located to the left of the acknowledgement.
- For the final section, select which availability option you would like for your manuscript. If you need help with the availability options, select “How to choose an availability option”



- Once you have passed your final exam and receive approval from your Chair for the C&A form, you will be able to submit your Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form.

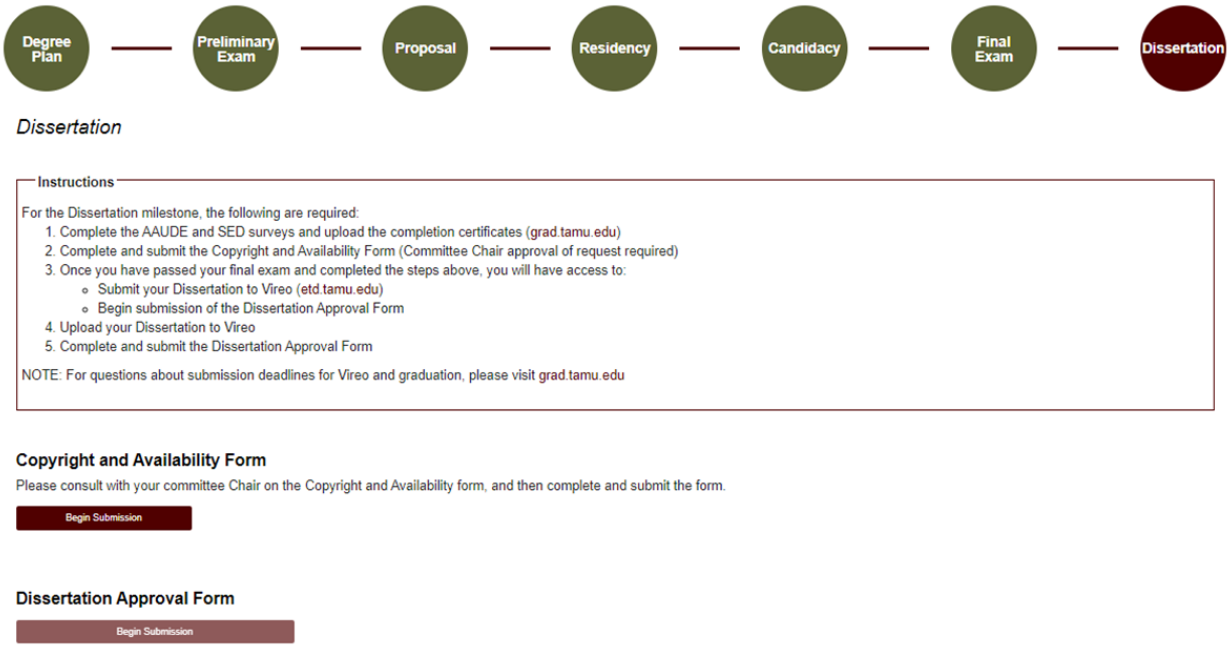
Thesis or Dissertation Approval

- To open ARCS, log into Howdy and select the "My ARCS" icon at the top of the page

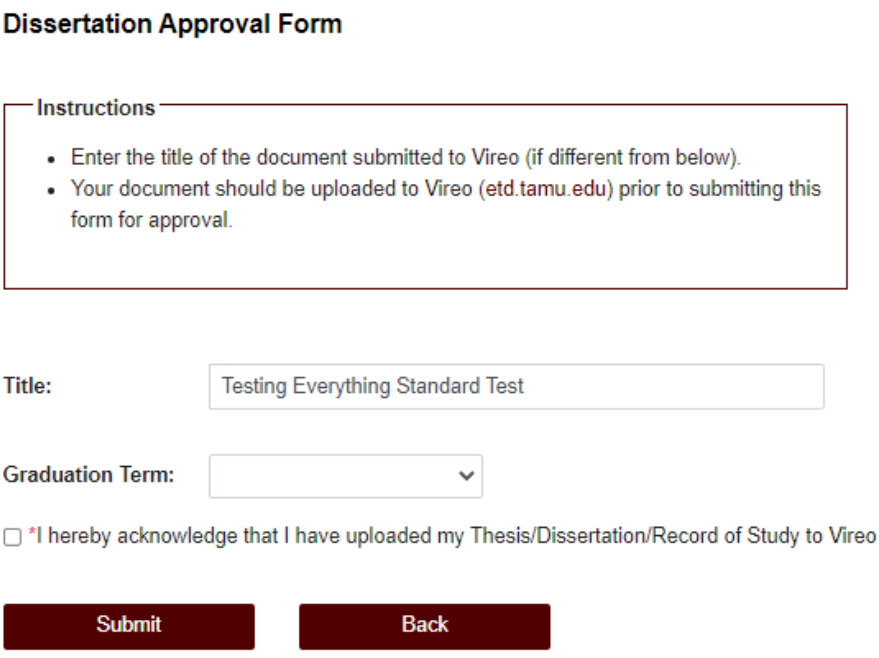
- Once inside ARCS, you will see a list of icons displaying all the milestones for the completion of your degree

NOTE: Your completed Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study needs to be uploaded to Vireo BEFORE you submit the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study approval form.

- On the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study milestone landing page, the following should be displayed.

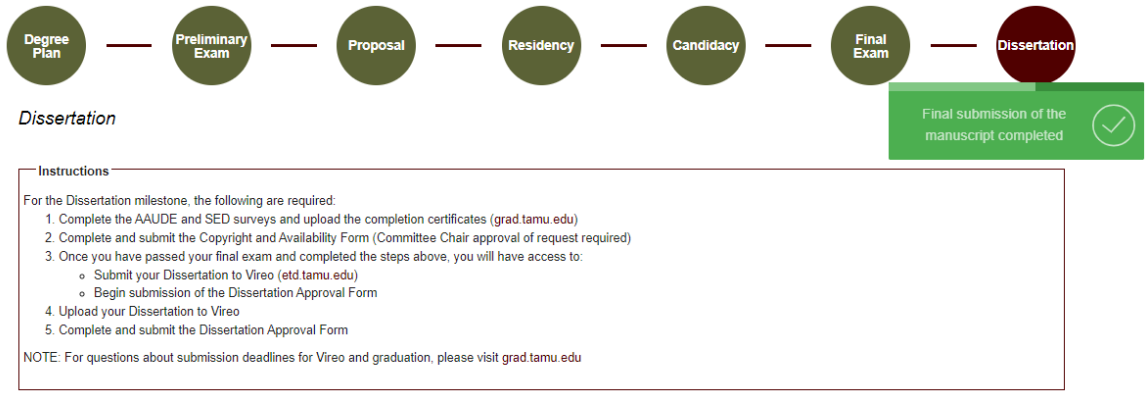


- After receiving approval for your Copyright and Availability Form from your Chair, you will have the option to click on "Begin Submission" in the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form section.

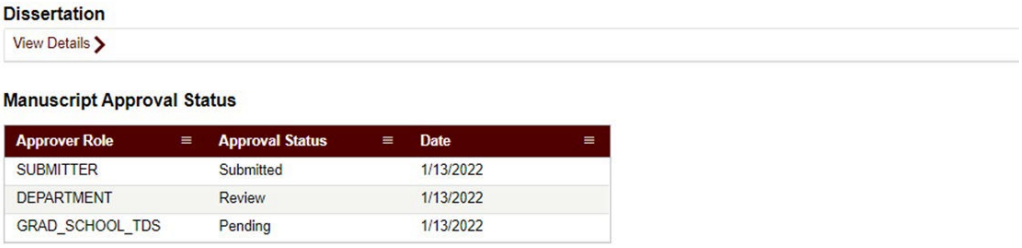
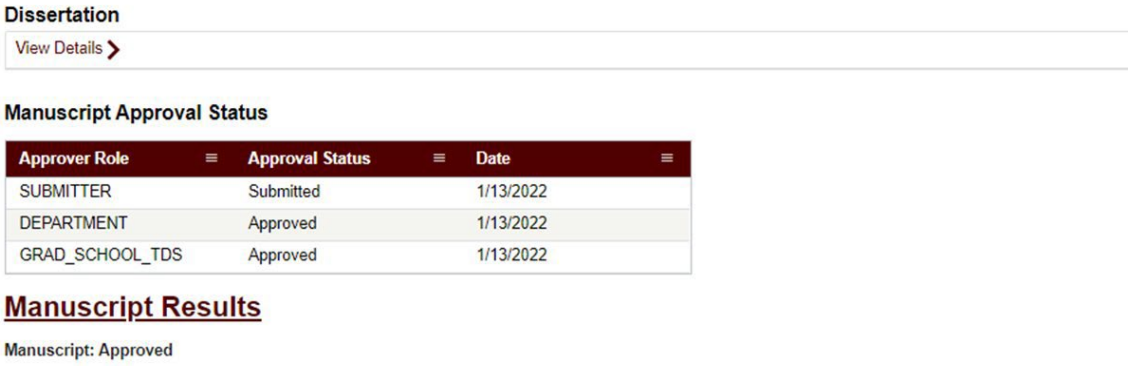


- Be sure to read through the provided instructions.
  - Verify the title of your Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study matches the title of the document submitted to Vireo.
  - A graduation term may be selected but is not required.
  - Acknowledge that you have uploaded your Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study in Vireo.
  - Click "Submit" to begin the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study approval process.

- After submitting the Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study approval form, you will see a pop-up in the right-hand corner verifying submission.



- After full committee approval, your manuscript will then need to be approved by your Department and Thesis & Dissertation Services (GRAD_SCHOOL_TDS). You will be able to track the approval status of your manuscript.



- Once all parties have approved the manuscript, you will see the results in the "Manuscript Results" section.