FISHERIES AND MARICULTURE

MASTER'S STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
CORPUS CHRISTI

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

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Websites:
http://fama.tamucc.edu
http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/degrees/science/fisheries_and_mariculture.html

This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog and the Graduate Student Handbook

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SECTION I. FISHERIES AND MARICULTURE PROGRAM

Introduction

This handbook provides guidance to students applying for and enrolled in the Fisheries and Mariculture (FAMA) master's (M.S.) degree program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC). It contains information about the requirements for successfully completing the degree, the course of study, selecting an advisor and graduate committee, choosing whether to pursue the thesis or professional (non-thesis) course of study, and the final oral examination. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog (be sure you are viewing correct catalog and year). The FAMA Handbook lists requirements specific to the FAMA program that are above and beyond what is described in the catalog. Additional graduate school requirements and specific rules and procedures can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook and the TAMU-CC University Handbook. There is also a Style Guide that contains detailed instructions for preparing the thesis prospectus, thesis proposal, thesis or professional paper, and master's defense seminar.

The M.S. in Fisheries and Mariculture

The Fisheries and Mariculture Program offers an M.S. degree with very flexible coursework requirements allowing students to pursue studies of fisheries and/or mariculture. Of ecologically and commercially important Gulf of Mexico species. In addition to university facilities, students may conduct research at nearby partner institutions including the Texas A&M AgriLife Mariculture Research Facility, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Marine Development Center, and the Texas State Aquarium. Our students acquire cutting-edge science and technological skills necessary for positions in both public and private sectors of the fisheries and mariculture industries, as well as undertaking research allowing them to pursue further studies at the PhD level.

The **goal** of the Fisheries and Mariculture M.S. program is to:

- Prepare graduate students for a career in either the private or public sector in fisheries, mariculture, or aquaculture.
- To foster creative independence and critical thinking in graduates so they are competent to practice in and contribute to their profession and field of scholarship.

The **expectations** of our graduates are to:

- Exhibit their mastery of subject knowledge and skills in the fields of fisheries or mariculture.
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct a thorough and complete survey of the relevant scientific literature pertaining to their approved topic of study.
- Demonstrate the ability to collect, organize and interpret data and produce a thesis or professional paper from an experiment, study, or project.
- Develop technical writing and communication skills that will benefit them in their professional careers.

The FAMA Program Student

Prospective students who wish to pursue a FAMA M.S. degree should have a strong life sciences background. Students accepted into the degree program will generally have undergraduate degrees in an area of the biological sciences (e.g., Biology, Ecology, Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences) with coursework that includes chemistry (e.g., general chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry) and math (e.g.,

trigonometry, calculus, statistics). The FAMA faculty welcome students from diverse academic paths as well as those who have some research experience.

Graduate study provides advanced, specialized training that strengthens academic and professional competence by broadening scientific horizons as well as development of specific expertise. Graduate students must assume greater responsibility and exercise more individual initiative than was necessary as an undergraduate. The graduate faculty emphasize productive research, employ seminar methods more frequently, and anticipate higher levels of class participation. To be successful in the master's program, students must display commitment to independent study, must become familiar with past and current research, and must relate ongoing research to the investigations of other scholars.

Fisheries & Mariculture Administrative Staff

Department Chair: Kam Tang, Ph.D.
FAMA Program Coordinator: Kim Withers, Ph.D.
Administrative Staff: Stephanie Hock (Academic Advisor), Mr. Ken Brown

M.S. Fisheries & Mariculture Graduate Faculty

The M.S. FAMA Graduate Faculty is housed within the Department of Life Sciences. To review faculty member research interests and to find faculty contact information go to the Department of Life Sciences Directory.

Get Connected

Most official college and program information for students is distributed on listservs. It is recommended that you subscribe to the graduate science and engineering student listserv (SciTech-GradStudents, scitech-gradstudents@listserv.tamucc.edu (Historical fact: It is called SciTech as the college used to be Science and Technology.) Other listservs that may be of interest include: MSGSO - Marine Science Graduate Student Organization (marigrad-list@sci.tamucc.edu) and Life Sciences Opportunities (lsci-opportunities@listserv.tamucc.edu).

SECTION II. ADMISSION INFORMATION

FAMA Program Admissions Criteria

Students seeking admission to a graduate degree program with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must submit an admission application form, application fee, official transcripts, and program-specific supporting documents. All documents **must** be received by the Graduate Admissions by the designated deadlines (see below).

Graduate Admissions
6300 Ocean Dr., Unit 5843
Student Services Center, Room 200
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

gradweb@tamucc.edu
Phone: 361.825.2541

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Application Submission

Specific information on University criteria, application procedures, fees, and additional requirements for international applications are found in the TAMUCC Graduate Catalog and at the Graduate Admissions website. To apply, complete the online Application Form found at Apply Texas.

Program Requirements & Information

Below is a summary of the supporting documents required by the FAMA program:

- Completed university graduate application form.
- An essay of about 1000 words describing educational and career goals, interests as they relate to the faculty in the FAMA program, and a statement identifying the faculty member who has agreed to serve as chair of the graduate advisory committee.
    - **Prospective students MUST have a commitment from a faculty member to chair their graduate committee and to have the student join the faculty member's lab.**
    - **If you do not have this commitment, your application will not be considered**.
- Three letters of evaluation from people familiar with your scholarly potential.
- Transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate work (including transcript evaluations of all work done at foreign institutions).[1]
- Any relevant supplemental materials such as publications or resumes that include information about relevant experiences.
- International students have additional requirements as outlined at the Graduate Admissions website. The BIOL program requires TOEFL or IELTS scores (click here for more information) for students from countries where English is not the native language. These scores must not be more than two (2) years old from the date the application was received AND must meet university criteria.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the application is complete and received by the deadline to assure full consideration. Acceptance into the FAMA M.S. program is competitive and based on consideration of all application materials. Students accepted into the program will typically have demonstrated an ability to succeed in an academically rigorous environment through a high GPA. Relevant life experiences may also provide a substantial basis for consideration.

Students whose GPA for the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework is less than 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale), are not competitive. If accepted, students in this situation are not eligible for support (i.e., cannot be supported through teaching or research assistantships), including out-of-state tuition waiver. Students whose GPA for the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework is 2.5 or less (on a 4.0 scale) will not be considered for admission.

[1] To be considered official, all required postsecondary academic records must be submitted directly from the registrar's office and bear the seal and signature of the registrar of the institution. In some foreign countries, the controller of examinations or principal may certify academic records. Official English translations, not interpretations, are required from most countries. Applicants must submit external transcript evaluations along with copies of the official transcripts. An applicant's file will not be considered complete without the submission of external transcript evaluations.

A campus visit with personal interviews involving prospective faculty mentors is highly recommended. To schedule a visit, please contact one of the following:

Dr. Kim Withers
FAMA Program Coordinator
Kim.Withers@tamucc.edu
361.825.5907

Mr. Ken Brown
Sr. Administrative Assistant
Kenneth.Brown@tamucc.edu
361.825.3907

Program Deadlines

The FAMA program has two deadlines: 1) priority date deadlines and 2) late or last decision date deadlines. All students should strive to meet the priority deadline because it is used to make decisions regarding assignment of assistantships. All applications received after the priority date deadline are considered "late" applications. Deadlines are typically earlier for international students because of the time required to process visa applications for international students. Check with the Office of Graduate Admissions for the most up-to-date application deadlines.
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M.S. FAMA PROGRAM APPLICATION DEADLINES			
	Admission Semester		
Domestic Students	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer I**
Priority deadline to receive complete applications.	February 1	August 1	February 1
Decision date for **Priority** deadline	March 15	September 15	March 15
Last date for receipt of complete applications.	August 1	December 15	May 1
Decision date for **late** applications.	August 15	January 5	May 15
International Students	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer I**
Priority deadline to receive complete applications.	February 1	June 1	February 1
Decision date for **Priority** deadline	March 15	July 15	March 15
Last date for receipt of complete applications.	April 15	September 1	February 1
Decision date for **late** applications.	May 15	October 15	March 15

The acceptance process has two steps: 1) review and vote for acceptance by the designated MS BIOL program faculty, and 2) final and official acceptance rejection from the Office of Graduate Education.

Assistantships

However, applicants must apply separately for scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships at the College of Science (https://www.tamucc.edu/science/student-information/graduate-funding.php). Remuneration for M.S. assistantships, which is currently set at $1200/month for 9-month half-time (50%, 20 hours/week) appointments, are consistent regardless of whether a student is a teaching or research assistant. **Students are only eligible to work half-time.**

After the priority deadline, if funding is available, awards will be made on a first come, first served basis. Students who have received offers for fellowships or assistantships **must notify** their respective coordinator (Kim Withers) and the College of Science TA Coordinator (named in offer letter) of their

acceptance by April 15 for Fall admission and November 15 for Spring admission (if assistantships are available). Otherwise, the University will assume that the offer has been rejected and will make offers to other deserving students.

Admission to the program is decided independently of financial awards. Students must first be accepted into the program before financial awards can be considered. For details regarding graduate assistantships and scholarships, refer to https://www.tamucc.edu/science/student-information/graduate-funding.php, respectively.

Teaching Assistantships: The State of Texas requires international graduate students whose native language is not English to obtain English proficiency certification before serving as graduate teaching assistants. See the Graduate Assistantship Handbook.

Research Assistantships: A limited number of research assistantships are available through research institutes or centers and individual faculty members. Consult with institute or center directors and individual faculty members to identify these opportunities.

Timelines: Sometimes students need to make decisions on financial assistance before all information is in. For example, a student may need to accept or reject a financial aid package (loans) before he or she knows whether he or she is approved for an out-of-state tuition waiver. If you have a financial aid situation, you should discuss the situation with your faculty advisor and the Financial Aid Office before making a decision. If your studies start being extended far beyond "normal" time for completion, a situation of "excessive" hours may occur that can lead to financial aid issues. This situation rarely occurs, but if it does, see a representative at the Financial Aid Office to check what is the process for continuing.

Out-Of-State Tuition Waivers: Out-of-state tuition waivers are available to any graduate student receiving a half-time assistantship or fellowship. Students receiving a University scholarship of $1,000 or more per academic year are eligible to apply for out-of-state tuition waivers. To be eligible for an out-of-state tuition waiver, students must maintain a course load of 9 graduate hours during long semesters or 3 graduate hours during the combined summer session. The Graduate Student Handbook provides information on how to request an out-of-state tuition waiver.

Graduate Orientation

The Office of Graduate Studies hosts a general Graduate Student Orientation every Fall and Spring semester. The BIOL program schedules a Program Requirements Orientation separately, usually during the first week of classes, to ensure that all new graduate students in the program are able to attend. **Graduate students with teaching assistantships must attend training prior to the start of the fall and spring semester.**

SECTION III. ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Enrollment Status

All FAMA students with teaching or research assistantships **MUST** be enrolled full-time, which is 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters and 3 hours during the combined summer session. If a student is unsupported and chooses not to enroll for any reason, they can only remain unenrolled for two semesters after which they will be dropped from the program and will have to reapply to complete their degree. The maximum time allowed to complete the M.S. degree is seven (7) years. After this time

coursework will begin to expire. Students typically, and should plan to, complete their degree within 2-3 years.

All FAMA students must follow University rules governing graduate studies including, but not limited to: residency, recency of credit, leave, transfer credit, degree plans, grade point average, scholastic probation, enforced withdrawal, out-of-State tuition waivers, and the Texas 99-hour rule. All of these rules are described in the TAMUCC Graduate Catalog.

Choosing a Degree Track

The FAMA program gives students a choice between thesis track and professional (i.e., non-thesis) track. The **thesis track** can be thought of as a *research-intensive degree* whereas the **professional track** is *coursework intensive and/or internship-intensive*; each will have a research component as part of the requirements. Students should have discussed the track and option they will pursue with their potential graduate advisor before being accepted into the program.

Fulfilling FAMA Program Degree Requirements

All FAMA master's students must, regardless of track (thesis or professional):

- form a committee appropriate to program and track
- have an approved degree plan
- develop a prospectus outlining the goals and objectives of their research project or internship
- pass a final oral examination.

In addition, thesis-track students must:

- develop a research proposal
- conduct research
- write thesis
- give a public seminar
- defend thesis

Important – It is the student's responsibility to ensure all forms, paperwork, and other degree requirements are completed in a timely manner. Continuing stipend support is contingent upon completing these milestones.

The Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC)

After being accepted into the FAMA program and enrolling, the most important first step for thesis-track students is forming the graduate advisory committee (GAC). All first semester FAMA students should work closely with their primary supervisor, the faculty member who agreed to take the student into their lab, with class registration and other program issues (the program coordinator may also be consulted). Ideally, students should select a GAC, with the aid of their primary supervisor(s), by the end of their first semester. The committee should be formed no later than the end of a student's second semester in the program. The GAC will help the student develop their overall degree program, including determining a research topic, formulating a research plan, selecting coursework, approving the degree plan, reviewing and approving the final research product (thesis or professional paper), and administering any

examinations. Beyond these functions, the chair and advisory committee members should serve as valuable mentors.

Composition and size of the GAC should reflect the scope of the intended graduate program and should be developed with substantial input from the student's primary supervisor(s). After the committee is formed, your primary supervisor will normally become your committee chair. Individual faculty members are under no obligation to serve on your committee or to be your committee chair. The decision not to serve is usually based on some definable criteria, such as work overload or incompatible research interests.

The graduate advisory committee consists of at least three (3) members. Two members must be of the Life Sciences Department Fisheries and Mariculture program graduate faculty, including the committee chair. Additional members from outside the Life Sciences Department graduate faculty or the university may be approved by Life Sciences Department graduate faculty. In exceptional cases, individuals holding graduate faculty rank at TAMU-CC or another accredited institution may serve as co-chair with the unanimous approval of the Life Sciences graduate faculty on the committee. In all cases involving the appointment of a non-FAMA-program-serving faculty member, a graduate faculty status request accompanied by a curriculum vitae and a rationale for the appointment must be filed with the Life Sciences Department graduate faculty and provided to the respective Program Coordinator.

Students **MUST** meet with their committee ***by the end of the first long semester but no later than the end of the second long semester***. The goal of the first committee meeting is to allow students to introduce themselves and their academic and research interests to the committee and to finalize a degree plan. Students should remain in close contact with their GAC during all phases of graduate study to keep them informed of progress and setbacks. Students must meet at least annually with their GAC to update the committee regardless of progress. **Students are responsible** for calling required annual meetings of the committee and any other meetings deemed necessary by either the student or a committee member. If a student is having problems with their GAC they should speak to the Program Coordinator. If an advisor or committee chair decides to not serve on a student's GAC it is the responsibility of the student to find a replacement for that member or new chairperson, otherwise the student may be dropped entirely from the university.

On occasion, it may be necessary to replace a committee member or a committee chair. If such a situation arises, the student should consult with their committee chair or the FAMA Program Coordinator immediately. The Program Coordinator and other members of the committee will determine if a change is necessary. The removal or replacement of a committee member requires a majority agreement of the remaining committee members and the Program Coordinator. Should a dispute arise between a student and any committee member, the student should consult with their committee chair, Program Coordinator, or the Department Chair.

Degree Plan

Each student, with input from the GAC or faculty supervisor, formulates a degree plan, which details the coursework that the student will undertake for their degree. The minimum number of hours that are taken by all M.S. students is 36 credit-hours at the 5000- or 6000-level; however, many students will take more than the minimum, either because they wish to expand their knowledge or because their committee requires additional coursework to address deficiencies. To address deficiencies, the GAC may require a student to take coursework at the 4000-level or less; these courses are regarded as foundation work and

will not be counted toward the total. Up to nine (9) credit-hours of graduate-level coursework may be approved for transfer from another university or program.

A degree plan must be filed with the Academic Advisor for Life Sciences, preferably no later than the end of the second long-semester after the student begins their program OR before the student has completed half (18 SCH) of the coursework in the program. Some programs may require the degree plan to be completed at an earlier point in the program. Degree plan development will be documented on the student's online Degree Planner by the academic advisor. Changes to the degree plan must be approved and be consistent with the requirement of the program. The requirements for tracks and options are listed below.

Fisheries & Mariculture MS Degree Requirements

Fisheries and Mariculture Degree Core Courses consist of two courses that are required of all students, FAMA 5102 Graduate Defense Seminar and MATH 6315 Statistical Methods in Research and at least 2 courses must be taken from the list of "Foundations." Many of the courses on this list will also be appropriate/relevant as advanced electives, depending on degree track. The total semester credit hours for the Core Course ranges from 10-12 (depending on whether students choose 3 or 4 SCH courses). Total hours for the degree, regardless of track, is 36 SCH. See the table below.

	Course Number	Course Title	SCH
Required			**4**
	FAMA 5102	Graduate Defense Seminar	1
	MATH 6315	Statistical Methods in Research	3
Foundations	**Take 2 courses from the list**		**6-8**
	BIOL 5360	Computation for 21st Century Biologist	3
	BIOL 5432	Ichthyology	4
	CMSS 6312	Communicating Science Seminar	3
	CMSS 6323	Experimental Design	3
	FAMA 5312	Mariculture Techniques	3
	FAMA 5314	Aquatic Animal Nutrition	3
	FAMA 5314	Diseases and Parasites of Aquatic Organisms	3
	FAMA 5328	Fisheries Ecology and Management	3
	FAMA 5329	Fisheries Techniques	3
	FAMA 5338	Applied Fisheries Statistics	3
	FAMA 5355	Public Aquarium and Animal Care Operations	3
	FAMA 5370	Mariculture	3
	FAMA 5421	Chemistry of Natural Waters	4
	MARB 6340	Marine Organisms and Processes	3
	MARB 6341	Evolution and Genomics of Marine Organisms	3
	MARB 6353	Down the River: Ecology of Gulf Coast Fishes	3
	MARB 6373	Biodiversity & Conservation	3
	MATH 6316	Statistical Methods in Research II	3

Thesis Track: The thesis track requires a thesis based upon original research. The thesis must include a review of relevant literature, a description of the results from original research on a topic or question approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee, statistical analysis when appropriate, and an

appropriate discussion of the results that contextualizes them within the larger body of literature on the topic or question.

The following courses are required of students in the thesis track. Advanced electives must be approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.

Course Number	Course Title	SCH
Core Courses		**10-12**
Thesis Sequence		**9**
FAMA 5392	Thesis Proposal (proposal must be approved by GAC to receive credit)	3
FAMA 5393	Thesis Research (first draft of the thesis must be produced to receive credit)	3
FAMA 5394	Thesis Submission (final thesis manuscript must be approved by the GAC and submitted to receive credit)	3
Advanced Electives		**15-17**
Total		**36**

See the FAMA Style Guide regarding research prospectus and proposal. The Style Guide is available from the program coordinator.

Professional (Non-Thesis) Track; The professional degree is designed to provide a broad understanding of fisheries and/or mariculture. The curriculum with especially benefit those individuals in professional employment who seek advancement or additional tract to enhance their knowledge and skills. There are two plans for professional track students: Applied and Internship. Regardless of which plan is chosen, students must produce a written product, give an oral presentation about the written product and/or their experiences, and pass an oral examination.

The following courses are required of students in the Professional Track (Applied). Advanced electives must be approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.

Course Number	Course Title	SCH
Core Courses		**10-12**
Written Component	FAMA 5397 Professional Paper Submission	**3**
Advanced Electives		**21-23**
Total		**36**

The following courses are required of students in the Professional Track (Internship). Advanced electives must be approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee. The internship contact hours (i.e., time working at the internship facility) needed for each semester credit hour (SCH) is calculated the same way that lab hours are calculated. See the matrix below to determine how many hours worked are needed per SCH of internship credit.

Course Number	Course Title	SCH
Core Courses		**10-12**
Written Component	FAMA 5397 Professional Paper Submission	**3**
Internship	FAMA 5998 Internship	**9-18**
Advanced Electives		**3-14**
Total		**36**

The number of semester credit hours (SCH) achieved per hours of work in an internship.

SCH	15-week Fall/Spring Session	7.5-week Mini Session	5.5-week Summer Session	10-week Summer Session
1	2 hrs, 30 min/week OR 150 mins/week	5 hrs/week OR 300 mins/week	7 hrs/week OR 420 mins/week	3 hrs/week OR 180 mins/week
2	5 hrs/week OR 300 mins/week	10 hrs/week OR 600 mins/week	14 hrs/week OR 840 mins/week	6 hrs/week OR 360 mins/week
3	7 hrs, 30 min/week OR 450 mins/week	15 hrs/week OR 900 mins/week	21 hrs/week OR 1260 mins/week	9 hrs/week OR 549 mins/week
4	10 hrs/week OR 600 mins/week	20 hrs/week OR 1200 mins/week	28 hrs/week OR 1680 mins/week	12 hrs/week OR 720 mins/week
5	12 hrs, 30 mins/week OR 750 mins/week	25 hrs/week OR 1500 mins/week	35 hrs/week OR 2100 mins/week	15 hrs/week OR 900 mins/week
6	15 hrs/week OR 900 mins/week	30 hrs/week OR 1800 mins/week	42 hrs/week OR 2520 mins/week	18 hrs/week OR 1080 mins/week

NOTE: Regardless of track, projects involving research with vertebrate animals (e.g., fish) require an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) protocol be submitted to the Research Compliance Office. The protocol must be approved by IACUC **before** any data is collected that will be used in your thesis.

For projects involving human subjects (even surveys), an Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol must be submitted to the Research Compliance Office. The protocol must be approved by IRB **before** any data is collected that will be used in your thesis.

Students should prepare protocol and other compliance forms along with their graduate advisor(s).

It is in the best interests of the student to **ensure the proposal is approved by the committee AND compliance office prior to the start of the research.** The student should report regularly on research progress to the advisor and committee to prevent last minute surprises or misunderstandings and to gain approval of any redirection.

Deadlines

Thesis/Professional Paper and Oral Examination Deadlines

Thesis track students must formally present/defend the results of their research and complete an oral examination administered by their GAC by deadlines that are established by the College of Graduate Studies in order to graduate at the end of a semester. These deadlines are ***generally two weeks before graduation*** but should be verified with your academic advisor (not GAC supervisor) at the beginning of the semester you expect to graduate.

This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog and the Graduate Student Handbook

Thesis manuscripts must be approved and signed by the GAC and submitted online along with forms and fees according to the Office of Graduate Education schedule in any given semester..

Professional track students must also formally present/defend the results of their research and complete an oral examination administered by their GAC **on or before the last day of finals in any given semester**.

Professional papers must be approved and signed by the GAC or faculty and internship supervisors **on or before the the last day of finals** in any given semester.

Graduation Deadlines

You must submit a completed application for graduation through SAIL by the posted deadline. It is highly recommended that you make an appointment with your academic advisor to review your records and be sure you are clear (i.e., all requirements met) for graduation.

Graduation deadlines are posted by the Office of the Registrar. For dates, times and location of the commencement ceremonies please visit http://commencement.tamucc.edu/.

Interactions With Other Graduate Students

Graduate education is not a solitary endeavor. Students must make opportunities to discuss their projects with other graduate students and offer to assist others in the field or laboratory. Beyond generating camaraderie, this will give students a more comprehensive understanding of the many specific issues and problems in coastal and marine systems, expose them to a broad array of lab/field techniques, provide ideas for research, and provide opportunities to reciprocate in supporting each other. Attending seminars and student presentations of proposals or research will allow you to see what is expected and should be viewed as another learning experience.

University/Standard Office of Graduate Studies Information

This section of the handbook includes standardized information about rules and policies pertaining to graduate education at Texas A&M University. It is not intended to be comprehensive. You are strongly encouraged to read the sections of the catalog pertaining to graduate students, which will provide more detail and additional topics that may impact you. You will also find information about your program.

Graduate Admissions

To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for the MS Biology graduate program a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 3.0 is required as is the commitment of a faculty member chair the student's graduate committee. All applications must be made through Apply Texas. For more information about the application process, visit the Application Process page on the Office of Graduate Education website or see the Catalog, Graduate Admissions section.

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

Full-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 9 hours Combined summer terms = 6 hours
Three-quarter-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 7 hours Combined summer terms = 5 hours
Half-time graduate student:	Fall or spring term = 5 hours Combined summer terms = 3 hours

Continuous Enrollment

The University does not have a continuous enrollment policy for master's students. However, you should be aware of your own program's requirements, which may differ from general University requirements. Master's students should also know that if they do not attend for two years, they will be required to reapply to the University. Students should consider applying for a leave of absence (see below), especially if the time-to-degree and recency of credits requirements will be impacted by a needed absence.

Leave of Absence

Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a Leave of Absence in writing from the Office of Graduate Studies using the Request for Leave of Absence form. A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the faculty advisor, Program Coordinator, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. If the Graduate Dean approves the petition, the registration requirement is set aside during the period of time of the leave. Students should be aware that leaves of absences require suspension of all activities associated pursuit of the degree. See the catalog for more information.

Maximum Course Load

Graduate students may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester, 6 hours in a single session of summer school, or 12 hours in the combined summer session (not including Maymester) without the approval of the appropriate college dean. See the Maximum Course Load section in the catalog.

Time Limit to Degree

The requirements for a master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. Exceptions will require ***strong*** justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college offering the degree, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit

In order to revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend information in the catalog (see Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog). Revalidation requests should be made using the Graduate Degree Plan Revalidation Request form.

If your program has shorter time-to-degree limits, it may impact recency of credit and other timelines. See program information in this handbook or seek information from your Program Coordinator.

Academic Requirements for Graduate Work

Good Standing. Graduate Students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students are considered in "good academic standing" if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress, or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal may be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog. For information regarding the effect of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the Financial Assistance Suspension Policy in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, which include but are not limited to illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, plagiarism, or collusion in any of these behaviors. All students should familiarize themselves with the full Academic Integrity Policy as well as the processes and procedures used to address violations thereof. You can find additional information in the Academic Integrity section of the catalog. Students can also access University Rules and Procedures 13.02.99.C0.04: Student Academic Misconduct Cases.

Additional Information

Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone numbers. Some of those webpages include the following:
Office of Graduate Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Office of International Education
Assistantships