

# GEOSPATIAL SYSTEMS ENGINEERING MASTER'S STUDENT HANDBOOK



## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

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Website: <https://www.tamucc.edu/programs/graduate-programs/geospatial-systems-engineering-ms.php>

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*This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: [tps://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate](https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate) , the College of Graduate Studies Handbook: <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/assets/documents/masters-student-handbook.pdf>, and the Geospatial Systems Engineering Catalog: <https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/engineering/masters/geospatial-systems-engineering-ms/>*

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## Section I. Geospatial Systems Engineering Program

### Welcome Message

Welcome to the Geospatial Systems Engineering Program at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi. The faculty and staff in the program look forward to working with you to help you complete your degree successfully.

This document outlines the requirements for completing your degree, discusses the culture of the program, covers the software used for instruction, and lists technical requirements to access these resources. After reading this document, refer to the checklist in Section VII to help you get set up for your first semester.

### Program Description

The Master of Science in Geospatial Systems Engineering (GSSE) will provide students with knowledge and skills focusing on the research, design, development, and use of technologies in geospatial systems engineering. The program builds upon the ABET-accredited undergraduate [Geospatial Science \(GISc\)](#). The program satisfies the regional, state, and national need for master's - level graduates in geospatial systems design and surveying engineering. Due to the diversity of geospatial applications in industry, the 30-credit hour program is purposely designed to offer breadth in the coursework.

Our degree is offered both entirely online and on campus. **If you plan on attending courses online, you are required to have access to high-speed internet on a daily basis.**

### Program Objectives

Graduates of the Master of Science in Geospatial Systems Engineering will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Develop, manage, and analyze geospatial data using spatial analysis, computational, and geomatics engineering techniques.
2. Develop the capacity for continued learning and professional application.
3. Creatively apply geospatial systems engineering techniques and technologies to solve real-world problems.
4. Become nationally and internationally recognized professionals.

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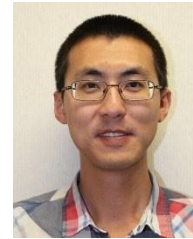
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## Get Connected

Most official college and program information for students is distributed on listservs. Students should be automatically added to the Geospatial Systems Engineering student listserv upon enrollment. To ensure you are subscribed, students can manually join the “gisso-list” listserv [gisso-list@listserv.tamucc.edu](mailto:gisso-list@listserv.tamucc.edu) and other listservs by going to <https://listserv.tamucc.edu/mailman/listinfo>.

## Section II. Degree and Program Requirements

The course of study leading to an MS degree in Geospatial Systems Engineering (GSSE) is composed of the following three components: 1) General prerequisites (must be satisfied before the student can be formally and unconditionally accepted to the MS program); 2) Options; and 3) Degree Requirements.

### General Prerequisites

1. Geospatial Systems Engineering  
Every student is expected to have achieved specific minimum competencies in geospatial science before being formally admitted to the MS degree program. Students who have not earned a baccalaureate degree in Geographic Information Science, Surveying, or a similar field must consult with the coordinator of the GSSE Program to design a plan of appropriate leveling courses. Leveling courses are not counted in the 30 semester-credit hour requirements.
2. Mathematics  
Every student must have a minimum level of knowledge in mathematics equivalent to the mathematics courses in the BS in Geographic Information Science Program, and will be evaluated on an individual basis by the GSSE faculty.
3. English  
Every student is expected to have a minimum level of competence in English composition, especially in technical writing. In preparation for reports that are required in the workplace, numerous reports are required during the course of study for the degree.

### Options

Students must choose one of the following two tracks:

- Track 1 Geosensing Systems and UAS for Geomatics
- Track 2 Geospatial Data Science and Analytics

The student can choose either a thesis or a coursework option under their chosen track.

### Thesis option

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A Graduate Thesis based upon original research, supported by the scientific literature, and proven statistically, will be required under this option. The thesis option master's degree will allow a person to pursue advanced graduate study or to obtain employment in most areas requiring a detailed knowledge of specific aspects of geospatial systems engineering. The Geospatial Systems Engineering Graduate Thesis requires a minimum of 9 hours of GSEN 5397 Thesis I (3 sch), GSEN 5398 Thesis II (3 sch), and GSEN 5399 Thesis III (3 sch), and a formal publishable thesis.

#### Thesis Option Track 1 or 2

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		9
Required Courses for Each Track*		9
Electives (approved by faculty advisor)		3
<u>GSEN 5397</u>	Thesis I: Thesis Proposal	3
<u>GSEN 5398</u>	Thesis II: Thesis Research	3
<u>GSEN 5399</u>	Thesis III: Thesis Defense	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

\*One required course in each track can be replaced with an elective course at the discretion of the graduate advisor and with approval by the program coordinator.

#### Coursework option

The Coursework option allows the student to be flexible in choosing elective courses but requires the student to complete a specific geospatial systems engineering project. The curriculum will especially benefit individuals employed in scientific or technical fields who seek advancement or additional training to enhance their knowledge and skills. The Coursework Option requires 3 hours of GSEN 5393 Graduate Creative Project (3 sch) and a project report. All GSEN courses provide an online offering.

#### Project Option Track 1 or 2

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		9
Required Courses for Each Track*		9
Electives (approved by faculty advisor)		9
<u>GSEN 5393</u>	Graduate Creative Project	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

\*One required course in each track can be replaced with an elective course at the discretion of the graduate advisor and approval by the program coordinator.

## Degree Requirements

### Track 1: Geosensing Systems and UAS for Geomatics - Thesis Option

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5395</a>	Geospatial Engineering Research	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6383</a>	Advanced Geospatial Analytics	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6386</a>	Remote Sensing and Image Analysis	3
<b>Required Courses*</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 6370</a>	UAS for Surveying and Mapping	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6371</a>	Geopositioning Systems and Autonomous Navigation	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6385</a>	Photogrammetric Engineering and Lidar Scanning	3
<b>Electives</b>		
Select 3 hours of the following GSEN courses or the COSC/MATH/DASC courses listed on the GSSE catalog		3
<a href="#">GSEN 6330</a>	Spatial Systems Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6355</a>	Geospatial Programming Techniques	
<a href="#">GSEN 6356</a>	Programming for Geospatial Data Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6365</a>	Spatial Database Design	
<a href="#">GSEN 6367</a>	Geospatial Data Mining	
<a href="#">GSEN 6380</a>	Applied Geospatial Statistics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6381</a>	Cadastral Information Systems Design	
<a href="#">GSEN 6382</a>	Policy and Legal Aspects of Spatial information systems	
<a href="#">GSEN 6384</a>	Geospatial Visualization Design	
<b>Thesis Option</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5397</a>	Thesis I: Thesis Proposal	3
<a href="#">GSEN 5398</a>	Thesis II: Thesis Research	3
<a href="#">GSEN 5399</a>	Thesis III: Thesis Defense	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
The following may be offered and substituted for any of the courses above subject to approval by the student graduate mentor or committee chair:		
<a href="#">GSEN 6390</a>	Advanced Topics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6396</a>	Directed Independent Study	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

\*One required course can be replaced with an elective course at the discretion of the graduate advisor and approval by the program coordinator.

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*Track 1: Geosensing Systems and UAS for Geomatics - Coursework Option*

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5395</a>	Geospatial Engineering Research	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6383</a>	Advanced Geospatial Analytics	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6386</a>	Remote Sensing and Image Analysis	3
<b>Required Courses*</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 6370</a>	UAS for Surveying and Mapping	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6371</a>	Geopositioning Systems and Autonomous Navigation	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6385</a>	Photogrammetric Engineering and Lidar Scanning	3
<b>Electives</b>		
Select 9 hours of the following GSEN courses or the COSC/MATH/DASC courses listed on the GSSE catalog		9
<a href="#">GSEN 6330</a>	Spatial Systems Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6355</a>	Geospatial Programming Techniques	
<a href="#">GSEN 6356</a>	Programming for Geospatial Data Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6365</a>	Spatial Database Design	
<a href="#">GSEN 6367</a>	Geospatial Data Mining	
<a href="#">GSEN 6380</a>	Applied Geospatial Statistics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6381</a>	Cadastral Information Systems Design	
<a href="#">GSEN 6382</a>	Policy and Legal Aspects of Spatial information Systems	
<a href="#">GSEN 6384</a>	Geospatial Visualization Design	
<b>Project Option</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5393</a>	Graduate Creative Project	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
The following may be offered and substituted for any of the courses above subject to approval by the student graduate mentor or committee chair:		
<a href="#">GSEN 6390</a>	Advanced Topics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6396</a>	Directed Independent Study	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

\*One required course can be replaced with an elective course at the discretion of the graduate advisor and approval by the program coordinator.

*Track 2: Geospatial Data Science and Analytics - Thesis Option*

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5395</a>	Geospatial Engineering Research	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6383</a>	Advanced Geospatial Analytics	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6386</a>	Remote Sensing and Image Analysis	3
<b>Required Courses*</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 6365</a>	Spatial Database Design	3

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Code	Title	Hours
<a href="#">GSEN 6367</a>	Geospatial Data Mining	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6384</a>	Geospatial Visualization Design	3
<b>Electives</b>		
Select 6 hours of the following GSEN courses or the COSC/MATH/DASC courses listed on the GSSE catalog :		3
<a href="#">GSEN 6330</a>	Spatial Systems Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6355</a>	Geospatial Programming Techniques	
<a href="#">GSEN 6356</a>	Programming for Geospatial Data Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6370</a>	UAS for Surveying and Mapping	
<a href="#">GSEN 6371</a>	Geopositioning Systems and Autonomous Navigation	
<a href="#">GSEN 6380</a>	Applied Geospatial Statistics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6381</a>	Cadastral Information Systems Design	
<a href="#">GSEN 6382</a>	Policy and Legal Aspects of Spatial information Systems	
<a href="#">GSEN 6385</a>	Photogrammetric Engineering and Lidar Scanning	
<b>Thesis Track</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5397</a>	Thesis I: Thesis Proposal	3
<a href="#">GSEN 5398</a>	Thesis II: Thesis Research	3
<a href="#">GSEN 5399</a>	Thesis III: Thesis Defense	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
The following may be offered and substituted for any of the courses above subject to approval by the student graduate mentor or committee chair:		
<a href="#">GSEN 6390</a>	Advanced Topics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6396</a>	Directed Independent Study	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

\*One required course can be replaced with an elective course at the discretion of the graduate advisor and approval by the program coordinator.

### *Track 2: Geospatial Data Science and Analytics - Coursework Option*

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5395</a>	Geospatial Engineering Research	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6383</a>	Advanced Geospatial Analytics	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6386</a>	Remote Sensing and Image Analysis	3
<b>Required Courses*</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 6365</a>	Spatial Database Design	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6367</a>	Geospatial Data Mining	3
<a href="#">GSEN 6384</a>	Geospatial Visualization Design	3
<b>Electives</b>		
Select 9 hours of the following GSEN courses or the COSC/MATH/DASC courses listed on the GSSE catalog :		9

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Code	Title	Hours
<a href="#">GSEN 6330</a>	Spatial Systems Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6355</a>	Geospatial Programming Techniques	
<a href="#">GSEN 6356</a>	Programming for Geospatial Data Science	
<a href="#">GSEN 6370</a>	UAS for Surveying and Mapping	
<a href="#">GSEN 6371</a>	Geopositioning Systems and Autonomous Navigation	
<a href="#">GSEN 6380</a>	Applied Geospatial Statistics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6381</a>	Cadastral Information Systems Design	
<a href="#">GSEN 6382</a>	Policy and Legal Aspects of Spatial information Systems	
<a href="#">GSEN 6385</a>	Photogrammetric Engineering and Lidar Scanning	
<b>Project Track</b>		
<a href="#">GSEN 5393</a>	Graduate Creative Project	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
The following may be offered and substituted for any of the courses above subject to approval by the student graduate mentor or committee chair:		
<a href="#">GSEN 6390</a>	Advanced Topics	
<a href="#">GSEN 6396</a>	Directed Independent Study	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

\*One required course can be replaced with an elective course at the discretion of the graduate advisor by the program coordinator.

## Section III. Additional Information

### GSSE Admission Criteria

Students interested in the Thesis Option for the GSSE MS program should contact the program and identify a faculty advisor. Coursework option students are also encouraged to identify a faculty advisor as well. Students are highly encouraged to review the program faculty and contact the respective faculty in their area of research interest to discuss their willingness to serve as an advisor. Students can also contact the GSSE program coordinator for suggested advisors.

### Program Specific Application Requirements

Students seeking admission to the graduate degree program in GSSE must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in the United States (or an equivalent foreign institution). In addition to meeting all University requirements, students seeking admission to the graduate degree program in GSSE must submit the following to the Office of Recruitment and Admissions:

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- An application and application fee.
- Transcripts from regionally accredited institutions.
- At least two reference letters.
- Admission Essay discussing why you wish to get a master's degree in GSSE and your area of interest.
- A 60 hr. GPA of 3.0 or higher is standard.

### Master of Science Degree Requirements

The University Graduate Student Catalog is the *official* document that describes the GSSE and University requirements. The Graduate Student Catalog is your contract with the University, and you are expected to have read and understood the requirements set forth within. A new catalog is produced every year; however, the catalog that you should follow is the catalog that was in effect when you were *admitted* to the program. You should always keep a paper copy of the catalog for reference. An online version of the catalog can be found at <https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/>

The official University Catalog holds precedence over anything written in this section of the document referring to degree requirements. This document will cover the highlights of the catalog but should not be used in lieu of the University Catalog.

### Total Hours

The MS Program in GSSE requires a minimum of 30 graduate semester credit hours (SCH). Courses must be from the 5000 level or higher.

### Grades

The minimum grade for credit is “C”. A student is only allowed 6 hours of credit at a grade of “C”. For more information concerning academic standing, scholastic probation, and similar topics, see Graduate Catalog, Section “Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements” at [catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/academic-degree-requirements/](https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/academic-degree-requirements/).

### Enrollment Status

Enrollment status for graduate students is defined below. Consult the Graduate Catalog and your academic college for exceptions and further information.

Status	Fall or spring terms	Combined summer terms
Full-time	9 hours	6 hours
Half-time	5 hours	3 hours

### Course Loads

#### Full-Time Students

A full-time course load for a full-time student is considered to be nine credit hours per semester. You may take a lesser course load if you choose, however note that less than full-time status will

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affect eligibility for University scholarships. To exceed twelve credit hours per semester, a student must have the approval of the Program Coordinator, Department Chair and College Dean.

#### Students with Full-Time Jobs

Suppose you are working a full-time job and plan on pursuing your graduate degree simultaneously. In that case, it is highly recommended that you limit your enrollment to a maximum of two regular graduate level courses a semester.

#### Students with an International F1 Visa

An F-1 student enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours may only count one online class or three credits (or the equivalent) per academic session.

If the F-1 student needs only one course to finish the program of study, it cannot be taken through online or distance education. Courses must have a physical presence requirement.

For more information, please visit [Chapter 3 - Courses and Enrollment, Full Course of Study, and Reduced Course Load | USCIS](#).

#### Students Holding an Assistantship

Students holding an assistantship must register for a minimum of nine (9) credit course hours each semester the appointment is held. Students on an assistantship cannot carry more than twelve credit hours per semester without approval from the College of Graduate Studies.

#### All Students

Any M.S. student who is using university facilities or staff time is required to register for at least three credit hours of coursework during the semester they utilize said facilities or staff time.

### **Course Formats**

The GSSE program delivers courses both an in-person and online format. Even though course is split into two *sections* (one section for each format of delivery), the students are considered as one cohort. The course material will be the same for in-person and online students, only the delivery method will differ.

When registering for courses, it is important that you register for the correct *section* of the course. Courses sections that are offered in-person will be designated as a 001 section. Course sections that are offered online will be designated as a W01 section. For example, GSEN6365.W01 is an online section of a course because of the W01 designation. GSEN6355.001 is the in-person section of the same course because of the 001 designation.

### **Graduate Advisor and Committee**

All GSSE thesis students are admitted to the program with a graduate advisor. The graduate advisor is his/her major professor and will also serve as the chair of his/her thesis committee. The graduate advisor or major professor must be tenured or tenure-track faculty of the GSSE Program. **All committee members must hold graduate faculty status at TAMU- CC.**

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For the M.S. program, a thesis student must appoint (and have approval) an advisory committee consisting of the Major Professor and two additional faculty members. This three-member committee shall consist of at least two full-time Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi graduate faculty members. The committee chairperson must be a graduate faculty member in the geospatial systems engineering program. The second committee member may be a graduate faculty member in geospatial systems engineering, geospatial science, computer science, engineering, or other programs related to the thesis topic. The third member may be a graduate faculty member having distinguished professional status and expertise in the discipline of the proposed Graduate Thesis.

**Students who choose the thesis option for study** must submit [Form A: Thesis Advisory Committee Appointment Form](#) to the College of Graduate Studies. The graduate dean will review and approve the thesis committee after submission of Form A. Students who wish to change the composition of their thesis committee after approval should submit [Form D: Thesis Committee Member Change Request](#) to the College of Graduate Studies.

### **Academic Advisor**

The role of the Academic Advisor is to help students reach their educational goals by providing crucial tools, resources and guidance. Students should make an appointment to see the academic advisor as soon as possible to plan your course schedule and verify that your plan will meet degree requirements. Students living outside of the University area can make the appointment via email or phone. Students **must** have a degree plan filed by the end of the first semester of attendance in order to register for subsequent semesters. To find your advisor, please visit [Find My Advisor](#).

### **Degree Plan**

All MS GSSE students will develop a degree plan in conjunction with their advisor that is consistent with the requirements of the program. Degree plans must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies by the time students have completed 50% of the required coursework in the program.

The degree plan details the coursework necessary for complete degree requirements. The degree plan for Geosensing Systems and UAS for Geomatic (Track 1) can be found at <https://www.tamucc.edu/science/documents/advising/worksheets/gsse-ms-geosensing.pdf>. The degree for Geospatial Data Science and Analytics can be found at <https://www.tamucc.edu/science/documents/advising/worksheets/gsse-ms-analytics.pdf>.

If possible, students should make an appointment with their graduate advisors at the beginning of the first semester to prepare a degree plan. Students should remain in close contact with their advisor during all phases of graduate study to keep the graduate advisor informed and revisit the degree plan. Students should also make an appointment with an academic advisor to verify the degree plan that will meet degree requirements. The degree plan should be finalized by the end of the second semester, when students are enrolled in the program.

### **Evaluation of Graduation Students**

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Each year, the graduate faculty/major professor reviews the progress of his/her graduate students. This review considers the student's academic performance and work as an assistant, if applicable. Considerations normally examined include present and past levels of performance, promise of future intellectual growth, and factors relating to the student's potential, such as perceptiveness; imagination; ingenuity in conceptualization; design; and accomplishment of research; and power to reason logically.

Each graduate faculty/major professor is charged with communicating with the student the salient aspects of the faculty review of the student following each review.

### **Graduation Deadlines**

Please be sure to apply for graduation online through your S.A.I.L account. Information regarding the graduation application deadlines and fees can be found online at [http://registrar.tamucc.edu/Degrees\\_and\\_graduation/Apply\\_for\\_grad.html](http://registrar.tamucc.edu/Degrees_and_graduation/Apply_for_grad.html).

In order to graduate, a series of deadlines must be met for students who choose the thesis option for study. These deadlines are posted by the CGS at

<https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/masters-dates.php>. Please use the checklist at <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/forms/masters/masters-thesis-student-checklist.pdf> for a timely submission of requirements. All Master's forms can be found at <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/forms/index.php#collapse3>

## Master's Thesis Student Checklist

Use the checklist below for a timely submission of requirements. Forms can be found at <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/forms/index.php>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree Plan ( <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	Before completing 50% of required program SCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form A</b> – Thesis Advisory Committee Appointment <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	Before state of data collection/creative activity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form B</b> – Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Thesis Defense/Final Examination ( <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	Five (5) days prior to defense
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form C</b> – Thesis Defense & Written Thesis Report *Form should not be signed until student has passed the defense AND made all necessary thesis changes requested by the committee.	<b>Master's</b> - Two (2) weeks prior to Graduation <b>MFA</b> – Friday prior to graduation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form D</b> – Thesis Committee Member Change Request ( <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	As needed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form I</b> – Graduate Degree Plan Exceptions Form ( <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	As soon as needed for exception
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form J</b> – Graduate Degree Plan Revalidation Request ( <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	As needed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form K</b> – Request for a Leave of Absence ( <i>Master's and MFA</i> )	As needed, prior to requested leave period
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Final Version of Thesis Uploaded to ProQuest</b> <a href="http://www.etsdadmin.com/tamucc">www.etsdadmin.com/tamucc</a> Thesis submission deadlines can be found online at <a href="http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/current_students/masters_students.html">http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/current_students/masters_students.html</a>  Note: Title Page, Committee Member Page, and Copyright Page templates can be found online at <a href="http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/current_students/doctoral_dissertation.html">http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/current_students/doctoral_dissertation.html</a>	<b>Master's</b> - 2 weeks prior to graduation <b>MFA</b> – 5 business days prior to graduation

### Thesis Formatting Guideline

Thesis must conform to academic and institutional standards. A thesis template in WORD format is provided by the College of Graduate Studies and is available at <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/dissertation-thesis.php>. This template could also be used for GSSE project guideline. However, always confer with your advisor concerning proposal and thesis/project format.

### Summary of Procedural Steps toward the MS GSSE Degree

1. Develop a Degree Plan with the Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor.
2. Complete all required coursework.
3. For students who choose the Thesis Option:

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- 1) Develop a thesis proposal with the Graduate Advisor and form the Advisory Committee (complete Form A) upon completion of the course GSEN 5397 Thesis I: Thesis Proposal. A thesis is not approved until the Advisory Committee has signed Form A.
- 2) Take GSEN 5398: Thesis II: Thesis Research to conduct thesis research
- 3) Take GSEN 5399: Thesis III: Thesis Defense to complete the thesis and defend the thesis
4. For students who choose the coursework Option, take GSEN 5393 Graduate Creative Project and complete the project 5993 Graduate Creative Project under the supervision of the Graduate Advisor.
5. Graduate students must provide their Major Professor and Advisory Committee adequate time for review of the thesis proposal and final thesis report. The first draft of the thesis must be submitted to the Committee Chair no later than the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the semester the student intends to graduate. Students not providing adequate time for review may not be eligible for thesis defense as determined by the Major Professor and Advisory Committee. Students encountering problems associated with the timely return of their thesis materials (3 to 6 weeks depending on the circumstances) from either the major professor or Advisory Committee should report their concern to the Graduate Coordinator, who, in consultation with the Head, will inquire to the nature of the delay.
6. The thesis, approved by the Major Professor, is submitted to the student's Advisory Committee no later than the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the semester that the student plans to graduate.
7. Final Oral Examination covering student's course work and thesis is conducted by the Major Professor and Advisory Committee. Although actual conduct of this examination rests with the Examining Committee, the general policy of the Department is that:
  - a. the student must appear in person (either on campus, or through online video conference) for the final oral examination; and
  - b. the entire examination should last approximately thirty minutes to one hour; and
  - c. the examination will start with a twenty- minute discourse on the student's thesis.
8. Upon successful completion of the Final Oral Examination and final approval of the Committee, one hard copy and one digital copy of the final approved thesis must be submitted to the Program Coordinator for safekeeping for the Department.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance in the form of assistantships or scholarships is available from a number of sources. Students on an assistantship must take a minimum of nine hours per semester. Scholarships are available through the University. All scholarship applications are applied for online via the Graduate office website <https://www.tamucc.edu/cost-and-aid/index.php>. To be considered for scholarship monies, you must be a full-time graduate student, which means you must be registered for a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester. Current graduate students can also find information about other scholarships at: <http://scholarships.tamucc.edu/index.html>.

### **Out-Of-State Tuition Waivers**

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Non-resident students receiving a 50% FTE graduate assistantship, as well as their spouse and children, will receive **in-state tuition and fees** at the rate charged to Texas residents **for the semester in which they hold the assistantship appointment**. To receive in-state tuition rates, students must maintain a graduate course load of at least six (6) hours during long semesters or three (3) hours during the summer session. Individual programs/departments/colleges may have additional qualification requirements (e.g., assistantships funded by the College of Science require nine [9] SCH graduate enrollment during long semesters). Out-of-state tuition waivers will be rescinded if students register for too few hours or are not working in the qualifying position by the 12th class day of long semesters and the 4th class day of summer semesters.

Students wishing to receive in-state tuition must complete the Out-of-State Tuition Waiver Procedure. Students will also need their Notice of Appointment Letter (NOA). The waiver form must be completed each semester.

Students receiving a University **scholarship of \$1,000 or more** per year **may be eligible** for in-state tuition contingent upon availability of Competitive Scholarship Waivers. The University Scholarship Office or the Office of the Prov.

## Section IV. General Guidelines for Courses and Labs

These guidelines are designed to inform scholars of their responsibilities and of the course requirements to ensure a positive course experience. The instructor is always available for consultation and discussion with students on any aspect of a course and of these general guidelines

### Class Culture

- Consider yourself as a **scholar** rather than a student. The term “student” may imply some passivity, whereas the term “scholar” implies active participation, understanding and searching. We will use these terms interchangeably with the meaning of “scholar” implied. Osmosis does not work in a learning environment!
- Further, define yourself as a “thinking explorer”. You are responsible for your education; an instructor can only be a guide and a facilitator. An instructor cannot learn for you. If you come across something that really interests you, explore it further.
- Your experience at this University should not consist of passing a series of courses to earn a degree. Your experience should rather be a series of activities that will give you an education.
- Concentrate on “learning to learn”. You will have to be a life-long learner to survive in your chosen career.
- There is no such thing as a stupid question; there is such a thing as a stupid answer. So ask questions, the instructor is taking all the risks! Ask questions of your instructor and of your fellow scholars.
- The Internet is a tremendous resource and also a great danger. When you find information on the Internet, you have no idea if it is correct. View such details with caution. But, use the Internet to explore topics that interest you. Do not only prepare for the exam in a course – learn

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as much as you can on the topics introduced to you by the course material. You are responsible for the extent of your education! READ MINDFULLY !!!!

- In addition to details of the syllabus given in class, the syllabus for the course includes all the chapters of the required textbook/s unless indicated otherwise by the instructor.

### **Course Procedures and Regulations**

- The final letter grade for the class will be based on the raw composite numerical score obtained from the weighted average of the tests, quizzes, exams, labs, etc. as indicated by the instructor and stated in the course syllabus.
- All University rules, regulations and expected student conduct apply to this course. Students are held responsible for the information given in the current Catalog and Student Handbook.
- All labs, assignments, etc. must be handed in on the assigned due date. Scholars having problems must notify the instructor well before the due date. Marks will be deducted for poor and unprofessional presented work.
- Labs, etc. handed in after the due date may be subject to a penalty of loss of marks (see course syllabus for policy).
- Scholars are asked to take special note of the penalties, which the University attaches to Academic Dishonesty. Consult the Student Handbook.
- All work handed in to the instructor must be the student's own work. Extracts, excerpts, etc. from the work of others must be suitably noted, acknowledged and properly referenced. Any Group Work will be judged in the same way. That is, it is the work of the group and the extracts, excerpts, etc. of others must be acknowledged.
- All written and graphical work handed in must be presented neatly printed or in digital format as required by the instructor. Student's written work will be judged on written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving ability.
- There are NO provisions for making up missed exams except in cases where prior arrangements have been made and agreed to by the instructor.
- Students must keep their given university e-mail address (i.e. `firstname.lastname@islander.tamucc.edu` ).  
This will be the means of the instructor communicating with students.
- All work submitted to the instructor (via e-mail or other means) must be clearly marked with the student's name and the name and number of the course.
- The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the above with due notice to the students. These changes will be announced to the class (see 9 above) and each student is responsible for keeping herself/himself informed of such changes.

## **Section V. Course Instruction Software**

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Courses are taught online using software named [Canvas](#). Canvas is a suite of course management software used by professors to post lectures, assignments, discussion boards, grades, etc. Depending on the professor's preference, students will submit assignments through Canvas or some other predetermined method outlined in the course syllabus.

Students should check Canvas often for new course material.

Should a professor require a synchronous meeting of students (also known as an online meeting), the professor will set up a meeting time and provide a link to the meeting via email or Blackboard.

Regardless of how the course is administered, professors rely heavily on email for communication with students. As such, you must have a university email address and check your email daily.

### University Email address

This program relies heavily on email for interaction with students (and vice versa). It is very important that you set up your university email address as soon as possible and check it often. Your email address will be in the form: [firstname.lastname@islander.tamucc.edu](#) Additionally, some professors will contact you through Blackboard, so be sure to check your Blackboard email often as well.

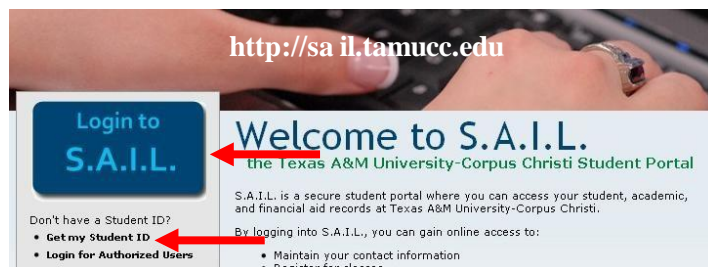
To obtain your email address, visit <http://islander.tamucc.edu> and click on "Get New Computer Account Passwords" link in the header of the page. You will be taken to the new user website. Select "Islander Student E-Mail, enter your student ID (also known as your A-number) and your date of birth, then click Submit and follow the instructions.

You can check your email by visiting <http://islander.tamucc.edu> and clicking on "Islander Student Email" in the header of the page.

### SAIL – Registering for Classes and Updating Personal Information

SAIL is the university system for class registration, viewing student records, making tuition payments, and parking administration. It is important to verify your contact information in SAIL as it contains the official records that we use to contact you.

To log into SAIL, visit <http://sail.tamucc.edu> If you do not know your student ID or PIN number, click "Get my student ID" on the left hand side of the screen. If you know your student ID and PIN, click on the blue "Login to S.A.I.L." button. Your student ID and PIN are known as your Banner ID. You will use these credentials to log into Blackboard (see 3.C).



On the next screen, enter your ID and PIN then click the Login button. If you have forgotten your PIN, click the Forgot PIN? Button and follow the instructions.

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### Canvas

Canvas can be access by navigating to <http://canvas.tamucc.edu> . You will use your Banner ID and PIN to log in. These are the same credentials used to log into SAIL (see 3.B).

Canvas has many capabilities that would take many pages to explain. The best way to gain familiarity with Canvas is simply to use it. Various canvas resources for students are available at: [Canvas Resources for Students | For Students | Digital Learning and Academic Innovations | Library | Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi \(tamucc.edu\)](#)

### GIS Software

The guide to GIS-related resources at TAMUCC can be accessed from [ArcGIS - Geographic Information Science - Research Guides at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi](#)

## Section VI. New Graduate Student Checklist (to be completed as soon as you are accepted into the Program)

- Obtain and read a copy of the University Graduate Catalog.** Remember, this is your contract!
- Acquire your University email address.
- Join the GSEN email list-serv. Many important university, program, and job announcements go across on this email list-serv GISSO. To join, visit <https://listserv.tamucc.edu/mailman/options/gisso-list>
- Log into SAIL to register for courses, pay your tuition bill and verify that your contact information is correct.
- Verify that your computer system meets the requirements for the program.
- Successfully log into Blackboard on the Island Online.
- Contact the graduate advisor and academic advisor to discuss your degree plan.
- Form the advisory committee (for Thesis Option Students) (complete by the end of the second semester).

## Section VII. General 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

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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. *(Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.)* Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made via the following web site: <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu>. For complete information, 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 College 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.

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**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.

**Repetition of a Course**

There are specific policies about repeating courses for higher grades, including the provision that graduate students may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study at the University. Each course may be repeated only once. Some courses may be repeated for multiple credit if those courses are so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty or program advisor as designated by their college. Complete catalog information may be found in the [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of 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 [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.

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**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:

[College of Graduate Studies](#)

[Office of Student Financial Assistance](#)

[Office of International Education](#)

[Scholarships](#)

[GROW](#)

[Assistantships](#)

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