

3.6.4

Educational Programs: Graduate/Post-Baccalaureate:Post-baccalaureate program requirements

The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

Judgment

Compliance Partial Compliance Non-Compliance Not Applicable

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) offers advanced degrees at the master's, specialist, and doctoral levels through the College of Graduate Studies. The University follows the appropriate standards for awarding degrees as exemplified by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Regulation 2:01:00:00, General Education Requirements and Degree Requirements. Section VI, paragraph A of the policy states: "Graduate degree Requirements vary by discipline and level. Generally, master's and doctoral programs require a 3.0 or higher for graduation as stated by the institution" [1]. Definitions and requirements for graduate degrees are published in TTU Policy 271 [2a] and the Graduate Catalog for all post-baccalaureate degree programs [2b]. In addition, detailed information about each graduate program may be accessed from the Graduate College website [3].

Policies Governing Graduate Degrees

The Graduate Studies Executive Committee (GSEC) approves all changes/additions to degree requirements at the graduate level. Prior to implementation, the Administrative Council of the University approves graduate degree requirements changes/additions as submitted by the GSEC. The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the GSEC, exercises overall review and supervision of graduate programs and provides leadership in developing new programs, monitoring current programs, and in improving standards for existing programs. New graduate programs must also be approved at the TBR level following TTU approval. Following the required approvals, the College of Graduate Studies publishes all degree requirements in TTU Policy 271 and the Graduate Catalog. The Graduate Catalog is accessible to students from the Graduate Studies website, and the requirements in the online catalog are always up-to-date with the latest approved policies and requirements [4].

Master's Degree (MA, MS, MBA) Requirements

To ensure the integrity and consistency of graduate degree requirements across the campus, each department website provides a link to the Graduate Catalog. The College of Graduate Studies is responsible for maintaining the Graduate Catalog, and revisions are incorporated after the GSEC approves all changes. In addition to a link to the Catalog on the department website, individual departments are responsible for maintaining general program information (program description, course requirements, career opportunities) on their websites and ensuring that all appropriate information is clear, complete, and consistent with the Graduate Catalog.

A program of study is required for each advanced degree. For many programs, the program of study is customized for the student on the basis of educational background, research interests, and career interests. The student's advisory committee, the departmental chairperson, the dean of the college in which the program resides, and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies must approve each proposed program of study. Graduate degrees are not only awarded on the basis of completion of

specific courses, but also on the basis of evidence of proficiency, scholarship, reasoning and investigation, and high attainments in the field of the student's specialization.

Although the maximum number of credits required in any degree program is determined in accordance with the formalized program approved for each student, a candidate for the master's degree must complete at least 30 semester hours of credit in a program requiring a thesis or at least 33 semester hours in most nonthesis programs. At least 70 percent of the credit to be counted toward a master's degree must be at the 6000 level or above [5].

When a thesis is required in a student's program of study, no more than six semester hours of credit of research and thesis is counted toward the degree. The student's advisory committee must approve the topic of the thesis research in advance. The graduate student is expected to consult frequently with the major advisor during research and thesis preparation. Revisions are suggested by the advisory committee prior to final submission of the thesis to the College of Graduate Studies in an electronic format. Students must defend their theses before their committees, and many of these defenses also include a comprehensive examination (oral and/or written), which includes area of knowledge-based questions.

Departments when authorized by the GSEC may permit nonthesis options. Any nonthesis program that is considered for approval by the GSEC must demonstrate that it fosters independent learning. Nonthesis options are available in all departments that offer graduate programs in the College of Education; in the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences, and in the departments of Computer Science and Electrical and Computer Engineering in the College of Engineering. The MBA in the College of Business is a nonthesis program, yet requires only 30 hours. The master's program in Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness requires 30 hours. The master's program in Educational Psychology in the Department of Counseling and Psychology requires 30 hours for the nonthesis option and 33 hours for the thesis option [6].

Regents Online Campus Collaborative (ROCC, previously RODP) Requirements

Master of Education (MEd). The Regents Online Master's of Education (MEd) degree program is based on The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts [7]. It provides advanced professional preparation in the area of reading and language arts for practicing teachers. All participants must be fully licensed teachers who are currently engaged in classroom teaching. The program bases course content and learning experiences on the student's work as a classroom teacher and includes assignments that teachers will carry out in their own classrooms. It includes course work focused on pedagogical content proficiencies related to teaching Reading-Language Arts. Since the core is aligned with NBPTS generalist certificates, this program will also support teachers who seek NBPTS certification in any of the generalist areas as well. The degree requires 33 hours (a minimum of 23 must be at 6000 level or above). Curriculum and degree requirements are located in the TTU Graduate Catalog and may also be found on the ROCC website [8].

Master of Professional Studies (MPS). The Master's of Professional Studies program is designed to meet the educational needs of working adults who are not generally educationally served by traditional methods. This graduate professional degree consists of 33 hours of interdisciplinary course work and is available in four concentrations: Strategic Leadership, Human Resources Leadership, Training and Development, and Healthcare Administration. Course requirements are located in the TTU Graduate Catalog and may also be found on the ROCC website [9].

Master of Science in Nursing (MSRN). The Regents Online Master of Science in Nursing offers a 36- to 46-credit hour program leading to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree. Students may pursue full-time or part-time study. All courses, with the exception of clinical rotations, are delivered in an online delivery format. The Accreditation Commission accredits the Regents Online Master of Science in nursing program for Education in Nursing (ACEN), formerly the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). Three areas of concentration are offered through the master's program: Nursing Education, Nursing Administration, and Family Nurse Practitioner. Links to course requirements for these concentration areas are located in the Graduate Catalog [10] and also may be

found on the ROCC website [11].

Specialist in Education (EdS) Requirements

An EdS program includes competencies needed for a professional specialization. Specializations are offered in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Leadership, and Educational Psychology and Counselor Education. A minimum of 30 semester hours beyond the master's degree, in approved upper-level courses, is required in the EdS program. At least 15 semester hours must be taken in courses numbered at the 7000 level; no course below the 6000 level will be counted for credit unless written approval is obtained from the student's advisory committee, the chairperson of the department in which the student is majoring, the dean of the college in which the student is majoring, and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

EdS degree requirements are located in the Graduate Catalog and may be found at the departmental websites [12]. Admission to candidacy for the EdS degree requires that the student successfully complete a comprehensive written examination administered by the advisory committee. The examination is administered after the completion of 15 semester hours of the program. In addition to a written examination, an oral examination may be required at the discretion of the student's advisory committee.

Students in the Counselor Education program will take the national Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) during their first semester of study. This examination is diagnostic in nature and must be passed as a degree requirement for the EdS specialization in Counseling [13].

Final clearance for candidacy will be achieved only upon recommendation by the department in which the student is majoring, subject to approval of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Requirements

Graduate programs leading to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree are offered in Engineering, Environmental Sciences, and Exceptional Learning. All PhD degrees are research degrees and require a dissertation. Degree requirements for the PhD are listed in TTU Policy 271 and in the Graduate Catalog by college and are also listed on the college website [14].

Total required course work beyond the BS degree varies among the three PhD programs: 72 semester hours for Engineering, 61 hours for Environmental Sciences, and 78/79 hours for Exceptional Learning. Of these, 24, 18, and 36 hours are associated with research and dissertation. Many students who earn a PhD at TTU have previously completed a master's or Educational Specialist degree, and hours earned in these advanced degrees may be counted toward the PhD degree: up to 24 hours in Engineering, 18 hours in Environmental Science, and 27 hours in Exceptional Learning [15] [16] [17].

In addition to the degree credit hour requirements above, students are required to complete at least 12 hours of 7000 level courses in Environmental Science and Exceptional Learning and six in Engineering.

Programs of study toward the PhD degree are similar to those of MS degrees in that they are customized for each student on the basis of educational background, research interests, and career objective. The student's advisory committee, department chair, dean of the college, and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies must approve the program of study. Engineering and Environmental Sciences PhD advisory committees consist of five voting members, requiring at least one and two member(s) from outside the department, respectively. The Exceptional Learning PhD advisory committees consist of four voting members.

Before PhD students are admitted to candidacy, they must complete 80 percent of their required course work and a set of comprehensive exams. Students in all three programs must complete knowledge-based written exams, followed by an oral exam. Oral exams in all programs except the biology concentration of Environmental Science are defenses of the proposed research, whereas the Biology oral exam is knowledge-based with a separate proposal defense generally occurring earlier. All PhD students must defend their dissertations to their advisory committees before submitting them to the

College of Graduate Studies in an electronic format.

Each doctoral candidate must prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation and that is acceptable in form and content to the advisory committee and the Graduate College. The dissertation must be of publishable quality and meet all formatting requirements as defined by the Graduate College. The student and the advisory committee are responsible for the level of quality and scholarship of the dissertation. Theses and dissertations are reviewed and approved by the Graduate College and released for publication when all requirements and approvals have been met [18].

Requirements for Online Graduate Degree Programs

Distance MBA. The Distance MBA program available from TTU consists of 10 three-hour courses for a total of 30 hours: seven three-hour core courses (21 hours) and three three-hour electives (nine hours). Each core course in this group is required of all MBA candidates with the exception of ACCT 6010 for those students in the accounting concentration. As many as nine semester hours may be transferred from other AACSB accredited schools. Credit will not be allowed for courses taken more than five years prior to application to TTU. Students may choose a concentration in accounting, finance, human resource management, international business, management information systems, or marketing. Students choosing a concentration will select an elective within that concentration; general MBA students can choose electives from any discipline with the exception of accounting. The MBA program is fully accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International) [19]. Details on the degree requirements and curriculum for the MBA program as well as concentration areas may be found in the Graduate Catalog and on the MBA website [20].

Master of Arts – Exercise Science. The Master of Arts degree program in Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness at TTU is completely online. The four concentrations available are: Adapted Physical Education, Elementary/Middle School Physical Education, Lifetime Wellness, and Sport Management. The Elementary/Middle School PE concentration of the MA-EXPW program is accredited through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) [21]. Entrance and matriculation requirements are identical to those already established for the M.A. program in EXPW. There is a core research requirement, including educational statistics, education research, and either a problems course or a thesis, the credit hours ranging from six to 12 for this research component. At least 70 percent of the courses taken toward the degree must be at the 6000 level or above.

Dissemination of Program Requirements

The Graduate College staff offers periodic workshops for college and graduate program coordinators to discuss degree requirements and to share best practices. Orientation is available for new graduate coordinators. In addition, new graduate student orientation, available each semester to students, provides a review of policies and procedures regarding graduate education and the process to graduation.

As mentioned above, the Graduate Catalog is available online. Colleges link to the catalog from their websites and also provide detailed information regarding their programs on their college websites. Colleges also provide online resources for their students including handbooks for departmental- and program-specific policies and procedures. For example, the handbook for the Exceptional Learning Ph.D. in the College of Education may be found on the program website [22].

Graduate Degree Summary Table

The following table is included to provide access to departmental degree requirements and descriptions of the major programs of study at the master's, specialist, and doctoral levels.

Table 1. Graduate Degree Departmental Requirements and Major Programs of Study.

Graduate Degree Programs	Graduate Degree Requirements
Professional Science Masters (PSM)	
Environmental Informatics	[23]
Manufacturing Sustainability	[24]
Master of Arts (MA)	
English	[25]
Curriculum and Instruction	[26]
Educational Psychology and Counselor Education	[27]
Exercise Science, Physical Education and Wellness	[28]
Instructional Leadership	[29]
Master of Education (MED) RODP Program	
Advanced Studies in Teaching & Learning	[30]
Master of Professional Studies (MPS) RODP Program	
Professional Studies with concentrations in Healthcare Administration, Human Resources Leadership, Strategic Leadership, and Training and Development	[31]
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	
Business Administration	[32]
Master of Science (MS)	
Biology	[33]
Chemistry	[34]
Mathematics	[35]
Chemical Engineering	[36]
Civil and Environmental Engineering	[36]
Computer Science	[36]
Electrical and Computer Engineering	[36]
Mechanical Engineering	[36]
Nursing (MSN)	[37]
Specialist in Education (EdS)	
Curriculum and Instruction	[38]
Educational Psychology and Counselor Education	[39]
Instructional Leadership	[40]
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	
Exceptional Learning	[41]
Engineering	[36]
Environmental Sciences	[42]

Conclusion





TTU defines and widely disseminates its requirements for all graduate programs. Graduate faculty members determine the course work for the degrees, and in collaboration with the Graduate College, determine the degree requirements. Clear, complete, and consistent information is provided in the Graduate Catalog as well as in student orientation sessions and student communication. Through these processes and practices, the University is in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.6.4.

Sources

 [01] General Education Requirements and Degree Requirements

 [02a] TTU Policy 271

-  [02b] Graduate_Catalog_2014
-  [03] Graduate Website
-  [04] Graduate Studies Website
-  [05] Masters Degree_Requirements
-  [06] Nonthesis_Requirements
-  [07] National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
-  [08] RODP Masters of Education
-  [09] RODP Masters of Professional Studies
-  [10] Graduate_Catalog_School_of_Nursing
-  [11] RODP Master of Science in Nursing
-  [12] EdS Degree Requirements
-  [13] EdS CPCE Exam
-  [14] PhD Requirements
-  [15] College_of_Engineering_Programs
-  [16] College_of_Interdisciplinary_Studies
-  [17] College_of_Education
-  [18] Dissertation Requirements
-  [19] AACSB
-  [20] MBA Website
-  [21] Council_for_the_Accreditation_of_Educator_Preparation
-  [22] PhD Handbook College of Education 2014_2015
-  [23] PSM Environmental Informatics
-  [24] PSM Manufacturing Sustainability
-  [25] MA English
-  [26] MA Curriculum and Instruction
-  [27] MA Counseling and Psychology
-  [28] MA Exercise Science_Physical Education_and Wellness
-  [29] MA Instructional Leadership
-  [30] MEd Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning
-  [31] MPS Professional Studies
-  [32] MBA Business Administration
-  [33] MS Biology
-  [34] MS Chemistry
-  [35] MS Mathematics

-  [36] MS Engineering
-  [37] MSN Nursing
-  [38] EdS Curriculum and Instruction
-  [39] EdS Educational Psychology and Counselor Education
-  [40] EdS Instructional Leadership
-  [41] PhD Exceptional Learning
-  [42] PhD Environmental Studies