GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023 – 2024

A Supplement to the Tennessee Tech University Student Handbook and the Graduate Catalog

College of
GRADUATE STUDIES
www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies

Welcome to Tennessee Tech University! The College of Graduate Studies works closely with the graduate departments and schools at the university to carefully select students who will be successful in graduate study. We are available to answer your questions, guide your progress and assist with your development. It is our goal to admit excellent students and do all we can to support them throughout their academic careers.

Pursuing a graduate degree is a journey into inquiry and learning that results in the attainment of a body of knowledge and the skills to discover new ways to solve problems. The attainment of a graduate degree will lead to the enhancement of your life and to using your knowledge for the betterment of society. We hope you have a rewarding experience at Tennessee Tech University.

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CONGRATULATIONS! You are now a graduate student.

THINGS TO DO

Financial Aid

Make sure all paperwork is in order.

Graduate Assistantship

Applications can be found at **tntech.edu/graduatestudies/gastudentinfo.php**

Student Email Account

Sign in; it's the main method of contact by the university.

Advisement

Contact the person listed on your Certificate of Admission.

Register

Login to Tech Express, then Eagle Online and register for courses.

Parking permit

Get a permit if you will be parking on campus.

Complete Admission Requirements

If you lack any requirements for admission it will be indicated on your Certificate of Admission. All admission requirements must be met by the end of the first semester or a registration hold will be placed on your account.

Advisory Committee

Start thinking about which faculty members you want on your committee.

Forms

Go to the Graduate Studies website and click on the Online Forms link and familiarize yourself with the forms we have available.

International students

Check in with the International Education office.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

Permissible Loads

There are limits in some situations.

Grades

Know what grades are required to avoid dismissal or probation.

Program of Study

Your program of study will be outlined in Degree Works. Your advisor will work with you on planning your program coursework.

Appointment of Advisory Committee

Contact your department for instructions on selecting your committee.

Changes

Learn how to make changes and the proper forms to use.

Degree Completion Time Limits

Six consecutive years to complete a master's or specialist in education; eight consecutive years to complete a doctorate.

Comprehensive Exam

Learn about your department and degree's comprehensive exam (when, where and how).

Thesis/Dissertation

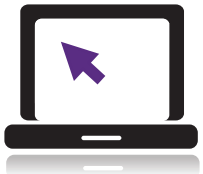
Tech has a specific format for theses and dissertations. Attend a workshop before you begin writing.

Graduation

You must apply for graduation one semester before you plan to complete your degree. All applications are due by the published deadline posted on our Graduate Student Calendar by semester.

COMMUNICATION

The College of Graduate Studies will communicate with students in the following ways:



WEB

www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/index.php
The College of Graduate Studies has a dedicated presence on the university website with information for graduate students such as admissions, dates and deadlines, forms, thesis/dissertation, graduation and more.

FACEBOOK

Tennessee Tech University Graduate Studies

The College of Graduate Studies Facebook page at **www.facebook.com/tntechgradstudies** shares important information. Use this page as a forum to discuss issues related to graduate students.

CAMPUS EMAIL

The Tennessee Tech campus email is the official email and students are encouraged to check it regularly as this is how they will be contacted.

INSTAGRAM

www.tntech.edu/tntechgradstudies
Follow us on Instagram for interesting news.

TENNESSEE TECH STUDENT HANDBOOK TOPICS

Please consult the Tennessee Tech Student Handbook for the information regarding any of the topics listed below.
tntech.edu/handbooks/student/index.php

- Academic Policies
- Alcohol and Drug Policy
- Confidentiality of Student Records BS FERP Compliance
- Copyright Infringement
- Disability Services
- Discrimination and Harrassment
- Fee Charges, Refunds and Fee Adjustments
- Financial Aid
- Free Speech on Campus
- History and Traditions
- Inclement Weather Policy
- Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- New Student and Family Programs (Orientation)
- Register to Vote
- Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse
- Residential Life Housing Policy
- Roaden University Center
- Student Complaint Policy
- Student Conduct Policy
- Student Fee Adjustments, Refunds and Appeals
- Student Government Association
- Student Organizations
- Student Rights
- Tennessee Tech Mission and Vision Statements
- Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures
- Use of Campus Property and Facilities

GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION TOPICS

All new graduate students will have student orientation modules within the iLearn system. The following topics are included in the Graduate Orientation "course."

- Welcome to Graduate School
- Welcome to Cookeville
- First Steps Checklist
- Title IX
- Counseling Center
- Career Development Center
- Campus Services
- College Information
- Graduate School Handbook
- Health Benefits Information

RESPONSIBILITIES, ATTENDANCE AND CONDUCT

Students are responsible for the proper completion of their academic programs, for familiarity with requirements of the Graduate Catalog, for maintaining the grade average required and for meeting all other degree requirements. A student may receive counsel from an academic advisor, however, **the final responsibility remains that of the student.**

STUDENT ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class at Tennessee Tech is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, alumni and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. The Student Academic Misconduct Policy describes the definitions of academic miscondut and policies and procedure for addressing Academic Misconduct at Tennessee Tech. For more information read Tennessee Tech's Policy 217 - Student Academic Misconduct.

www.tntech.edu/policies

FINANCIAL AID

Students who have been admitted with full standing in a degree-seeking program may wish to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA).** Recipients of federal direct loans must be U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens enrolled for at least five (5) semester hours (for federal aid purposes, halftime status is defined as enrollment for five (5) hours, three-quarter time status is defined as enrollment of six to eight (6-8) hours, and full-time is defined as enrollment of nine (9) hours). The interest on these loans is a variable amount (set by the federal government each year); interest and principal repayment may be deferred while the student is enrolled. The FAFSA may be found at **www.tntech.edu/financial aid/.**

In some instances graduate students may qualify for positions as head residents in the university's housing program. For more information visit the University Housing and Residential Life website at **www.tntech.edu/reslife/.**

There are four (4) classifications of **graduate assistantships:** Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Teaching Associate, Graduate Support Assistant and Graduate Research Assistant.

Unless other arrangements are specified, it is assumed the graduate assistant will pursue a degree objective in the department where the assistantship assignment is made. Applications for assistantships are online at **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/ga-studentinfo.php.**

Additional assistantship and fellowship awards are available for qualifying graduate students. Consideration is given on the basis of academic preparation, major area of study and the availability of funds. Information regarding additional funding sources may be found at **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/financial.php**

A student must be in full standing to be offered an assistantship. The period of appointment is normally for one (1) academic year at a stipend determined by the department in which the assistantship is available. The graduate assistant is required to maintain a minimum quality point average of 3.0.

Veteran's Benefits - Tennessee Tech has a full-service veteran's center to assist our military and veteran students. Information is available at

www.tntech.edu/veterans/index.php

ADMISSION TYPES

Admission standing is not to be confused with academic standing (good or probation) or enrollment level (full-time or part-time).

Provisional Standing
Some colleges allow students provisional admission with the agreement that all outstanding admission requirements be met within the first semester of enrollment. By mid semester a hold will be placed on the student's account to prevent future enrollment until all admission requirements are satisfied. Students admitted in provisional standing are allowed a maximum load of nine (9) hours.

Full Standing
Students admitted in full standing have met all admission requirements and are entitled to all freedoms as a graduate student.

Special Standing
This classification enables students to enroll for graduate credit in certain academic areas but it does not guarantee that such credit will be counted toward a degree objective. If a student transfers to a degree program and wishes to use courses taken during special standing, only nine (9) credit hours (approved by the department of major) can count towards a degree objective.

Students in special standing are not eligible for financial aid.

Reclassification
Students admitted in full standing are not required to be reclassified. Students who have been admitted to graduate study in provisional standing may, upon the approval of the department chairperson or program director, request and be granted full standing. Students are not required to apply for reclassification. Students files are reviewed each semester by the College of Graduate Studies and all students eligible for reclassification will be processed automatically.

ADVISEMENT AND REGISTRATION

Advisement

1. Contact the major department for advisement. The contact name and number is available on the department website.
2. The departmental chairperson or advisor will provide you with "Alternate PIN" codes for registration.

Registration

1. The student will register online through Tech Express and then Eagle Online using the information provided by the department.
2. Once the course selection process is complete, the student will pay fees and confirm enrollment. If enrollment is not confirmed and payment not received, the enrollment will be purged.

Permissible Loads
Full load (fall, spring) - 9 hours (GA's may enroll in 6 hours)

Full load (summer) - 6 hours (GA's may enroll in 1 hour)

Maximum load for Graduate Assistantship - 12 hours

Maximum load for student not on Graduate Assistantship - 15 hours

REQUIRED TRAINING

All Graduate Assistants must complete two online training modules at **www.tntech.edu/hr/training/index.php.**

- Title IX, Sexual Misconduct
- Title VI, Discrimination

All graduate students should be familiar with the FERPA regulations. A quick fact sheet may be found at **www.tntech.edu/em/records/faculty.php.**

All Teaching Assistants (TA) will be required to complete a Teaching Assistant module that will be added to iLearn.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PROGRAM OF STUDY

Advisory Committee

All degree-seeking students are required to have an advisory committee and are responsible for its formation and maintenance. The advisory committee may be appointed during the student's first term but no later than the term in which 15 credits will be earned. If not filed by this time, a hold will be placed on the student's account to prevent further registrations.

Master's - requires minimum of 3 members.

Specialist in Education - requires minimum of 3 members.

Doctorate - Engineering requires five (5), Education requires four (4), Environmental Sciences requires five (5).

See Graduate Catalog for specific member composition requirements as it varies by department.

If changes in membership of the student's advisory committee are desired or required, see "Changes" section of this handbook for instructions.

Program of Study

Upon admission to a degree program, your program of study will be available in Degree Works. Your advisor will provide you with the particular courses that you will take and when you will take them. As you enroll and complete your courses, you will see your degree progression within Degree Works. Your degree is awarded based upon your Degree Works Program of Study. Courses that do not fall into the Degree Works framework will require an advisor-approved substiution form.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy is required of all degree-seeking students. For master's and specialist in education it must be filed by the end of the semester in which 15 hours of course credit will be earned. A hold will be placed on the student's account to prevent further registrations mid-semester of the semester in which the 15 hours will be earned. To be admitted to candidacy, a student must:

- be in full standing.
- have completed at least 9 semester hours of graduate credit with a minimum quality point average of 3.0.
- successfully complete of any examination which may be required by the student's department.

Master's and Specialist in Education students will initiate the "Admission to Candidacy" form on the Graduate Studies online forms page at **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/forms.php.**

Doctorate — presentation to committee, memo to College of Graduate Studies. Once the comprehensive exams are complete, the student's advisor will send a memo to College of Graduate Studies indicating such and requesting that the student be admitted to candidacy.

If the student's application for admission to candidacy is not approved due to academic deficiencies, the student cannot continue graduate study with a major in any of the departments of the college in which he/she is studying.

CHANGES

Change of Major
A student is admitted into a degree program only upon a declaration of a major area of study. This major area can be changed if the department of the original major releases the student, and if the department of the new major is willing to accept the student. Student must meet the admission requirements of the new major. The online "Change of Major Concentration" form must be initiated to begin this process.

Change of Concentration
A student may wish to change concentrations within a degree program major. The concentration may be changed if the department of the major allows. Student must meet the admission requirements of the new concentration. The online "Change of Major Concentration" form must be initiated to begin this process.

Program of Study
Due to course offerings and a change in focus of research, students may have to alter a few courses on the Degree Works program of study. A "Substitution Form" must be initiated and approved by your academic advisor to modify/update your Degree Works program of study.

Advisory Committee
Due to change in focus of research or faculty changes, students may need to adjust the approved advisory committee. To change members on a committee, the online "Change of Advisory Committee Request" form should be initiated.

Contact Info and/or Legal Name
In the event of the need to update or change legal name or contact information, students are to contact the Office of Records and provide the appropriate required documentation.

To access any of the above forms, just visit the Graduate Studies online forms page **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/forms.php.**

THESIS/DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE

All graduate students submitting a thesis or dissertation are provided with detailed guidelines about the document and submission process on the Graduate Studies website. Personnel are available for one-on-one formatting assistance. **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/etd/index.php.**

Thesis/Dissertation Final Draft
The advisory committee will review the student's thesis prior to the defense to ensure the thesis/dissertation is of suitable caliber and presents a valid investigation.

Thesis/Dissertation Defense
Schedule the defense with the advisory committee well in advance of the deadline. Student should take approved Certificate of Approval and Defense Form to the defense for the advisory committee to sign, if they choose. The results of the defense must be received by the College of Graduate Studies by the deadline date posted on our Graduate Student Calendar.

The Certificate of Approval page, also referred to as the signature page, is a required form. The format of the form is defined on our website **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/etd/formatting/approval.php.**

Thesis/Dissertation Submission

The final copy of the paper must be submitted electronically to ETD ProQuest by the deadline date posted on our Graduate Student Calendar. Instructions and assistance may be found at **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/etd/index.php.**

Upon receipt of the Certificate of Approval signed by all committee members, Graduate Studies personnel will begin reviewing the ETD ProQuest submission.

For additional information on thesis/dissertation resources, go to the Graduate Studies website. **www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/etd. php.**

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Comprehensive Exam

For master's and Ed.S. students, the comprehensive (comp) exam is scheduled directly with the department, not the College of Graduate Studies. This is normally taken in the last or next to last semester prior to graduation.

For Ph.D. students, consult with the advisory committee chairperson regarding the timing and specific requirements of the Comprehensive Exam and Admission to Candidacy for the doctoral program.

WITHDRAWAL

Students who desire to withdraw from the university before the end of an academic term must make formal application for withdrawal in the Office of the Registrar. The withdrawal application is found online.

www.tnech.edu/records/universitywithdrawal.php

If no administrative holds have been assigned to the student account, such as a disciplinary hold, the student requesting to withdraw will receive a grade of "W" in all courses if an official, signed withdrawal application is received by the Office of the Registrar prior to the last day of classes.

PROBATION AND DISMISSAL

Probation for Unsatisfactory Performance

A graduate student is required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least "B" on all graduate courses taken as a graduate student. When a student's cumulative average on courses falls below 3.0, but not less than 2.0, the student will be placed on probation. If the cumulative average falls below 2.0, the student will be dismissed.

If the term average on all courses presented as part of the hours required for graduation during any semester is less than 2.0, the student will be dismissed.

Dismissal for Unsatisfactory Performance

A graduate student will be dismissed from the graduate program if any one of the following conditions occurs:

1. Two consecutive semesters of probation (summer semester is not included if the student did not take a summer course).
2. The student's current or cumulative GPA falls below 2.0.
3. Two grades of "F."
4. Two consecutive semesters of "No Progress" grades assigned in thesis or dissertation courses.
5. Several graduate programs have more stringent dismissal criteria. Students should confer with the department about such criteria.

A student who has been dismissed for unsatisfactory performance may request reinstatement, provided he/she produces evidence of extenuating circumstances that would prevent dismissal. The request must be approved by the department chair, director of the student's graduate program, the dean of the college and the Graduate School Executive Committee. The decision of the Graduate Studies Executive Committee is final. Details may be found in Tennessee Tech Policy 281.

www.tntech.edu/policies/

GRADES AND COURSES

Grade of Incomplete
An instructor may assign an incomplete "I" grade when a student's performance has been satisfactory, but for reasons beyond the student's control, he/she has not been able to complete course requirements within the allotted time as determined by the instructor. Students are **not** to register for the course again but must complete the original course requirement with the instructor.

Students have up to one calendar year or until the time of graduation, whichever comes first, to remove the "I". The "I" is excluded from calculation of the student's QPA. If the "I" is not removed within the time limits, it converts to an "IF" and remains permanently on students' records.

Course Repetition Policy
Each college in which graduate programs are offered may permit courses to be repeated, provided the cumulative repeat credit does not exceed nine (9) hours. If the repetition is for courses taken for graduate credit either before or after admission to the Graduate School, the grade on repeated work as well as the original grade will be included in the calculation of the quality point average in hours attempted.

The grade received for retaking the course **does not** replace the first grade as is the procedure at the undergraduate level.

Course Offerings
The course offerings and requirements of the institution are continually under examination and revision. The Graduate Catalog presents the current offerings and requirements at the time of publication but is no guarantee that they will not be changed or revoked. Adequate and reasonable notice will be given to students affected.

GRADUATION

Typical Graduation Timeline

Master's and Specialist in Education

30-33 hour program - typical graduation is in 1.5 to 2 years

36-60 hour program - typical graduation is in 2 to 3 years

Doctor of Philosophy

48-79 hour program - typical graduation is in 3.5 to 4 years

Time Limits
Master's and Ed.S. students must complete the degree within six (6) years.

Doctoral students must complete the degree in eight (8) years.

Application for Graduation
Students must submit an application for graduation in Eagle Online or Degree Works by the publiched deadline which is the semester prior to the semsester in which the degree is expected to be conferred.

Graduate Studies will notify the student by email listing items and courses needed or missing for graduation.

Commencement
The candidate is expected to be present at the ceremony for the conferral of the degree in the term in which it is conferred. There will not be a commencement ceremony for those graduating in August; therefore, these students are invited to participate in the December commencement ceremony.

Diplomas and Dilpoma Covers
Diploma covers are given out at the commencement ceremony. Students not attending commencement but wanting a diploma cover may contact contact the Office of the Registrar.

Diplomas are not given out at the commencement ceremony because degrees are not officially conferred until after commencement. Diplomas will be mailed or students within two weeks of commencement.

GLOSSARY

Advisement - A meeting with academic advisor to determine best plan of study to achieve academic goals.

Advisor - A professional advisor or faculty member who meets with designated students each semester to help make curriculum choices and discuss progress toward achieving educational goals.

Advisory Committee - Committee chosen by student to guide research and degree pursuit. The committee is headed by the committee chair.

Bursar - A term unique to higher education and means 'keeper of the funds'.

Candidacy - A student who has nearly completed the requirements for a degree.

Comprehensive Exam - Often abbreviated as "comps," this is a specific type of examination that must be completed by graduate students in some disciplines and courses of study.

Concentration - Area of specialization within a major.

Contract - Agreement between student and Office of Teacher Education.

Corequisite - A course requirement that must be taken concurrently with a particular course. In some instances may be met before enrolling in a particular course.

Dean - The head of a college or university faculty or department.

Defense - Formal meeting with advisory committee in which student defends research and thesis or dissertation.

Degree - The final award upon completion of set academic criteria.

Degree Works - The software system that manages your degree progression.

Departmental Chairperson - The head of a college or university department.

Dismissal - Students failing to meet academic requirements and upon recommendation by the major department will be dismissed from the university.

Eagle Card - Identification card that can be used to gain access to sporting events, fitness center, meals, library, stage events, etc.

Early Registration Students may register for the coming semester at the end of a given semester in advance of the official registration dates.

Financial Aid Loans, grants or assistantships to assist students in paying tuition and fees.

GPA An average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1) earned by the total number of hours of coursework attempted.

Graduate Catalog Annual **online** bulletin reflecting the current policies, rules and regulations of Graduate School; admission requirements; degree requirements and course offerings.

IRB Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects reviews applications for research involving human subjects.

Major A particular subject or specialization.

Prerequisite A course requirement that must be met before enrolling in a particular course.

Problem Paper or Project A research project resulting in a report or project for students not pursuing a thesis track.

Program of Study The course requirements defined by your advisor for your degree program.

Provost The senior administrative officer in the university.

RODP Regents Online Degree Program.

QPA An average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1) earned by the total number of hours of coursework attempted.

Syllabus A precise outline of course expectations stating the required textbook(s), assignments and dates due, test dates, grading and policies, research papers, as well as other requirements.

T# (Student ID) Identification number assigned to student and is used in place of social security number.

Tech Express The Tennesee Tech online one-stop portal for email, registration and access to software.

Thesis/Dissertation A thesis or dissertation is a document submitted in support of candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification presenting the author's research and findings.

University Calendar The university's calendar is determined and published annually.

RESOURCES

Bookstore	931-372-3131
Bursars Office	931-372-3311
Campus Mail / P.O. Boxes	931-372-3282
Career Services	931-372-3232
College of Graduate Studies	931-372-3233
Counseling Center	931-372-3331
Disability Services	931-372-6119
Diversity and Legal Affairs	931-372-3016
Eagle Card	931-372-6232
Financial Aid	931-372-3073
Fitness Center	931-372-6215
Health Services	931-372-3320
Human Resources	931-372-3034
International Education	931-372-3634
Library	931-372-3326
Multicultural Affairs	931-372-3392
Records	931-372-3317
Recreation/Fitness	931-372-6212
Residential Life	931-372-3414
Scholarships	931-372-6159
Student Affairs	931-372-3411
University Police	931-372-3234
Veterans Benefits	931-372-3205

Advisor and departmental contact information are listed on your Certificate of Admission.

Your frequently called numbers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Tennessee Tech does not condone and will not tolerate discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, genetic information, disability, veteran status, and any other basis protected by federal and state civil rights law. Tennessee Tech complies with Title IX and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities, admissions or employment. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action may be referred to the Director of Affirmative Action, Derryberry Hall 146, Box 5132, Cookeville, TN 38505-0001, 931-372-3069, equity@tntech.edu. Inquiries regarding Title IX may be referred to Tennessee Tech's Title IX Coordinator, Derryberry Hall 258, 931-372-3034, titleix@tntech.edu, or to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 800-421-8339, OCR@ed.gov. CGRD088-PRNT-24