



Doctoral Student Handbook

Prepared for

Doctoral Students and Graduate Faculty

If you print out a hard copy of this handbook, please be aware that it is subject to change. The most current handbook will always be available online. Therefore, as you progress through your doctoral program, please check the Graduate web page <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/> for the most current version of this handbook.

Compiled by

**Texas A&M University-Commerce
Office of Graduate Studies**

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Welcome to Texas A&M University-Commerce! The Office of Graduate Studies is pleased you have chosen to pursue your doctoral studies at Texas A&M University-Commerce. As you progress through your doctoral program, you will become aware that numerous rules and procedures must be followed for you to be successful in your doctoral program. The Office of Graduate Studies is here to help guide and assist you during each step of your doctoral program.

This handbook is designed to assist you in meeting all of the requirements and deadlines, from the time of admission until your graduation. The handbook has a doctoral program checklist to help you with timelines and progression. We also have a Dissertation Manual that will guide you through the dissertation process. ***If you print out a hard copy of this handbook, please be aware that it is subject to change. The most current handbook will always be available online. Therefore, as you progress through your doctoral program, please check the Graduate Studies web page <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/> for the most current version of this handbook.***

Departments have the right and may exercise the right to have program requirements higher than those set by the Office of Graduate Studies. However in no case can a department set criteria lower than the Office of Graduate Studies minimums. Please consult your advisor, departmental student handbook, or written guidelines for your specific department requirements.

Everyone in the Office of Graduate Studies will work with you to ensure your success. Ask questions or let us know of any concerns you might have; we are here to help you. If you have questions or concerns that are not answered in this handbook, please feel free to contact the Doctoral Degree Coordinator (903/886-5167 or vicky.turner@tamuc.edu) or the Office of Graduate Studies and Research (903/886-5163).

Vicky Turner

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University Website: <http://web.tamuc.edu>

Office of Graduate Studies Website: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/>

(903) 886-5167

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Please include your student id number in all correspondence.

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USEFUL INFORMATION AND WEBPAGES

ALL DOCTORAL FORMS AND THE DOCTORAL HANDBOOK CAN BE FOUND AT THE WEBSITE BELOW. THIS WEBSITE WILL ALWAYS CONTAIN THE MOST UP-TO-DATE VERSION OF ANY DOCUMENT OR FORM. PLEASE REFERENCE LINK BELOW.

Graduate Forms and Guidelines: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/graduateForms.aspx>

Texas A&M University-Commerce homepage: <http://web.tamuc.edu/>

Office of Graduate Studies and Research homepage: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/>

Graduate Catalog: The Graduate Catalog changes year to year, so for the most up-to-date catalog, please access the attached link. The catalogs from previous years that are electronic will be here, too.

<http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/catalogs.aspx>

MyLeo access: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>

Registrar's Office: <http://web.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/>

Class Schedule: <http://www.tamuc.edu/schedule/>

Financial Aid: Doctoral students who have full admission to the doctoral degree program may be eligible for several forms of financial aid. These include the Texas Public Education Grant, College Work-Study, on-campus employment, and several loan programs. For information and application forms, contact the Office of Financial Aid, (903) 886 5096.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/tuitionCosts/financialAidandScholarships/default.aspx>

Housing: A&M-Commerce Department of Housing can accommodate single students and families in campus housing. Accommodation costs are reasonable, and the facilities are varied to meet a number of different life style alternatives. The Department of Housing is located on the first floor of Halladay Student Services, room 100, (903) 886-5797. <http://web.tamuc.edu/studentLife/housing/>

Funding your education: For current graduate scholarship information from the Office of Graduate Studies, please review this link: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/funding/default.aspx>

There are more scholarships and funding opportunities through your department and the scholarship office so please contact them for details.

Campus Locations: A&M-Commerce offers some classes in Mesquite and Dallas. Not all courses will be offered at all locations, especially at the doctoral level. Please check with your department.

<http://web.tamuc.edu/audience/prospectiveStudents/default.aspx>

Library: <http://www.tamuc.edu/library/>

Campus Map: <http://web.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/contactUs/campusMapDirections/map/map.pdf>

IRB information: <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/default.aspx>

Texas Bookstore: <http://www.amcbookstore.com/home.aspx>

Tuition and Fees: <http://web.tamuc.edu/admissions/tuitionCosts/default.aspx>

Academic Calendar: <http://web.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/academicCalendars/>

University Directory: <http://famis.tamuc.edu/pb/>

Graduate Assistantships: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/funding/assistantships/default.aspx>

Graduate teaching, non-teaching, and research assistantships at Texas A&M University-Commerce offer financial support for graduate education. Assistantships are awarded to qualified masters and doctoral students and are distributed through academic and non-academic departments. In addition to funding graduate education, assistantships also provide students opportunities for professional growth.

The University awards three types of assistantships:

1. **Graduate Assistant Non-teaching (GANT)** works in a variety of settings across campus performing such tasks as assisting with labs, offering teaching support, assisting faculty with research, preparing reports, entering data, or other responsibilities as assigned.
2. **Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT)** requires recipients to teach courses in the department in which they are assigned. Teaching Assistants are teachers of record, meaning they have primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit or noncredit and/or for assigning final grades for the course. In order to qualify for Teaching Assistantships students must have earned a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the field in which they will be teaching. Although they are teachers of record, they must work under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching field, receive regular in-service training, and be regularly evaluated.

Graduate students whose native language is other than English must demonstrate a sufficient level of oral and written proficiency (successfully pass the TOEFL or IETLS before they may be awarded a teaching assistantship. Texas A&M University-Commerce does have an English Language Institute that a student may complete instead of the TOEFL or IETLS.
3. **Graduate Assistant Research (GAR)** requires recipients to aid in the research with the department/professor to which they are assigned. Work may also include tasks such as assisting with labs, offering teaching support, assisting faculty with research, preparing reports, entering data or other responsibilities as assigned.

PURPOSE OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM:

1. To educate a person who has developed breadth of vision, a capacity for interpretation, and the ability to carry out critical investigation.
2. To help acquire new concepts, a zeal for adding to the sum of human knowledge, and development of ability to conduct original research, and to think clearly and independently.
3. To develop the professional competencies necessary for applying knowledge in the essential areas of human and public interest.

DOCTORAL DEGREES AWARDED at A&M-Commerce

1. **Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)**
 - a. Educational Administration
 - b. Higher Education Leadership
 - c. Supervision, Curriculum and Instruction in Elementary
2. **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**
 - a. Counseling
 - b. Educational Psychology
 - c. English

Admission to Doctoral Degree Programs

Students wishing to be considered for admissions into a doctoral program must meet the general requirements for admission to Graduate Studies; have an overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.00 scale, or a 3.00 on the last 60 undergraduate hours, or a 3.40 for a master's degree and work beyond the master's level; and must meet all departmental requirements, such as GRE, letter of recommendation, interviews, portfolio, etc. Individual departments may establish additional requirements for admission to a specific degree program. Applicants will be required to fulfill any additional requirements established by the major department.

Doctoral application packet:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/doctoraladmissionpacket..pdf>

Counseling forms: <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/doctoralCounselingPacket.pdf>

Educational Psychology forms: <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/stogforepsy.pdf>

Applications of students who have met the requirements listed above will be forwarded to the major department. The department will review each application and make a recommendation regarding admission status to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who will send notice of the admission decision to the applicant. Some departments have specific dates for the departmental review of applications. Applications submission deadlines are available: <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/doctoraladmissionpacket..pdf>

A student is either granted full admission or denied full admission. There is no provisional or conditional admission status. A doctoral student who has not enrolled for 5 calendar years must apply for readmission under current admission standards for doctoral programs. If a student does not enroll for a semester, their matriculation will close and must contact the Graduate School to open their registration again.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE:

<http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/catalogs.aspx>

1. Degree Plan: Upon acceptance into a doctoral program, the student should contact his/her major department and/or advisor to discuss the doctoral degree plan. The degree plan will then be completed with the major and minor advisors (if a minor is selected) and forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval no later than the first semester of enrollment as a doctoral student. An official copy of the degree plan will then be sent to the student and the department.

2. Course Requirements: A minimum of 90 semester hours beyond the baccalaureate degree or 60 semester hours beyond the master's degree is required for the doctoral degree. In the 60 semester hour degree plan, no courses from a master's degree may be used. At least 45 hours of graduate course credit must be earned from Texas A&M University-Commerce. Master's level 595 research courses cannot be used toward a doctoral program, and no research tools from another institution may be used. All courses applied toward a doctoral degree must be 500-level or higher. No more than 12 graduate credit hours (including hours completed in nondegree status) beyond the master's degree taken prior to admission to a doctoral program can be applied toward a doctoral degree.

A. Major. A major requires at least 36 semester hours excluding dissertation hours (718); however, a specific program may require additional semester hours for a major. (Specific program requirements are listed under each departmental section of the graduate catalog.)

B. Minor. Students selecting the 60 hours beyond the master's degree option are not required to have a minor. A minor consisting of a minimum of 30 semester hours is required in all 90-hour programs except counseling, educational psychology, and English programs. The minor requirement can be fulfilled by one of the following options:

- i. *A comprehensive minor with all course work in one academic area.* A committee member will be assigned from the academic area and will determine the courses to be taken and be involved in evaluating the written and oral qualifying examinations, the dissertation, and the dissertation defense.
- ii. *A split minor in two academic areas with at least 12 hours in each area (a 12-18 or 15-15 format).* Committee members will be assigned from both academic areas, and they will determine the courses to be taken and to be involved in the written and oral qualifying examinations, the dissertation, and the dissertation defense.
- iii. *An interdisciplinary studies minor in three academic areas (a 12-9-9 format).* In rare cases, an interdisciplinary studies minor consisting of at least 9 hours in each of three academic areas may be approved. Committee members will be assigned from each of the academic areas and will be involved in the written and oral qualifying examination, the dissertation proposal, and the dissertation defense.

Regardless of the option chosen the following conditions will apply: assignment of minor advisors rests with the head of the minor department or departments; all courses applied to the minor areas must be approved by the head of the appropriate minor department; at least one committee member must be from outside the student's major department; transfer courses applied toward a minor must be in academic areas taught at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

C. Other Requirements:

- i. Credit will be given for no fewer than nine semester hours and no more than 12 semester hours of dissertation (718).
- ii. Electives and other course requirements as indicated under each departmental section of this catalog.
- iii. Research Tools
Specific program requirements are listed under each departmental section of the catalog.

3. Transfer of Credit: Credit for work taken from other regionally accredited universities in the United States is granted in accordance with an evaluation by the Office of Graduate Studies and upon recommendation by your Advisory committee. Transfer courses applied to a doctoral degree must be in a graduate academic area taught by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Time limitations on transfer courses are the same as for A&M-Commerce courses. Transfer credit will be granted for only those courses in which you received a grade of “B” or better. Only grades earned at A&M-Commerce will be calculated into your grade point average. There is no limit to the number of hours a doctoral student may transfer in from a regionally accredited university but each doctoral student must have forty-five (45) doctoral graduate hours from A&M-Commerce. Research tools cannot be transferred.

4. Correspondence Courses: Credit earned by correspondence will not apply toward a doctoral degree.

5. Individual/Independent Studies: Registration in an individual/independent studies courses (589 or 689), research, or similar course shall imply an expected level of effort on the part of the student comparable to that associated with an organized class with the same credit value. No more than twelve graduate semester hours (including master’s credit) of individual studies courses may be applied to a doctoral degree. Individual studies course credits cannot be used toward fulfilling the residency requirement.

6. Grade Point Average: A grade point average of 3.00 or better on all graduate work completed at A&M-Commerce and in the student’s major, as well as an overall grade point average of 3.00 or better on all graduate courses completed, is required for graduation. If a course is retaken, the last grade will be counted toward graduation and computation of the overall grade point average. **No grade of “C” or below will count toward a doctoral degree. A course in which an “F” is received is considered a course completed and will always count in the number of grades below a B, even if the course is repeated.** Only grades earned at A&M-Commerce will be calculated with student’s grade point average. **A student receiving a grade of “C” or lower in a third doctoral course will be suspended and will not be allowed to pursue further doctoral study at this institution. This provision applies to all courses taken and to all repeated courses.**

7. Academic Probation and Suspension from Doctoral Degree Programs: A student who fails to achieve and maintain an overall 3.00 graduate grade point average during any semester of enrollment will be placed on academic probation. A student who fails to achieve a 3.00 overall graduate grade point average by the end of the next semester of enrollment will be placed on academic suspension for a minimum of two semesters (two summer terms count as one semester). After the academic suspension is served, the student may be allowed to reenroll only upon the recommendation of the major department and with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Failure to achieve an overall 3.00 graduate grade point average during any subsequent semester of enrollment will result in dismissal, and the student will not be allowed to pursue further study toward the doctoral degree at A&M-Commerce. No course with a grade of “C” or lower will count toward a doctoral degree. **A student receiving a grade of “C” or lower in a third doctoral course will be suspended and will not be allowed to pursue further doctoral study at A&M-Commerce.** This provision applies to all courses taken, including all duplicated or repeated courses. Courses taken from other institutions will not be transferable if taken during a

period of suspension from Texas A&M University-Commerce. Students on academic suspension from another institution will not be admitted to A&M-Commerce until their specific period of suspension expires.

8. Academic Fresh Start: A graduate student who has not been enrolled for a period of at least 6 years may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies to have previous graduate grades from courses at Texas A&M University-Commerce eliminated from the calculation of the official grade point average provided the courses were taken over 10 years previously. No courses eliminated from such calculation can be used toward a graduate degree.

9. Doctoral Degree Residency: After admission to a doctoral degree program, each student is required to engage in activities that fulfill departmental residency requirements. The departmental residency plan specifies requirements in the following areas:

- A. Involvement in events that broaden intellectual growth.
- B. Use of academic support resources.
- C. Faculty-student interactions that promote scholarship, mentoring, and opportunities for evaluation.
- D. Involvement with cognate disciplines and research scholars in those disciplines.
- E. Engagement in meaningful peer interactions.

Please check with the major department for specific requirements. Successful completion of residency is conferred by approval of the department.

10. Doctoral Tuition and Fees: Due to legislative changes, doctoral students who have completed over 99 doctoral hours will be charged non-resident tuition and fees.
<http://web.tamuc.edu/admissions/tuitionCosts/default.aspx>

11. Research Tools: All research tools must be taken at A&M-Commerce. Candidates for the doctoral degree must possess proficiency in the use of the research skills necessary to successfully complete the doctoral dissertation. It is desirable for students to demonstrate these proficiencies early in their program; however, if that is not possible, students should demonstrate such proficiency prior to taking the qualifying examinations.

Research tools courses must include bibliographic research skills, so that candidates are able to find, evaluate, use and communicate information in all its various formats.

These requirements are to be viewed as minimal requirements. Consequently, a department may require additional research tool courses either for all of their students or as a requirement for an individual student based upon that student's need.

Students cannot be admitted to doctoral candidacy until the all research tools requirement has been met.

Research tools requirements for doctoral degrees in the College of Education and Human Services can be met by successfully completing required coursework.

- a. The Doctor of Education (EdD) requires 12 hours of prescribed doctoral research tools.
- b. The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) requires 15 hours of prescribed doctoral research tools.
- c. Courses must be completed with a grade of B or better.
- d. Only doctoral research tool courses approved in advance of their offering by the Graduate Council can be used to satisfy this requirement.
- e. These course requirements cannot be met through individual/independent studies courses.

The research tools requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English

- a. 12 semester hours of college-level classes in one foreign language.
- b. Students with native or near-native competence in a relevant foreign language may consult with the department Director of Graduate Studies regarding this requirement.

12. Qualifying/Comprehensive Examinations: Upon the completion of approximately 2 full years of study, doctoral students take written and oral qualifying examinations, also known as comprehensive exams. The qualifying examinations are designed to test the student's knowledge in the major and minor fields and are administered under the direction of an advisory committee consisting of representatives from the major and minor departments. An application for taking qualifying examinations and a current Texas A&M University-Commerce transcript must be submitted to the major department at least 3 weeks prior to the examinations. An applicant who does not pass the qualifying examinations may be suspended from the doctoral program, or upon the recommendation of the advisory committee and with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, may be permitted to repeat the examinations.

13. Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree: Upon completion of the qualifying/comprehensive examinations, the signed form, along with an updated degree plan filled in with all course substitutions and course completions/grades must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for review. After the qualifying examinations have been satisfactorily completed and all requirements have been verified by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, the student will be admitted to candidacy.

Notification of admission to candidacy will be made by the Dean of Graduate Studies. After a student has been admitted to candidacy and all course work (except 718 Dissertation) has been completed, the student may qualify for reduced tuition. **The degree can be conferred no sooner than eight months after admission to candidacy.** Candidacy cannot be granted if any of the research tool courses are not complete.

14. Time Limitation for Degree: All doctoral degree requirements beyond the master's must be completed within ten calendar years from the date of admission to the doctoral program. However, no course work beyond the master's degree which is over ten years old at the time the doctoral degree is conferred can be used toward the doctoral degree. Only courses from a conferred master's degree used within a 90 hour doctoral degree plan are exempt from the ten years time limitation.

15. Catalog Privileges: A student is entitled to use the degree provisions of any catalog in effect between the semester the student is admitted to the doctoral degree program and the semester the student's degree is conferred, provided the catalog used is not more than 10 years old at the time the degree is conferred.

<http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/catalogs.aspx>

16. Dissertation Credit. After admission to candidacy, the student is required to enroll in at least 3 hours of each fall and spring semester until the dissertation is completed and approved by the advisory committee and Office of Graduate Studies. Enrollment during the summer term is not required unless the student is using the use of the major advisor and/or University facilities and/or the student is planning to graduate in the summer. Students who fail to enroll for dissertation during a fall or spring semester after admission to candidacy will be prohibited from enrolling until the tuition has been paid for those semesters.

17. PROPOSAL Process: A candidate must present a dissertation that is acceptable to the student's advisory committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies. To be acceptable, the dissertation must give evidence that the candidate has pursued a program of research, the results of which reveal superior academic competence and a significant contribution to knowledge in the field.

A. Dissertation committee. The student should check with the head of the major department concerning the membership of the dissertation committee. The committee will consist of a minimum of three faculty members from the student's major and minor areas of study (at least one committee member must be from outside the student's major department). The student needs to work with their department to create their dissertation committee and submit the Dissertation Committee form, fully approved, to the Graduate School.

B. IRB Compliance and Scheduling of Proposal: All RCR and IRB questions should be directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs: Mona Gilley, mona.gilley@tamuc.edu or 903/ 886-5143

The dissertation proposal is a major step in the academic history of a doctoral student at Texas A&M University-Commerce and RCR training and IRB approval is a major element to gain proposal approval. Below are guidelines to help you navigate through this important time. Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of research conduct and strictly adhere to all federal, state, and local regulations involving research.

Schedule your proposal:

You may schedule your proposal before you have completed your RCR and/or IRB approval but you will not be granted proposal approval from the Graduate School until you have completed your RCR and IRB approval. **We recommend you work on your training and IRB at the same time, if not before, you are working on your proposal scheduling. You must submit your proposal schedule form no later than the 20th of the month before your proposal date.**

Training and IRB:

To ensure integrity and compliance in research, all students involved in research activities must successfully complete training in *Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship* (http://www.tamuc.edu/gradschool/research/responsible_conduct_training.asp). Additional training is required for individuals (see #2 below) whose research involves human/animal subjects or biological agents. Completion of #1 and #2 (if applicable) and A&M-Commerce Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) approval must be achieved before you submit your Schedule Form for the Dissertation Proposal Defense. Proposal approval by the Office of Graduate Studies, not just submission of the proposal, is required before any studies may be conducted.

Process to Submit Proposal to the Office of Thesis & Dissertation Services

Submitting a proposal is a major step in the academic history of a doctoral student at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Below are guidelines to help you navigate through this important time.

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of research conduct and strictly adhere to all federal, state, and local regulations involving research. Before collecting any data for your dissertation you **must** have completed ethics training (RCR) and obtained approvals by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), your committee, Department Head, College Dean and the Graduate Dean. Any data collected prior to receiving these approvals is an ethical violation and you will not be permitted to use those data in your dissertation.

After your proposal defense, to gain approval from Graduate Studies you must submit your proposal, the dissertation proposal approval form fully signed by your committee members, IRB approval email, and a copy of the ethics training completion record to the Thesis and Dissertation Services Office, Business Administration, Room 315C.

Your proposal will be reviewed by the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services. Recommendations for revisions will be made. Issues involving research ethics, design, or statistical analysis must be resolved before data collection begins. The revised manuscript must be signed by your chair before it is re submitted to the Thesis and Dissertation Services Office. Style manual corrections should be reviewed, but may be made at the time the completed dissertation is submitted.

The approval of your dissertation proposal by the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services must be gained no later than the semester prior to graduation.

To be able to submit your proposal:

1. You must complete the online training for *Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship* (<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/responsibleConduct.aspx>) before you submit your proposal and proposal approval form. Attach a copy of the certificate of training to the proposal approval form. **This training is required of all doctoral students and is good for three (3) years.**

2. You must complete the following if your proposed research/study involves:

Human Participants: Human participant research is defined as a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalize knowledge, which involves the collection of data from or about living human beings. In addition, all student research involving human participants outside the classroom is considered to be in this category (see <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/humanSubjectsIRB.aspx>).

a. You must complete the Human Participants online training **and** gain approval for the inclusion of human participants in your research/study from the IRB for the Protection of Human Participants. The online training can be accessed at the following website:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/humanSubjectsIRB.aspx>

b. You must gain IRB approval for your study. The process to gain approval from the IRB includes completion, submission, and revisions (if required) of the IRB protocol form (see http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/Research/IRB_Protocol_form.rtf). IRB protocol forms must be submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Final approval for the inclusion of human participants in your research/study rests with the IRB. Attach the IRB approval email to proposal approval form.

Animal Subjects: Animal subjects are defined as any live, vertebrate animal (see <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/animalCare.aspx>).

a. You must complete the Animal Subjects online training **and** gain approval for the inclusion of animal subjects in your research/study from the Institutional for care of use of animals. The online training can be accessed at the following website:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/animalCare.aspx>

b. You must gain IACUC approval for your study. The process to gain approval from the IACUC includes completion, submission, and revisions (if required by the IACUC) of the IACUC protocol form (see Research Protocols Form A at

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/animalCare.aspx>). IACUC protocol forms must be submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Final approval for the inclusion of animal subjects in your research/study rests with the IACUC. Attach IACUC approval email to proposal approval form.

Biological Agents: If you use or plan to use the following in your research (see <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/biosafety.aspx>).

- Pathogens and potential pathogens of humans, animals or plants;
 - Materials potentially containing human pathogens (including human and non-human primate blood, tissue, and cell lines);
 - Recombinant DNA and RNA including creation or use of transgenic plants and animals;
 - Select agents and toxics listed by CDC
 - Any material requiring a CDC license to import or a USDA permit
 - a. You must complete Biosafety training online and gain approval from the IBC before commencing any work. On-line training can be accessed at <http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/biosafety.aspx> .
 - b. The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) approval for your study includes training, self-assessments, safety concerns, required biosafety levels, risk analysis, and emergency procedures. The detailed information can be found under Office of Research and Sponsored Programs website. Final approval rests with the IBC, and the approval must be attached to your proposal approval form.
- 3.** Submit the completed proposal form with signatures **and** any training completion certificates, IRB, IACUC, or Bio-safety approval emails to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services. Students are responsible for collecting all required signatures.

If you have questions about the dissertation proposal form, please contact **Ms. Holly Sienty** at Holly.Sienty@tamuc.edu or 903/886-5967. If you have any questions concerning the training or protocols, please contact **Ms. Mona Gilley** at Mona.Gilley@tamuc.edu or 903/886-5143.

Once the proposal has been reviewed and approved, the Office of Thesis & Dissertation Services will email you the proposal approval including your revised proposal with notes and edits.

18. Scheduling the final dissertation defense. A “Schedule for the Final Examination/Dissertation Defense” form must be filed in the Office of Graduate Studies by the 20th of the month prior to the month the examination is to be held. Refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for dissertation defense deadlines for the semester in which you wish to graduate. The deadline for final defense of the dissertation is approx. seven weeks prior to graduation.

<http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/finaldissertationdefensesscheduleform.pdf>

19. Final Dissertation Defense: The student will defend the completed dissertation and respond to any questions related to his/her program of study before his or her department advisory committee in a session open to all graduate faculty members. A Graduate Council representative will attend the examination to help assure that general graduate standards related to format and quality is upheld. Students must be in good academic standing with the Office of Graduate Studies to be eligible to take the final examination.

20. Submission of Dissertation: Registration in the dissertation course (718) is required the semester that the dissertation is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies/Thesis and Dissertation Services.

A. Initial submission: One copy of the dissertation in its final form must be submitted to the **Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services** by the deadline indicated in the Academic Calendar for that particular semester (the deadline is approximately six weeks prior to commencement). Accompanying a copy of the revised final dissertation will be the following items:

1. Final Examination/Dissertation Defense Report
2. Advisor's approval to submit form
3. Dissertation information sheet
4. *Survey of Earned Doctorates* completion certificate (only required for PhD students)
5. You will pay 2 fees: a dissertation processing fee of approx. \$83, which will be posted on your myleo at your initial submission of the final dissertation to the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services**. You will pay the binding/publishing/copyrighting fees during the online Proquest process after your final dissertation has been give final approval. We will provide you a web link for Proquest after all your final edits have been made with Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services** approval. At that point, you will upload your final dissertation electronically, fill out their information and pay the required fees. The standing required minimum order is for 3 bound dissertations; one for the library, your department, and your advisor. You will have the opportunity to order extra bound dissertations for your own use at an additional cost.

B. Final Submission.

After your dissertation has been reviewed and you have addressed all areas of concern, you will receive the final approval email from the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services** to process your final dissertation. First you will start by emailing the final version of your dissertation in pdf format as one document to the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services**. Secondly, you will upload the pdf of your dissertation to Proquest by using the link provided in the "Proquest upload" email. You must have your dissertation in one document, not multiple sections, so that you can make it a pdf and upload it into Proquest. They have free pdf software available on their site which you can use once we send you the Proquest link. You will fill out all their documents online and pay for 3 copies to be bound and distributed as follows: One copy to the library, one for the department, and one copy to your advisor. At this time, you will also order any additional copies you may wish for yourself and pay for the copyrighting fees, too.
Submission to Proquest is a requirement of the doctoral degree and graduation, not an option.
Failure to upload your dissertation by the deadline stated in the Final Approval email can result in a delay of graduation.

C. Final Approval.

Final approval of the dissertation rests with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

21. Filing for Graduation and Commencement: Commencement exercises are held three times each academic year in May, August, and December. Students must file for graduation with the Registrar's Office during the first two weeks of the semester they plan to graduate. Students will be approved for graduation and the degree after they have completed all degree requirements satisfactorily and been approved by the Graduate Committee of the department and the Office of Graduate Studies. Please check the University Academic Calendar for deadline dates for filing. Graduation information and a graduation application are available online at web.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/graduation/default.aspx. A student must be in good academic standing in order to complete graduation requirements. Participation in the commencement ceremony does not guarantee conferring of any degree. Texas A&M University-Commerce has the right to rescind any conferred degree if the University becomes aware that the student did not meet degree requirements.

22. Commencement: The degree is conferred at the commencement following the fulfillment of all requirements. The candidate is expected to be present. If circumstances will prevent you from attending, you must request permission to be excused from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM CHECKLIST

(Check with your department for additional requirements)

DOCTORAL FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES WEBSITE UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE:

<http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/graduateSchool/graduateForms.aspx>

- ❑ **MEET MAJOR ADVISOR:** Shortly after acceptance into the program, meet with your assigned advisor to develop a degree plan.
- ❑ **FILE DEGREE PLAN:** Immediately after the degree plan is completed and signed by your advisor and department head, submit it to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval. It will be processed and an official copy will be put in your file at the Office of Graduate Studies and your department file.
- ❑ **REGISTER FOR AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE COURSES:** Register for and successfully complete courses recommended by advisor. You must maintain a graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher at all times and have no more than 2 grades below a B at any time. No grade lower than a B can be used towards a doctoral degree.
- ❑ **RESIDENCY:** As soon as possible after admission, declare and complete residency. Check with your major department for residency requirements. Doctoral residency requirements must be completed prior to candidacy. Secure necessary forms from your major department to document residency.
- ❑ **MEET RESEARCH TOOLS REQUIREMENT:** All research tools must be completed prior to taking comprehensive exams. You cannot be granted candidacy until all research tools courses are complete.
- ❑ **BEGIN REQUIRED TRAINING MODULES and UNIVERSITY IRB:** Complete required (*Responsible Conduct in Research & Scholarship*) module (required of all students) and any other module pertaining to your research. **You must repeat trainings every 3 years as the trainings are only good for 3 years.** All training modules must be completed prior to submission of the IRB to the department IRB chairperson. You must gain university IRB approval before you will be granted proposal approval.
- ❑ **SCHEDULE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS:** Schedule your comprehensive exams with your departments after you have completed your research tools requirement and a majority of your course work. **The examination must be taken and passed a minimum of eight months before the degree is conferred.**
- ❑ **SUBMIT DOCTORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FORM:** Upon completion of ALL parts of the comprehensive examination (written and oral), submit *Doctoral Comprehensive Examination* form to the Office of Graduate Studies along with an **updated degree plan**.
- ❑ **OBTAIN ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY STATUS:** After the comprehensive exams are passed and all requirements are met, the Office of Graduate Studies will send you a letter notifying you of admission to candidacy. This letter will contain IMPORTANT information so review it carefully. If you have outstanding coursework other than 718 listed on your candidacy/comprehensive exam form, please complete the outstanding coursework before or during your proposal semester.
- ❑ **WORK WITH YOUR ADVISOR TO SELECT DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:** This committee will consist of a minimum of three faculty members. If you have minor, you must include your minor advisor. At least one committee member must be from outside your major department. **Submit Doctoral Dissertation Committee request form to Graduate School.**
- ❑ **ENROLL IN 718:** You are **required** to enroll in at least three hours of 718 each **fall and spring** semester after your admission to candidacy until the dissertation is completed and approved. Enrollment during the summer term is not required unless you are utilizing the

counsel of your major advisor and/or university facilities/resources or you are going to graduate in August.

- **DEVELOP DISSERTATION PROPOSAL:** Develop your dissertation proposal in collaboration with your Doctoral Dissertation Committee. You must propose and be given proposal approval from the Office of Graduate Studies at least one semester before graduation. **You cannot hold your proposal defense and final defense of your dissertation the same semester you wish to graduate.**

- **SCHEDULE PROPOSAL DEFENSE WITH THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:** Schedule the dissertation proposal defense with the Office of Graduate Studies by completing and obtaining all signatures on the *Schedule for the Presentation of Dissertation Proposal* form. This form must be completed and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the 20th of the month preceding the month in which the proposal will be presented.
- **COMPLETE IRB APPROVAL PROCESS:** Complete the Protection of Human Subjects form for approval by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or obtain IACUC approval for animal subjects or IBC for biosafety. **Failure to obtain IRB/IACUC/IBC approval will result in a delay of proposal approval.**
- **REPORT OUTCOME OF PROPOSAL DEFENSE AND SUBMIT PROPOSAL TO OFFICE OF THESIS and DISSERTATION SERVICES:** After the proposal defense, the outcome of the defense must be reported on the *Office of Graduate Studies Dissertation Proposal Approval Form*. This form must be signed by your major advisor, all committee members, your major department head, and dean of your college.
Prior to submitting the proposal to the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services**, you must carefully revise and edit your proposal. This includes, but is not limited to, editing for mechanics and formatting and making all revisions required by the advisor and committee. After completing all revisions and editing, you must provide a copy of the revised proposal to your major advisor for review and approval to submit to the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services** for review. Your advisor must sign the *Advisor's Approval to Submit Proposal, Thesis, or Dissertation for Office of Graduate Studies Review* form to signify approval.
Submit a copy of your final proposal (including Title Page, Signature Sheet, Abstract, and Table of Contents along with the chapters and references) with the *Advisor's Approval to Submit Proposal or Dissertation for Office of Graduate Studies Review*, the *Office of Graduate Studies Dissertation Proposal Approval Form* (with all signatures), the IRB approval email and copy of the ethics training completion record to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services for proposal review and approval. All RCR training and university IRB approval must be complete before you will be granted proposal approval. **Your proposal does not have final approval until you have received the proposal signature form back from the Office of Graduate Studies with the Dean's signature.**
- **WORK TOWARDS COMPLETION OF DISSERTATION:** You are expected to make progress toward the completion of your dissertation each semester. All degree requirements beyond the master's degree must be completed within ten calendar years from the date of admission to the doctoral program.
- **FILE FOR GRADUATION:** File for graduation with the Registrar's office by the deadline noted in the Academic Calendar. You may file for graduation beginning with the first class day of the semester you will graduate. Order graduation regalia.

- ❑ **DISTRIBUTION OF COPY OF DISSERTATION FOR DEFENSE:** Ensure that committee members have received all final chapters of your dissertation a minimum of two weeks prior to your defense. Work with your advisor and committee to make corrections prior to defense. Check with your department for additional distribution requirements and deadlines.
- ❑ **SCHEDULE DISSERTATION DEFENSE:** Submit the *Schedule for the Presentation of Final Examination/Defense* to the Office of Graduate Studies by the 20th of the month prior to the month of defense. **Be aware of all deadlines for defending your dissertation and dissertation submission listed in the academic calendar.** There are different deadlines for the date of defending your final dissertation and for submitting the initial final dissertation.
- ❑ **DEFEND THE DISSERTATION:** Defend the dissertation at the scheduled time. Obtain signatures of the committee members, and the department head on the *Final Examination Report* (the Office of Graduate Studies will email the form to you and your doctoral advising committee chair prior to the dissertation defense).
- ❑ **REVISION OF DISSERTATION:** After the defense of the dissertation and prior to submitting it to the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services, carefully revise and edit your dissertation.** This includes, but is not limited to, making corrections from the committee/department and thoroughly reviewing the dissertation to ensure it aligns with Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services formatting and APA or MLA requirements. The dissertation copy submitted to the Office of **Thesis and Dissertation Services** should be **line edited and error free** and include all components that will be in the bound copy. Your department may have recommendations regarding editors or proofreaders.
Once you have made all revisions, you must show a copy of your dissertation to your advisor for submission approval. Before you may submit the dissertation to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services, your advisor must sign the *Advisor's Approval to Submit Proposal, Thesis, or Dissertation for Office of Graduate Studies Review* form.
- ❑ **OBTAIN THE SIGNATURE OF THE DEAN OF YOUR ACADEMIC COLLEGE:** After the dissertation defense and when all corrections have been made and approved by your advisor and department head, obtain your academic college dean's signature on the *Final Examination Report*. For the process of obtaining the signature, check with the office of your academic college dean. Most deans prefer you schedule an appointment.
- ❑ **SUBMIT INITIAL DISSERTATION COPY TO OFFICE OF THESIS AND DISSERTATION SERVICES FOR REVIEW:** Submit one copy of your dissertation, and all forms (which includes *Advisor's Approval to Submit Proposal, Thesis, or Dissertation for Office of Graduate Studies Review* form, dissertation information form, email from Survey of Earned Doctorate (only done by PhD students), and *Final Examination Report*) to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services by the deadline stated in the Academic Calendar (approximately six weeks before commencement.) Your dissertation processing fees will be posted to your myLeo during this submission so you can pay at this time. You will also pay during the Proquest submittal process for your binding and copyrighting.
The dissertation will be review by the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services. You and your advisor will be contacted by the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services regarding any revisions to the dissertation and final submission deadline. You will send a new updated copy of the dissertation back to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services once you have made the corrections we suggest.
- ❑ **SUBMIT FINAL DISSERTATION:** After your dissertation has been reviewed and you have addressed all areas of concern, your dissertation will receive the "final approval" email from the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services. The final approval email will instruct you to email the Office of Thesis and

Dissertation Services a copy of your final dissertation as a pdf. Once you send the dissertation pdf to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Services, you will receive the “Proquest upload” email that has a link to Proquest. You will upload your dissertation pdf to Proquest for final processing by the deadline stated in the email. You must have your dissertation as one document, not multiple sections, so that you can make it a pdf and upload it into Proquest. They have free pdf software available on their site which you can use once we send you the Proquest link. You will fill out all their documents online and pay for 3 copies to be bound and distributed as follows: One copy to the library, one for the department, and one copy to your advisor. At this time, you will also order any additional copies you may wish for yourself. Submission to Proquest and copyrighting your dissertation is a requirement of the doctoral degree and graduation, not an option. Failure to upload your dissertation by the deadline stated in the Proquest upload email can result in a delay of graduation.

□ **ATTEND GRADUATION**

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