

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

UPDATED 8/1/2019



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	3
Scholastic Regulations and Procedures	
Grades, Academic Performance and Progress.....	3
Academic Probation and Dismissal.....	4
Academic Appeals.....	4
Student Honesty and Conduct.....	5
Course Attendance.....	5
Transfer Credit.....	5
Auditing Courses.....	5
Withdrawals.....	6
Withdrawal with option to return	6
Inactivation after non-attendance.....	6
Medical Withdrawal.....	6
Hardship Withdrawal.....	6
Military Withdrawal.....	6
Dismissal and Withdrawal from The Graduate School and University with No Option to Return.....	6
Major Advisor: Thesis, Doctoral Project and Dissertation	7
Advisory Committees: Thesis, Doctoral Project and Dissertation	7
Advisory Committee Meetings and Research Progress Reports	
Advisory Committee Meeting Reports.....	8
Doctoral	8
Master's	9
Research Progress Reports.....	9
Requirements for Graduation	
Time Limits.....	10
Doctor of Philosophy.....	10
EdD.....	10
DNP.....	10
Master's.....	10
Grade Point Average Requirement for Graduation.....	10
Coursework Proposal for Thesis and Dissertation Programs.....	11
Research Proposal for Theses and Dissertation.....	11
The PhD Comprehensive Examination.....	11
Admission to Candidacy.....	12
Doctor of Philosophy.....	12
Master's.....	12
Dissertation.....	12
Approval of the Dissertation.....	12
Final Oral Examination.....	13
Graduation.....	14

ALL FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE GRADUATE SCHOOL WEB SITE AT
[HTTPS://WWW.AUGUSTA.EDU/GRADSCHOOL/ STUDENT-RESOURCES](https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resources) UNLESS DIRECTED ELSEWHERE

PREFACE

This booklet specifies the requirements and procedures for students enrolled in The Graduate School (TGS). Individual TGS programs may have additional or modified requirements that are stated in an individual program's handbook, which must be updated or reaffirmed by the start of the Fall semester on an annual basis. TGS graduate student guidelines serve as the baseline requirements and individual programs may set (with permission of the TGS Dean) more stringent guidelines but cannot set ones that are less stringent. Exceptions to any policies or processes in this handbook can be made in rare and extenuating circumstances by permission of the Dean of The Graduate School.

Information in the booklet is **not** inclusive of all requirements for all graduate programs. The student should obtain and become familiar with other publications and web pages/resources directed toward graduate students and Augusta University (AU) students in general. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Graduate School Website www.augusta.edu/gradschool
- the *AU Student Manual*, available on the Enrollment and Student Affairs web page at <https://www.augusta.edu/student-affairs/>
- the *AU Graduate Catalog* available at <http://catalog.augusta.edu/>
- additional AU web pages related to TGS and graduate students (The Graduate School Reference Center at <http://guides.augusta.edu/c.php?g=229939&p=1525044>)
- AU web pages/resources in general (e.g. AU Policy Library at <http://www.augusta.edu/compliance/policyinfo/policies.php>)
- student handbooks specific to any individual graduate program.

Please remember that it is the student's responsibility to remain informed of current graduation requirements for his/her degree program. Questions regarding requirements should be directed to the student's program director or to the staff in The Graduate School office.

SCHOLASTIC REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

A student's registration and class attendance constitute an agreement on the part of the student to comply with the rules and regulations of Augusta University as published in the Augusta University Catalog and other official Augusta University publications during the student's continued enrollment.

A student's continued enrollment in The Graduate School is subject to the decision by the TGS Dean and other designated officers, that academic grades and progress are satisfactory, that the student is complying with the rules of the university, and that the best interest of the Academic College and The Graduate School and of other students is being served.

Grades, Academic Performance and Progress

Satisfactory progress toward a degree in The Graduate School requires that a student maintain a cumulative grade point average* (GPA) of at least 2.8 for all courses attempted, and that all milestones required by the student's program be met in the timeframe set by that program. A **minimum** grade of C or satisfactory in courses graded S/U (where S = satisfactory, U = unsatisfactory) must be earned for each non-repeatable course applying toward a graduate degree, and a 2.8 cumulative GPA in all courses attempted toward the degree is required for graduation. For repeatable S/U courses only, students may be allowed up to one U grade. Individual programs may set stricter GPA, U grade and/or other graduation requirements. Additional standards for satisfactory progress in courses related to the specific discipline may be set by the program (with approval of the TGS dean), in which case the higher standards shall apply. Such higher standards may include recommendation for dismissal from the program. Consult your program's handbook.

* Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) includes **all** courses taken (every time taken) while in the degree (or certificate) program with no D/F grade forgiveness.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Any student whose cumulative GPA for a degree program falls below 2.8 is placed on academic probation. This is not noted on transcripts. While on probation, the student **must** earn a minimum of 3.0 each grading period until the cumulative GPA is raised to at least 2.8. Students who fail to earn at least 3.0 each period while on probation shall be recommended for academic dismissal from the Program. The above are minimum standard for AU's TGS graduate programs. With approval of the TGS Dean, *individual programs may establish stricter GPA standards and/or performance standards for probation or dismissal, in which cases the stricter standards shall apply.* For example, in the College of Education, any student who is unable to remediate the grade point average after one semester on academic probation will be placed on "academic suspension" for a period of one semester. Consult your program's handbook for specific information.

Where circumstances warrant and upon recommendation of the academic program concerned and approval of the TGS Dean, a student being considered for dismissal under the provisions of this policy may be permitted to continue as a student on probation. In such cases, the student must earn a GPA of at least 3.0 each grading period while on probation until a 2.8 cumulative GPA is achieved. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the degree program. The second dismissal will be final.

Students cannot graduate with a D or F grade in a course, and must re-take the course to earn at least a C grade or higher. Students cannot graduate with a U grade in any non-repeatable S/U course and likewise must re-take the course to earn an S grade. Any student in a dissertation or thesis track (including consulting track for Biostatistics MS students) who receive a U in a repeatable research course will be placed on academic probation. For repeatable S/U courses (e.g. research courses, seminar courses, journal clubs), students may have one, but not two, U grades. Two or more U grades in repeatable courses will result in the student being recommended for dismissal. Students earning a D, F, or U in a graduate course required for their degree can be recommended for dismissal by their program. The above are minimum standard for AU's TGS graduate programs. *Individual programs may set more stringent C, D, F and/or U probation and/or dismissal policies.* Consult your program's handbook.

Any PhD student who earns a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) in a Research course will be placed on academic probation. A student appointed as a Graduate Research Assistant will also be placed on GRA-funding probation if they earn a U in a Research course. Assignment of such a U grade by a faculty advisor will be accompanied by a written report to the Program Director and TGS Dean citing the reason(s) for the U grade, and the expectations/requirements the student must meet during the next semester in order to earn an S grade in the subsequent course. The Program Director and faculty advisor will discuss the student's past performance and future expectations with the student. While on probation, a student must earn Satisfactory (S) grades in all S/U courses in which s/he is enrolled. A student who fails to earn all S grades while on probation will be recommended for academic dismissal. GRA-appointed students who earn a second U grade will be terminated from the GRA appointment.

A student may be considered for dismissal if s/he fails to make timely progress (meeting program requirements including milestones and timelines) toward the degree sought.

Academic Appeals

Any student who has been dismissed from a program and would like to appeal that dismissal should follow the Student Academic Appeals Policy at <https://www.augusta.edu/compliance/policyinfo/policy/student-academic-appeals-policy.pdf>. The Augusta University Student Academic Appeals Policy is specifically

designed to address administrative decisions made with respect to an individual student which bears upon his/her career.

Student Honesty and Conduct

The Graduate School follows the AU Academic Honesty and appropriate Conduct Policies. Some TGS programs have more stringent or additional rules/expectations, and those rules/expectations will be honored by TGS and AU.

Course Attendance

The Graduate School follows the official Augusta University student attendance policy found at: <https://www.augusta.edu/compliance/policyinfo/policy/student-attendance-policy.pdf>

Transfer Credit

Transfer of graduate credit from another school or program is never automatic and credits transferred do not automatically reduce the residency requirement for any advanced degree. At the discretion of the Dean of The Graduate School (or Dean's designee) and the faculty of the major program, up to nine semester hours of credit toward a degree may be transferred with the exception of the Doctor of Philosophy degree (see below). The actual maximum number of credit hours allowed for transfer (0-9) is program specific. A request for credit transfer should be initiated by the student and his/her advisor, through the program's director using the Transfer Credit Authorization Form which may be found in the TGS Form Repository at: <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resources/>

Course work transferred to a degree program in The Graduate School must be relevant and applicable to the degree being sought. The individual applying for the transfer credit is responsible for providing the necessary documentation (i.e., course syllabi, transcripts, etc.) for the review. Course credit may be accepted for transfer if:

- The course content is equivalent to a course offered by the Augusta University graduate program as assessed by the director of the equivalent Augusta University course.
- The course was taken by the student within five years prior to the date of his/her projected enrollment
- The student earned a grade of either "B" or higher or "pass/satisfactory".
- The course is recommended for transfer by the graduate program and approved by The Graduate School dean.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree programs: A maximum of six credit hours is usually recommended but nine credit hours may be allowed to transfer from a master's degree program. The transfer of any course work beyond the master's level is a matter for negotiation between the student, his/her advisory committee, his/her major department and the Dean of The Graduate School. In general, no more than a total of 20 semester hours may be transferred toward the PhD under any circumstances.

Auditing Courses

Students may audit graduate courses, but must secure permission of the instructor/course director, program director, and Dean of The Graduate School. No academic credit is awarded. Students auditing courses must pay the program's tuition and fees. No changes from audit to credit or credit to audit will be permitted after the last day of the schedule adjustment (add/drop) period. Courses taken as audit do not count toward financial aid eligibility. A student enrolled as an auditor is expected to attend class regularly and to complete assignments as assigned by the instructor. An auditor who does not attend regularly may be withdrawn from the course. In order to audit a class, students must first apply at <https://www.augusta.edu/admissions/apply.php>, click on non-degree seeking, Audit, Apply. Once this is complete, a Course Approval Form must also be completed. This form may be found at <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resouces/>

Withdrawal with option to return

Registration in each grading period indicates that a student is making progress toward his/her enrollment objective. Students who plan to take a semester or more off from what is required by their official approved program curriculum should request a withdrawal with the option to return from The Graduate School Dean, through their program director, using the Withdrawal Form

<https://www.augusta.edu/registrar/withdrawal>. Withdrawal requests may be for absences no more than three consecutive semesters in length. The semester in which the student withdraws is considered semester one. Students withdrawn (with the option to return) less than three consecutive semesters will be required to be reactivated. Such reactivation requests must be specifically approved by The Graduate School Dean using the Reactivation Form

<https://www.augusta.edu/registrar/withdrawal>. Some programs may require a re-enrollment plan. A withdrawal does not modify a student's obligation to complete the degree within the maximum time limit allowed for that degree. Students must notify their program director and The Graduate School of their intent to return at least three weeks prior to the beginning of the semester (grading period) in which they plan to return, unless a longer period is specified by the program.

Students who have not enrolled in Augusta University for three consecutive semesters must apply for readmission through the Office of Academic Admissions using the online application process following published procedures and deadlines. Acceptance back into the program is not automatic.

Inactivation after Non-Attendance

A student who does not enroll for three consecutive terms will be classified as inactive by the Registrar. Re-enrollment after withdrawal is not automatic, and the individual will be required to re-apply for admission and be evaluated through the standard admissions process.

Medical Withdrawal

Students may request a Medical Withdrawal when the student experiences a medical emergency or serious health condition which prevents them from completing their course work for the current semester. Visit <https://www.augusta.edu/student-life/medical.php> for additional information and form(s).

Hardship Withdrawal

Students may request a Hardship Withdrawal when he/she has experienced an unexpected occurrence in their life that requires that he/she withdraw from all classes for the semester. Visit <https://www.augusta.edu/student-life/medical.php> for additional information and form(s).

Military Withdrawal

Students who are active duty military and receive reassignment orders that would prevent completion of the term may request a Military Withdrawal. Visit <https://www.augusta.edu/registrar/withdrawal> for additional information and form(s).

Dismissal and Withdrawal from The Graduate School and University with No Option to Return

Students who have been dismissed from a program or from The Graduate School, or have chosen to withdraw with no option to return, will not be eligible to return to the program or The Graduate School, whichever applies. A student withdrawing from their program and all courses in which they are currently enrolled must complete the Withdrawal Form

<https://www.augusta.edu/registrar/withdrawal> to include all required signatures.

MAJOR ADVISOR: THESIS, DOCTORAL PROJECT AND DISSERTATION

A faculty member is selected to serve as the Major Advisor. Each program is responsible for developing the process and timeline for the Major Advisor selection. The process and timeline, and changes in the process and timeline, must be approved by The Graduate School Dean. The Major Advisor must have a full appointment to the graduate faculty and also must hold a faculty appointment in the student's graduate department/program. Responsibilities of the Major Advisor include, but are not limited to, serving as the chair of the student's Advisory Committee; mentoring the student; advising him/her concerning requirements and procedural steps in the degree program; and assisting the student in selecting and pursuing the research topic, in obtaining admission to candidacy, and in the preparation of the thesis or dissertation.

For programs that do not assign a student to their mentor, the program has the responsibility of introducing students to potential advisors and providing them with the opportunity to meet or train with potential advisors, but it is ultimately the student's responsibility to obtain and get formal approval for a major advisor. Students should be aware that if for any reason they must change their current major advisor for another, it is typically more difficult to find a replacement advisor than an original advisor. If the student is unable to obtain an advisor in the time period set by TGS and/or the program, then s/he may be dismissed from the program due to failure to make progress towards the degree.

If a major advisor leaves Augusta University and the student remains at Augusta University, the departing major advisor must obtain an adjunct appointment in both their primary department/program and in The Graduate School in order to remain as the student's Co-Advisor (see below) and committee member. Upon the departure of the major advisor, a Co-Major Advisor must be appointed. The Co-Major Advisor must be a regular (full-time) graduate faculty member who also holds an appointment in the student's department/program. If the advisor does not receive an adjunct appointment, a new major advisor must be selected and officially approved (see below) as soon as it is known that no adjunct appointment will be granted. In the case where no adjunct appointment is granted, the faculty member may be removed from the committee by the Dean of The Graduate School.

If for any reason the student needs to change their major advisor, the student must follow the guidelines set by their specific program with final approval being granted by the Dean of The Graduate School. All appropriate forms must be completed prior to approval of a mentor change.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES: THESIS, DOCTORAL PROJECT AND DISSERTATION

The minimum Advisory Committee membership number is dependent upon the degree:

- PhD – five (Nursing may have a minimum of 4)
- MS – four or five (depending on the program). For Biostatistics MS students on the consulting track (non-thesis), there must be a minimum of 2 advisory members.
- DNP – two
- EdD – four, where one can be *ex officio*

In each case, one member is the student's Major Advisor. The Major Advisor, after consultation with the student, recommends to the Program Director and Department Chair (or equivalent) the names of additional faculty members who have agreed to serve as members of the student's Advisory Committee. If a Co-Major Advisor has been appointed, s/he is one of the committee members. All but one member must hold an appointment on the faculty of The Graduate School. In addition, the majority of the committee members must hold a faculty appointment (primary, adjunct, or Graduate School) in the student's program. The Dean

of The Graduate School must approve the members of the Advisory Committee. The Dean may allow for exceptions to the committee faculty makeup. The advisory committee members should be selected after the major advisor is chosen as set by the specific program's timeline. The **Advisory Committee Form** for submitting the names of the Advisory Committee to the chair and Dean is available on the TGS website or from TGS.

The Advisory Committee's function is to assist the student in the following activities:

- Selection of courses pertinent to the objectives of the student's educational program
- Planning of the student's research
- Assisting in preparing and administering the Comprehensive Exam (as applicable)
- Critical review of the research in progress
- Defense of the thesis, doctoral project or dissertation

It is natural that there will be some faculty who leave the institution while serving as members of a student's Advisory Committee. Should this occur, please adhere to the following process for replacing a committee member.

- Once an individual leaves the institution, s/he is no longer a member of the faculty and cannot participate as an official committee member. Exceptions may be granted if the committee member requests and receives adjunct graduate faculty status or if applicable, can fill the position of the one allowable outside committee member.
- Another faculty member must fill the position vacated by the departing faculty as soon as possible.
- If the departing member is the Major Advisor, and the dissertation defense is planned to occur within two semesters, the program director, chair and Dean of The Graduate School will consult to make satisfactory arrangements. If the dissertation defense is planned for more than two semesters after departure of the major advisor, a new Major Advisor must be selected and officially appointed within the timeframe set by The Graduate School. Inability to identify a new major advisor in the timeframe referenced above may lead to dismissal of the student from the program. Special exceptions can be granted through The Graduate School Dean.

Replacement of a committee member who is not leaving the institution requires specific and substantive justification, the mutual agreement of the committee member, the Major Advisor and the student, and approval by the Dean of The Graduate School. Replacement of this nature is not a trivial action and generally does not occur. The Dean of The Graduate School has the final authority to remove any committee member (including the Major Advisor) at any time for just cause.

If a committee member (including Major Advisor) is replaced, a new **Advisory Committee Form** with signatures of all members and all other signatories as required on the form, must be submitted to The Graduate School for approval by the Dean of The Graduate School. The form must indicate the name of the original and replacement member(s). Committee membership is not final until signature of the Dean of The Graduate School is obtained.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORTS

Advisory Committee Meeting Reports

Doctoral

Doctoral students in programs requiring a thesis must form an Advisory Committee no later than the end of the fifth semester of graduate education at Augusta University and hold his/her first committee meeting no later than the end of the sixth semester (seventh semester for Biostatistics students). For students in year-

round programs who enter in the fall semester, their second spring semester is the fifth semester of enrollment and summer is the sixth semester of enrollment. **Earlier deadlines for the first committee meeting may be set by individual programs.** The student's Major Advisor serves as chair of the Advisory Committee and presides at this meeting. The results of the committee meeting (i.e., date, members of committee present/absent, a short summary of the research project proposed by the student, and detailed recommendations for formulating the student's formal research proposal) should be written by the student in conjunction with his/her major advisor, using the **Report of Advisory Committee Meetings Form**. This report should be reviewed by the committee members for their input, revision and approval, and submitted to the Graduate Program Director, and The Graduate School within two weeks of the date of the committee meeting. If a student finishing his/her second year has not formed an Advisory Committee and held the first committee meeting by the semester deadlines described above, a U or failing grade will be assigned to the course associated with the student's research (e.g. XXXX 9210 Investigation of a Problem) for the deadline semester and any subsequent semesters for which the committee has not been formed and/or held a meeting. Multiple U or failing grades in research courses will result in recommendation for dismissal from the program. Any requests for an exception due to extenuating circumstances should be made through the Major Advisor and Program Director to the Dean of The Graduate School. Forms are available on the TGS website.

After the first meeting, the committee will meet at **least once annually** to evaluate progress towards completion of the degree requirements. **Individual programs or committees may require more frequent advisory committee meetings.** Each of these committee meetings will be summarized (i.e., date, members of committee present/absent, progress report submitted by student, and detailed recommendations of committee) and submitted to the committee members, Program Director, and The Graduate School using the **Report of the Advisory Committee Meetings Form**. *All* members are expected to be present at *all* Committee meetings. Rarely, a scheduled meeting may proceed with all but one member present, if that member cannot attend due to unforeseen circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to schedule committee meetings. Due to the busy nature of committee members, it is strongly suggested that these meetings be scheduled well in advance of the proposed meeting date.

Master's Degree

Master's students in programs requiring a thesis must form an Advisory Committee and hold his/her first committee meeting and file progress reports per the program's processes and procedures.

Research Progress Reports

Students enrolled for credit hours related to research (Investigation of a Problem or Thesis/Dissertation) and their Major Advisors are responsible for filing a **Research Progress Report Form** at the end of each grading period. If the Advisory Committee did not meet during the grading period, that fact should be noted.

The student **must complete** the **Research Progress Report Form** and submit it to his/her Advisor for approval. The Advisor's role is to review the report with the student and make additional comments if necessary. The student and Advisor signify approval of the report by signing the form and forwarding it to the Program Director or equivalent along with the student's grade (U or S) for the grading period. **Failure to file the report by the end of the grading period results in a grade of UNSATISFACTORY.** Should the Major Advisor disagree with the student's assessment, s/he is responsible for placing in writing comments indicating the specific areas of disagreement, giving the student a copy of the comments and forwarding the form, grade and the comments to the program's director. If the advisor will be assigning the student an unsatisfactory (U) grade for the semester, the reasons *must* be stated on this form. Copies of the report form and comments are forwarded to The Graduate School office by the program at the end of each semester and placed in the student's file.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Time Limits

It is the student's responsibility to meet all the requirements for their degree in the proper sequence and in the time limits specified in this document. Where circumstances warrant, a student may petition the Dean for exceptions to the time limit policies.

Doctor of Philosophy

The minimum requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is three full academic years (nine semesters of full time enrollment), which cannot be satisfied through summer work alone. Typical PhD degree programs take more than three years of full time enrollment to complete. All course work and other requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, including the Final Oral Examination, **must be completed within seven (7) consecutive years from the date of enrollment** in The Graduate School. Leaves of absence (withdrawals) do not extend the seven-year limit. It is the student's responsibility to meet all the requirements for the degree in the proper sequence and in the time limits specified in this document. *For students in combined MD/PhD or DMD/PhD degree programs, the seven-year limit does not include semesters of enrollment in the professional degree program.*

EdD

The minimum requirement for the EdD degree is three full academic years (nine semesters of full time enrollment), which cannot be satisfied through summer work alone. All course work and other requirements **must be completed within seven (7) consecutive years from the date of enrollment**. Leaves of absence (withdrawals) do not extend the seven year limit.

DNP

All course work and other requirements for the DNP Traditional Program and the DNP Executive track, including the Final Oral Examination, **must be completed within five (5) consecutive calendar years from the date of initial enrollment** in the DNP program. Leaves of absence (withdrawals) do not extend the five-year limit. It is the student's responsibility to meet all the requirements for the degree in the proper sequence within the 5 year time limit. This applies to both full- and part-time enrollment.

All course work and other requirements for the DNP Program with NP concentrations, including the Final Oral Examination, **must be completed within six (6) consecutive calendar years from the date of initial enrollment** in the DNP program. Leaves of absence (withdrawals) do not extend the six year limit. It is the student's responsibility to meet all the requirements for the degree in the proper sequence within the six year time limit. This applies to both full- and part-time enrollment.

Master's Degree

The minimum requirement for a master's degree is two (2) full academic semesters. All course work and other requirements must be completed within five (5) consecutive years from the date of enrollment. Leaves of absence (withdrawals) do not extend the five year limit.

Grade Point Average Requirement for Graduation

The Graduate School requires a cumulative GPA of at least 2.8 to graduate. Students cannot graduate with a D or F grade in any course and must re-take the course to earn at least a C grade or higher. Students cannot graduate with a U grade in any non-repeatable S/U course and likewise must re-take the course to earn an S grade. The GPA and minimal grade requirement may be higher for some programs. Student's should check with their program's director for program specific information.

Coursework Proposal for Thesis and Dissertation Programs

The coursework proposal form is typically turned in to The Graduate School Dean's office at the same time as the Research Proposal. The coursework proposal form includes a copy of the student's JagTrax profile, signed by the student and the program director, listing the courses the student must satisfactorily complete for meeting The Graduate School's requirements and those of the student's graduate program. All required electives and any additional coursework that the student and his/her advisor and Advisory Committee determine is appropriate for facilitating the student's research project must be specified on the Coursework Proposal Form. Thesis and dissertation program students in dual degree programs should include coursework for both degrees on this form.

Research Proposal for Theses and Dissertations

The research proposal is a research plan that serves as the basis for the thesis or dissertation. The proposal is written by the student in collaboration with the student's mentor and Advisory committee and approved by his/her Advisor, Advisory Committee, Program Director, Department Chair and Dean. The proposal must conform to the **Instructions for Writing a Research Proposal** found at <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resources>

A copy of the proposal and a signed Research Proposal approval form must be submitted and approved by the Dean of The Graduate School before the student can be admitted to candidacy. The form can be found at: <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resources> .

The Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

The Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination – Standard Policy can be found at <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resources>

All Graduate School (TGS) PhD graduate programs and students are required to adhere to The Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination – Standard Policy approved by the PhD program directors in conjunction with TGS administration. The Standard Policy represents the minimum standards and basic process for all TGS PhD programs. Individual programs may set (according to process) more stringent or additional requirements. Faculty and students are advised to check with their program director for additional approved program specific requirements, information and guidelines not specified in the Standard Policy.

Each program must ensure that the examination is designed and conducted in a manner that not only demonstrates a mastery of the student's dissertation topic but also demonstrates the student's understanding and comprehension of general and discipline-specific material as well as the student's independent and critical thinking ability.

With the exception of the Biostatistics PhD Program which has two written components, the comprehensive exam standard format consists of an oral and a written component. The Comprehensive Exam must be taken within four semesters of completion of the program's core course requirements and no later than the end of the seventh (7th) semester of full time, year-round study. Programs may set more stringent (earlier) deadlines for their programs, in which case the more stringent deadline applies. See the policy for program specific deadlines, format and exam details.

In the event of failure, a student will be afforded one opportunity to retake each section (written and oral) of the exam after additional study. Students are allowed one retake for the written component of the exam and one retake for the oral component of the exam. Students only need to retake the exam (written or oral component) that they fail on the first attempt. If a student passes one component (written or oral) on the first attempt and fails the other, he/she only has to retake the failed exam component. Biostatistics PhD students must retake both written components of their exam if they fail any single component. The second

attempt (retake) of the exam, should occur within three months of the first attempt. A written plan of action for retaking the exam must be submitted to the Graduate School and student within two weeks of the original unsuccessful attempt at the exam. Second attempts scheduled beyond three months must be pre-approved by the program director and Dean. A new exam will be prepared by the Examination Committee for the second attempt. Failure of the second retake of either component of the exam (written or oral) will result in the student being considered for dismissal from the graduate program and The Graduate School.

In the event that a student changes program/major, the student will be required to meet the comprehensive exam requirements of their new program/major and thus must pass the comprehensive exam of their new program. This is required regardless of whether he/she has taken and passed all/part of the comprehensive exam from their previous program.

Please refer to The Comprehensive Exam – Standard Policy (found at <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-resources>) for additional information and important details.

Admission to Candidacy

Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A student will be admitted to candidacy for the **Doctor of Philosophy Degree** by the Dean following approval of the coursework proposal, the research proposal, and successful passing of the comprehensive exam. A completed ***Admission to Candidacy Form*** must be submitted to the Dean. The Dean notifies the student in writing of his/her admission to candidacy. **A student must be eligible for candidacy for the Ph.D. degree at least two semesters before the proposed defense date.**

Master's Degree: For Master's students in a thesis or consulting project (Biostatistics) track, the student will be admitted to candidacy for the **Master's** degree by the program following approval of the coursework and research or project proposal. A completed ***Admission to Candidacy Form*** must be submitted to the Dean. **A student must be eligible for candidacy for the Master's degree at least one semester before the proposed defense date.**

Dissertation

The dissertation is required of all Ph.D. candidates. It is the culmination of an original investigation leading to new information that gives evidence of independent thinking, scholarly ability and critical judgment, and indicates familiarity with research methods and techniques. The dissertation should characterize in a scholarly manner the importance of this information as it applies to the field of study. Publication of the dissertation in one or various forms is encouraged, but not required. Defense (Final Oral Examination) of the dissertation is required and must be completed within seven years of initial enrollment in the PhD program. **Directions for preparation of the written dissertation are available at <https://guides.augusta.edu/graduateschool/template>.**

Approval of the Dissertation

The student and Advisory Committee should follow the procedures listed for approval of the dissertation.

- A good draft of the dissertation, proof-read and corrected by the student and approved by the Major Advisor, is distributed by the student to members of the Advisory Committee at least five (5) weeks before the date of the student's final oral examination.
- At least two (2) weeks before the oral examination, the dissertation should be approved for oral defense by the Advisory Committee and the ***Dissertation Approval Form*** submitted to the Dean. The signed form indicates that the members of the committee have read the draft of the dissertation and find it acceptable for the purpose of examining the student. If the draft of the dissertation is not approved, the student will be responsible for making all changes recommended by the committee and must resubmit it to the committee for approval.

Final Oral Examination

All requirements for the degree must be completed before a student can defend his/her thesis/dissertation. Satisfactory performance on the Final Oral Examination, in which the student defends his/her dissertation before the Advisory Committee, dissertation reader(s), faculty, students and the public, is required. This examination is based primarily on the dissertation and the field of knowledge that constitutes the student's major subject. **The student must be enrolled in the PhD program in the semester that the examination is administered.**

For select programs (i.e. the Biomedical Sciences PhD program), the student and his/her Major Advisor must select a reader who must be approved by the Dean. A reader should be an expert in the student's field of study, have a terminal degree, and is typically a University (AU or otherwise) faculty member. The Dean and reader(s) must receive a corrected electronic copy of the dissertation approved by the Advisory Committee at least two (2) weeks before the Final Oral Examination.

The student should contact The Graduate School office, Advisory Committee, and reader (when required) to arrange a time that all individuals will be able to attend the oral examination. Once the date and time is established, notification in writing is sent to the Dean on a completed **Faculty Agreement Form**. The Major Advisor must be physically present at the Final Oral Examination. All other Advisory Committee members and the dissertation reader(s) must be present, physically or via electronic means, at the Final Oral Examination. Rare exceptions may be granted by the Dean if last-minute extenuating circumstances preclude the attendance of one committee member or reader. The research presentation portion of the examination is open to the Augusta University community. Departments will be responsible for producing and distributing the Final Oral Examination Announcement Template may be found at <https://www.augusta.edu/gradschool/student-student-resources>. These announcements must be emailed to students and faculty of the area of study (i.e., graduate nursing faculty and students, biomedical sciences faculty and students, etc.). The **Final Oral Examination Form**, provided by The Graduate School, is completed at the end of the examination by the committee and reader(s) and then submitted to the Dean of The Graduate School for final approval.

After successful completion of the Final Oral Examination, the following is required:

- 1- After revisions of your dissertation/thesis have been made, please go to <http://guides.augusta.edu/friendly.php?s=graduateschool> for electronic submission instructions of your dissertation/thesis to the library or contact the librarian faculty member listed on that page. The Graduate School office will need the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Submission for Publication Approval Form signed and submitted for the Dean of The Graduate School's approval before it will be accepted.
- 2- Submit an electronic version of the final dissertation in any format, Word, PDF, etc. to TGSENROLLED@augusta.edu.
- 3- Submit electronic version of your announcement.
- 4- Survey of Earned Doctorates. Survey must be completed and submitted online at <http://sed-ncses.org> Once this is completed the certificate of SED completion must be printed and submitted with final paperwork.
- 5- Proquest. Electronic submission of your dissertation must be made to Proquest at <http://www.etsadmin.com/augusta> This is mandatory by The Graduate School and confirmation is received by our office once this has been completed.
- 6- Application for Graduation (see below). (**This should be done by midterm the semester before graduation**), However, if you have not already done so, the Form must be completed and submitted online at <http://www.augusta.edu/graduation/healthsciences-graduation-app.php>

Graduation

Each candidate for a graduate degree must apply for graduation. Graduation information and the ***Application for Graduation Form*** is available at <https://www.augusta.edu/graduation/graduationinformation.php>. Please read the application carefully and provide **ALL** requested information.

- Spring Applicants: submit application Fall Midterm **BEFORE** completion of requirements
- Summer & Fall Applicants: submit application Spring Midterm **BEFORE** completion of requirements

Students must have completed all degree requirements and be certified for graduation in order to participate in graduation and hooding ceremonies. Satisfactory fulfillment of any additional requirements and/or milestones required by the student's program or the institution must also be completed to be eligible for graduation.