



**POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR
DIRECTORS OF GRADUATE
STUDIES**

2024-2025

(10/17/24)

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Foreword

The information contained within this document is intended to assist the Director of Graduate Studies in academic advising of students and in interactions with the Graduate School. It is not intended to be a substitute for the Graduate Catalog which is the official source of information for all graduate students. The 2024-2025 Graduate Catalog is available [here](#).

October, 2024

Padraic Kenney, Ph.D.

Dean of The Graduate School

Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

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Associate Dean of Administration and Faculty Affairs, The Graduate School

Graduate School Staff

A full listing of the staff in the Graduate School is available [here](#), along with details of who does [what](#).

Graduate Faculty

Guidelines for the nomination and appointment of members of the graduate faculty are available in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and on-line [here](#). Eligibility for a graduate faculty appointment includes the following:

- The nominee must have an academic appointment at the Assistant Professor level or higher to be eligible (lecturers for example are not eligible).
- Faculty members in all title series (Regular, Special, Research, Clinical, Extension, Adjunct) are eligible for appointment to the Graduate Faculty.

Appointment to full, from associate, graduate faculty status has typically coincided with the point at which a faculty member is promoted to the rank of associate professor. Graduate programs are encouraged to nominate assistant professors to full graduate faculty membership when they have been employed by UK for at least two years, if they have demonstrated the appropriate level of scholarly research and productivity.

Upon recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), faculty members who have recently retired or who have taken faculty positions at other institutions may continue to serve on existing doctoral and master's committees but cannot be appointed to new committees. The DGS should submit these requests to the Graduate School Dean inbox (gsdean@uky.edu); the e-mail should include the names of all students affected and their current academic status (for example, pre- or post-qualifying; estimated degree completion date).

Non-UK-affiliated experts can add valuable insights for graduate student research projects and thus be valuable members of student advisory committees. These experts can be appointed to serve as official members of graduate student committees. It is recommended but not required that such appointments are made in addition to the standard three-member master's committee or four-member doctoral committee consisting of UK faculty.

The on-line graduate faculty appointment form for University of Kentucky faculty members can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

- You will be asked to confirm that the graduate faculty of the program, the chair, and the dean of the college support the appointment request. There is no proscribed process for obtaining these approvals and documentation is not required.
- A request for appointment of an assistant professor as a full member of the graduate faculty must include a letter of support from the chair or Director of Graduate Studies. This can either be pasted into the form or uploaded as a separate document.
- A current CV of the nominee must be uploaded.

The on-line graduate faculty appointment form for Non-UK Experts can be accessed via [this link](#).

- You will be asked to confirm that the graduate faculty of the program, the chair, and the dean of the college support the appointment request. There is no proscribed process for obtaining these approvals and documentation is not required.
- The request must include a detailed explanation from the committee chair or the Director of Graduate Studies of why the appointment is needed and must include the name of the doctoral student.
- A current CV of the nominee must be uploaded.

Directors of Graduate Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is the Graduate School's local representative of each graduate program, acting as the official liaison with the Graduate School. The DGS is responsible to the Graduate Faculty of their program and to the Dean of the Graduate School for the recruitment, admission, advising, evaluation and graduation of students in their program. Consequently, the DGS has an important impact on the quality of graduate programs at the University of Kentucky.

DGS appointments are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School upon nomination by the program's college. The Dean of the Graduate School consults with the colleges on the effectiveness of appointed DGS's, and may recommend changes when necessary. The DGS is normally a tenured faculty member, holding the rank of Associate Professor or above, and must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. Exceptions to this policy may be made if the program DGS and/or chair can confirm that paperwork has been submitted and the appointee will be promoted to Associate Professor within several months. The standard term for a DGS is three years; however, each program has the option to request an appointment for up to four years if appropriate. A DGS who will be absent from the University for a semester or more must inform the Dean so that a substitute can be appointed. The on-line form for nominating a DGS can be found [here](#).

The DGS of a graduate program reports directly to the Dean of the Graduate School or to the Dean's designee on all matters relating to graduate education in the program. The DGS is responsible for the administration of the graduate program, including maintenance of records at the departmental level, admission of graduate students, fellowships, program requirement changes and new programs, advising and registration, appointment of advisory and examination committees, and other degree requirements related to the graduate program. The DGS should also ensure that their program's Graduate Student Handbook is current and that annual written evaluations are provided to each student. Additionally, the DGS serves as the focal point for dissemination of information from the Graduate School to both graduate students and the Graduate Faculty in their program. The DGS may also be asked to provide program information to the Graduate School.

The DGS serves as program advisor to each student until the student has a thesis or dissertation director. The DGS then recommends that the thesis or dissertation director be appointed as the student's advisor or committee chair. In programs where a thesis is not required, the DGS is the primary advisor for all students, but other faculty members may be unofficially appointed as individual student advisors. A list of current Directors of Graduate Studies can be accessed [here](#).

Directors of Graduate Certificates

Each graduate certificate must have a designated Director, who is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Director will represent the certificate on matters such as admission to and successful completion of the graduate certificate, enforcement of certificate requirements and maintenance of records. The Director can be either an associate or full member of the Graduate Faculty of the University.

The on-line form for nominating a DGC is available [here](#). A list of current Directors of Graduate Certificates is available [here](#).

Communicating with the Graduate School

The shared Graduate School Dean (gsdean@uky.edu) email box should be used for all requests to the Graduate School Dean.

Monthly DGS/DGC/staff meetings provide updates, reminders and discuss best practices among graduate programs.

The Graduate School Newsletter, issued bi-weekly during the academic year, is targeted mainly to graduate students but goes to all graduate faculty, so they are aware of activities. DGSs and DGCs should help promote relevant activities to their students. A newsletter about technical and process updates is issued quarterly.

A Teams site (Graduate Program Resource Hub) for DGS/DGCs and graduate program staff contains informational resources from each office (holistic admissions, career support guidance, ppts and recordings from presentations). Please let the Graduate School know if you need additional access.

Admissions

Admission Requirements

Baccalaureate Degree

Students seeking admission to the Graduate School must have obtained a baccalaureate degree, prior to the start of the term for which s/he is admitted, from a fully accredited U.S. institution of higher learning or from a recognized foreign institution. The institution must be accredited during the time of the student's enrollment and awarding of the degree.

A recognized foreign institution is an institution that is recognized by that nation's Ministry of Education or similar authority as a post-secondary, academic degree-granting institution. International applicants must hold a four-year bachelor's degree. While there are countries that offer 3-year degrees not all are equivalent to a four-year bachelor's degree, and these will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Note that Higher National Diplomas are not equivalent to a bachelor's degree. Applicants are welcome to obtain a Credential Evaluation from a NACES accredited credential evaluator and the official evaluation report should be sent directly from the evaluation agency to the Graduate School. This is not required for all applicants, however in some cases the Graduate School may request that the applicant obtain an evaluation. This evaluation will be at the expense of the applicant.

A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale) on all prior undergraduate coursework and 3.00 on all prior graduate coursework is required for admission. The DGS can submit a petition via the application system to request an evaluation for exception to this requirement; it is typically evaluated by the Assistant Dean for Admissions.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

Applicants for admission to graduate degree programs that require GRE scores must have official GRE scores sent directly from ETS, which typically makes official scores available for five years after the student's test date. Submission of official GRE (or GMAT) scores cannot be waived for an individual student. An applicant can however be admitted in conditional status (see below) with the requirement that scores are presented to the Graduate School before priority registration for the second semester of study.

GRE/GMAT scores are no longer be required by the Graduate School, although individual graduate programs (noted [here](#)) may still require them. To remove, modify, or add a testing requirement requires notification of the Graduate School's Office of Admissions.

Application Fee

For domestic students the current application fee is \$65.00, and for international students the fee is \$75.00. An application fee is required for all applicants; the Graduate School will not consider individual requests for waivers. However, programs do have the option to pay the fee on behalf of categories of applicant, based on established, consistent criteria that are endorsed by the Dean of the Graduate School. If a program does wish to pay the application fee on behalf of the applicant, the fee payment request can be entered in the application system by the DGS/DGC. The applicant must be in "awaiting payment status" and a valid cost center must be provided. Grants cannot be used for this purpose.

Transcripts

When credentials are submitted in support of an application, they should be either the original documents or certified copies (certified or attested as "true copies" by a notary public). An official translation must be attached to these records if they are in a language other than English. Credentials should include a record of all degrees earned, detailing all subjects taken and grades obtained, listed in the indigenous system. Credentials uploaded in the application system by the applicant are considered unofficial and official documents will be required if admitted. Official credentials may be mailed to the Graduate School or sent electronically to gradtranscripts@uky.edu including through the National Student Clearinghouse and Parchment. All official transcripts are due before a student can register for the second semester of enrollment.

English Proficiency

All applicants must demonstrate English proficiency for admission. One of the following methods can be used:

- An awarded degree from a fully accredited US institution (bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree)
- Official, valid English Language Proficiency Test Score sent directly to the Graduate School from the testing agency. Photocopies are not acceptable.
- Statement on the official transcript or an attestation letter sent directly from the registrar of the degree-granting institution confirming that English was the language of instruction. This option will only be accepted when English is the sole language of instruction. Applicants may be evaluated by an ESL professional.

The University of Kentucky requires a score of 79 on the internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT) or a minimum overall score of 9 on TOEFL Essentials. Applicants may also use International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores or Duolingo English Test (DET) scores to satisfy the language requirement. The minimum acceptable overall band score is 6.5 on IELTS and the minimum score on DET is 115. Applicants submitting DET scores may also be evaluated by an ESL professional. Admission recommendations may be made by the program based on self-reported language scores, but official scores are required to process the admission. The Graduate School reserves the right to request additional information regarding an applicant's language proficiency. These requirements apply to admission only. There may be additional requirements for applicants wishing to be considered for an assistantship.

International Application Deadlines:

For the fall semester: April 15

For the spring semester: September 15

Financial Resources Requirement for 2024-2025: International graduate applicants must certify that they have at least **\$55,650**** available for each 12-month period of study. Students must have readily accessible funds sufficient to pay for tuition, fees, room and board, and health insurance at the beginning of each registration period. Applicants must certify that **\$7,350**** per year is available for their spouse and **\$5,040**** per year for each additional dependent (this is normally proven by bank account statements).

**** Please note these charges are subject to change.** Many international students receive offers of financial support (e.g., research or teaching assistantships) that are sufficient to meet the financial resources requirement. To facilitate the processing of immigration documents, students will be asked to upload a copy of any financial offer letter in iCAT for an Immigration Specialist in International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to review. Additional bank statements or other documents will be required if the assistantship does not cover the full amount of estimated expenses (**\$55,650**). This award letter should be signed by the DGS or the department chair, and should specify:

- whether the support is a research assistantship (RA) or teaching (TA) assistantship, the total amount of the stipend and, start and end dates of the appointment (the appointments must encompass at least one academic year).

Health Insurance Requirements for International Students

The University of Kentucky has a mandatory health insurance program for all international students. International students who are in F-1, J-1, and J-2 visa status will be charged for the UK Student Health Insurance Plan along with their tuition and fees on their student account. The current cost of this insurance is **\$3,122** per year (**\$1,185** for Fall, **\$1,937** for Spring). Any graduate student, domestic or international, who is enrolled and degree-seeking and is receiving a qualifying institutional fellowship or full-time teaching, research, or graduate assistantship receives University-funded (single coverage) health insurance at no cost. The Student Health Insurance Plan Administrator will remove the international insurance charge after verifying student eligibility as a funded graduate student. Removal of this charge generally takes about one month after the first day of classes. For insurance eligibility questions contact the Student Health Insurance Plan Administrator [by email](#) or by telephone at 859-218-3208.

International students who already have a qualifying health insurance plan and do not wish to participate in the UK Student Health Insurance Plan must complete the online waiver form every semester by the established deadline. To qualify for a waiver to cancel the UK school health insurance plan, the insurance policy must meet or exceed ALL of UK's current Minimum Health Insurance Requirements. These requirements can be reviewed at <http://www.uky.edu/international/Insurance>.

International students on a J-1 and F-1 visa are required to purchase health insurance for all of their dependents. Students insured on the UK Student Insurance Plan can enroll their dependents on the UK plan [here](#). These purchases can only be made during the open enrollment window or with a qualifying life event such as losing existing health coverage under another plan, or losing existing health coverage as a dependent on a family member's plan through divorce, death, job loss. Note that the cost of health insurance for a spouse and/or dependent children is the sole responsibility of the student. International students with questions about health insurance may contact the coordinator in the Student Health Insurance Office at 859-218-3208. J-2 dependents with a DS-2019 issued by a non-UK entity, organization, or government agency may choose to purchase insurance from other health providers, unless enrolling in coursework or beginning employment with the University of Kentucky.

Other Admission Categories

Post-baccalaureate

This type of admission is for students who wish to take courses in non-degree status. Post-baccalaureate (POBA) status is typically not available for international applicants, except in very rare circumstances. Applicants for POBA (or certification) status must have an undergraduate GPA of 2.50 or greater; GRE scores are not required. POBA students who subsequently wish to apply for admission to a regular academic program must have maintained a 3.00 GPA on all graduate work attempted and must have no "I" or blank (***) grades on their UK graduate transcript.

Graduating Senior as Part-time Graduate Student

Seniors at the University of Kentucky who otherwise meet admission requirements but who lack no more than 6 credit hours for graduation may be admitted in conditional status with the consent of the Undergraduate College Dean and the appropriate Director of Graduate Studies. The total load of such students may not exceed 12 credit hours. Requirements for the undergraduate degree must be completed during the semester in which the student is allowed to register for graduate work. Students applying for admission to the Graduate School under these conditions will be required to list the course or courses to be taken to complete the undergraduate requirements on the application form which can be accessed [here](#).

Accelerated Masters Pathways

This program is designed for undergraduate students at the University of Kentucky whose well-defined academic and career plans include graduate training. The Accelerated Masters Pathways (AMP) offers these students the opportunity to integrate their undergraduate and graduate courses of study in an accelerated program, culminating in both a baccalaureate degree and a master's or doctoral degree. [here](#)

Undergraduates interested in pursuing an accelerated Master's submit an Expression of Interest form at any time after they have completed 60 credits and before completing 105 credits. After approval by the student's Academic Advisor, the form routes to the graduate program. The DGS should ensure that the student receives information about how to best prepare for formal application to the program, including undergraduate courses and credentials, graduate courses, and orientation programming.

Students proceed through their subsequent academic career with the help of their undergraduate advisor and a graduate advisor. The student may then apply formally to the graduate program in their last semester of undergraduate study, following current procedures and rules for admission to the Graduate School with the following additions:

- The undergraduate GPA must be at least 3.0 in the applicant's major field and overall.
- GRE/GMAT scores are not required for admission to this program unless the program.

Degree requirements for the accelerated path to a Master's are as follows:

- The total number of credit hours completed for the accelerated program, and thus counted toward both degrees, may not exceed 12.
- Registration for courses that will count toward both degrees must be at the graduate level and graded at the graduate level. Students should register only after they have submitted the Expression of Interest, which enables USP Exploratory status to be added to their student record.
- The primary classification of University Scholars students will be undergraduate until they have completed all requirements for their undergraduate degree, and
- Undergraduate tuition rates will be applied to the 12 hours (or less) of graduate level coursework designated for dual credit in this program. No undergraduate may take more than 12 hours of graduate work, whether or not they are pursuing an accelerated Master's.
- Please note that USP students cannot receive Graduate School support (assistantships or fellowships) until they have completed the requirements for their undergraduate degree.

Visiting Students

Students who are enrolled in a graduate program at another institution and plan to attend the University of Kentucky as a Visiting Student must submit the Visiting Student form which can be accessed [here](#) when filing an application (transcripts are not required). Visiting Student admission is for one semester only and credit earned in that status is not applicable to a University of Kentucky degree.

The Application Process

All applications for graduate study at the University of Kentucky Graduate School must be submitted online. All Graduate School and program requirements can be submitted in one application, including letters of recommendation. Students may apply for as many programs as they wish, but currently, each application requires completion of a separate application form and a separate application fee. There are several important features of the application review process:

Transcripts

The applicant is required to upload copies of transcripts from all higher education institutions from which they received a degree and to self-report cumulative GPA's for each institution. Admission decisions may

be made based on these unofficial transcripts; the applicant will be required to submit official transcripts to the Graduate School only if they are admitted and decide to enroll.

Test Scores

For graduate programs that require them, the applicant is required to self-report test scores on the application (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS) or they can supply a future date for taking the test(s). Admission decisions may be made based on these self-reported scores, but we do require timely submission of official scores from the reporting agency. These scores are incorporated into the student application record and compared to self-reported scores by the admissions officers to ensure consistency. Offers of admittance can be rescinded if official test scores (or official transcripts) are different from self-reported.

Program-Specific Requirements

Many graduate programs at the University of Kentucky require additional information from applicants. This may include a curriculum vita, personal statement, writing sample or an assistantship application. These documents must also be uploaded to the application prior to submission. Program-specific requirements are listed [here](#).

Letters of Recommendation

As part of the application students are asked to supply contact information for the number of recommenders required by their program of interest. The system will contact each person identified and their recommendations will be incorporated into the application. Students can check back into their application at any time to see who has submitted a recommendation.

A student's application can only be reviewed by the program when all application requirements including letters of recommendation have been submitted. Until then the application is considered incomplete.

Types of Admission

Regular

Regular admission is approved when all requirements have been met.

Conditional

Domestic and international applicants wishing to pursue an advanced degree who are temporarily ineligible for regular graduate admission status may be recommended by the DGS for conditional admission status in the following cases:

- Receipt of a final undergraduate transcript showing an awarded bachelor's degree.
- Receipt of official GRE (or equivalent) scores, if required by the program.

These requirements are monitored by the Graduate School and must be met prior to the start of priority registration for the second semester of enrollment. If these requirements are not met, students cannot register for courses.

Programs also have the option of recommending admission "conditionally" for other reasons including:

- Completion of deficiencies, such as taking specific required undergraduate courses.

- Program review upon completion of a specified number of hours of coursework.

These requirements are monitored by the program; the Graduate School should be notified when they have been met so that the student's status can be changed to regular admission. If a student is required to take undergraduate level pre-requisites before starting the graduate program and those courses will be taken at UK, that student's enrollment should be as an undergraduate non-degree seeking student and the graduate application and admission moved to a subsequent semester. The student's undergraduate grades must be re-evaluated for admission. Approval to proceed with the doctoral qualifying examination or the master's final examination as appropriate will not be granted to students remaining in conditional status.

Modifying the Date of Admission and Deferring Admission

If a student has received a letter of admission to a graduate program and wishes to change entry to a different term, they should communicate with their DGS as soon as possible**. If approved, the DGS should e-mail the assigned admissions officer requesting the change (students who need to change their application term and/or year prior to receipt of an offer of admission from the Graduate School should e-mail their admissions officer directly).

If the request is for an earlier semester, the officer should be notified no later than one week prior to the beginning of the requested semester. If the request is for a later semester, the officer should be notified no later than one week prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student initially received admission. The deferral period cannot be longer than one academic year. If the student fails to request the deferral within this time-frame, they will need to reapply for admission and pay the application fee.

***Post baccalaureate students who need to modify their date of admission should contact their admissions officer directly.*

Admissions Deadlines

Key deadlines for the admissions process can be found [here](#).

Academic Policies

Registration

Graduate students register for courses through myUK. Please refer to the university registrar's [website](#) for information on the registration process and registration window. The only exception to this policy is registration in the zero-hour residency course XXX-748, which is controlled by the Graduate School.

Add/Drop

Generally, any request for a change in schedule after the stated [deadlines](#) in the University Calendar must be signed by both the instructor and the DGS. Before the mid-term deadline, a student wishing to withdraw from individual classes may do so using myUK. The process and form for later add/drop processes is currently being updated.

Leave of Absence

Enrolled graduate students at the University of Kentucky who sit out for one or more semesters will need to complete a new application and pay the application fee to be considered for readmission. In many instances this requirement can be avoided by requesting a "leave of absence". In addition to avoiding the application process, this status will allow the student to priority register in preparation for their return to UK. Procedurally, students should contact their DGS to seek approval for the leave prior to the beginning of the semester in question. The DGS confers with the College Associate Dean before approving, and then forwards approval to the Graduate School's Office of Academic Services. When the leave is approved, the student must drop all courses for the semester in question before the leave is applied. No more than two consecutive and four total semesters in leave of absence status may be requested. International students considering a leave of absence are strongly encouraged to discuss their plans with the International Center, Department of Immigration Services prior to making a formal request.

Post Mid-term Withdrawal

A student may withdraw from classes during the latter half of the term upon approval by the Dean of the Graduate School or their designee of a petition certifying urgent non-academic reasons including but not limited to 1) injury or illness of the student 2) serious personal or family problems 3) serious financial difficulties. If the request is approved the Dean will inform the instructors of the classes of the action taken. Access the request form [here](#).

Retroactive Withdrawals

A student may request a retroactive withdrawal from an entire semester, upon presentation of documentation to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The Associate Dean reviews materials and forwards the decision to the student and to the college's associate dean. A final decision is made by the Office of the Provost.

Academic Load

The total semester or term load of a student is the sum of all credits and credit equivalents taken (e.g. graduate language courses, undergraduate courses, courses audited, etc.). The normal load of a graduate student for the summer, fall and spring semesters is nine credit hours or equivalent.

Course loads exceeding fifteen credit hours must be approved by the Graduate School. Students wishing to request a credit overload should complete a Credit Overload Request [form](#). Students must provide a detailed listing of all proposed course registrations and must obtain the signature of the DGS.

Students satisfactorily completing at least nine course credits during a semester are classified as full-time students. Students enrolled in XXX 748 (0 credit hours), 757 (2 credit hours), or 767 (2 credit hours) are also classified as full-time. Full-time students who fall below the minimum full-time equivalent as the result of dropping one or more courses are classified as part-time students for that semester. Note that international students may be in violation of their visa conditions if they do not maintain full-time status. Exceptions to this rule are managed by the Office of Academic Administration and the International Center.

For full-time teaching assistants, research assistants, or graduate assistants, their assignment entails up to 20 hours per week. Their academic load may not exceed twelve credit hours without approval of the Graduate School.

Course Repeatability

The DGS and the student's advisor are responsible for knowing the repeatability limits of courses. If a student exceeds the limit, the Registrar's Office will not assign academic credit to the course.

Grades

The official grades of graduate students are recorded in the Office of the Registrar. The grading in graduate courses is done according to the following scale:

- A: High Achievement (4 grade points per credit)
- B: Satisfactory Achievement (3 grade points per credit)
- C: Minimum passing grade (2 grade points per credit)
- E: Failure (0 grade points per credit)
- I: Incomplete (see explanation below)
- S: Satisfactory (see explanation below)
- UN: Unsatisfactory (see explanation below)

I (incomplete) Grade

A grade of "I" can be assigned if part of the work of a course remains undone and there is a reasonable possibility that a passing grade will result from completion of the work. The graduate program should maintain a record of all instructor-student agreements; these should clearly state the work awaiting completion and the timeline. All "I" grades must be replaced by a regular final letter grade within 12 months of the end of the academic term in which the "I" grade was assigned or prior to the student's graduation, whichever occurs first. If an "I" grade has not been replaced within the allowable period, the University Registrar will change the "I" grade to a grade of "E" on the student's permanent academic

record and adjust the student's grade-point standing accordingly. In exceptional circumstances, the Graduate School will consider a one semester extension of the "I" grade beyond the 12-month period. In order to request the extension, the student must obtain the recommendation of both the course instructor and the DGS in the student's program and complete the [Extension of Incomplete \("I"\) Grade form](#). Please append the program's form referenced above. In addition, the instructor must specify the remaining work necessary for the satisfaction of the course requirements. All work must be completed, and the grade assigned by the last day of final exams for the semester in which the extension is granted.

S (satisfactory) Grade

A grade of "S" can be assigned to zero credit graduate courses and to graduate seminars, independent work courses, and research courses which extend beyond the normal limits of a semester or summer term. The grade cannot be assigned to a course carrying credit if the student has done unsatisfactory work or failed to do a reasonable amount of work. The project must be substantially continuous in its progress. When the work has been completed a final grade will be substituted for the "S". Students who show "S" grades in letter-graded courses cannot sit for qualifying examinations or final examinations prior to the conversion of the "S" grade(s) to a final letter grade.

UN (unsatisfactory) Grade

A grade of "UN" can be assigned to credit-bearing seminars, independent work courses, or research courses if these courses extend beyond the normal limits of a semester or summer term. This grade is given to a student who has done unsatisfactory work or to one who has failed to do a reasonable amount of work. All "UN" grades in credit-bearing courses must be replaced by a regular final letter grade before a candidate for a graduate degree is permitted to sit for a Qualifying or Final Examination. Grade "UN" is recorded as a permanent mark only in courses carrying no academic credit or graduate residence courses.

An overall average of "B" (3.00) on all graduate work in the program is required for an advanced degree to be awarded. A student on academic probation (see below) cannot be awarded a degree. All graduate level courses are included in the graduate grade point average computation, except for 400G courses in the student's program. Once a grade (other than "I" or "S") has been reported to the Registrar's Office, a change requires the written unanimous approval of the instructor, the Registrar, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit evaluation occurs only after a student has been admitted to a graduate program.

Directors of Graduate Studies may [request transfer of credit](#) for coursework taken in post-baccalaureate status at the University of Kentucky into a master's/specialist or doctoral degree program. There is no restriction on the number of transferrable hours. The transfer of credit for coursework taken in post-baccalaureate status at another regionally accredited university is restricted to a maximum of 9 hours, or 25% of the credit hours needed to fulfill the master's/specialist degree requirements (whichever is greater).

The following rules also apply to credit transfer:

- Course credits applied toward a previously awarded graduate degree at UK cannot be transferred.
- Credits from international institutions are considered for transfer only in the case of completed graduate degrees.
- Transfer of independent work, research, thesis, or dissertation credit is not permitted.
- Short courses lasting fewer weeks than the number of credits may not be transferred.
- A student must have been in graduate status at the time the courses were taken.
- A student must be in good academic standing at the time of transfer.
- Only courses assigned a B grade or better can be transferred.
- Courses must have been taken no more than 6 years (masters) or 10 years (doctoral) prior to the semester the transfer is requested.
- Transfer of external credit cannot be applied to a graduate certificate unless it is specified and justified in the initial request to establish the certificate (or at the time of renewal).

The Repeat Option

A graduate student may elect to repeat a graduate course and count only the second grade as part of the graduate grade point average. This action is not retroactive to a time prior to Fall 1981. A graduate student may exercise the Repeat Option only once in a degree program. The student must file a Repeat Option Form using the [Request for Repeat Option form](#). The Repeat Option Form is held in the Graduate School and the change of grade is recorded when the course has been completed for the second time. The original grade does not figure in to the GGPA. A request to exercise the repeat option must be submitted prior to graduation from the program. The repeat option cannot be used to remove an “E” grade assigned as the result of an academic offense, such as cheating or plagiarism.

Scholastic Probation

When students have completed 9 or more semester hours of graduate course work with a cumulative GPA less than 3.00, they are placed on scholastic probation. Students will have one full-time semester or the equivalent (9 hours) to remove the scholastic probation by attaining a 3.00 (overall) average; students demonstrating appreciable progress toward this goal will be granted an additional semester of probation. If probation is not removed, the student may be subject to dismissal from the Graduate School. In this situation, the Dean of the Graduate School or designee will consult with the DGS prior to undertaking the dismissal action. Dismissed students may apply for readmission after two semesters. Readmission is contingent upon the approval of the student’s program, and should be accompanied by a plan that outlines how the program faculty will support the student and enable their success. Exceptions to this policy are made only by the Dean of the Graduate School or designee upon the recommendation of the DGS. Students on academic probation are not eligible to sit for the doctoral qualifying exam, or master’s or doctoral final examinations.

Special Immigration-related Considerations When Advising International Students

Limitation on Online Coursework*

For F-1 visa holders, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits hours of online coursework may be counted toward the full-time enrollment requirement. If an F-1 student is in the final semester and requires one course to complete the program of study, the course must be in person or a hybrid course.

For J-1 visa holders, no online or hybrid courses may count towards the full-time enrollment requirement. Additionally, some sponsored students require special permission by sponsors who may also limit the number of online courses based on the length of the program. International students in other visa categories (e.g. H-4, L2) are exempt from the online course limitation.

For both F-1 and J-1 students, the online course restrictions apply only to the number of credit hours required to meet a student's full course of study requirement. When students meet these requirements, they are permitted to enroll in additional online or distance-learning courses as needed. But the students must be present in the U.S. Currently, the University of Kentucky is restricted from offering fully online programs in many international locations. Please consult with [Distance Learning](#) as you advise applicants.

NOTE: Hybrid courses are not considered online courses when there is a requirement of physical attendance for the class, examination or other purposes integral to course completion. It is strongly recommended that students submit the course syllabus for review by ISSS in advance of taking any hybrid courses.

**Additional rules may apply to sponsored students.*

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

F-1 students are eligible to drop below full-time under limited circumstances listed below. A Reduced Course Load (RCL) must be approved in SEVIS by an Immigration Specialist before the student drops the courses(s) to maintain F-1 status. SEVIS limits the reasons for which an RCL may be granted. An immigration specialist must select one of these choices to process the RCL approval:

- Initial academic difficulties due to unfamiliarity with American teaching methods, English difficulties, or improper course level placement (initial semester only).
- Students in their final semester of course work.
- Students who have a medical problem certified by a physician or clinical psychologist (maximum of two semesters; number of course hours determined by physician). A letter from a U.S. licensed physician or clinical psychologist is required. For more information, refer to the International Center.

Final Program Requirements and Grace Period

An international student's F-1 or J-1 visa program ends upon the completion of all final program requirements or the visa document (I-20/DS-2019) end date, whichever is earlier. For many international students the final requirement is the acceptance of the dissertation, thesis or capstone project by the Graduate School. In this case, the F-1 or J-1 visa program ends on the acceptance date if it falls before the estimated program end date on the visa document.

NOTE: F-1 students have a 60-day grace period following completion of the final program requirements and J-1 students have a 30-day grace period. F-1 and J-1 students are prohibited from employment pursuant to the on-campus employment rules during the grace period.

Internships as Part of Dissertation

F-1 and J-1 students must receive authorization for any off-campus employment approved in advance. Graduate international students may request authorization to engage in off-campus employment as part of their dissertation or thesis. F-1 graduate students who have completed coursework are only eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization if the employment is required and contributes materially and substantially to the successful completion of their dissertation or thesis as established under the direction of their dissertation or thesis advisor and committee. J-1 students may be eligible for Academic Training (AT).

Students approved for CPT in the research-only phase of a program are not required to take any additional coursework beyond dissertation or thesis residency credit. The practical training in this case is already considered an “integral part of the established” curriculum.

Restrictions on Enrolling in Coursework Outside of Program

F-1 students are not permitted to take any additional coursework outside of the primary program of study that is listed on the Form I-20/DS-2019 to meet the full-time enrollment requirement. If at any time it becomes clear that an F-1 international student is unable to pursue a full course load of classes required for the specific program level or field of study listed on the Form I-20, the student immigration specialists in ISSS should be notified immediately.

Enrollment for International Students Completing Their Defense and Dissertation/Thesis

- International Students in F-1 visa status who have not completed degree requirements (submission of the final dissertation/thesis) must enroll fulltime by the SEVIS reporting deadline, which is 30 days from the start date of the term.
- Students who defend in the spring term are not required to register for the summer.
- Students who will defend and submit their dissertation/thesis in the summer are strongly encouraged to register for 767 or 748 to meet the enrollment in the final term requirement.
- Students who defend in the summer but have not submitted dissertation/thesis by fall SEVIS registration deadline must enroll fulltime for the fall term.
- Students who have not defended but plan to defend at the beginning of the term must complete all degree requirements by the SEVIS reporting deadline or enroll fulltime by SEVIS reporting deadline.

NOTE: J-1 Graduate students who are close to the defense at the beginning of any new semester should enroll within 60 days of the start of that semester and the DS-2019 will be shortened to reflect a 60-day period. This is slightly different than F-1 because SEVIS registration does not occur each term.

Registration and Enrollment Key Deadlines

Key deadlines can be found [here](#).

Master's Degrees

Coursework Requirements

Graduate students are eligible to take regular courses that meet as organized classes, and independent-study or research courses in which each student carries on investigations independent of class meetings. Independent study or research courses must not duplicate thesis work; thesis work is in addition to the minimum course requirements. At least two-thirds of the minimum requirements for the master's degree must be in regular courses, and at least half of the minimum course requirements (excluding thesis, practicum, or internship credit) must be in 600- or 700-level courses.

Candidates for the master's degree must have a major area (defined usually as an academic department) and must take at least two-thirds of the course work in this area; the other one-third can be taken in this area or in related graduate areas. In Agriculture, Communications, Education and Human Environmental Sciences, only one-half of the work must be in the major area. Exceptions are approved by the college's Associate Dean.

Thesis/Non-Thesis Options

The Graduate Faculty authorizes graduate programs to satisfy requirements for the master's degree by either of two options, thesis (Plan A) or non-thesis, (Plan B). Both options require a minimum of 30 credit hours. The thesis option (Plan A) requires a minimum of 24 hours of course work plus a thesis, which is produced under the direction of a full or associate member of the Graduate Faculty. While working on the thesis, master's candidates should register for 6 credits of XXX-768 (Residence Credit for Master's Degree) in the appropriate department. After meeting coursework and 768 requirements, Plan A master's degree candidates who are in residence and receiving financial support from the University and/or utilizing University resources while working on the thesis must be enrolled in their departments XXX-768 or XXX-748 (Master's Thesis Research; 0 credit hours) each semester through to the defense. Registration in 748 guarantees that a student is in full-time status for the purposes of student financial aid and loan deferments. The DGS must certify that the student is working at least halftime (i.e., 20 hours per week) on the thesis. Registration in 748 is limited to a maximum of six semesters (not counting the summer semester). The Graduate School processes all 748 registrations.

The non-thesis option (Plan B) requires six or more graduate credit hours of course work in lieu of a thesis.

Course Substitutions

Depending on the circumstances, a DGS may request certain graduate course substitutions in a master's degree curriculum for individual students. These requests are sent to the designated Academic Services officer. Approval is contingent upon the student earning a grade of "A" or "B" in the substitute courses.

Foreign Language Requirement

If the program requires a foreign language, it may be satisfied in one of the following ways:

- Completion of one of the accelerated graduate level (“011”) courses with at least a “B” grade.
- Completion of the fourth semester (or equivalent) of a modern foreign language with a grade of “B” or better as an undergraduate at an accredited college or university.
- Completion of Special Examinations given for the foreign language graduate reading courses with a grade of “B” or better (forms may be obtained from the Registrar’s Office).
- Transfer of a language taken to satisfy the requirements for a master’s degree at another university (this information must appear on the student’s transcript from the institution awarding the master’s or the Graduate School must receive a letter from that Graduate Dean confirming when and how the foreign language requirement was satisfied).
- With program approval, international students who are non-native speakers of English may satisfy the foreign language requirement by presenting a TOEFL score of 79 (iBT) or better or an IELTS score of 6.5 or better.

The Graduate School automatically credits a student as having met the foreign language requirement if they have obtained a “B” or better in the special foreign language reading courses (“011” courses). All other modes require a written recommendation to the Graduate Dean by the DGS.

Final Examination for the Master’s Degree

Scheduling the Examination

The Graduate School must be notified of the intent to schedule a master’s (or specialist) Final Examination at least two weeks prior to the examination date by submission of the on-line [“Final Masters or Specialist Degree” form](#). Master’s students are eligible to sit for the Final Examination only if they have completed all coursework requirements for the degree, or if the remaining course work is in progress at the time of the examination. Students with “I” grades or “S” grades in credit-bearing courses are not eligible to sit for the final examination. The overall graduate GPA of the student must be 3.00 or better to sit for the examination. The final examination must be conducted no later than eight days before the last day of classes for the degree to be awarded at the end of that term (see the [University Calendar](#) or the Graduate School Graduation [Deadlines](#)).

Composition of the Master’s Committee

The examining committee consists of a minimum of three faculty members. At least two committee members (including the chair or co-chair) must be members of the graduate faculty; and at least one of these must be a Full Member of the graduate faculty. At least two members of the committee should be from the student’s program/department. Contact the [Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Services](#) with questions regarding the eligibility of individuals without graduate faculty status to serve on master’s committees.

In all decisions, the majority opinion of the committee prevails. If the committee vote is a tie, the candidate fails. If the candidate fails, the committee can recommend conditions for a second

examination. The minimum time between examinations is four months; it must be taken no later than one year after taking the first examination. Insofar as it is practicable, the same examining committee administers this examination. A third examination is not permitted.

The Master's Thesis

After successful completion of the examination, the student has 60 days to submit a final copy of the thesis to the Graduate School; otherwise, a second Final Examination may be required. Requests for exceptions to the 60-day policy should be in the form of an e-mail from the student's advisor to the [Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Services](#).

Electronic Thesis & Dissertations (ETDs)

All master's theses must be submitted in electronic format. [Click here for instructions](#). To view the current collection of ETDs, go to <http://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool/>.

Application for Degree

To be eligible to receive a degree, master's/specialist students must submit an on-line "Application for Degree" form via [myUK](#). Timelines for applying for the degree are found in the key dates (Graduate School) and the University of Kentucky Academic [Calendar](#).

Time Limit for Degree

Master's/specialist students have 6 years to complete all requirements for the degree, but extensions up to an additional 4 years may be requested for a total of 10 years. Extensions may be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School or designee.

A student terminated for exceeding time-to-degree limits may be readmitted to pursue the degree without re-taking all required coursework. Coursework that has expired (as above) must still be retaken. The request for reinstatement should provide a detailed description of the requirements that must be fulfilled in order to receive the degree.

Concurrent Degree Programs

Concurrent enrollment in two master's programs is permitted with the approval of the student's Graduate Advisor(s), the DGS's in both programs, and the Graduate School. In concurrent programs, up to 9 hours of coursework may be counted toward both degrees. Students requesting concurrent status must complete the [Concurrent Master's Degree request form](#). A request for concurrent enrollment in a master's and doctoral degree program requires a separate [Concurrent Master's and Doctoral Degrees request form](#).

Graduate Certificates

All graduate certificate-seeking students must submit an on-line application to the Graduate School; this applies even if they are currently enrolled in a graduate program at UK. If enrolled, there is no application fee; those who are not enrolled in graduate school at UK must pay the standard application fee of \$65.00. For currently enrolled students there is no limit to the number of hours that can be applied to both the degree and the certificate (unless the program/certificate owners specify otherwise). For a certificate to

be awarded all students are required to apply for their certificate in MyUK, using the same process as when students apply for degrees: <https://myuk.uky.edu/irj/portal> (Click on Student Services /myRecords / Graduate Degree Application).

Doctoral Degrees

Residence Requirements

Students must complete the equivalent of two years of residency prior to the qualifying examination and one year of post-qualifying residency. Specifics of these requirements are detailed below.

Pre-Qualifying Residency

Students must complete at least 36 credit hours of graduate coursework to be eligible to take the qualifying examination. An awarded master's degree from the University of Kentucky or from another accredited school may satisfy up to 18 of this 36-hour pre-qualifying requirement. To request Master's credit the DGS can send an e-mail to the [Graduate School Dean](#). Credit for a prior Master's degree cannot be combined with transfer of credit.

Post-Qualifying Residency

Students are required to enroll in a 2-credit hour course, XXX-767: Dissertation Residency Credit, after successfully completing the qualifying examination. This constitutes full-time enrollment. For students who are not on an assistantship, the Graduate School provides a scholarship for the out-of-state portion of the (2) credit hours associated with a 767 course and the student will only be responsible for the in-state tuition rate plus mandatory fees. Students must remain continuously enrolled in this course every fall and spring semester until they have completed and defended the dissertation. The student need not be physically present on campus while enrolled for credit after the qualifying examination. Students are required to complete a minimum of two semesters of 767 before they can graduate.

757

A student who is preparing to take the qualifying exam may enroll in XXX-757 for the semester in which the exam is scheduled. Like 767, this two-credit course counts as full-time. The DGS is responsible for confirming the student's plans, as the course is nonrepeatable. Should the student fail the exam or postpone it, they must enroll for 9 credits in the next semester. The course is graded S (exam passed), UN (exam failed), or I (exam postponed).

The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee should be formed and appointed no later than the point at which 18 credit hours of graduate work in the doctoral program have been completed, and at least one year prior to the Qualifying Examination. The advisory committee has a core of four members. This core must include a minimum of two faculty members from the graduate program (with one being the major professor as chair or co-chair), and one representative from outside the graduate program. All members of the core must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kentucky and three (including the major professor) must possess full Graduate Faculty status.

Experts who hold non-academic positions may be appointed to a doctoral committee upon request, additional to the core and the outside representative. The program should submit to the Office of Academic Services a c.v. of the nominee and an explanation from the committee chair or the Director of

Graduate Studies of why the appointment is beneficial to the doctoral student. See further details on p. 8.

When faculty members retire or leave the University, they may continue their service on previously established doctoral Advisory Committees but cannot be appointed to new committees. Requests to continue service should be made by the DGS to the [Graduate School Dean](#), and include the names of all students affected.

Online Form Submission

A web-based process is used for submitting the following forms required for doctoral students:

- Advisory committee formation.
- Modifications to advisory committee composition.
- Request to schedule the Qualifying Examination.
- Notification of Intent to Schedule the Final Examination.
- Request for Final Examination.

Form submission is initiated by the student. Pressing the “Submit” button sends the form to the DGS for review. If changes are required, pressing the “Reject” button will send an e-mail to the student asking them to consult with the DGS. Pressing the “Submit” button forwards the form to the Graduate School for review. Please contact the [Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Services](#) with any questions regarding this process.

Foreign Language Requirement

The Graduate Faculty does not require a foreign language for the doctoral degree. Individual programs, however, may require one or more foreign languages. Students satisfy the requirement by one of the methods detailed in the prior Master’s Degree section of this document. Requests for exceptions to existing policy should be made by the DGS to the [Graduate School Dean](#).

The Qualifying Examination

The request to schedule the Qualifying Examination should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. Before scheduling the Qualifying Exam, all requirements for the degree should be completed (except the final exam and dissertation.) Students with “I” grades or “S” grades in credit-bearing courses will not be allowed to sit for the Qualifying Examination until letter grades are assigned for these courses. The Qualifying Examination card is sent electronically to the DGS prior to the date of the examination. No exam should commence without a card. All members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee must be present at the oral qualifying examination. The results of the examination must be reported by the DGS to The Graduate School within 7 days of its conclusion. A majority vote is required to pass this examination. If the committee vote is a tie, the candidate fails. If the result is failure, the student may elect to sit for the exam a second time. The advisory committee determines the conditions to be met before another examination may be given, including a minimum time between exams. The minimum time between examinations is three months; maximum is one year after taking the first examination. A third examination is not permitted. If a student fails the qualifying examination on the

first attempt, the Advisory Committee should not be changed prior to re-examination without approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Students are admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree after they have successfully completed the Qualifying Examination; the date is noted on the transcript.

Pre-Qualifying Time Limit

Students are required to take the qualifying examination within five years of entry into the program. Extensions up to an additional three years may be requested. Extensions may be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School upon receipt of a request from the DGS. Requests for extensions longer than twelve months require in addition the positive recommendation of the chair of the student's doctoral advisory committee. If the qualifying examination has not been passed at the end of five years, or at the end of all approved time extensions, the student will be dismissed from the program. Requests for time extensions should be made by the DGS to the [Graduate School Dean](#).

Degree Application

To be eligible to receive a degree, doctoral students must submit an on-line "Application for Degree" form via <https://myuk.uky.edu/iri/portal>.

Doctoral Final Examination

The Graduate School must receive a "Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Doctoral Examination" form in order to initiate the doctoral final examination process. The "Notification of Intent" form must be submitted to the Graduate School at least eight weeks before the exam is to be scheduled. Upon submission of the form, the Graduate School appoints an Outside Examiner. Note that the minimum eight-week lead time is required to secure a suitable outside examiner and to perform the necessary audit of the student's academic record (a student will not be allowed to sit for the Final Examination until any remaining "I" or "S" grades in letter-graded courses have been assigned letter grades).

Following the appointment of the Outside Examiner, the final examination date may be set by submitting the "Request for Final Examination" at least two weeks before the scheduled date for the Final Exam. The Graduate School will send announcements of the examination to each committee member and to the student. Doctoral Final Examinations may only be scheduled when classes are in session (fall and spring semesters, and summer session). Requests for exceptions to this policy should be submitted by the DGS to the [Graduate School Dean](#). Examination and degree conferral deadlines can be found in the [University Calendar](#).

The following are Graduate School procedures for conducting the Final Examination:

- At the outset of the Examination, the DGS or committee chair should verify that the Examination Card is available. If this is not the case, the committee chair or DGS must call the Graduate School (859-257-2411) to determine if the examination may proceed.
- The Examination may not begin until all voting members of the committee are present (these names are listed on the examination card).
- An Examination may be cancelled prior to its official start for substantive reason with no permanent consequences for the student. The student has not failed the examination in this case because it was

never officially begun. Substantive reasons can include a missing committee member, a sudden difficulty in the candidate's personal life that may affect performance, or a (late) opinion on the part of one or more committee members, for example that the dissertation is not ready to defend. In such cases, the committee may hold an open or closed discussion to review the issues at hand and reach a decision on whether to hold the examination or not. Furthermore, the candidate does have the right to cancel the examination prior to its start. If the examination is cancelled, it must be formally re-scheduled with the Graduate School in the standard fashion. A minimum two-week interval is required for re-scheduling the examination.

- Once the examination has begun, all committee members must remain present for the duration of the process, and it must be carried through until its end. A formal vote must be taken and recorded on the examination card, along with the signatures of all (voting) members. There are only two outcomes possible; by majority vote, Pass or Fail. The examination may not be suspended for an extended period to permit the candidate to correct deficiencies, and subsequently re-convened. The only suspensions permitted are short ones to permit the candidate or committee members to refresh themselves.
- If an emergency situation should arise during the course of an examination, the committee chair or DGS should immediately call the Graduate School (859-257-2411) to seek guidance.

Outside Examiner on Final Examination

The Graduate School will independently appoint the outside examiner to the Final Examination Committee. Care is taken to appoint outside examiners who have some understanding of and interest in the topic of the dissertation. When the Notification of Intent is submitted, the DGS or advisor can recommend programs that may have faculty members qualified to serve as outside examiner. Specific faculty member nominations will also be considered. The Graduate School will not appoint a particular outside examiner on the basis of a student's (or Committee's) desire to hold the Final Examination on a specific date, or at a specific time. For selected dissertations, the Dean of the Graduate School may appoint a faculty member from another institution to serve as the outside examiner (see the Nietzel Visiting Distinguished Faculty program [here](#) and as described below).

The role of the outside examiner on the Final Examination Committee includes (a) assurance that only qualified candidates receive degrees and (b) assurance that the examination is administered in a fair, impartial and professional manner. At the time of appointment, the outside examiner on each examination will be given access to an on-line questionnaire addressing (a) the quality of the dissertation, (b) the adequacy of the student's defense, and (c) the administration of the examination. The outside examiner should complete the questionnaire and return it to the Graduate School. Summaries of reports are provided to programs periodically (every 2–3 years).

The student must deliver to the Outside Examiner a complete, approved copy of the dissertation at least two weeks in advance of the examination. Direct questions concerning the assignment of the outside examiner for doctoral final examinations to [the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Services](#).

The Dissertation

The final copy of the dissertation must be approved by the Graduate School **within 60 days** of the Final Examination or on the last day to present a dissertation for a graduating candidate, if a specific graduation date is desired. Failure to present the dissertation within 60 days may result in the student having to be re-examined. Requests for exceptions to the 60-day policy should be sent by the DGS or the student's advisor to the [Graduate School Dean](#).

Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETDs)

All doctoral dissertations are submitted in electronic format. [Click here for instructions](#). To view the current collection of ETDs, go to <http://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool/>.

Post-Qualifying Time Limit

From the end of the semester in which the qualifying examination is passed, students have five years to complete all requirements for the doctoral degree. Extensions up to an additional 5 years can be requested for a total of 10 years. All requests should be initiated by the DGS and accompanied by a letter of support from the student's advisor. Extensions require the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School or their designee. Failure to complete all degree requirements within 10 years of initially taking the qualifying examination will also result in the termination of degree candidacy.

A student terminated for exceeding time-to-degree limits may be readmitted to pursue the degree without re-taking all required coursework. Coursework that has expired (as above) must still be retaken. The request for reinstatement should provide a detailed description of the requirements that must be fulfilled in order to receive the degree.

Assessment of Good Progress for Doctoral Students

The Graduate Faculty of each doctoral program is required to define good progress toward completion of the doctoral degree. This information should be included in the program's Graduate Student Handbook (it is recommended that the consequences of lack of good progress are also included in the handbook). Each doctoral student's progress toward the degree will be reviewed (at least) annually by either the Graduate Faculty in the program, the doctoral advisory committee, or the graduate education committee. Students must be informed in writing of the results of that meeting by the Director of Graduate Studies, the chair of the advisory committee, or their designee. The Graduate School currently does not require copies of these reports.

Policy on Defenses and Exams

All members of a student's graduate committee are expected to attend and participate in any examination as part of the student's graduate (Master's or Doctoral) degree program. Traditionally, examinations are conducted with the student meeting with their committee while gathered in one physical location on campus. When it is deemed necessary to hold an exam in hybrid or completely virtual form, the DGS must be informed of the exam's nature, as well as the reasons necessitating absence from campus of any of the participants.

A virtual or hybrid exam should adhere to the following technical requirements. Departments or programs may enforce stricter guidelines than those outlined, including an on-campus-only policy if deemed necessary and appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies for each program to ensure that the student and their full committee all agree on any type of exam format other than the standard in-person exam. The Graduate School must be notified of the modality by which the oral exam will be conducted: in-person, virtual or hybrid. This information must be included in the Comment field of the request for the QE or Final exam form and does not need to be approved in advance of the exam.

Technical Requirements

In cases where departments or programs allow any level of virtual participation, from one virtual member to a fully virtual event, they must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Prior to any oral exam, the student and Committee Chair coordinate with other committee members regarding the protocol for the exam.
2. All participants must join using university-adopted videoconferencing tools that allow for **fully interactive** audio and video communications along with screen-sharing capabilities, which must be maintained throughout the examination and any related discussion.
3. The use of audio-only communications is not permitted; each participant must keep their camera on throughout the exam.
4. Participation merely by viewing a recording of the oral examination is specifically prohibited.
5. All members of the committee, on- or off-site, must participate in the final evaluation of the examination or defense; provisions must be made to record their votes and collect their signatures as necessary using the system approved by the Graduate School. This must be submitted to the Graduate School as soon as possible, but within 7 days of the exam.
6. The Committee Chair, or another non-student designee, shall be the host of the virtual meeting. A co-host may be assigned so that the event will not be interrupted by technical difficulties. The host should mute all participants (or ask participants to mute themselves) and ask the student to share their screen, if a presentation is involved, in order to make the presentation visible to all attendees. The host must also ensure that appropriate security precautions are taken to prevent any interruptions of the event.
7. Following any public portion of the defense, the host shall ask all non-committee members to leave the meeting, or the host may manually remove them. In programs where the defense has both a public and a private portion, the committee may then continue the event as outlined in their program protocols.
8. Once the committee has completed the examination of the student, the host shall place the student into the waiting room (or have the committee members use a breakout room) so the committee can conduct their deliberations in private.

The Committee Chair must have a secondary videoconferencing system available as a back-up in the case of technical difficulties. Cancellation of the examination should only occur in the case where both the primary and secondary back-up systems fail or due to internet failure. If an examination must be

rescheduled, it will be done without prejudice to the student. Since committee deliberations are an essential aspect of the examination, completing the examination and final discussion via email or other non-audiovisual means is not an option.

If the student or any committee member(s) have a disability that will be impacted by virtual participation, accommodations for participation must be provided.

Graduation Deadlines

Key deadlines for students who plan to complete their master's or doctoral degree can be found [here](#).

Myrle E. and Verle D. Nietzel Visiting Distinguished Faculty (VDF) Award

This award program provides funding to bring a nationally recognized scholar to campus to serve as the Graduate School's Outside Examiner for an outstanding doctoral student's Final Examination. The distinguished visitor will also give a colloquium on his or her research that will enrich the scholarly environment for the program in which the student is enrolled. The award provides up to \$2,000 for the visiting faculty's honorarium and travel costs. Requests for support should be submitted at least two months in advance of the anticipated defense date. Additional details and a list of past award winners are available at: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/visiting-distinguished-faculty-program>

Student Funding

Administrative Regulation 5:2, Teaching, Research and Graduate Assistants ([AR 5:2](#)) contains the policies governing graduate students that are supported by an assistantship. This includes definitions, work time expectations, limits on funding, evaluations, reappointments and non-reappointments and termination.

In fall of 2022, UK President Capilouto established the Graduate Stipend and Benefits Committee to evaluate the status of funded student support and explore other ways to support graduate students. This committee's work has resulted in changes to the tuition scholarship to now cover all mandatory fees as well as, for the first time, establishing a baseline stipend for each discipline which will be reviewed annually. This ensures that every teaching assistant, research assistant and graduate assistant receives competitive compensation, along with their tuition scholarships. The published list of baseline graduate stipends can be found [here](#).

The Graduate School administers a broad range of student support programs including tuition scholarships, fellowships, and awards for under-represented students. The details of these various programs are provided on the [Graduate School website](#) but are summarized below. If you have further questions, please contact the [Graduate](#) School Business Office

Tuition Scholarships

Tuition Scholarships for students holding Assistantships

TAs, RAs and GAs receive tuition scholarships paid at the standard graduate tuition rate for both the in-state and out-of-state portions of tuition; these tuition scholarships are processed by the Graduate School for all qualifying students. Full-time TAs, RAs, and GAs receive a full tuition scholarship and half-time assistantships receive a half scholarship. Tuition scholarships also cover all mandatory fees. Graduate students are responsible for paying Distance Learning fees, International Center fee, and any required course/programs fees. For TA scholarships allocated to the colleges, the Graduate School charges a university Core account for the in-state tuition and fees. For RAs and GAs, the in-state tuition and fees are recharged to the academic program in which the RA or GA is enrolled, or the active grant number provided on the GSAS form. For current year standard graduate tuition, see the Student Account Services [website](#). Any out-of-state tuition will be processed by the Graduate School and will be charged to another university Core account for TAs and GAs, and to an account in UKRF for RAs. If students on a Research or Graduate Assistantship are enrolled in classes during a summer session, the Graduate School will provide an out-of-state tuition scholarship. However, it is the responsibility of the hiring department or the student to pay for the in-state tuition and fees directly as the Graduate School does not do a recharge as in the fall and spring semesters. Teaching assistants do not receive an out-of-state tuition scholarship during the summer; departments handle any summer teaching assistantships directly. The Graduate School does not provide tuition scholarships during winter term.

In order to award a tuition scholarship for TAs, RAs and GAs, a Notice of Appointment to Graduate Student Academic Staff (GSAS) Form must be filed **each semester**. This document notifies the Graduate School a tuition scholarship has been offered, approved and accepted; provides a formal contract

between the student on an assistantship and the University of Kentucky; and interfaces with the TA Credentials database to ensure SACS accreditation standards are met. The GSAS system does not interface with payroll. Detailed guidance on how to fill out GSAS forms and how to designate access to the GSAS forms are distributed each semester and can also be found [here](#).

Tuition scholarship funds from the Graduate School are not permitted for courses taken with an audit (AU) grade type or as pass/fail. Tuition scholarships are also not intended for courses taken by doctoral students in addition to the 2 credit 767 course, or courses not required for the student's graduate degree as indicated in the program's Graduate Catalog pages. This policy is enforced for all graduate assistants (TAs, RAs, GAs) and fellowship awardees receiving tuition scholarships through the Funding office. Graduate students may take additional classes and pay for tuition and fee charges on their own. Graduate programs/colleges can also be financially responsible for these tuition costs if they approve any such courses or fail to monitor enrollment of their funded graduate students. This policy is not intended to preclude graduate students from taking remedial courses, both at the graduate and undergraduate level, required by their academic program and DGS. Nor is this policy intended to preclude graduate students from taking courses to complete certificate programs, as long as the major professor, DGS, and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies endorse enrollment in certificate or undergraduate courses. DGSs who wish to request exceptions to the tuition scholarship policy may send an e-mail, copied to their Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies (or similar Associate Dean in their college), to the Graduate School's tuition scholarship officer at gsas@email.uky.edu. Please see the [Graduate School website](#) for the most recent updates.

Graduate School Allocated Tuition Scholarships

Some colleges receive Allocated Tuition Scholarships (ATS) as part of their Block Funding package, and these ATS are used via the GSAS form process as described in the GSAS instructions. These are to be used at the college's discretion.

Graduate School Dean's Tuition Scholarships

Colleges receive an annual dollar amount that can be used to help cover in-state tuition costs for RAs whose stipend comes from funding sources that don't cover tuition or that have a budget insufficient to cover the full tuition costs. These are used via the GSAS form process as described in the GSAS instructions.

Fellowships

The current listing of fellowships is on the [Graduate School website](#). A few fellowships have deadlines in the fall, but most deadlines occur in the spring. Eligibility details and application instructions are provided for each opportunity. Each fellowship has a separate application.

Some fellowships provide tuition scholarships and/or student health insurance, as specified in the descriptions at the fellowships link above. Additional work assignments, fellowships or other funding that may be permitted for Graduate School Fellowship recipients must be approved by the Graduate

School Funding Office. Depending on the university budget and endowment pools, some fellowships may not be offered every year.

Graduate School fellowships often seek applications from students meeting very specific qualifications such as those pursuing a degree in selected programs or students from a designated geographic region.

Funding Office Contact: Fiscal Officer; P: 257-9684; grad.fellowships@uky.edu

Graduate Student Funding Deadlines

Key dates for student assistantships and GSAS forms can be found [here](#).

Graduate Student Support

Graduate School College Block Funding Program

The Graduate School notifies the Deans each year of their Block Funding amount and they are responsible for deciding how the money is allocated to departments and/or for college-level programs. Block funding money may only be used for the following types of graduate student support:

- Stipends for graduate students enrolled in a UK graduate program
- Tuition payments (via SAG form) for graduate students enrolled in a UK graduate program
- Costs for UK graduate students to attend meetings in their field, including costs related to travel, lodging, and meeting registration
- Costs for UK graduate students to travel to sites needed to do research or training deemed to be necessary for that student's thesis/dissertation work

Student FICA Exemption

The Controller's Division sets the policy on FICA withholding for students based on IRS procedures. This policy applies to individuals who are enrolled graduate students who have a University payroll assignment such as a teaching assistantship, research assistantship, or graduate assistantship. Graduate students who are enrolled at least half-time who are not considered career employees of the University, qualify for the student FICA withholding exemption. Half-time enrollment corresponds to enrollment in five or more hours in each of the fall and spring semesters. For the summer terms, the student must enroll in at least three hours of coursework. Note that students enrolled in the XXX-748 (0 hour) and 767 (2 hour) residency courses also receive the FICA exemption. For further guidance, click [here](#).

University Health Service Fee and Student Health Insurance Plan

The [University Health Service Fee](#) allows graduate students to be seen at the Student Health Clinic whereas the [Student Health Insurance Plan](#) is the health insurance for needs beyond the Health Clinic. The Student Health Plan (SHIP) office has provided an [overview](#) of these two programs that support graduate student health.

Not all graduate students are required to pay the health fee. Only full-time students in nine hours or more have the mandatory health fee automatically applied to their student account. For all other students, including those in zero and two-credit hour courses, the health fee is optional. These students may access University Health Service by voluntarily paying a health fee or by being seen on a fee-for-service basis. To use University Health Service in the summer, all students must pay the summer health fee or pay on a fee-for-service basis. Voluntary requests for the health fee should be made to [Student Account Services](#). If a student is supported by an assistantship, this request should go to GSFiscalAffairs@uky.edu by the date communicated to the students each semester. **Please be sure students who transition from 9 credit hours full-time to 757 or to 767 post-qualifying status realize that they must specifically add the University Health Service Fee to their accounts if they want to have access to the Student Health Clinic.** Services related to hospitalization, surgical procedures, accident care and any other health care provided outside University Health Service, are not covered by the health fee. The University, including University Hospital, assumes no responsibility for a student's medical expenses.

Health insurance coverage is provided to all enrolled and degree-seeking graduate students with full-time teaching, research, or graduate assistantships, qualifying institutional fellowship recipients, or a combination of these positions. The [Student Health Insurance Plan Office](#) manages this program. The health plan is provided to eligible graduate students at no cost. The student health plan is a preferred provider organization (PPO), and UK Hospital and UK College of Medicine physicians are the in area preferred providers. When receiving treatment away from UK, students can expect higher out-of-pocket costs. Below are some of the most frequently asked questions about this program:

Q. Who should funded graduate students contact when they have questions about their insurance?

A. The Graduate School cannot answer questions about the Student Health Insurance Plan. Insurance questions and claims issues are managed by the Student Health Insurance Plan Office at StudentHealthPlan@uky.edu.

Q: How do I know if one of my graduate students is eligible for University-funded health insurance?

A: There are three criteria used to determine eligibility for University-funded health insurance. Students must be 1) currently enrolled in the Graduate School 2) degree seeking and 3) on UK payroll with an assignment as a full-time (50% Employment FTE%) TA, RA, GA, as an institutional fellowship recipient or a full combination of these positions (full-time generally means an assignment of 20 hours a week or a fellowship of \$9000 or more). For eligible students to be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan the correct payroll actions must be executed. Students who are funded on external fellowships may also receive insurance coverage but should contact the [Student Health Insurance Plan Office](#) with any eligibility questions.

Q. What action do students need to take to apply for the insurance?

A. None. Students meeting eligibility requirements will be enrolled automatically by the Student Health Insurance Plan Office each semester (Fall and Spring) when student payroll assignments are correctly

processed. International students (F-1, J-1, or J2 visa) are automatically enrolled in the UK Student Insurance Plan upon registration for classes.

Q. What are the insurance coverage periods?

A. These are shown below for the different Assistantship/Fellowship terms. Please note: For new graduate students, regardless of the effective date of their assistantship, insurance coverage cannot begin prior to the August 15 start date. Please see the chart below for further clarification:

Assistantship or Fellowship Term	Periods of Coverage
Fall	August 15 to December 31
Spring/Summer	January 1-August 14

Q. How much is the annual premium?

A. For 2023-24, the annual premium is **\$3,122**.

Q. Who pays the premium for health insurance for my graduate students?

- A.** TAs: The Graduate School charges coverage to a central university account
- RAs: Account from which they receive their stipend or a departmental account (see details below)
- GAs: Account from which they receive their stipend
- Graduate School fellows: Graduate School accounts, as appropriate
- Departmental fellows or traineeships: Account from which they receive their stipend, or another account provided in the payroll assignment.

Q. How is the insurance premium charged to my grant account?

A. If a payroll assignment is charging a grant, the Student Health Insurance Plan can not be directly charged to the grant using the 9027 infotype. The 9027 must charge a department account. If no 9027 is created, SHIP will charge to the cost center associated with the position number. If it is appropriate to charge the SHIP to a grant, then it will be necessary for the department to process this with a JV.

If a student has multiple assignments, their insurance should be paid in proportion to their effort on the grant (Employment Percentage).

Q. May a funded graduate student decline the coverage?

A. Health insurance coverage for international students is mandatory. Domestic funded graduate students may decline if they are covered by a comparable plan by completing a Health Insurance Declination [Form](#).

Q. What action do directors of graduate studies need to take to make sure eligible graduate students receive health insurance coverage?

A. Be sure graduate student payroll assignments are completed in HR as quickly as possible with the appropriate employment percentage. This is especially important during the spring semester. For example, students with split assignments that end in Dec and start again in Jan may have their insurance discontinued if a payroll assignment is not completed by late Dec or early Jan.

Q. What happens if a student’s assignment ends?

A. The three criteria for funded health insurance coverage are verified each semester; only students meeting eligibility requirements will continue to have their insurance premiums provided by the University. Changes made mid-semester to assignments, fellowships or status may affect program eligibility. Please contact the Student Health Insurance Plan Office in the event of a mid- semester change to discuss the implications of the specific situation.

Q. Can students continue their coverage on their own, even though the University is no longer paying their premiums?

A. Yes. Graduate students not meeting eligibility criteria for spring semester insurance have until January 14 to continue their coverage at their own expense.

Q. Can dependents be enrolled in the insurance plan?

A. Yes, students may purchase additional coverage via the insurance [website](#).

Parking

Fellows and graduate assistants are eligible to apply for [parking permits](#).

Uniform Resolution on Graduate Student Offers

The University of Kentucky conforms to the Council of Graduate Schools [resolution](#) on financial assistance offers made to graduate students:

“Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship or assistantship) by a prospective or enrolled graduate student for the next academic year completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution.

If a student accepts an offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit a written resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. Applicants are not required to obtain a formal release from the program whose offer they accepted, either before or after the April 15 deadline. Once applicants have informed the program that they are withdrawing their acceptance of the offer, they then can accept any other offers. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.”

This Resolution applies to offers of financial support only, not offers of admission. The deadline should be 11:59 pm of April 15 in the time zone of the school offering financial support.

Pre-Employment Background Checks

All new graduate assistants (RA/TA/GA) are required by KY state law to undergo a pre-employment background check prior to beginning work as a graduate assistant. This includes all new hires that have not worked in some capacity for UK within the past five years. Relevant HR links:

<https://www.uky.edu/hr/hiring-officials/hiring-officials-pre-employment-screenings-and-i-9-process-essentials>

<https://www.uky.edu/hr/employment/student-employment/uk-student-employee-information>

<https://www.uky.edu/hr/employment/hiring-officials/faqs-pre-employment-screening>

Program Support

Analytics

Services provided by the Graduate School’s Office of Finance, Funding, and Analytics include completing external surveys and meeting internal reporting needs. Examples of External surveys include the NSF-NIH Graduate Student Survey, Survey of Earned Doctorates, and the Council of Graduate School’s Graduate Enrollment and Degrees and International Graduate Admissions Surveys. Examples of internal reports include reporting available to units via the [Graduate Data Portal](#).

Gaining Access to the Graduate Data Portal

If you receive notification that you cannot access the Graduate Data Portal or there are additional staff in your area who use these reports and need access, you will need to request access to the Graduate Data Portal and Student Detail projects through the [Tableau Users page](#). This form can also be used to request initial Tableau Server access if this hasn’t been previously done.

Enrollment Data

Official (CPE, IPEDS) fall enrollment headcounts by college and program can be found [Institutional Research’s web site](#). Unique Academic Year (summer I and II, fall, and spring) enrollment headcounts can be found on the [Graduate Data Portal](#). Please note that these reports are for internal reporting functions only. For external reporting use the Official Student Data located on the Institutional Research web site.

Degrees Awarded Data

Official (CPE, IPEDS) counts of degrees by college and program can be found on the [Office of Institutional Research’s web site](#). Counts of degrees awarded can also be found on the [Graduate Data Portal](#). As above, please do not use these data for external reporting.

Graduate Data Portal

Reports available on the Graduate Data Portal:

GS Admissions – Applicants to Graduate Programs
GS Admissions – First-time Graduate and Graduate Professional Students
GS Admissions – Test Scores for Grad School Applicants
GS Admissions – University Scholars Program Data
GS Enrollment – Graduate Credit Hours
GS Enrollment – Graduate Enrollment
GS Enrollment – Test Scores for Enrolled Students
GS Funding – GSAS Contract Details
GS Funding – GSAS Users and Roles
GS Funding – Years of Assistantship Funding per the GSAS System
GS General Info – Graduate Faculty
GS General Info – Graduate Program Inventory

GS General Info – Graduate Student GPAs
GS General Info – Graduate Student Prior Degrees
GS Progression – 748 Enrollments: Master’s Thesis
GS Progression – 767 Enrollments with Qualifying Exam Status and Cumulative 767 Terms Enrolled
GS Progression – Advisory Committees
GS Progression – Exam Qualifications including Qualifying Exam
GS Progression – Graduate Degrees and Certificates Awarded
GS Progression – Milestones toward Degree Timing
GS Progression – Retention
GS Progression – Time to Degree and Graduation Rates

Ad-Hoc Student Data Requests

If the DGS cannot find the data needed on either the Institutional Research’s web site or the [Graduate Data Portal](#), please contact your college’s Tableau Superuser, as these individuals are the starting point for generation of new data. [Click here to find your college’s superuser\(s\)](#).

The Graduate School will periodically request that Directors of Graduate Studies review particular workbooks to ensure adherence to policies and procedures. Several common situations are presented below.

- Students enrolled in 767 courses with no qualifying exam
- Students approaching years of assistantship funding limits
- GSAS contracts pending acceptance

Administrative Policies

Faculty Teaching at the Graduate Level

In response to regulations from the accrediting agency of the University of Kentucky, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), we require the following:

- Courses intended for graduate studies at the University must be taught by faculty members who have a terminal degree in the discipline or a closely related discipline. These courses are designated by the numbers 400G-799. The terminal degree in most cases is the doctorate. Ideally, these courses should be taught by Graduate Faculty members. If a program needs to assign a person without a terminal degree to teach a graduate level course, the program's chair must first petition the Dean of the Graduate School, explaining the unique circumstances and qualifications supporting this assignment.
- Courses that have both undergraduate and graduate students in the courses are usually designated as 400G or 500 level courses. In all courses with a mixed student population, there must be a clear differentiation in the syllabus of differing course requirements and grading criteria for graduate students and undergraduates. Copies of syllabi must be retained by the College.

Parental Leave for Graduate Students

Teaching, Research, and Graduate Assistants, as well as Graduate Fellows, will be entitled to up to two weeks of parental leave without loss of stipend immediately following the birth of a child, or upon either the initial placement or the legal adoption of a child under eighteen years of age. Eligible Graduate Assistants and Fellows are those students who have an appointment form on file in the Graduate School and who hold an active appointment at the time the parental leave is to be taken. Graduate students who hold only an hourly appointment are not eligible for paid parental leave.

Graduate Assistants and Fellows will also be entitled to unpaid parental leave, up to a maximum total period of leave (paid and unpaid) of twelve weeks. Within a given academic year contract, the student's department will make every effort to ensure the continuity of assistantship funding; the terms of specific teaching and/or research arrangements will be determined by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the student and the hiring unit, if separate from the student's academic department. As with any leave, students should make every effort to communicate with their units regarding the timing of the proposed leave; a minimum of a 30-day notice should be provided if possible. Please note that units may request documentation of the birth or adoption.

Graduate School Forms

The Graduate School relies on a variety of standard forms for the processing of academic actions (e.g., credit transfer, exam scheduling), as well as for fellowships and scholarships, appointments, student support, etc. Many of these forms can now be submitted on-line via the following pages on the Graduate School website: [Degree Forms](#), [Student Forms](#), and [Faculty & Staff Forms](#).

Provost's Policy on TA Credentials

The Graduate School oversees the provost's policy regarding the teaching credentials and support activities required for Teaching Assistants (TAs). The policy is based on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) teaching credentials guidelines for graduate teaching assistants in primary roles, as follows:

- An earned master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours completed in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.

For the purpose of this policy, primary teaching responsibility is defined as a teaching assignment assumed by an individual who functions autonomously to carry out teaching and learning activities, evaluate student performance, and assign final grades.

In addition to TAs with primary responsibility for teaching a class, the University employs TAs in three other major ways:

- (Type 2) To teach a section of a course under a course coordinator who closely supervises all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Courses eligible for Type 2 TAs must be approved by The Graduate School and should be sections of a multi-section course with a faculty member serving as the course coordinator. In this type of teaching assignment, TAs deliver the course by using a common syllabus, common textbook, common exams, and common grading criteria. "Common" here means established by the course coordinator and used across the sections of the course. The TA recommends a final grade to the course coordinator who reviews the recommendation and takes responsibility for the final grades. Also required is ongoing structured support of Type 2 TAs, e.g., weekly meetings, a support course, grading calibration sessions, a series of workshops geared specifically to the course being taught, etc.
- (Type 3) To support a primary instructor within the classroom setting, such as a recitation leader or lab instructor.
- (Type 4) To provide out-of-classroom support to a primary instructor. Type 4 TAs work behind the scenes with minimal direct student interaction but are engaged in instructional duties such as grading.
- Students providing out-of-classroom support may also be hired on an hourly basis, according to a standard rate set by the college.

The criteria below describe the credentials and support necessary for each TA type:

Type 1

A Teaching Assistant who has primary responsibility for teaching a class must:

- have an earned master's degree in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours completed in the teaching discipline. The faculty member making a teaching assignment is responsible for ensuring a match between the TA's educational credentials and the teaching area;

- have an assigned faculty member who provides supervision and support;
- participate in regular orientation and development programs and/or pedagogy courses provided by the Graduate School, CELT, the primary college, or the department for which she/he is teaching;
- participate in the [TA Observation and End-of-Semester Evaluation process](#) as required by the Graduate School and have an opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan for improvements (AR 5.2);
- participate in the university-required Teacher Course Evaluation process and have an opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan for improvements; and
- achieve a Category 1 status (a score of 3.5 or above) on the University's language screening if English is not the TA's primary language (AR 5.3). See the Graduate School's website for [equivalency information](#) on TOEFL iBT and IELTS academic speaking sub-scores.

Type 2

See important note above about courses eligible for Type 2 TAs. A TA who teaches a class under the direct supervision of a course coordinator must:

- be enrolled as a graduate student in the teaching area;
- have an assigned faculty member who provides supervision of and support for all teaching activities;
- participate in regular orientation and development programs and/or pedagogy courses provided by the Graduate School, CELT, the primary college, or the department for which she/he is teaching;
- participate in the [TA Observation and End-of-Semester Evaluation process](#) as required by the Graduate School and SACS and have an opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan improvements (AR 5.2);
- participate in the university-required Course Teacher Evaluation process and have an opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan for improvements;
- achieve a Category 1 status (a score of 3.5 or above) on the University's language screening if English is not the TA's primary language (AR 5.3). Note: Type 2 TAs teaching in foreign language courses must have Category 1 or Category 2 status (a score of 3.0 or above). See the Graduate School's website for [equivalency information](#) on TOEFL iBT and IELTS academic speaking sub-scores.

Type 3

A TA who serves in a supporting classroom role to a primary instructor must:

- be enrolled as a graduate student in the teaching area or a related teaching area;
- have an assigned faculty member who provides supervision and support;
- participate in regular orientation and development programs and/or pedagogy courses provided by the Graduate School, CELT, the primary college, or the department for which she/he is assisting;
- participate in the [TA Observation and End-of-Semester Evaluation process](#) as required by the Graduate School and SACS and have an opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan improvements (AR 5.2);
- participate if eligible in the university-required Teacher Course Evaluation process and have an opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan for improvements;

- achieve at least a Category 2 status (a score of 3.0 or above) on the University’s language screening if English is not the TA’s primary language (AR 5.3). See the Graduate School’s website for [equivalency information](#) on TOEFL iBT and IELTS academic speaking sub-scores.

Type 4

A TA who serves in a supporting educational role outside the classroom (e.g. grader) must:

- be enrolled as a graduate student in the teaching area or a related teaching area;
- have an assigned faculty member who provides supervision and support;
- participate in regular orientation and development programs provided by the Graduate School, CELT, the primary college, or the department for which she/he is teaching;
- participate in the [End-of-Semester Evaluation process](#) as required by the Graduate School and SACS and have the opportunity to discuss results with the faculty supervisor in order to plan improvements; and
- achieve at least a Category 2 status (a score of 3.0 or above) on the University’s language screening if English is not the TA’s primary language (AR 5.3). See the Graduate School’s website for [equivalency information](#) on TOEFL iBT and IELTS academic speaking sub-scores.

Policy on TAs Employed in Graduate-Level Courses

The Dean of the Graduate School must approve all cases in which TAs are to be employed in graduate-level courses.

- TAs must not be employed in primary-instructor roles (TA Types 1 or 2) in courses in which graduate students are enrolled. If employed in such courses, TAs must be Type 3 (e.g., lab assistant).
- TAs employed in a graduate-level course must have post-qualifying exam status or a master’s plus 18 graduate hours completed in the discipline. Exceptions may be made in cases of established national practice in the discipline.
- TAs must not be in the position of assigning final course grades. TAs may assign grades on daily work, quizzes, notebooks, lab participation, but only if such grades and comments are regularly reviewed by the instructor of record.
- A graduate-level course in which a TA is employed must not enroll students who are within the TA’s programmatic cohort (i.e., same program and year).
- The DGS in the assigned discipline must see that appropriate faculty oversight of a TA employed in a graduate-level course is in place and maintained throughout the course.

TA Credentials Database

The [TA Credentials Database \(TADB\)](#) monitors TA roles and qualifications, including minimum credit hour requirements and adherence to the [Provost’s Policy on TA Types and Credentials and on Employing TAs in Graduate-Level Courses](#). The TA Credentials Database issues warnings and error messages to help departments identify assignments that may be inappropriate, may require approval of The Graduate School, or may require justifications or further documentation of credentials. The database should be

monitored by the appointed users for the college or department (usually the administrative staff of the Directors of Graduate Studies) to verify accuracy, and all warnings and errors should be addressed or cleared by the biannual deadline, which is announced via email. The database is monitored by The Graduate School for institutional reporting to SACS, and by The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness, which periodically analyzes the teaching credentials in relation to courses taught by TAs. Annual results are forwarded to the Provost.

TA Supervision & Feedback

The training and mentoring of TAs is a great investment in their professional future. It is, moreover, the faculty's responsibility to ensure that undergraduate instruction is the highest quality possible. The system described below of faculty-TA interaction will help the University of Kentucky meet two central goals of graduate education: preparing future faculty and professionals and continuously improving undergraduate instruction. The TA Evaluation and Feedback process is summarized on the [Graduate School website](#).

To fulfill SACS requirements and to foster a mechanism of structured departmental feedback to TAs, each semester The Graduate School collects the first two items below documenting each TA's performance:

TA Class Observation Form

A faculty member in the program (one who holds a terminal degree in the discipline or a closely related discipline) must observe at least one class or lab session of each TA (except Type 4) in the program once a semester. If the program is small (fewer than 10 TAs), the program's designated TA coordinator (or course coordinator, lab supervisor, etc.) may serve as the observer; if the pool of TAs is large, numerous program faculty should assist. The Graduate School has developed an [online form](#) for this purpose, which, once the observer has completed and submitted it, will automatically be emailed to the TA. After reading the observation, the TA is encouraged to meet with the observer to discuss any constructive criticism and guidance for improvement. A copy of the completed form is automatically emailed to the Director of Graduate Studies. This email should be placed in the TA's file in the department. Any remaining observations (e.g., those needing converted from raw notes to the digital form, or those still in PDF) should be submitted before February 1 for fall terms or June 1 for spring terms.

In large classes with multiple sections, faculty must help the course coordinators with class observations. These faculty visits to TA instruction include discussion sections led by TAs under supervision of a course coordinator, lab sections under a lab supervisor, and independently taught sections of a course. TA instruction includes in-person and online sections (synchronous and asynchronous). TAs who assist directly in the classroom of a faculty member should be evaluated by the faculty member. TAs who are graders (and other Type 4s) are not observed but should be monitored by the supervisor for accuracy and consistency.

TA Supervisor's Evaluation of Overall Performance

The TA supervisor/coordinator should submit a semester-end evaluation of overall TA or lab assistant performance in the following areas for all TA Types, as applicable: reliability in group activities and in the

classroom, punctuality in assignments and grading, accuracy in presentation, knowledge of subject matter, and other items specific to the assignment. The Graduate School has developed an [online form](#) for this purpose, which, once the supervisor has completed and submitted it, will be automatically emailed to the TA. The completed form will also be automatically emailed to the Director of Graduate Studies. This email should be placed in the TA's file in the department. Evaluations should be completed and submitted before February 1 for fall terms or June 1 for spring terms.

Teacher/Course Evaluation

If the TA's assignment is TCE eligible, please make sure that each TA (Types 1 and 2 are required; Type 3 is optional) receives a TCE and that it is kept in the departmental file.

All three documents above should be kept in the student's departmental file for SACS scrutiny. The Graduate School needs only the first two items (Observation/Feedback Form and the End-of-Semester Performance Evaluation) for its files.

Mandatory Ongoing Training for TAs

Continuing TAs are required to attend departmental, college-level, or campus-wide (e.g., offered through CELT or The Graduate School) professional development activities each term they are employed, at least one of which should be held at or near the beginning of the term. TA Coordinators may ask the most experienced TAs to present on their own pedagogical experiences or best practices in the classroom, if they have been guided by faculty in that project. Coordinators may also combine this activity with other departments in related disciplines or with similar pedagogy. Each TA, new and returning, is required to attend.

The beginning-of-semester in-service activity should be held separately from the department's or college's New TA Orientation. These activities usually occur consecutively and should be scheduled to coordinate (but not overlap) with the dates of the university-wide Orientation for New TAs conducted by The Graduate School.

In addition to the beginning-of-semester activity for all TAs, each program is required to hold at least one mandatory in-service training event for TAs—continuing and new—during the semester.

Attendance should be required and recorded. For in-service training, some current practices will work, for example:

- departmental one-to-three-hour pedagogy courses, where they exist, or one of the courses in the Graduate School's GS-course curriculum
- ongoing course meetings which give guidance in pedagogical problems (for all TAs, not just multi-section courses)
- one departmental event on teaching practices
- presentations by TAs themselves about their work, if faculty are present and have guided them in the presentation
- attendance (required by the department) at some of CELT's or The Graduate School's scheduled teaching-related workshops.

Graduate Student Professional Enhancement

The Graduate School offers numerous resources and activities to assist students with building, sharpening, and articulating the skills and habits of mind needed for graduate student success. These resources complement and augment the resources that may be available within colleges and departments. An important part of the DGS role is assuring that students in your program remain aware of university-wide resources and activities that help them survive and thrive in graduate school. Several key resources are listed below, with more details found under the [Professional Enhancement tab](#) on the Graduate School's website.

Tools, Programs, and On-Demand Resources

- [Graduate Student Success Pathways](#), an interactive navigational tool providing guidance to students at every stage of the graduate student experience; this tool, unique to UK, will assist your students in deciding which of the many campus resources to engage with at the appropriate stages to optimize their success in the areas of research/scholarship, teaching, career exploration and preparation, and wellbeing.
- The GS-series of for-credit courses, also known as the [Preparing Future Faculty/Professionals Program](#) (which offers an optional [Graduate Certificate in College Teaching and Learning](#))
- The [GradDegree+ Program](#), a partnership with CELT and HR Training and Development, providing workshops in leadership, conflict management, time management, computing skills, pedagogy skills, etc.
- [Thesis and Dissertation Writing Camps](#)
- [The Thomas D. Clark Graduate Study](#) on the fifth floor of the W. T. Young Library
- [GradResearch Live! \(3-Minute Thesis\)](#) and [GradTeach Live!](#);
- Institutional subscriptions to robust online learning platforms, including [Magna Digital Library/20-Minute Mentor Commons](#), [Imagine PhD](#), and [Beyond the Professoriate](#) (formerly Aurora, for PhD career exploration and preparation).

Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Career Services

In collaboration with the Stuckert Career Center, the Graduate School offers various career development services and resources for graduate students and postdocs. Graduate students can take advantage of tailored programs like information sessions on CVs, resumes, and cover letters early and often in their graduate journey. They can also participate in events featuring employers and alumni to learn about hiring trends and practices. Students can find career sessions catered to graduate students by logging into [Handshake](#). They can also make an appointment to meet privately with a career advisor to explore different career options, discuss job search strategies, and get their application materials reviewed via Handshake. Information on scheduling via Handshake can be found [here](#).

English Language Support

The Graduate School is committed to promoting the success of all students inside and outside the classroom. Through a partnership with the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL), the Graduate School offers courses in academic writing (ESL 095) as well as speaking/listening (ESL 090 and 093) for students whose primary language is not English. More information about these credit-bearing courses can be found at this [link](#). The Graduate School oversees the administration of the [TA Language Screenings](#) for any TA whose primary language is not English.

Teaching Assistant Orientations

The Graduate School holds mandatory orientations for all new TAs twice a year (in August and January), currently a mix of Canvas modules and in-person sessions. Completion of all required orientation modules and activities (e.g., Microteaching) is a condition of employment as a TA (regardless of TA Type or role). New international TAs have additional orientation activities. The DGS is responsible for ensuring TAs are registered for and participate in all required orientation and screening activities. The Office for Graduate Student Professional Enhancement provides completion updates periodically. Current details about orientations are [here](#).

New Graduate Student Orientation

The Graduate School [orientation](#) for all new students is currently held online in [Canvas](#). Students are introduced to strategies that will help them transition effectively from undergraduate to graduate studies. Students learn about the array of resources and activities offered by various units across campus that will assist them in optimizing academic success, exploring and preparing for the range of career paths, and assuring holistic wellbeing.

The Graduate Student Congress

Founded in 2006, the Graduate Student Congress's mission is to bring together and represent the graduate-professional student and postdoc bodies at the University of Kentucky. This is accomplished through the organization of activities geared toward the social well-being and professional development of graduate-professional students and postdocs at UK. Frequently partnering with other entities on campus, including the Graduate School and the Student Government Association, the GSC provides a unique platform to connect meaningfully with the larger university community.

Each graduate program should elect or appoint a representative to the Graduate Student Congress. Only students in programs with representatives are eligible for funding through the GSC (such as travel and research awards). As an elected body of graduate-professional students and postdocs, the GSC offers a number of ways for graduate-professional students and postdocs to serve as advocates for its members. More information on the GSC is [here](#).