Program Requirements

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Student’s Advisory Committee

On-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework, the student will consult with the head of his or her major or administrative department concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student’s advisory committee for the master’s degree will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty representative of the student’s fields of study and research. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the advisory committee must be from the student’s department, and at least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student’s major department.

The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student’s advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair) with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student’s degree program, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee, and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

If the chair of a student’s advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student’s academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head or Chair of Intercollegiate faculty may request in writing to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student’s advisory committee without a co-chair for us to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

If the chair of the student’s advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship or record of study and is registered for 684 or 693 courses, the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the professional paper and the final examination. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Graduate and Professional School.

The committee members’ approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign en masse.

Degree Plan

On-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

The student’s advisory committee, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan. The degree plan must be completed and filed with the Graduate and Professional School prior to the deadlines imposed by the student’s college, and no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination.

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu (https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/)

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student’s academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student’s Request for Final Examination is approved the Graduate and Professional School.

Credit Requirement

On-Campus Degree Program

A minimum of 36 hours is required for the Master of Natural Resources Development degree.

Distance Education Degree Program

The minimum requirements for the degree are 36 hours of distance-based coursework. Explore the list of online courses on the MNRD course offerings page (https://essm.tamu.edu/academics/graduate/prospective/degrees/mnrddistance/distance-courses/).

Transfer of Credit

A student who has earned 12 hours of graduate credit in residence at Texas A&M University may be authorized to transfer courses in excess of the limits prescribed above upon the advice of the advisory committee and with the approval of the Graduate and Professional School. Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater might be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses
would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in
degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations
stated in the preceding section apply. Coursework in which no formal
grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are
earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit.
Courses appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F or U may not be
absolved by transfer work. Credit for thesis research or the equivalent is
not transferable. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any
college or university must be shown in semester credit hours or equated
to semester credit hours. An official transcript from the university at
which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the
Office of Admissions.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied
for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the
conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar
at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit
toward the degree must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional
School.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in
computing the GPA.

Distance Education Degree Program

The distance education modality allows a maximum of 9 hours of 300 or
400 level undergraduate transfer courses. See above for other transfer
credit policies.

Limitations on the Use of Transfer,
Extension and Certain Other Courses
On-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

Some departments may have more restrictive requirements for transfer
work. If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward
meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree under the
following limitations.

1. The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for
transfer credit is the greater of 12 hours or one-third (1/3) of the total
hours of a degree plan. The following restrictions apply.
   • Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses taken
     in residence at an accredited U.S. institution, or approved
     international institution with a final grade of B or greater will be
     considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were
     completed, the student was in degree-seeking status at Texas
     A&M University, or the student was in degree-seeking status at
     the institution at which the courses were taken; and if the courses
     would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student
     in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
   • Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for
degree plan credit.

2. The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate
non-degree (G6) classification at Texas A&M University which may be
considered for application to the degree plan is 12.

3. A zero credit 684 or 685 course is only allowed for non-thesis
option master's students. A zero credit 681 course can be used for
either thesis or non-thesis option master's students. Other courses,
including 691 research hours, are not eligible for zero credit.

4. Any combination of 684, 685, 690 and 693 may not exceed 25 percent
of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree
plan:
   • A maximum of 8 hours of 684 (Professional Internship) and/or
   • A maximum of 8 hours of 685 (Directed Studies), and
   • Up to 3 hours of 690 (Theory of Research), and
   • Up to 3 hours of 693 (Professional Studies).

5. A maximum of 2 hours of Seminar (681).

6. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate courses (300- or
400-level).

7. For graduate courses of three weeks’ duration or less, taken at other
institutions, up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day
week of coursework. Each week of coursework must include at least
15 contact hours.

8. No credit hours of 691 (Research) may be used.

9. Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.

10. Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.

11. For non-distance degree programs, no more than 50 percent of the
credit hours required for the program may be completed through
distance education courses.

12. To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University, students
must earn one-third or more of the credits through the institution’s
own direct instruction. This limitation also applies to joint degree
programs.

Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned
by the student’s advisory committee and approved by the Graduate and
Professional School.

Final Examination

On-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

The candidate must pass a final examination by dates announced each
semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School
Calendar. To be eligible to take the final examination, a student’s GPA
must be at least 3.000 for courses on the degree plan and for all courses
completed at Texas A&M which are eligible to be applied to a graduate
degree, and no unabsolved grades of D, F or U can occur for any course
listed on the degree plan. To absolve a deficient grade, the student must
repeat the course at Texas A&M University and achieve a grade of C or
better. All coursework on the degree plan must have been completed with
the exception of those hours for which the student is registered.

A request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted
to the Graduate and Professional School a minimum of 10 working days
in advance of the scheduled date for the examination. The Graduate and
Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellations. A
student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination
for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does
not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms
are excluded). The final exam cannot be held prior to the mid point of the
semester if questions on the exam are based on courses in which the
student is currently enrolled.

A professional paper, which is a scholarly report of a problem solving
nature, will be prepared by each student. The professional paper must
be submitted to the student’s advisory committee for approval prior to
the final examination. The final examination will cover all work taken on
the degree plan and at the option of the committee may be written or
oral or both. The examination is conducted by the student’s advisory
committee as formally constituted. Persons other than members of
the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and
the major professor, attend final examinations for advanced degrees. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam. A department can have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department.

The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Graduate and Professional School. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. If necessary, multiple copies of the form may be submitted with different committee member original signatures. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Master of Natural Resources Development degree candidates do not qualify to petition for an exemption from their final examination. Students in the distance program must also prepare a professional paper and participate in a final examination. This may be written, oral, or both, with an option to have a virtual oral examination.