The committee members’ signatures 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. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student’s research and dissertation or record of study, has the responsibility for calling all meetings of the committee. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, the preliminary examination, the dissertation or record of study 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.

**Degree Plan**

The student’s advisory committee will evaluate the student’s previous education and degree objectives. The committee, in consultation with the student, will develop a proposed degree plan and outline a research problem which, when completed, as indicated by the dissertation (or its equivalent for the degree of Doctor of Education or the degree of Doctor of Engineering), will constitute the basic requirements for the degree. The degree plan must be filed with the Graduate and Professional School prior to the deadline imposed by the student’s college and no later than 90 days prior to the preliminary examination.

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website [http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/](http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/). A minimum of 64 hours is required on the degree plan for the Doctor of Philosophy for a student who has completed a master’s degree. A student who has completed a DDS/DMD, DVM or a MD at a U.S. institution is also required to complete a minimum of 64 hours. A student who has completed a baccalaureate degree but not a master’s degree will be required to complete a 96-hour degree plan. Completion of a DDS/DMD, DVM or MD degree at a foreign institution requires completion of a minimum of 96 hours for the Doctor of Philosophy. A field of study may be primarily in one department or in a combination of departments. A degree plan must carry a reasonable amount of 691 (research). A maximum of 9 hours of 400-level undergraduate courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy.

Additional coursework may be added by petition to the approved degree plan by the student’s advisory committee if it is deemed necessary 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 by the Graduate and Professional School.

Approval to enroll in any professional course (900-level) should be obtained from the head of the department (or Chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable) in which the course will be offered before including such a course on a degree plan.

No credit may be obtained by correspondence study, by extension or for any course of fewer than three weeks duration.

For non-distance degree programs, no more than four courses may be taken by distance education without approval of the Graduate and Professional School and no more than 50 percent of the non-research credit hours required for the program may be completed through distance education courses.
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.

Transfer of Credit
Courses for which transfer credits are sought must have been completed with a grade of B or greater and must be approved by the student’s advisory committee and the Graduate and Professional School. These courses must not have been used previously for another degree. Except for officially approved cooperative doctoral programs, credit for thesis or dissertation research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for “internship” coursework in any form is not transferable. 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 courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Credit for coursework taken by extension is not transferable. 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. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours, or equated to semester credit hours.

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. An official transcript from the university at which transfer courses are taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Research Proposal
The general field of research to be used for the dissertation should be agreed on by the student and the advisory committee at their first meeting, as a basis for selecting the proper courses to support the proposed research.

As soon thereafter as the research project can be outlined in reasonable detail, the dissertation research proposal should be completed. The research proposal should be approved at a meeting of the student’s advisory committee, at which time the feasibility of the proposed research and the adequacy of available facilities should be reviewed. The approved proposal, signed by all members of the student’s advisory committee, the head of the student’s major department (or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School at least 20 working days prior to the submission of the Request for the Final Examination.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained on the website http://rcb.tamu.edu.

Examinations
Preliminary Examination for Doctoral Students
The student’s major department (or chair of the interdisciplinary degree program faculty, if applicable) and his or her advisory committee may require qualifying, cumulative or other types of examinations at any time deemed desirable. These examinations are entirely at the discretion of the department and the student’s advisory committee.

The preliminary examination is required. The preliminary examination for a doctoral student shall be given no earlier than a date at which the student is within 6 credit hours of completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan (i.e., all coursework on the degree plan except 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, 695, 697, 791, or other graduate courses specifically designated as S/U in the course catalog). The student should complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan.

Preliminary Examination Format
The objective of preliminary examination is to evaluate whether the student has demonstrated the following qualifications:

a. a mastery of the subject matter of all fields in the program;

b. an adequate knowledge of the literature in these fields and an ability to carry out bibliographical research;

c. an understanding of the research problem and the appropriate methodological approaches.

The format of the preliminary examination shall be determined by the student’s department (or interdisciplinary degree program, if applicable) and advisory committee, and communicated to the student in advance of the examination. The exam may consist of a written component, oral component, or combination of written and oral components.

The preliminary exam may be administered by the advisory committee or a departmental committee; herein referred to as the examination committee.

Regardless of exam format, a student will receive an overall preliminary exam result of pass or fail. The department (or interdisciplinary degree program, if applicable) will determine how the overall pass or fail result is determined based on the exam structure and internal department procedures. If the exam is administered by the advisory committee, each advisory committee member will provide a pass or fail evaluation decision.

Only one advisory committee substitution is allowed to provide an evaluation decision for a student’s preliminary exam, and it cannot be the committee chair.

If a student is required to take, as a part of the preliminary examination, a written component administered by a department or interdisciplinary degree program, the department or interdisciplinary degree program faculty must:

a. offer the examination at least once every six months. The departmental or interdisciplinary degree program examination should be announced at least 30 days prior to the scheduled examination date.

b. assume the responsibility for marking the examination satisfactory or unsatisfactory, or otherwise graded, and in the case of unsatisfactory, stating specifically the reasons for such a mark.
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working days in advance of the scheduled date. Any changes to the
degree plan must be approved by the Graduate and Professional School
prior to the submission of the request for final examination.

The student's advisory committee will conduct this examination. The
final examination is not to be administered until the dissertation or record
of study is available in substantially final form to the student's advisory
committee, and all concerned have had adequate time to review the
document. Whereas the final examination may cover the broad field of
the candidate's training, it is presumed that the major portion of the time
will be devoted to the dissertation and closely allied topics. Persons
other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent
of the candidate and the chair of the advisory committee, be invited to
attend a final examination for an advanced degree. 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. Upon completion of the questioning of the
candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

Report of Final Examination
The student’s department will promptly report the results of the Final
Examination to the Graduate and Professional School via the Report of
Doctoral Final Examination form. These forms should be submitted to the
Graduate and Professional School within 10 working days of completion
of the final examination. The Graduate and Professional School must be
notified in writing of any cancellations.

A positive evaluation of the final exam by all members of a student’s
advisory committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a
student on his or her final exam. 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
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.

Dissertation
The ability to perform independent research must be demonstrated by the
dissertation, which must be the original work of the candidate. Whereas
acceptance of the dissertation is based primarily on its scholarly merit,
it must also exhibit creditable literary workmanship. The format of
the dissertation must be acceptable to the Graduate and Professional
School. Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available in
the Thesis Manual, which is available online at https://grad.tamu.edu.

After successful defense and approval by the student's advisory
committee and the head of the student's major department (or chair
of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), a student must submit his/
hers dissertation in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file
must be uploaded to the website, https://grad.tamu.edu. Additionally, a
signed paper approval form with original signatures must be received by
the Graduate and Professional School. Both the PDF file and the signed
approval form are required by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting are announced each semester or summer
term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar (see Time Limit
statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website https://
grad.tamu.edu.

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time
thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services.

This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After
commencement, dissertations are digitally stored and made available
through the Texas A&M Libraries.

A dissertation that is deemed unacceptable by the Graduate and
Professional School because of excessive corrections will be returned to
the student's department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty. The
manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire
review process must begin anew. All original submittal deadlines must be
met during the resubmittal process in order to graduate.