



Graduate School Degree Program and Certificate Requirements Policy

Responsible Official: **Provost**

Responsible Office: **Graduate School,
College of Graduate and Continuing Studies**

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the academic requirements for creating or revising a Graduate School program or certificate and provides faculty with a roadmap for graduate curriculum development or revision.

Policy Statement

I. Academic Content.

Developing or revising a graduate curriculum is a faculty-driven activity. When faculty members create or revise graduate curriculum for a program or certificate, they must follow the [ETSU curriculum process](#). Faculty must follow the procedures for curriculum development or revision as specified on ETSU's Curriculum Innovation Center website to have curriculum approved.

A. Master's, Education Specialist, and Doctoral Program Content.

[SACSCOC Standard 3.6.1](#) requires that master's and doctoral programs provide progressively more advanced academic content. The requirements detailed here align with the [Graduate School Enrollment Policy](#) for students. Faculty should refer to those policies when developing or revising curriculum.

At least 70 percent of all courses taken in a master's program must be in the 5000 or 6000 course series. Master's programs may include 5xx7 courses that are co-listed with 4xx7 undergraduate courses, but graduate students must complete coursework over and above that of the companion undergraduate course. No more than 30 percent of all credit hours taken in a master's program may come from the 5xx7 series.

At least 50 percent of all courses taken in a doctoral program must be in the 6000 and 7000 course series. Education specialist and doctoral programs cannot include 5xx7 courses.

[SACSCOC Standard 3.6.2](#) requires coursework in all graduate programs provide students with (1) knowledge of the literature of the discipline, (2) engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practices and training experiences, and (3) preparation in scholarly and professional written and oral communication practices.

All graduate programs must require students to have at least one course on appropriate research/scholarly methods for their discipline. The research methods course can be inter- or cross-disciplinary and may or may not have the rubric of the program.

B. Certificate Program Content.

Certificate program content should be at the 5000 or 6000 level. No more than 30 percent of all credit hours taken in a certificate program can be from 5xx7 courses.

II. Student Learning Outcomes for Graduate Level Work.

As part of the curriculum process, ETSU graduate program and certificates must include student learning outcomes. The Council of Graduate Schools provides the following national student learning outcomes:

At the end of their graduate education, students should be able to:

- Think logically and consistently;
- Integrate and synthesize knowledge;
- Access up-to-date knowledge and information within the discipline;
- Communicate in a clear, consistent, logical manner both orally and in writing;
- Understand the interrelationships between their discipline and other disciplines.
- Deal with ethical dilemmas within their profession;
- Apply knowledge of discipline to real-life situations; and
- Adapt to the dynamic requirements of their profession and the workplace.

Graduate programs and certificates may have accreditation student learning outcomes that overlap with or are in addition to the ones above.

III. Culminating Experience.

A. Master's, Education Specialist, and Doctorate.

When developing or revising curriculum for graduate degree programs, each program must include a culminating experience that helps students synthesize knowledge and

skills acquired through the degree program. The culminating experience includes an evaluation of the student's performance. The culminating experience option(s) and evaluation process will be identified in the catalog.

1. Culminating Experience Requirements.

Each program must choose at least one culminating experience option appropriate to the discipline. Programs may have more than one option for students to choose (e.g., thesis or capstone project or examination). Culminating experiences may or may not involve academic credit.

Options for Culminating Experiences:

- Master's thesis with defense
- Doctoral dissertation with defense
- Examination (written and/or oral)
- Capstone project
- Capstone course
- Artistic presentation
- Portfolio
- Analytical essay(s)
- Internship or other applied experience

Culminating experiences may be completed by an individual student or small groups of students, as determined by the program.

When programs have more than one culminating experience option, they may allow students to change from one culminating experience option to another, but all program requirements must be met.

2. Evaluation of Culminating Experience.

Each student will receive an evaluation on the culminating experience. For thesis or dissertation students, this evaluation is typically part of the defense. The evaluation of a thesis, dissertation, or examination must involve at least 3 members of the graduate faculty; other culminating experiences may involve fewer members of the graduate faculty.

A student's performance on any culminating experience will be classified as: (1) pass; (2) fail with no opportunity for re-examination or re-evaluation; or (3) fail with an opportunity for further study and re-evaluation or re-examination. If a student fails with an opportunity for further study and re-evaluation or re-examination, a committee of graduate faculty in the program must provide the student with feedback that will assist the student in preparing for the re-

evaluation or re-examination. A second failure will result in the student's dismissal from the program.

B. Certificates.

Certificate curriculum is not required to have a culminating experience.

IV. Teaching in a Graduate Program.

Before teaching 4xx7/5xx7, 5000, 6000, or 7000 level courses or serving on a culminating experience/thesis/dissertation committee, an individual must hold current member, affiliate, or temporary graduate faculty status pursuant to [Graduate Council requirements](#). Individuals submit their application for graduate faculty status following the process described on the Graduate School [website](#).

V. Residency Requirement.

A. Doctoral Programs.

All doctoral programs must include a residency requirement. The purpose of the residency requirement is to provide doctoral students with significant time for sustained participation with peers and faculty members in scholarly and creative activities. Each doctoral degree program must specify how the residency requirement can be fulfilled.

B. Education Specialist, Master's programs, and Certificates.

When developing or revising curriculum for Education Specialist degree, master's programs, and certificates, a residency requirement is not needed, but may be appropriate as determined by the degree program. If required by a program, the program must specify how the residency requirement can be fulfilled.

VI. Credit Requirements.

A. Doctoral, Education Specialist, and Master's programs.

The following are minimum credit requirements for graduate degree programs:

Master's degree	30 graduate credits
Education Specialist degree	30 graduate credits beyond the master's degree
Doctoral degree	30 graduate credits or 50 graduate credits beyond the master's degree

B. Certificates.

Certificates must have minimum of 9 graduate credits.

VII. Additional Requirements .

Degree or certificate programs may have additional requirements beyond those required under this policy. Any program policies must be stated in the catalog and/or a program handbook. Program handbooks must be updated annually, provided to the student in either hard copy or digital format, and a copy submitted to the Graduate School for archiving.

VIII. Approval of Program Requirements.

Graduate Council must approve all programs of study, research requirements, and writing requirements for each program or certificate as part of the curricular process.

Authority: Focus Act, TCS § 49-8-203, et seq.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a special meaning within the context of this policy.

Policy History

Effective Date: 03/09/2023

Revision Date:

Previous:

Procedure