

Master of Science in Allied Health

Graduate Student Handbook

East Tennessee State University

College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences

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Introduction to the Handbook

The Master of Science in Allied Health Graduate Student Handbook contains the most current policies and procedures; thus, this version of the handbook supersedes any previous versions of the student handbook regarding policies and procedures related to the Master of Science in Allied Health.

This handbook does not replace published university requirements and should be used in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog and ETSU policies and procedures. The faculty encourages you to bookmark the Graduate Catalog online for future reference.

Goals of the Master of Science in Allied Health program

1. To prepare allied health practitioners to analyze, interpret, and respond to the major factors influencing health and health care policy.
2. To prepare allied health practitioners with knowledge of administration/management skills.
3. To prepare allied health practitioners to function as educators and/or leaders in academic, clinical, or community settings.
4. To prepare allied health practitioners to be critical thinkers able to analyze concepts, principles, research, clinical findings, technologies, and outcomes and apply them to the professional practice.

Curriculum

The program of study in the Master of Science in Allied Health consists of 18 credits of major field core, 12 credits of guided electives, and a 6-credit thesis or non-thesis capstone project. The student will work with their advisor to select courses from the guided electives that meet their professional needs and career aspirations. Guided electives are available in allied health administration, education, and public health.

Allied Health Major Field Core (18 credits)

ALHE 5000	Information Technology in Allied Health Sciences	1
ALHE 5100	Interdisciplinary Health Care Teams	2
ALHE 5200	Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation	3
ALHE 5050	Legal and Ethical Issues in Allied Health	3
ALHE 5070	Leadership Theory for Health Care Delivery	3
ALHE 5150	Population Health Issues for the Allied Health Professional	3
ALHE 5500	Methods of Research in Allied Health	3

Guided Electives (12 credits – choose 4 classes):

ALHE 5010	Clinical Teaching Strategies	3
ALHE 5060	Allied Health Curriculum Design	3
ALHE 5300	Administration at the Department Level	3
ALHE 5700	Strategic Initiatives for Allied Health	3
BSTA 5310	Biostatistics I	3
EPID 5400	Epidemiology I	3
HSMP 5550	Human Resources Management	3
COBH 5900	Grant and Proposal Development	3

Thesis or Non-Thesis Option (6 credits):

ALHE 5800	Advanced Practice Seminar in ALHE OR	6
ALHE 5960	Thesis	<u>6</u>

Total Credits	36
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Advisory Committee

The student is required to form their advisory committee no later than the final semester of coursework. The committee will be composed of at least three (3) faculty members who hold graduate faculty status; the committee chair must hold member or senior member status. In warranted circumstances, a fourth committee member who does not have graduate faculty status may be added if the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies approves the individual for a temporary graduate faculty appointment.

Advisory committee members are available to students during the terms of each semester (from the first day of the semester through the last day of final exams) but not on holidays or over the breaks between semesters. Students in the MSAH program should plan their work, particularly on the thesis/capstone accordingly.

If changes in the composition of the advisory committee are needed, the student must submit an [approval form](#), with signatures of the retiring member(s), replacement member(s), the committee chair, the department chair, and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Admission to Candidacy and Approval of the Program of Study

Admission to the School of Graduate Studies, and the approval to pursue a degree program, does not in any way imply that a student is admitted to candidacy for the master's degree. To be admitted to candidacy the student must:

1. Remove all conditions required at the time of admission by the School of Graduate Studies.
2. Complete at least one (1) semester (9-12 credits) of study following admission to the School of Graduate Studies.
3. Meet the specific requirements of the major department.
4. Have an overall GPA of 3.0 and be in good academic standing.
5. Submit the completed forms for admission to candidacy and an approved program of study to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Ideally, the program of study is filed well in advance of the published deadline. When the application for candidacy is approved, the student may be considered a candidate for the graduate degree. If the program of study is filed with the School of Graduate Studies after the published deadline, graduation will be delayed until all program requirements have been verified.

Comprehensive Examination

Near the end of the student's program of study they must successfully pass a comprehensive examination. Comprehensive exams are offered three (3) times per year: On the first (1st) and third (3rd) Tuesday of March, June, and November. The MSAH graduate coordinator is responsible for coordinating the administration of the comprehensive examination. Pre-approval is required if the student is using a proctor and testing center. The comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to synthesize knowledge and skills acquired throughout the program curriculum.

The comprehensive exam has eight (8) sections: six (6) from the core coursework and two (2) from the guided electives. The student must pass each of the eight (8) sections with a minimum score of 80%.

The student's performance on the final examination will be classified into one (1) of three (3) categories. The student may (1) pass; (2) fail with no opportunity for re-examination; or (3) fail with an opportunity for further study and re-examination by the committee. Re-examination can be written or oral. The nature of such further study and a schedule for re-examining the student's performance will be established by the committee. A second failure by any candidate will result in the student's dismissal from the graduate program.

Preparing for Comp Exam

Individual instructors for the courses may have additional suggestions for how to prepare for the comprehensive exam, but students can begin their preparation from the first class in the program by doing the following:

- Keep your textbooks
- Download or print out the course syllabi or other document that includes the course objectives
- Keep copies of the assignments for each class.
- Create a document (if one isn't provided) that includes the discussion prompts for the course
- As you move through each course, ask "How do I use this?" The comprehensive exam items are essay questions/prompts; your responses should indicate your ability to apply the information from your coursework.

Best Practices for the Comps

Based on the common errors students have made on the comps over the years, the following is a list of best practices for students when they take their comps.

- Set aside time dedicated to reviewing course material. It may have been a while since you have taken some of the courses, so review is going to be necessary.
- Read the questions/prompts carefully
- Begin by outlining your response, then start filling in
- Provide specific and detailed examples. Your answers should provide depth and go beyond "surface" responses
- Save time during each session to review and edit your responses
- When you review your responses, ask questions like "How?" "Why?" or "In what way?" If you haven't answered those questions in your response, you have more work to do!

Advanced Practice Seminar and Thesis

The student is required to complete six (6) credits of advanced practice seminar (capstone project) or thesis. The student must register for two consecutive semesters of three (3) credits each of thesis or advanced practice seminar. Students must maintain continuous enrollment during the summer term. Students who have completed six (6) credits but not finished the thesis or capstone project must enroll in ALHE 5990 Readings and Research for each consecutive semester until the thesis or project is complete.

The **advanced practice seminar (non-thesis capstone project)** option is designed as a culminating experience in administration or education and provides an alternative to the thesis option. The capstone project is more practical in nature as opposed to the research focus of a thesis, and does not require IRB approval; however, both follow the same format (see the [Thesis/Dissertation guide](#)). The student must present an advance practice plan and identify a clinical preceptor (if applicable) prior to beginning the project to his/ her graduate committee. Upon completion of the experience will present an oral defense to their committee.

The **thesis** represents a high standard of scholarly inquiry, methodology, techniques, statistics, and literature review. Upon completion of the research and written thesis, the student will present an oral defense to their committee. The student must meet additional thesis requirements as stated in the ETSU Graduate Catalog.

Oral defense of both the advanced practice seminar and the thesis are scheduled adhering to the dates set forth by the School of Graduate Studies.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

All research involving human subjects must be approved by the [East Tennessee State University IRB](#) prior to initiation of the research. IRB approval is necessary to protect the rights of human subjects involved in physical, psychological, or social research. The student will complete the IRB CITI training as a requirement in the ALHE 5500 Research course. The student may have to update the training before the end of the program depending on how much time has elapsed from the initial training. The application forms for research involving human subjects and review of such research projects are available on-line.

Thesis or Capstone Process

The thesis topic will be selected by the candidate with the advice and approval of the committee chair.

Prospectus Proposal

The student must prepare a prospectus that includes the research problem, a review of literature, and the research methods or the application methodology in the case of a capstone. A copy of the prospectus will be given to each member of the student's committee. Committee members may suggest changes to the prospectus and will work with the student to ensure the integrity of the research project. The student, under direction of their committee chair, will schedule an oral prospectus proposal with

their committee. Upon completion of the prospectus proposal, the thesis student will begin working on their IRB application and the capstone student will start their project.

Oral Defense

Each student will complete an oral defense of either the capstone project or thesis. After the thesis or capstone has been completed, and the committee is in agreement that the student is ready to defend, the oral defense of either the thesis or capstone must be scheduled with the School of Graduate Studies. Copies of the thesis or capstone should be distributed to committee members at least two (2) weeks prior to the oral defense.

The date, time, and place of the oral defense will be determined by the student and graduate committee chair in accordance with the Academic Calendar. Students have the option of a virtual defense since this is an online program.

The defense will be attended by no fewer than three members of the student's graduate committee and an outside observer appointed by the School of Graduate Studies. The graduate committee must receive the final copy of the thesis or capstone paper two weeks prior to the scheduled final defense. Students who do not meet the two-week deadline must reschedule their oral defense and may have to register for Readings and Research the next semester and be responsible for applicable fees.

Following successful completion of the defense, the student must prepare the thesis in final form and have it reviewed by the chair of the advisory committee and the reader for the MSAH program.

Submission of the Thesis

The student will submit the final thesis through Turnitin via the learning management system. The committee chair will submit the Turnitin report to the School of Graduate Studies. The student will submit the final paperwork and the final thesis in the format prescribed at the time of submission to the School of Graduate Studies for review and approval through the [electronic thesis and dissertation website](#). (See the Checklist at the end of this handbook).

All students submitting theses must pay a microfilming fee. Students seeking exemption from electronic submission of the thesis will still be responsible for microfilming. More [detailed instructions](#) are available from the School of Graduate Studies.

Academic Calendar

The School of Graduate Studies follows a calendar with strict deadlines for registration, forms (i.e. intent to graduate, committee forms, candidacy forms, and programs of study), thesis/dissertation preparation workshops, scheduling oral defense of theses, completing the oral defense, and filing the initial review of copies of theses with the School of Graduate Studies for graduation in fall, spring, and summer. Please refer to the [School of Graduate Studies](#) for a calendar of deadline dates.

Grades

Grades given in the School of Graduate Studies carry the following meaning and quality points:

Grades	Meaning	Quality Points
A	Clear Excellence	4.0
A-		3.7
B+		3.3
B		3.0
B-		2.7
C+	Satisfactory Performance	2.3
C		2.0
F		0
S		0
SP		0
U	Unsatisfactory	0
W	Withdrawal	0
WF	Withdraw failing	0
AU	Audit	0
I	Incomplete*	0

To remain in good standing a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 "B" or better. Graduate credit will be given for grades of "A", "A-", "B+", "B", "B-", "C+", and "C" in graduate level courses. Graduate credit is not awarded for Pass/Fail grades. Grades of "P" or "F" do not count toward degree requirements. All graduate course grades earned at East Tennessee State University will be used in computing the student's grade point average (GPA). An overall GPA of 3.0 is required for admission to candidacy and for graduation.

"S", "SP", and "U" Grades

The letter grades of "S" (Satisfactory Completion), "SP" (Satisfactory Progress), and "U" (Unsatisfactory) are given for Readings and Research, Advanced Practice Seminar (Capstone Projects), and Thesis. A grade of "S" carries graduate credits and indicates satisfactory completion of the course. Degree completion requires an "S" on the most recent credits associated with Thesis/Advanced Practice Seminar or Readings and Research. "SP" indicates progress toward project or research completion, but carries no credit and does not affect the student's GPA. Students who receive an "SP" must, in subsequent semesters (including summer), enroll in additional credits of Thesis/Advanced Practice Seminar or Readings and Research until the requirements are completed. The "U" grade carries no

credit and indicates unsatisfactory progress toward research or project completion. Students who receive a “U” must enroll for the course the following semester, including summer. The “U” is equivalent to an “F.” The first “U” does not affect the GPA, however, all subsequent “U” grades will convert to an “F” and will be figured into the GPA.

***Incomplete Grades**

A grade of “I” (incomplete) indicates that a student was passing the course at the end of the semester, but due to circumstances beyond the student’s control, was unable to complete the course requirement. It also indicates that the student has received consent from the instructor to complete the work for which an “I” is assigned. The “I” grade cannot be used to allow a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade or to repeat a course. An “I” grade must be removed no later than one calendar year from the time the grade is awarded. Time extension requests for removal of “I” grades must be submitted to and approved by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies before the allotted time expires. An “I” grade not removed under the guidelines noted above will be converted to an “F.” When an “I” grade converts to an “F” after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term. A student cannot withdraw from or drop a course after a grade of “I” has been assigned or after one year has elapsed. To remove an “I” grade, the student must complete the work independently and must not register for the course a second time or attend the same course at a later time in order to complete the course requirements.

Repeating a Course

If a student chooses to repeat a course, all grades earned are computed in the grade point average. The grade earned on the repeat does not replace the original.

Grade Reports and Appeals

Grade reports are available through GoldLink to all students who complete registration each term. Academic departments are required to retain grade documentation for a period of one year. Specific student concerns regarding academic records, other than the Grade Appeal process, must be addressed within one academic year from the date of posting of grades for the term in question.

Academic Probation

To remain in good standing, a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better on all graduate work attempted. No more than six (6) credits of “C” grades in the program of study can be applied toward the degree. Students must have a cumulative grade point of 3.0 or better in order to register for thesis or advanced practice seminar.

When the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0, the graduate student will be placed on academic probation. If the student does not achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of one probationary semester, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and appropriate college/departmental/program officials will determine whether the student should be dismissed from graduate study at East Tennessee State University or continued on probation.

No student will be allowed more than two probationary semesters, whether consecutive or cumulative. At the end of a second probationary semester a student whose cumulative grade point average is still below 3.0 will be dismissed from graduate study. A student will be removed from probationary status

upon attaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average. When an “I” grade converts to an “F” after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term.

Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the School of Graduate Studies for such reasons as academic misconduct, failure to meet conditions of admission, failure to meet a requirement of the program, or for exceeding the allowed number of probationary semesters.

Reinstatement

Students who have been dismissed from the School of Graduate Studies for academic reasons may submit a written request for reinstatement to the chair of their department. The request should include reasons why the reinstatement should be considered.

The department chair, the graduate program coordinator, and the graduate faculty who have been instructors for the student will review the request for reinstatement and make recommendations to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. If the request is denied at the departmental level, the student may then direct a written appeal to the dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and a final decision will be made in accordance with policies established by the Graduate Council.

MSAH Program Timelines

1. Complete all coursework (30 credits) and develop committee for thesis/capstone project (advanced practice seminar).
2. File application for candidacy, approved program of study, and committee form with the School of Graduate Studies.
3. Pass written competency exams. (Offered the first and third Tuesday of March, June and November).
4. Complete thesis or capstone project. (This may include approval from IRB See page 10).
5. File intent to graduate, clear records, and pay fees for graduation.
6. Complete oral defense.
7. Submit review copies of thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
8. Submit final copies of thesis to the School of Graduate Studies.

Students have six (6) years to complete the degree; time for completion of the degree is counted from the date of matriculation in the first course applied toward the degree requirements, including transfer work.

Revalidation of ETSU Coursework that Exceeds Matriculation Limits

It is the department’s responsibility to recommend to the School of Graduate Studies one of the following actions for revalidating course content in each instance that exceeds the matriculation limits. The department may:

1. Examine the student (orally or in writing) and report the results to the School of Graduate Studies.

2. Design an independent study if no course currently exists by which the student may update course content.
3. Have the student repeat the outdated course.
4. Have the student complete additional coursework.

This procedure may not be used to revalidate coursework for transfer purposes when the course already exceeds the matriculation limit at the time of application.

Change in Program of Study

Changes in the planned program of study for candidacy must be approved by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Forms for program changes are available in the Graduate Studies office or through its web site.

Required GPA

In order to graduate, students must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average overall and on the program of study for all degrees.

Intent to Graduate

The student must file an Intent to Graduate Form with the School of Graduate Studies no later than the end of the second week of the semester in which the student expects to complete the requirements for a graduate degree. If the student does not graduate in that term, a new Intent Form must be completed and submitted prior to the published deadline.

Graduation Instructions

The School of Graduate Studies publishes a Graduation Instruction Sheet for each term which provides all deadline and instructions for meeting graduation requirements.

Forms

Please refer to the School of Graduate Studies website for [appropriate forms](#) for committee appointments, program of study, approval of thesis prospectus, candidacy and others.

Thesis Checklist

- ☐ Develop committee for thesis project
- ☐ Sign MOU
- ☐ Work with chair of committee on Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (outlines for each chapter are submitted first)
- ☐ Meet with department methodology specialist when working on Chapter 3
- ☐ Send to MSAH reader and all committee members for review
- ☐ Approved by committee for prospectus proposal
- ☐ Schedule prospectus proposal
- ☐ Complete proposal presentation and receive approval from committee to submit through IRB
- ☐ Conduct pilot study (if applicable)
- ☐ Submit to IRB
- ☐ Receive IRB approval
- ☐ Notify committee chair of IRB approval
- ☐ Develop timeline for data collection
- ☐ Collect data
- ☐ Work with committee chair and department methodology specialist on Chapter 4
- ☐ Work with committee chair on Chapter 5
- ☐ Chapter 4 approved by department methodology specialist and Chapter 5 approved by committee chair
- ☐ Send to MSAH reader and all committee members for review
- ☐ Approved by committee for defense
- ☐ Schedule defense (following dates set forth by School of Graduate Studies)
- ☐ Defend
- ☐ Make any changes requested by committee during defense
- ☐ Submit to MSAH reader for review
- ☐ Approved by MSAH reader for submission to the School of Graduate Studies
- ☐ Submit to Turnitin
- ☐ Committee Chair submits Turnitin report to the School of Graduate Studies
- ☐ Submit to School of Graduate Studies for format review
- ☐ Make any changes noted by reviewer
- ☐ Submit final document to the School of Graduate Studies
- ☐ Pay fees and complete documents as required by the School of Graduate Studies

NOTE: *Your committee chair must approve every step of the process. The overall thesis process generally takes more than two (2) semesters.*

Capstone Checklist

- ☐ Develop committee for capstone project
- ☐ Sign MOU
- ☐ Work with chair of committee on Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (outlines for each chapter are submitted first)
- ☐ Meet with methodology and/or content expert when working on Chapter 3
- ☐ Send to MSAH reader and all committee members for review
- ☐ Approved by committee for prospectus proposal
- ☐ Schedule prospectus proposal
- ☐ Complete proposal
- ☐ Develop timeline for project
- ☐ Engage in project work
- ☐ Work with chair and methodology specialist on Chapter 4
- ☐ Work with chair on Chapter 5
- ☐ Chapter 4 approved by methodology specialist and Chapter 5 approved by committee chair
- ☐ Send to MSAH reader and all committee members for review
- ☐ Approved by committee for defense
- ☐ Schedule defense (following dates set forth by School of Graduate Studies)
- ☐ Defend
- ☐ Make any changes requested by committee during defense
- ☐ Submit to MSAH reader for review
- ☐ Approved by MSAH reader for submission to the School of Graduate Studies
- ☐ Submit final document to the School of Graduate Studies
- ☐ Pay fees and complete documents as required by the School of Graduate Studies

NOTE: *Your committee chair must approve every step of the process. The overall capstone process generally takes more than two (2) semesters*

AGREEMENT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Master of Science in Allied Health (MSAH) Graduate Student Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for following the policies and procedures in this handbook, the Graduate Catalog, ETSU policies and procedures, and any additional policies outlined by the University. I further understand that this manual is not intended to be all-inclusive and that individual instructors may establish additional policies provided these policies do not conflict with this manual or the policies, rules, or regulations of East Tennessee State University.

Student's Signature

Date