

**DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT**

## **DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2016 – 2017**



**TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY  
CORPUS  
CHRISTI**

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**COLLEGE OF  
GRADUATE  
STUDIES**

6300 Ocean Dr., Unit 5843 • Faculty Center 178 • Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
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*Updated: October 21, 2016*



*This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/index.php>.*

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# DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

## SECTION I. COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

### Message from the Dean



Congratulations on being accepted into one of our outstanding terminal degree programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (A&M-Corpus Christi). This is a major accomplishment that comes with a significant financial, academic as well as personal commitment on your part. The College of Graduate Studies at A&M-Corpus Christi has adopted as a mantra–Discover Your Passion: Inquire, Innovate, Inspire. This doctoral student handbook has been developed to ensure that you will be successful and kept informed every step of the way regarding University academic expectations and requirements, program specific expectations and requirements, and resources and services available to students. It was developed electronically, to provide you live links to other information you may find useful.

The College of Graduate Studies is located on the first level of the Faculty Center, Suite 178. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Monday–Friday. Please feel free to stop by any time and/or share any suggestions on how to improve this resource for you.

Best of luck on your exciting, new undertaking and I look forward to seeing you at graduation, if not sooner.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JoAnn Canales".

JoAnn Canales, PhD  
Founding Dean, College of Graduate Studies

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## College of Graduate Studies Staff



**JoAnn Canales, PhD**

Founding Dean

[joann.canales@tamucc.edu](mailto:joann.canales@tamucc.edu)

- Administers and supports graduate programs
- Collaborates with faculty and academic deans on all issues related to graduate education



**Thomas Naehr, PhD**

Associate Dean

[thomas.naehr@tamucc.edu](mailto:thomas.naehr@tamucc.edu)

- Collaborates with various units across campus on graduate-related issues
- Coordinates and manages graduate program review
- Oversees scholarship process



**Steven Seidel, PhD**

Graduate Studies Faculty Fellow

[steven.seidel@tamucc.edu](mailto:steven.seidel@tamucc.edu)

- Develops and implements graduate student professional development program
- Coordinates efforts to improve graduate student retention
- Oversees activities associated with the new I<sup>3</sup> graduate student suite



**Jesse Sifontes**

Executive Assistant

[jsifontes@islander.tamucc.edu](mailto:jsifontes@islander.tamucc.edu)

- Assists Dean and Associate Dean with administrative duties
- Collaborates with other TAMUCC units to ensure a climate of engagement and success for graduate students



**Tim Boulan**

System Support Specialist

[tim.boulan@tamucc.edu](mailto:tim.boulan@tamucc.edu)

- Maintains databases and equipment
- Provides systems/application analyses, design, development and implementation of programming
- Generates reports to faculty regarding admissions and student progress



**Morgan Beard**

Audit and Compliance Coordinator

[morgan.beard@tamucc.edu](mailto:morgan.beard@tamucc.edu)

- Audits all degree plans
- Processes all degree plan exceptions
- Processes all information related to doctoral students



**Lorena Quevedo-Delgado**

Business Coordinator

[lorena.quevedo-delgado@tamucc.edu](mailto:lorena.quevedo-delgado@tamucc.edu)

- Assists with budget development and management
- Generates reports for the Dean
- Reviews departmental expense reports

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## SECTION II. STUDENT RESOURCES

Student fees paid entitle you to a number of varied student resources. Below is contact information for resources available to you by category.

### **Financial Assistance**

Graduate Scholarships and Assistantships  
<http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/funding>  
361-825-2177

Office of Student Financial Assistance  
<http://osfa.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-3338

### **Student Services**

Admissions & Records  
<http://admissions.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2624

Business Office  
<http://businessoffice.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2600

Career Services  
<http://career-services.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2628

IT Help Desk  
<http://it.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2692

Disability Services  
<http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-5816

Office of International Education  
<http://oie.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-3922

University Center & Student Activities  
<http://ucsa.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-5200 or 361-825-2707

University Police Department  
<http://police.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-4444

University Services  
(Banking, Bookstore, Dining, Mail, Printing, SandDollar)  
<http://universitieservices.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-5710

Veterans Affairs Office  
<http://vets.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2331

### **Academic Resources**

Graduate Resource and Opportunity Workspace (GROW)  
<http://grow.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2507

Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA) Writing Center  
<http://casa.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-5933

Mary and Jeff Bell Library  
<http://rattler.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2643

Office of Academic Testing  
<http://testing.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2334

SAIL  
<http://sail.tamucc.edu>

The Island Online (Blackboard)  
<https://iol.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2825

### **Health and Wellness**

Recreational Sports  
<http://recsports.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2454

Student Health Plan  
<https://tamucc.myahpcare.com>  
800-452-5772

University Counseling Center  
<http://counseling.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2703

University Health Center  
<http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu>  
361-825-2601  
Ask-a-Nurse Line: 361-825-5735

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## **Graduate Resource and Opportunity Workspace (GROW)**

As part of the College of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Resource and Opportunity Workspace (GROW) offers graduate students exclusive space and resources tailored specifically to academic needs and professional development. GROW is located in the Mary and Jeff Bell Library (Room 220) and is open during library hours. To gain access for group study, students must complete an online form available on the GROW website: <http://grow.tamucc.edu>

## **Required Dissertation Formatting Workshop**

Effective Summer 2014, ALL doctoral students having a proposal hearing or a dissertation defense will be required to attend a Dissertation Preparation Meeting the semester of the hearing/defense. For additional information on this event, email [gradweb@tamucc.edu](mailto:gradweb@tamucc.edu).

Topics covered include:

- CGS Website
- Important Dates
- Forms
- The Submission Process
- Formatting & Templates

## **Doctoral Orientation**

Orientation is available every Fall and Spring semester. For additional information on this event, please visit [http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/current\\_students/orientation.html](http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/current_students/orientation.html). A special orientation session is available for doctoral students upon request by the department/program.

Topics covered include:

- The College of Graduate Studies
- The Big Picture of Doctoral Degrees
- Getting to the Doctoral Degree

## **Title IX Information**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, including discrimination based upon sex. TAMUCC provides resources to students, faculty, and staff to address concerns related to sexual harassment, sexual assault (rape), sexual misconduct, sex discrimination and has appointed Mr. Samuel Ramirez as its Title IX Coordinator. For more information and a short Title IX Student Video from The Texas A&M University System, please see: <http://edcs.tamucc.edu/TitleIX.html>

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## SECTION III. ACADEMIC POLICIES

### Registration

The Office of the Registrar coordinates the course registration process for all current and incoming students. <http://registrar.tamucc.edu/registration/>

Current and incoming students are able to register online through their S.A.I.L. account or at the Office of the Registrar.

- S.A.I.L.: <http://sail.tamucc.edu/>
- Office of the Registrar: Located in the Student Service Center
  - Phone: 361- 825-2624
  - Website: <http://registrar.tamucc.edu/>

### Enrollment Status

Enrollment status for graduate students is defined below.

Status	Fall or spring terms	Combined summer terms
Full-time	9 hours	6 hours
Three-quarter-time	7 hours	5 hours
Half-time	5 hours	3 hours

### Total Hours

Normally a doctoral degree will consist of a minimum of 90 hours beyond the bachelor's degree for students admitted to a doctoral program directly after completion of the undergraduate degree. For students who have completed a master's degree, a minimum of 60 hours is normally required for the doctoral degree. The majority of the doctoral degree plan course work must be doctoral-level courses.

### Continuous Doctoral Enrollment and Residency

Unless on an approved leave of absence, students in terminal degree programs **must be registered continuously for a minimum of 3 semester credit hours per long semester** (fall and spring semesters) during the academic year and pay the designated tuition and fees. Individual programs may have additional credit hour requirements. Students working on research/scholarly activity toward their dissertation should enroll in the number of credit hours that reflects the extent of a student's study or research activity. International students may have additional registration requirements depending on their visa status and should consult with the Office of International Education to obtain current information. Unapproved Leaves of Absence may result in the student being required to reapply to his/her program.

In addition, some terminal degree programs require students to continuously register in courses for a minimum of two consecutive terms, which may include summer. The purpose of the residency is to permit professional interaction with program faculty and students. The residency provides an opportunity for sustained intellectual effort/creative output by enhancing exposure to new concepts in the discipline, to research methodologies and to development of research competency with the outcome resulting in a dissertation containing original research or a solo MFA final thesis and



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exhibition. For specific residency requirements, consult the degree requirements sections of the individual terminal degree programs.

Students must be enrolled the semester in which the dissertation defense/final examination occurs and in the semester in which they graduate.

### Graduate Courses

Graduate courses are numbered 5000 or higher. Courses at the 5000 level are open only to students with graduate standing and senior undergraduate students who meet specific criteria. Courses at the 6000 level and higher are limited to students admitted to a doctoral program, or graduate students who meet specific criteria. Please consult the individual graduate program for additional details or requirements.

### Maximum Course Load

As a graduate student, you may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester without the approval of your College Dean. You may not register for more than 6 hours of course work in a single session of summer school without the approval of your College Dean.

### Repetition of a Course

*Repetition of a Course to Raise a Grade:* A course in which the final grade is C or lower may be repeated. A course in which the final grade is a B may be repeated only with the permission of the Graduate Dean. **A maximum of two courses** may be retaken during graduate study at the University. **Each course may be repeated only one time.** **All grades** received for the course will be **computed in the grade point average.**

*Repetition of a Course for Multiple Credit:* A course may be repeated for multiple credit towards graduation only when so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty advisor.

### Recency of Credit

#### Students admitted prior to Fall 2015:

Credit that is more than **seven years old** will not be counted toward a degree. The seven-year period begins the first semester students are enrolled and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Exceptions, provided the courses were completed at this university, will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception. Also required will be a revalidation plan accompanied by a current degree plan.

#### Students admitted Fall 2015 or later:

All requirements for a terminal degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed **within ten years** subsequent to admission to the terminal degree program. The ten-year period begins with the first semester students are enrolled in the graduate program. Students have a **maximum of five years to advance to candidacy** and a **maximum of 5 years from candidacy to successfully defend the dissertation.** Credit that is more than ten years old will not be counted toward a terminal degree. Exceptions, provided the courses were completed at this University, will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as a revalidation plan. Written approval from the department chair, the Dean of the college from which the degree is offered, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

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## Revalidation of Courses

### Students admitted prior to Fall 2015:

Courses listed on the plan of study **completed more than seven years prior to graduation** are considered dated. The faculty advisor or college graduate committee recommends a revalidation plan. Revalidation will verify that the student's knowledge in a specific subject area is current. Written examinations normally are required.

Successfully revalidated courses may be included in the student's plan of study. Failure to follow all designated requirements of the revalidation agreement may result in dismissal from the program. Subsequent requests for revalidation may be considered, but will be denied absent a showing of extraordinary hardship. Graduate students **will not be permitted to submit more than 12 semester hours** of the program's required courses for revalidation. Courses must have been completed at this university to be eligible for revalidation. All revalidation plans must be approved by the student's advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost.

Use the [Graduate Degree Plan Revalidation Request](#) form to initiate the process. A current degree plan must be submitted along with the revalidation plan.

### Students admitted Fall 2015 or later:

Courses listed on the plan of study **completed more than ten years prior to graduation** are considered dated. The department chair or program coordinator recommends revalidation of dated courses. Revalidation will verify that the student's knowledge in a specific subject area is current and documented.

Options for course revalidation include written examinations, 3–5-page essay, a project, course retake, or other equally rigorous academic means appropriate to the discipline to determine the student learning outcomes have been met. Revalidation requests should be submitted on the [Revalidation Request Form](#) and accompanied by a written justification, updated degree plan, revalidation plan, and documentation used for revalidation.

All revalidation requests and plans must be approved by the student's advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost. The student's advisor, department chair, and College Dean are responsible for determining whether the student demonstrated sufficient course knowledge necessary for successful course revalidation. Successfully revalidated courses may be included in the student's plan of study. Failure to follow all designated requirements of the revalidation agreement may result in dismissal from the program. Subsequent requests for revalidation may be considered, but will be denied absent a showing of extraordinary hardship. Graduate students **will not be permitted to submit more than 12 semester hours** of their program's courses for revalidation. Courses beyond the 12-semester hour limit will need to be retaken. Courses must have been completed at this University to be eligible for revalidation.

## Request for Leave

Students experiencing **life-changing or catastrophic events** (e.g, serious illness of a student or immediate family member, death of an immediate family member, divorce, etc.) are encouraged to consult with their department chair and request a leave of absence in writing from the College

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of Graduate Studies using [Form K: Request for a Leave of Absence](#), especially if the Recency of Credit Rule will be impacted. Consideration for requests submitted after the degree time limit has expired will be impacted by evidence of successful continuous progress towards the degree, programmatic changes, and faculty availability.

**Requests for a leave of absence must be approved by the faculty advisor, the Program Coordinator, the College Dean, and the Graduate Dean.** If the Graduate Dean approves the petition, the registration requirement will be set aside during the period of leave. Leaves will be granted only under conditions that require the suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree including use of University facilities and faculty mentoring/advice. Counting of the time to the completion of the degree pauses when a leave of absence is granted and resumes when the student re-enrolls to continue the program. Unapproved leaves of absence may result in the student being required to re-apply to his/her program.

A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than one academic year (consecutive semesters) and the maximum number of leave of absence requests is two. In case of extenuating circumstances, a one-semester leave of absence can be extended to a maximum of two consecutive full semesters by the student's Faculty Advisor and or Program Coordinator and the Graduate Dean. A student who returns to the University after an approved leave of absence will not be required to submit an application for readmission to the College of Graduate Studies. International students should visit with an advisor in the Office of International Education to find out how a Leave of Absence may impact their stay or re-entry into the U.S.

Title IX regulations also require the University to treat **pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and recovery therefrom as a justification for a leave of absence** for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. At the conclusion of the leave of absence the student will be reinstated to the status that she held when the leave began. Students requesting leave of absence under this provision must **submit their request to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator (825-2765)**, who will initiate the process. The Associate Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will notify the instructors and coordinate the student's reinstatement as appropriate.

### **Transfer of Credit**

In addition to the general Transfer of Credit Policy in the Graduate Catalog, specific requirements must be met for courses that may transfer for terminal degree credit. The following rules apply to these courses, with the exception of degrees offered jointly.

- Credit used for a degree at another institution cannot be applied to a graduate degree at A&M-Corpus Christi.
- Transferred graduate credit must have been earned at a regionally accredited institution.
- The student must have earned a grade of B or better in the transfer course work. Courses lacking letter grades (e.g., courses graded pass/no pass, credit/no credit, or satisfactory/unsatisfactory) will not be accepted as transfer credit.
- The coursework must be less than 10 years old at the time the A&M-Corpus Christi degree is awarded.

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- The student must have been enrolled as a terminal degree student when the coursework was completed.
- The maximum amount of transfer credit from another doctoral degree program accepted toward the A&M-Corpus Christi degree is one-fourth of the credit hours required for the A&M-Corpus Christi degree.

Please see individual programs for specific requirements related to Transfer Credits.

### Grade Point Average

In order to remain in good standing, as well as maintain eligibility for University funding such as scholarships and assistantships, the University requires students to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (“B”) for all graduate work undertaken. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi uses a 4.0 scale for calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA).

Only grades earned at this University will be used to calculate the A&M-Corpus Christi grade point average as used in determination of eligibility for graduation.

Grades are made available to students at the end of each grading period at <http://sail.tamucc.edu>

### Scholastic Probation

The University places a student on probation if their cumulative **graduate grade-point average** falls **below 3.0** at the end of a semester.

*Placement on Scholastic Probation:* A graduate student will be placed on scholastic probation if, at the end of any semester or term, the student’s cumulative graduate grade point average falls below 3.0 (or higher GPA set by the program). A graduate student receiving a grade of U or NC in research will also be placed on scholastic probation.

**A student can be on scholastic probation only once** (see section on Enforced Withdrawal below).

*Removal from Scholastic Probation:* A student must achieve a cumulative 3.0 GPA (or higher GPA if required by the program) within completion of the next nine (9) semester credit hours to be removed from scholastic probation if scholastic probation was due to an unsatisfactory GPA. The courses included in the nine (9) semester hours must be approved by the program faculty for degree-seeking students.

- A student who receives a grade of U or NC in research may be removed from scholastic probation after one year if the student achieves a cumulative 3.0 GPA (or higher GPA if required by the program) and subsequently receives grades of S or CR in research.
- A student will not be placed on scholastic probation in a graduating semester if the cumulative GPA is 3.00 or higher and there are no more than two C’s for courses on the degree plan.
- A student who is removed from scholastic probation is not eligible for placement on scholastic probation a second time.

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## Enforced Withdrawal

Enforced withdrawal is reflected on the student's academic record. A student who **is or has been on scholastic probation** will be placed on enforced withdrawal if,

- the student's grade point average for **any subsequent term** or semester falls **below 3.0**, or
- the student receives a second grade of U or NC in research, or
- other scholastic requirements are not met, or
- the student does not achieve the required cumulative GPA (3.0 or higher if required by the program) within completion of nine (9) semester hours.

## Reinstatement

A student on enforced withdrawal may not enroll in any graduate program for a **minimum of 12 consecutive months**. A student **must reapply**, meet current requirements for degree-seeking students, and be accepted by the University and the program to enroll for graduate studies following the period of enforced withdrawal. The application may be submitted prior to the requested enrollment date. After reinstatement, students will normally be allowed to continue in the program from the point of progression they had reached before enforced withdrawal. Colleges or programs may have additional procedures or requirements related to re-enrollment following enforced withdrawal or unapproved absences. Some colleges or programs may not permit reinstatement from enforced withdrawal. Please see the appropriate college or program section of the catalog for specific requirements.

## Texas 99-Hour Rule

The Texas State Legislature has enacted a rule that provides that students at all state universities with over 99 doctoral hours may be subject to the payment of nonresident tuition. A student will generally be able to study at A&M-Corpus Christi full-time for five complete academic years, including summers, before being affected by the 99-hour rule. For students staying beyond five years, in a number of cases there is still the possibility of a programmatic or individual exemption from the rule. For more information, contact the coordinator of your graduate program.

## Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students

Much of the following information in this section and in Sections VI and VII applies to doctoral programs in the College of Science and Engineering and College of Education and Human Development. Please see the DNP Student Handbook, available on the College of Nursing and Health Sciences website for information regarding the DNP committee, doctoral program forms, DNP project, and other program requirements.

## The Doctoral Committee

As a first step, students should choose a doctoral committee chair from among the regular graduate faculty members of the doctoral program. The remainder of the committee will be selected by the student in consultation with the committee chair. All doctoral committees will be composed of a minimum of four Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi graduate faculty members, including the doctoral committee chair, two other TAMUCC graduate faculty members (or members of the participating faculty for interdisciplinary degree programs), and a Graduate Faculty Representative from a different discipline selected by the Graduate Dean. The Graduate Dean will officially appoint the doctoral committee after submission of Form C: [Doctoral Dissertation Advisory](#)

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[Committee Appointment Form](#). Normally, the committee chair and committee members will be faculty members from the program offering the degree. Persons with unique and appropriate expertise may be appointed to the dissertation committee upon approval of the Graduate Dean for the dissertation portion of the doctoral program. Doctoral committee members are required to review and approve degree plans and participate in qualifying examinations, proposal hearings, comprehensive and final examinations, including the dissertation defense, and are required to sign relevant documents.

### **The Graduate Faculty Representative**

The Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) helps ensure that the quality of the graduate degree is appropriate for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and that students receive fair and reasonable treatment in their graduate experience. The Graduate Faculty Representative is not required to attend or evaluate materials related to the comprehensive examination. However, the GFR is required to participate in the final examination, including the dissertation defense.

### **Degree Plans**

All students will develop a degree plan that is consistent with the requirements of the program. Degree plans must be submitted by the time students have completed 50% of the required course work in the program. Copies should be forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies to be approved by the Graduate Dean.

Normally a doctoral degree will consist of a minimum of 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree for students admitted to a doctoral program directly after completion of the undergraduate degree. For students who have completed a master's degree, most doctoral degrees will require 60 credit hours. The majority of the doctoral degree plan course work must be doctoral-level courses.

Changes in the degree plan must be approved by the doctoral committee chair, the College Dean, and the Graduate Dean, using [Form I: Graduate Degree Plan Exceptions Form](#).

A student may petition to apply credits earned while in non-degree, certificate, or a previous master's-seeking status toward a doctoral degree. However, no more than one-fourth of the credit hours required for that doctoral degree may be applied.

### **Doctoral Program Forms**

Please use the checklist on the next page for a timely submission of required forms. These can be found at <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms.html>. Each program's administrative assistant will initiate these forms and submit to the College of Graduate Studies for electronic signature routing.

### **Doctorate Checklist**

**Please use the checklist below for a timely submission of requirements.**  
**Forms can be found at <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms.html>**  
**Important dates: [http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/doctoral\\_dates.html](http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/doctoral_dates.html)**

**Timeline**

*This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/index.php>.*

## DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

		ED	S&E
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form A</b> – Degree Plan (signed)	30 hrs.	9 hrs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form B</b> – Comprehensive Examination and Advancement to Candidacy Report	42 hrs.	36 hrs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form C</b> – Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee Appointment	48-57 hrs.	9 hrs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form D</b> – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Hearing Request Form Must be submitted at least two weeks before anticipated proposal date	48-57 hrs.	36 hrs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form E</b> – Preliminary Agreement to schedule the Dissertation Defense/Final Examination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dissertation, in its entirety, must be submitted to each committee member at least two (2) weeks prior to the defense.</li> <li>• Last day to defend is six (6) weeks prior to graduation.</li> </ul>	8 weeks prior to Graduation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form F</b> – Dissertation Defense and Written Dissertation Report	4 Weeks Prior to Graduation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form G</b> – Graduate Faculty Representative Report	<u>5 Days following Defense/ Exam</u> 5 Weeks prior to Graduation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form H</b> – Doctoral/Dissertation Committee Member Change Request	As needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form I</b> – Graduate Degree Plan Exceptions Form	As needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form J</b> – Graduate Degree Plan Revalidation Request	As needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Form K</b> – Request for a Leave of Absence	As needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Final Version of Dissertation Submitted to ProQuest</b> <a href="http://www.etdadmin.com/tamucc">www.etdadmin.com/tamucc</a> Note: Title Page, Committee Member Page, and Copyright Page templates can be found online at <a href="http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms.html">http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms.html</a>	4 Weeks prior to Graduation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Survey of Earned Doctorates:</b> <a href="https://sed.norc.org/doctorate/showRegister.do">https://sed.norc.org/doctorate/showRegister.do</a>	4 Weeks prior to Graduation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dissertation Processing Fee:</b> <a href="http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/doctoral_students.html">http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/doctoral_students.html</a>	4 Weeks prior to Graduation	

### Dissertation Defense/Final Examination

The comprehensive exam must be passed and courses in the plan of study completed with a GPA of 3.0 or greater before the dissertation defense/final examination will be scheduled. The dissertation defense/final examination must cover the dissertation but need not be limited thereto. More than one dissenting vote in the comprehensive exam or final exam (which includes the

## **DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT**

dissertation defense) will constitute failure. The defense must be scheduled for a minimum of **six (6) weeks prior to graduation**.

All committee members, including the GFR, will be provided a copy of the dissertation at least **two (2) weeks before the defense** of dissertation and final exam.

There are some common elements, albeit slight variations, across the doctoral programs related to both the presentation of the dissertation and the final examination. Please see individual Doctoral Program Handbooks for more specificity regarding each program's requirements.

Subsequent to the dissertation defense/final examination, and **only** after all changes to the dissertation manuscript requested by the committee have been made, the student will submit an electronic copy of the dissertation, no later than **four (4) weeks prior to graduation**, to ProQuest/UMI as a single PDF file.

Students not completing all requirements of the final dissertation defense by the end of the semester, such as turning in an approved final draft by published deadlines, will receive a grade of In Progress (IP). The student must register for the same course in the subsequent semester, paying all the appropriate tuition and fees, to receive a final grade for the course.



# DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

## SECTION IV. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Programs to assist you in financing an education at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi are administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance, including scholarships, grants, work study, and loan programs.

### Financial Aid

Application forms and detailed instructions on applying for financial aid are available through the Office of Student Financial Assistance at the following web address: <http://osfa.tamucc.edu>.

### Scholarships

#### Eligibility

Graduate students who wish to apply for a graduate scholarship can apply via the [NextGen Scholarship Application](#) (student ID required).

Eligibility requirements for **receiving** a graduate scholarship include:

- Admission to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.
- Being a graduate degree or certificate-seeking student.
- Enrollment in at least six (6) graduate student credit hours in a regular semester or three (3) graduate student credit hours during the combined summer terms for summer scholarships. Please note: individual scholarships or Colleges (i.e., College of Science and Engineering) may require full-time enrollment (9 graduate SCH).
- A 3.0 GPA minimum (graduate GPA for returning students or last 60 SCH for new students)

Scholarships funds will normally be disbursed throughout the academic year. For example, a \$1,000 scholarship awarded for the academic year, will be paid out as \$500 in the fall semester and \$500 in the spring semester.

### Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available through the individual colleges and other academic units on campus. Students are encouraged to inquire with the coordinator of their graduate programs regarding assistantship availability. Graduate students interested in becoming Teaching Assistants in the First-Year Seminar Program should contact the Director of the University Core Curriculum Program for information.

In addition to individual Colleges, the following units may also hire graduate assistants. This is not an inclusive list.

College of Graduate Studies

Computer Services

Center for Coastal Studies

Garcia Education Center

Center for Water Supply Studies

Library Operations

Conrad Blucher Institute for  
Surveying and Science

Office of Student Engagement and  
Success

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Office of Marketing and Communications	Office of the Provost
Office of Assessment & Continuous Improvement	Office of Student Engagement and Success
Office of Student Financial Assistance	Research, Commercialization, and Outreach
Career Services	Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center	

### Fellowships

Recipients of national fellowships such as the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, National Academies, NDSEG, or National Physical Science Fellowship may apply for a TAMU-CC National Recognition Scholarship at <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu//funding/index.html>.

In addition, fellowship recipients are eligible to participate in the TAMU Postdoctoral & Graduate Student Fellow health insurance plan. Plan details and enrollment instructions can be found at: <http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/grad-students/>

### Out-Of-State Tuition Waivers

Non-resident students receiving a 50% FTE graduate assistantship, as well as their spouse and children, will receive **in-state tuition and fees** at the rate charged to Texas residents **for the semester in which they hold the assistantship appointment**. To receive in-state tuition rates, students must maintain a graduate course load of at least six (6) hours during long semesters or three (3) hours during the summer session. Individual programs/departments/colleges may have additional qualification requirements (e.g., assistantships funded by the College of Graduate Studies and College of Science and Engineering require nine (9) SCH graduate enrollment during long semesters).

To request an out-of-state tuition waiver,

1. download and complete the “Graduate Assistant In-State Tuition Form” available at <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms/GradAssistant/GradAssistExemption.pdf>.
2. submit the completed form to the College of Graduate Studies for processing.

This form must be completed **once every academic year**.

Graduate assistants appointed for more than one semester will receive notification from CGS in November to complete and submit a **reaffirmation form** online, confirming their eligibility to receive in-state tuition. **The reaffirmation form must be completed every semester** and is required to retain eligibility for in-state tuition. The form can be accessed at:

[http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/TA\\_RA\\_waiver\\_request.html](http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/TA_RA_waiver_request.html).

Students receiving a University **scholarship of \$1,000 or more** per year **may be eligible** for in-state tuition contingent upon availability of Competitive Scholarship Waivers. The University Scholarship Office or the Office of the Provost determines how many waivers are available each year. There is no separate form required.

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**SECTION V. STEPS TO GRADUATION**

Flow Chart



This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/index.php>.

# DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

## Graduation Deadlines

Students must submit a completed application for graduation online through their S.A.I.L account **by the posted deadline**. Graduation deadlines and pricing are posted by the [Office of the Registrar](#). Graduation application fees are non-refundable.

## Commencement

For dates, times and location of the commencement ceremonies please visit <http://commencement.tamucc.edu/>.

## Regalia

Graduates must wear official regalia to the commencement ceremony. These items can be rented or purchased at the Barnes & Noble University Bookstore. For more information, please visit <http://universityservices.tamucc.edu/Bookstore.html>.

Option	Processing/Delivery	Fee
<b>Rental</b>	Must be ordered at the bookstore. Takes approximately 2 weeks for delivery.	Starting at \$120
<b>Purchase</b>	Must be ordered at the bookstore. Take approximately 4-6 weeks for delivery.	Starting at \$200 up to \$2,000. Varies based on customization options.

## Diploma

Diplomas will be made available to the students once an audit has confirmed completion of all requirements. This process may take a few weeks after graduation. Once complete, diplomas may be picked-up or are mailed by the Registrar's Office. For more information, contact 361-825-2624, press option 2 to be connected. Doctoral graduates will receive a diploma tube at commencement. In the tube will be a congratulatory letter from the University President. Additionally, there will also be a congratulatory letter from the College of Graduate Studies Dean, with instructions on the availability timeframe and process for obtaining transcripts and the diploma.

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## Graduation Cost Estimate Worksheet

Fee	Type
\$100	Dissertation Processing Fee
\$43	One Institutional Dissertation Copies
\$43	Personal/Program Required Dissertation Copies (Optional)
\$95	Open Access Fee (optional)
\$55	Copyright Fee (optional)
\$120 and up	Regalia – Rental or Purchase
	Graduation Invitations (optional)
	Miscellaneous
<b>Starts at \$456</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL</b>

# DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

## SECTION VI. DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

The following guidelines were developed to help doctoral candidates and their committee members to prepare the dissertation manuscript. The dissertation should be presented in a scholarly, well-integrated and properly documented manner and should report the original work done by the student under the supervision of the advisory committee.

### Research

The responsibility for the ethical conduct of student research is jointly held by the instructor and the student, each being fully responsible for the research. Approval to conduct research involving **human subjects or animals**, which may require IRB review, must be obtained prior to conducting **any** data collection. Contact the Compliance Officer for additional information.

Compliance Officer                    <http://research.tamucc.edu/compliance>  
Faculty Center 168                    361- 825-2497

### Plagiarism Check for Dissertations

Plagiarism is not tolerated at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. It is the doctoral committee chair's responsibility to electronically check for plagiarism. All dissertations must be checked through Turnitin or an instrument of equivalent rigor prior to the defense. The College of Graduate Studies requires that the student's committee chair **certify** that the dissertation has been electronically checked for plagiarism. [Form E - Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Dissertation Defense/Final Examination](#) must be used to transmit the certification to the College of Graduate Studies. If Turnitin is not used, the process that was followed must be described and submitted together with Form E.

For information about Turnitin, tutorials, and how to create a user account, see:  
<https://distance-education.tamucc.edu/turnitin.html>

Departments will determine their own guidelines for these checks, for how they deal with the results revealed, and for remedies to address indications of plagiarism, consistent with existing rules and regulations, including University Rule 13.02.99.C3.01: Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases.

An online plagiarism course has been established through the Office of Research Compliance CITI training account. This course is available free of charge for faculty members to use and assign to students as appropriate. The plagiarism course description and registration instructions are available at: [http://research.tamucc.edu/compliance/citi\\_training.html.html](http://research.tamucc.edu/compliance/citi_training.html.html). Students are able to download the certificate of completion after the course quiz.

### Dissertation Formatting Guidelines

Your dissertation must conform to academic and institutional standards. The following guidelines will help ensure your dissertation is completed and submitted appropriately. Acceptable formats for the body of the dissertation will vary by program area. For more specific guidelines, please see individual Doctoral Program Handbooks.

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## Margins

Text may not extend beyond 1-inch for left/right margins and for the top/bottom for each page. All figures and tables must also conform to these margins. Do not hyphenate words at the end of a line.

## Pagination

Number all pages in the dissertation proposal or dissertation manuscript **except** the Title Page, the Copyright Pages, and the Committee Member Page. Page numbers on all numbered pages should appear .5 inches from the bottom center of the page in Times New Roman font.

Number the preliminary pages of the dissertation with lower case Roman numerals (bottom center). The Abstract page is the first numbered page; it follows the Title, UMI Publisher's (which is automatically inserted- DO NOT LEAVE A BLANK PAGE FOR THIS PAGE), Copyright, and Committee Member Pages and is numbered v. Number the text and supplementary pages of the dissertation proposal or dissertation manuscript with Arabic numerals. The first page of the narrative text begins with 1 and the numbering runs consecutively to the end of the manuscript.

## Order of Preliminary Pages

Please see the examples for the title, copyright, abstract, and table of contents pages found at the end of this document. The templates can also be found online at <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms.html> under the Doctoral Program tab.

- Title page (no pagination)
  - Use the [online template](#) to format this page:
  - Title should be in all capital letters, centered. (Exception: genus, species, chemical element symbols should be upper and lower case and in italics as needed to comply with the custom of the discipline)
- Copyright page (no pagination)
  - Use the [online template](#) to format this page:
  - Note: When you submit your dissertation for publication you will be asked if you want to pay an additional fee for Copyright. This is for a Registered Copyright. In the United States, the United States Copyright Office accepts registrations. For works created in the US by US citizens, a registration is required before an infringement suit may be filed in a US court. Furthermore, copyright holders cannot claim statutory damages or attorney's fees unless the work was registered prior to infringement, or within three months of publication.
- Committee member page (no pagination)
  - Use the [online template](#) to format this page:
- ABSTRACT (pagination begins here at v) – allows for automatic insertion of UMI Proquest publisher page
  - Text of the Abstract must not exceed 350 words (this does not include preliminary lines). Any term (or numeral) with a space on either side is counted as one word.
  - The text of the Abstract starts two spaces below the title.
  - The text is double-spaced or space-and-a-half according to the spacing style of the text of the dissertation. Follow the same margin settings as your narrative text, as well as the same right alignment (ragged edge or right justified).

## DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

- View the abstract examples for information on abstract content for Traditional Dissertation or Manuscript Dissertation formats.
- DEDICATION
  - Center DEDICATION at the top of the page
  - The text of the acknowledgements starts two spaces below the title.
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
  - Center ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS at the top of the page
  - The text of the acknowledgements starts two spaces below the title.
- TABLE OF CONTENTS
  - Insert an automatic Table of Contents from the References tab in Microsoft Word
  - Center TABLE OF CONTENTS at the top of the page
  - Use the headings CONTENTS and PAGE for the listing of topics and pages, respectively.
  - List the preliminary pages (beginning with the abstract and including the Table of Contents) and include all headings and subheadings used in the dissertation, exactly as they appear in the body.
  - Chapter numbers should be in Roman numeral format.
  - The Table of Contents should be double-spaced, in 12-point, Times New Roman font and should **not** include bold, italicized, or underlined font.
- LIST OF FIGURES AND LIST OF TABLES Use *the heading* LIST OF FIGURES (or TABLES) *as appropriate for the listing of pages.*
  - Center LIST OF FIGURES (or TABLES) at the top of the page
  - Use the headings FIGURES (or TABLES) and PAGE for the listing of figures/tables and pages, respectively.
  - Insert an automatic Table of Figures from the References tab in Microsoft Word
  - The List of Figures/ List of Tables should be double-spaced, in 12-point, Times New Roman font and should **not** include bold, italicized, or underlined font.

### **Deadlines**

To maintain eligibility to graduate in a given semester, students must meet the scheduled deadline for submittal of (1) the signed Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Dissertation Defense/ Final Examination, (2) the Dissertation Defense & Written Dissertation Report, and (3) the dissertation in final form as a PDF file. This date, along with other dates of interest, is posted on the College of Graduate Studies important dates webpage [http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/doctoral\\_dates.html](http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/doctoral_dates.html). There are no exceptions for late submittal. Students submitting after Deadline Day cannot graduate until the following semester and will be required to enroll in dissertation hours in the semester of graduation.

### **Final Steps to Submitting Your Dissertation**

After your **Dissertation Defense & Written Dissertation Report** (Form F) is submitted and all requested changes have been made, you can submit your dissertation electronically. Before you begin the submission steps, please be sure you have the following:

- a) *Full text of your dissertation in PDF format.* This must be one file with embedded fonts. The maximum file size that can be uploaded is 250 MB. The PDF file name cannot contain



## DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

periods (except for the .pdf extension). Instructions about PDF conversion and embedding fonts are available at the ProQuest/UMI ETD Administrator site under the “Submission Steps/PDF” tab.

- b) *Optional supplementary files*. Images, data, etc. that are an integral part of the dissertation, but not part of the full text.
- c) Advisor and other committee members’ names.
- d) *Subject Category*. Please choose up to three subject categories from the Subject Category List ([http://www.etsadmin.com/UMI\\_SubjectCategoriesGuide.pdf](http://www.etsadmin.com/UMI_SubjectCategoriesGuide.pdf)) that best describe your dissertation.

### **Submission Guidelines**

Go to <http://www.etsadmin.com/tamucc> to create an account or login using an existing account.

When signed into the account, a list of submission steps will be visible on the left hand side of the computer screen. These steps will serve as a guide through the submission process. A checkmark will appear once each step is completed. For a detailed presentation on the electronic submission process, visit:

[http://gradschool.tamucc.edu//current\\_students/assets/ProQuest\\_Dissertation\\_Submission\\_Guide.pdf](http://gradschool.tamucc.edu//current_students/assets/ProQuest_Dissertation_Submission_Guide.pdf)

### **Unacceptable Manuscripts**

A thesis or dissertation may be declared unacceptable by the College of Graduate Studies and returned to the student and department head with a list of needed changes if the requirements outlined in this manual are not followed. In this situation, the manuscript must be corrected and resubmitted as a new document. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the re-submittal process in order to graduate that semester. Unacceptable manuscripts returned to the student after Deadline Day may not be accepted for graduation in that semester.

### **Dissertation Review**

The following are approximate turn-around times to be expected for feedback and requests for revisions after the dissertation has been submitted to ProQuest/UMI. Documents are reviewed in the order received. The student will receive requests for revisions from the College of Graduate Studies via email through ProQuest/UMI.

Early in the semester - 5 working days

Week before Deadline Day - 5–10 working days

The student will make requested corrections in the original Word (or other) file, convert the revised document to a new PDF file and upload the new PDF to the ETD.

All corrections must be made promptly and meet the College of Graduate Studies’ deadlines. Graduation **WILL BE POSTPONED** if corrections are not made on time.

# DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

## Publication of your Research; Copyright Issues

[Note: based on information in the Texas A&M University Thesis Manual]

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to U.S. copyright laws regarding the dissertation and its contents.

*If you are using your already published material in the dissertation (journal policies):*

Graduate students may publish material that will later be used as part of the dissertation. However, students should be aware of the publishing agreement they sign when a journal accepts an article for publication. At that time, the student/lead author typically transfers copyright to the journal as publisher, and you he/she no longer possess the right to use this material without permission. **However, the publishing agreement form may be modified before it is signed so that the student retains the right to include the material in the dissertation.** The publisher would still have the rights it needs to print, distribute, and sell the work. When negotiating with the publisher, remember to inform them that the dissertation will be available worldwide through the Internet (theses will be sent to ProQuest/UMI and can be purchased through them).

If you have **not** retained the right to use your previously published material in the dissertation, you must get permission from the copyright holder to include it. If the journal retains the right to an article and does not allow its exact reproduction in your dissertation, we recommend that you contact them to ascertain whether a revised or reworded chapter is acceptable.

*If you are planning to use your dissertation material in a future publication:*

Students who plan to publish dissertation material in future articles need to investigate whether the journal of choice will publish material already made available to the public and consider this when choosing an option for making the dissertation available after graduation. You have the option to restrict full-text access to your dissertation for a period of time before releasing it to the Internet to allow time to publish in journals whose policy is to be first publisher. This process is called an **embargo** or delayed release. More information is available during the submission process through ProQuest. ProQuest **embargo options include 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. If a student needs to delay the release for longer than two years, contact the College of Graduate Studies for instructions.**

*If you are planning to include others' copyrighted material in the dissertation:*

If the manuscript contains any material (figures, tables, text, etc.) taken from copyrighted sources, the student has the responsibility to determine if permission from the copyright holder is needed. The student should consider a number of factors when utilizing material from other sources, including whether or not the material is in the public domain or can be used under the provisions of Fair Use. Regardless of whether or not permission is required, proper credit must be given in the text. For material that requires permission, acknowledgment should be included in the text, per the instruction of the copyright holder. For additional information regarding copyright and fair use, refer to the [Copyright and Your Dissertation or Thesis](#) document available at our website.

## DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

To summarize, when using published material:

- Determine if the material is copyrighted or not. Non-copyrighted material may be reused freely, as long as credit is given to the original source
- If the material is copyrighted, determine if it may be included in your dissertation under the provisions of Fair Use. If Fair Use applies, do not seek permission.
- If Fair Use does not apply, obtain permission (in either the publisher agreement or in a letter or email from the copyright holder).
- Give proper acknowledgment of all work created by others and included in the dissertation.
- Doctoral students must inform the copyright holder that the dissertation will be sent to, and sold on demand by, ProQuest/UMI.

### Binding

Dissertation binding will be handled through the ProQuest/UMI ETD Administrator. During the submission process, an opportunity to order personal copies, along with the two required University copies for the Library and College Department.

Each volume is rendered with respect for the scholarly research, featuring:

- Brilliant white 32 lb. paper stock: acid-free and archival-grade, this photographic-quality stock is brighter and more opaque for better ink contrast and readability.
- Any color graphics included in the digital copy of the dissertation received by ProQuest/UMI can now be reproduced in color at no extra charge. Photographs, charts, and other illustrations are printed as faithfully as they were provided electronically.
- Durable hardbound copies are 8½”x11” with black covers made from 2.5 mm-thick board covered in washable linen. Titles are embossed in gold foil on the spine. Handmade thread-sewn bindings and generous margins enable volumes to be opened flat.
- Manuscript copies are shipped approximately **8 to 12 weeks** after submission of the manuscript to the address provided by the student.

### Distribution

<b>Distribution Copies (1)</b>	Copies for distribution will be delivered directly to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, College of Graduate Studies, who will in turn deliver to the Mary and Jeff Bell Library.
<b>Personal Bound Copies</b>	All personal copies will be delivered to the shipping address provided during the electronic submission process.

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### Fees

Fee Type	Required	Amount	Payment methods
Distribution Copies (1)	Yes	\$43	Pay online (ProQuest) during submission process.
Personal Bound Copies	Optional	Varies by type and amount ordered	Pay online (ProQuest) during submission process.
Dissertation Processing Fee (TAMU-CC)	Yes	\$100	Pay online at <a href="https://tpg.tamucc.edu/C20207_u_stores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=210">https://tpg.tamucc.edu/C20207_u_stores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=210</a>
Copyright Fee	Optional	\$55	Pay online (ProQuest) during submission process.
Open Access Publishing	Optional	\$95	Pay online (ProQuest) during submission process.
* <b>Note:</b> Tax may be added to the total based on your shipping address.			

# DISCOVER YOUR PASSION – INQUIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT

## SECTION VII. EXAMPLES & HINTS

The following examples are meant to guide you and act as samples of what the preliminary pages should look like.

Please use the templates available online: <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/forms.html>

*Title Page Example*

*Copyright Page Example*

*Committee Member Page Example*

*Abstract Page Example*

*Dedication Page Example*

*Acknowledgements Page Example*

*Table of Contents Page Example*

*List of Figures Page Example*

*List of Tables Page Example*

THE TITLE OF YOUR DISSERTATION BELONGS HERE IN ALL CAPS AND IF IT IS  
LONG ENOUGH, IT WILL FILL THE SECOND LINE

A Dissertation

by

YOUR NAME

BS, University Name, Year\*

MS, University Name, Year

\*This is only for degrees previously earned! Please do not include your major with the degree name, and list the degree simply as BA, BS, MA, etc. For example:

BS, University Name, Year

MS, University Name, Year

\*International Students must include the name of the country between the school and the date the degree was received, if it was received outside of the US.

\*Delete this box before typing in your information.

DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

in

MARINE BIOLOGY

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
Corpus Christi, Texas

August 2016

© Your Full Legal Name

All Rights Reserved

August 2016

THE TITLE OF YOUR DISSERTATION BELONGS HERE IN ALL CAPS AND IF IT IS  
LONG ENOUGH, IT WILL FILL THE SECOND LINE

A Dissertation

by

YOUR NAME

This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

Albert Einstein, PhD  
Chair

Stephen W. Hawking, PhD  
Co-Chair

William S. Nye, PedD  
Committee Member

Arnold A. Schwarzenegger, DHL  
Graduate Faculty Representative

August 2016



## ABSTRACT

### ABSTRACT for Traditional Dissertation Format

The dissertation abstract is the “gateway” to your dissertation and it should provide a “complete snapshot” of your manuscript. The text of the Abstract starts two double spaces below the preliminary lines and is double-spaced or space-and-a-half according to the spacing style of the text of the dissertation. The text of the Abstract should not exceed 350 words. Paragraph one introduces your specific problem and the theoretical underpinnings driving the study.

Paragraph 2 describes the population and/or the methodology employed to conduct the study. For example: size of population; demographics; location; quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods; types of analyses.

Paragraph 3 describes the findings.

Paragraph 4 briefly shares the implications, the “so what” of the study and may pose additional/future research needed.

## ABSTRACT for Manuscript Dissertation Format

The dissertation abstract is the “gateway” to your dissertation and it should provide a “complete snapshot” of your manuscript while informing the reader of the layout of the dissertation. The text of the Abstract starts two double spaces below the title and is double-spaced or space-and-a-half according to the spacing style of the text of the dissertation. The text of the Abstract should not exceed 350 words. Paragraph one introduces your specific problem and the theoretical underpinnings/rationale driving the study. Provide the objectives/focus for each of the manuscripts.

Paragraphs 2-4 (or 5) describe the focus for each manuscript and the methodology, e.g., size of population (number of fish; samplings, etc); location; process for data collection; types of analyses employed to conduct the study. Close with the findings.

Final paragraph briefly shares the implications, the “so what” of the study and may pose additional/future research needed.

## DEDICATION

The Dedication page is optional and follows the Abstract. The title DEDICATION is capitalized and centered at the top of the page. The text of the Dedication starts two double spaces below the title.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Acknowledgements page is optional and follows the Dedication. The title ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS is capitalized and centered at the top of the page. The text of the Acknowledgements starts two double spaces below the title.

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Einstein, and my committee members, Dr. Hawkin, Dr. Nye, and Dr. Schwarzenegger, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research.

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## **How to Manage Your Dissertation**

The following article first appeared in *SACNAS News*, winter/spring 2014, Volume 16, No.2 and is available online at: <http://sacnas.org/about/stories/sacnas-news/winter-2014/managing-your-dissertation>

### **Managing the Dissertation Process**

By Roberta Pokphanh, PhD

Over the past decade, I have witnessed some students struggle to complete a dissertation while others manage to turn hard work into results swiftly. The final component of a doctoral program—the dissertation—does not have to be a daunting experience. Across disciplines, there is one skill that stands out among students who succeed in a timely manner. What is the skill that makes the large, overwhelming project of completing a dissertation manageable? The skill that will see you through to dissertation completion is taking responsibility for managing your dissertation as a research and writing project. The moment you take full responsibility for managing your dissertation as a project is the moment you will begin to see the end of your career as a student and the beginning of your career as a professional.

#### **The Dissertation Is Your Project to Manage**

The most important step to dissertation completion is to accept that the dissertation is *your* project to manage and to take full ownership of the process. *No one else*—not your advisor, not your lab mates, not your spouse, and not even your mother who keeps asking you if you are done with school yet—will ensure that your dissertation gets completed.

#### **How to Start Managing Your Dissertation Project**

Step back and take a good look at your dissertation. If you view it as a project and create your own personal map to dissertation completion, you will find that you can and will make regular, consistent progress and complete it in a timely manner.

There are five basic steps that will allow you to manage your dissertation as a project. First, you must define the project; then, list the steps/tasks necessary to complete the project; identify the people and things necessary to complete the project; set a timeline leading to completion; and finally, ask for help when necessary. If you follow the steps in the guideline below, you will quickly find yourself moving forward to dissertation completion.

#### **Defining the Dissertation**

It is extremely difficult to achieve something that is undefined, so your first step in taking control of your dissertation is to define for yourself precisely what your finished dissertation will look like. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What does an average table of contents in my field contain?
- What is the length of the introduction, conclusion, average chapter, and the entire dissertation?
- Is there a separate literature survey?
- Is it usually produced in Word or LaTeX?
- How are citations handled—as footnotes or endnotes?
- Is a particular style manual required or recommended?

*This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/index.php>.*

- How is the bibliography formatted?
- How are illustrations, figures, and charts labeled?
- Are there requirements and limitations on fonts and margins?

Some of these questions are answered for you at your institution by required formatting guidelines found on your graduate school's website; other questions must be answered according to the standards in your field and program. If you do not know the answers to these questions, go to your University's library website and find a few recent dissertations from your program. Do not read the dissertation—just look at the table of contents. Then take a few minutes to create a listing of all of the components of your dissertation. It should look something like the following:

- Title page (1 page)
  - Acceptance page (1 page)
  - Abstract (350 words)
  - Acknowledgements (optional, 1–2 pages)
  - Table of Contents (1–2 pages)
  - Introduction
  - Chapter 1
  - Chapter 2
  - Chapter 3
  - Chapter 4...
  - Conclusion
  - Works Cited/Bibliography
  - Appendixes
- Total length: 200 pages or so (depending on your field)

### **Define the Project Scope**

Now that you have demonstrated what the final project needs to look like, start thinking about what resources will be required to get you to a completed dissertation. Select one section or chapter of your dissertation, and write down a description of each of the items that will need to be completed in order for that section or chapter to be written. What research needs to be done? Is there fieldwork to be completed? Are there experiments to be run? Do you need to learn a new lab technique? Are there books/articles to be obtained and read?

So far you have focused on one section. But the process is iterative; you need to complete the process for each section of your dissertation. Repeat the planning process for each section.

### **Outline the Process in Manageable Pieces**

Now, take the list of items you created for the first section of your dissertation and begin breaking the process down into smaller steps. For each item, identify three things: the steps you need to take to complete these tasks; who and what is involved in each step; and how long it will take you to complete each task.

### **Set a Timeline**

The next step is to build a timeline based on your tasks that includes reasonable deadlines, detailed milestones, and University-established deadlines. Think about your task list in terms of short-term and long-term tasks. Create a chart, noting which items will be completed:

- Today
- This week
- Next week
- This month
- Next month
- Longer timeline items – months 3 and 4
- Even longer timeline items – months 5 to 9 (or longer)

### **Implement Good Business Practices**

You have taken the first few steps by defining your project, identifying intermediate tasks, and setting a timeline. But remember where you began the process—by acknowledging that the dissertation is **YOUR PROJECT TO MANAGE**. You, and only you, have to take responsibility for making sure you follow through on your commitment.

Large projects such as a dissertation benefit greatly from regular, dedicated, time and effort commitments. Next you are going to set a schedule for research and writing, and use a reward system to keep yourself accountable for maintaining regular research and writing time.

Pull up your calendar *now* and set repeating appointments with yourself for research and writing. At the end of each week, after you have kept your commitment, mark down your reward. The reward should be something that motivates you and is simple and free (or cheap— after all, you are a graduate student). It might be something like: a guilt-free hour surfing the web, reading Facebook, playing your favorite video game; a quiet cup of coffee in your favorite coffee shop; finding and listening to a new song you have never heard before; or an evening socializing with good friends.

Next you need to set regular meetings with your advisor. Start by requesting a meeting to review the dissertation timeline you have created. Along with the request for a meeting, include a brief description of the agenda. Always provide an agenda prior to the meeting that includes “meeting minutes”—where you left off with your last meeting; what has been accomplished since the last meeting; what you plan to do in the next two weeks and upcoming deadlines; and questions and new agenda items.

Bring your project outline and timeline to every meeting. After the meeting, make sure you follow up with an email summary of the meeting and an itinerary for the next two weeks. When you turn in any portion of your dissertation, always include a project and progress summary that tells your committee members clearly and exactly what is in the materials you are submitting—such as “edits to chapter 2 that incorporate changes on pages 50–55 to reflect new data from the latest set of experiments.”

### **Ask for Help When You Need It**

While you are ultimately responsible for your dissertation, you are not alone. Dissertations should not be written in isolation. Identify your dissertation completion team and use that team to help you finish. The team will include your advisor and committee members, but may also include many others. Take a few minutes to create a list of your team. It should look something like the list below:

- **You!**
- Your advisor

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- Co-advisor/committee member
- Co-advisor/committee member
- Co-advisor/committee member
- Reader (disciplinary content)
- Reader (allied field content)
- Reader/Editor (grammar, sentence structure)
- Timekeeper (a brave soul who will regularly ask you if you are following your timeline despite the fact that the only reward you bestow on them for the steadfast assistance is a dark scowl)
- Cheerleader (an encouraging person who will remind you constantly that you *can* indeed do it!)
- Support Network (someone who will help out with life commitments—such as providing babysitting—or otherwise provide nonacademic support)

If writing is a primary concern for you, consider joining a graduate student writing group, visiting your University writing center, taking a writing class, or joining a dissertation writing group for more assistance.

### **Focus—But Don’t Just Write Your Dissertation**

Dissertation completion requires focus. You must limit other commitments—and even possibly take a hiatus from certain activities. *But...don’t just write your dissertation.* Maintain a healthy interest in other activities.

Consider doing an activity if it is helpful or supportive of your dissertation—such as a journal publication of chapter 1; or, if it is helpful/supportive of your career goals —such as a presentation at a national conference; or, if it keeps you sane—such as taking a break for an afternoon of classic movies.

Offer a polite “no thank you” to requests to participate in activities that are not connected to your dissertation research—such as a call for abstracts in an area you would like to do future research in, but that is not part of your dissertation; or, an activity that is not supportive of your career goals —such as serving as PTA president at your child’s school; or, especially if you really are not interested, but are afraid to say no.

### **A Note on Productive Procrastination**

When you are tempted to clean your desk, build a website for a blog, clean out the refrigerator, remodel the bathroom, revise your syllabus yet again, or various and sundry other productive tasks rather than working on your dissertation—remember your timeline, take a deep breath, and get back on course. Here are a few basic rules to remember during the time you have dedicated to researching, writing, or revising:

- If it does not stink or pose a health hazard, do not clean it.
- If it is not a fire hazard, do not fix it.
- Unless it is your small child or pet, do not feed or otherwise provide care to it.

Most things will wait until after you have met your research, writing, or revising goals for the day. A little self-discipline can go a long way toward dissertation completion—and ending your signature line with *PhD*.

**About the Author**

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