

Tulane University

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

(updated 11/2024)

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I. SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING DEGREE PROGRAMS

Graduate programs in Tulane's School of Science and Engineering award both Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

The requirements for this degree are a minimum of 30 credit hours. Additional departmental/program-specific requirements and specifications may exist. Please check with the department/program for additional information.

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

For Doctor of Philosophy degree programs, the minimum requirement is 48 semester hours and a dissertation. One academic year must be in full-time residence status. Students undertaking work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy should understand that this degree is awarded not for an accumulation of course credits only, but for original work in the discipline. Ideally the student is expected to finish the course requirements in two full years of graduate study and complete the dissertation by the fifth year. The student must demonstrate in independent study and research, as evidenced in the dissertation, the ability to carry out an original investigation in the chosen field.

The minimum course requirements are usually 48 semester hours; however, students should refer to the departmental/program-specific requirements. Where necessary, a department/program will require additional hours of course work. Students ordinarily must complete the requirements for the doctoral degree within seven years from the date of matriculation in the School of Science and Engineering. Only in unusual cases, with the approval of the department chair and Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, will credit be approved for courses taken more than six years before first registration for graduate work.

Departmental (Preliminary or Qualifying) Examination

The student shall undertake the general (preliminary or qualifying) examination as set by the department/program deadlines. A student who fails to take the test within a reasonable length of time will be judged not to be making adequate progress towards the degree and will be advised by the department/program not to continue graduate study. The test is a comprehensive examination over the student's field of study. It covers the student's knowledge of appropriate subjects and courses and is a rigorous test of scholarly competence and knowledge. The examination also tests acquaintance with the scholarship in the field and powers of bibliographical criticism. Finally, the examination affords the examiners the basis for constructive recommendations on any subsequent program of studies to be undertaken by the student. It should be noted that in some departments/programs cumulative examinations are used in lieu of and/or in addition to the general or preliminary examination.

Dissertation Committee

A student should choose a topic or project in consultation with a tenure-track faculty member in the major department who has agreed to serve as director. The student, in coordination with his/her director should form a committee of a minimum of three members, which will serve as the dissertation committee. The majority of the committee should comprise tenure-track faculty at

Tulane; other members may include Professors of Practice, Research Professors, and/or faculty at other institutions. Some programs may have additional committee composition requirements. Exceptions to these stipulations may be made with the approval of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Programs. The approval of the prospectus as described below also serves as approval of the committee. The responsibilities of the dissertation committee are specified below under Dissertation and Final Examination.

Prospectus

A student will usually submit a prospectus after the student has completed course requirements, satisfied any departmental/program-specific foreign language requirement and passed the general examination. Upon the recommendation of the department/program, however, the student may submit a prospectus any time after completion of one year of full-time residence. The department's/program's recommendation for approval of the prospectus should include one copy of the prospectus itself. The prospectus should be approximately three doubled-spaced typewritten pages in length or may be submitted in the department/program's required format. The cover sheet should state the student's name, department/program, the title of the proposed dissertation, and the name of the chair and the other members of the committee. The introduction of the prospectus should contain a summary of earlier work on the problem. The body should include an orderly description of the plan for the investigation. The conclusion should clearly state the anticipated nature of the investigation results. Major sources of information should be indicated, and a selective bibliography attached. The prospectus should be submitted to the Graduate Programs office along with a signed copy of the prospectus approval form.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to the School of Science and Engineering in a doctoral program does not constitute official admission to candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Requirements for admission to candidacy vary among departments/programs. The minimum requirements for admission to candidacy that the student must meet are completing course requirements, satisfying any departmental/program-specific teaching and research requirements, and passing a general examination. Some departments/programs also require that the student have submitted a prospectus of the dissertation approved by the student's dissertation committee. The recommendation for admission to candidacy is made by the department/program and must bear the signature the chair of the department/program. The recommendation for admission to candidacy must be submitted to the School of Science and Engineering no later than September 15 for those expecting to receive the degree in December, or December 15 for those expecting to receive the degree in May, or March 15 for those expecting to receive the degree at the end of the Summer Session.

The Dissertation

The dissertation is the necessary demonstration that the graduate candidate is worthy of taking a place among research scholars in their discipline. As the culmination of the doctoral degree, the dissertation must demonstrate not only mastery of the literature of a subject, but also the candidate's ability to carry on independent research, a genuine contribution to a field of knowledge, and/or an original interpretation of existing knowledge, and it must do so in a literate and lucid

fashion.

The student should complete the writing of the dissertation with the aid of his/her committee and submit drafts to each member of the committee prior to the oral defense. The oral defense should be set by the student in coordination with the department/program and the committee. The student should then make any revisions required by the committee. Once the committee has approved the final copy of the dissertation, the dissertation should be submitted to the SSE Graduate Programs office for final approval.

The deadline dates for the submission of dissertation are posted on the Graduate Programs website of the School of Science and Engineering.

Oral Defense Final Examination

All candidates must take a final examination for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Normally this examination consists primarily of an oral defense of the dissertation. This examination should be scheduled and approved by the committee, but not later than the deadline for submission of the dissertation to the Graduate Programs office. The requirement for final examination will not be waived, unless the candidate and the department/program can establish a case of extreme hardship subject to review and approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs.

The final examination committee is usually comprised of the members of the dissertation committee but may include any other members of the Graduate Faculty, including members of other departments/programs or other universities.

II. RULES AND REGULATIONS

Upon admission to Tulane's School of Science and Engineering, students are held responsible for compliance with the regulations of the School of Science and Engineering and of Tulane University as set forth in this handbook and in other current or subsequent official statements. They should familiarize themselves with these regulations. The University reserves the right to change any of its courses and charges without advance notice and to make such changes applicable to students already registered as well as to new students.

All international students who perform TA duties need to display English language proficiency sufficient to successfully complete their TA duties. International students who can demonstrate English is their first language will be exempted. All other international students who are on TA support will be required to take the ESP courses. Students who wish to have an ESP waiver granted must have 1) taken the summer course (in person or asynchronously) offered by the English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program, and 2) be given a waiver based on performance in this course at the discretion of the instructor. Additionally, international students who have completed a degree at a U.S. University can also request an exemption. These will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For the small number of cases where an international student does have fluency in English which do not fall under the scenarios above, these will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program Director and the home department of the student.

FULL-TIME RESIDENCE STATUS

To hold a fellowship, scholarship, or any of the various kinds of assistantships available in the

School of Science and Engineering, a student must be registered with full-time residence status. To determine student privileges and assess tuition and fees, a student with full-time residence status must be (1) registered for at least nine hours of graduate credit per semester until admitted to candidacy or (2) registered for three hours of Master's Research or Dissertation Research. These nine hours of graduate credit may be a combination of course work and research or solely research credit.

For doctoral students, after completing the requirements for admission to candidacy, students must register for dissertation research. In this status, the student registers for three credits of graduate dissertation research and is recognized as full-time. For Master's students, upon completion of course work, students may register for three credits of Master's thesis research and be considered full-time.

PART-TIME RESIDENCE STATUS

For the purpose of determining of student privileges and for the assessment of tuition and fees, a student with part-time residence status is any student who prior to admission to candidacy is registered for less than nine hours of graduate credit. See Continuous Registration Requirements given below.

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

A student admitted to the School of Science and Engineering in a doctoral program must be continuously registered in a degree-granting division of the University until the awarding of the degree. For most students, this includes the summer, fall, and spring academic terms. The continuous registration requirement applies both to resident and non-resident students.

Doctoral students must be registered from the date of first registration until the receipt of the degree, unless the registration is terminated by resignation or by dismissal for academic or disciplinary reasons. Under exceptional circumstances a student may be granted leave by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Programs, and during such period of leave, a student will be considered in continuous registration without payment of fees.

Students who are supported as teaching assistants, research assistants, fellows, or trainees have full-time status when they are enrolled in at least 3 credit hours of course work, Master's Research, or Dissertation Research.

Any student who is not registered for course work in a degree-granting division of the University must be registered in 3 credits of Masters Research or Dissertation Research in order to remain in continuous registration.

TENURE FOR DEGREE STUDENTS

Tenure is the maximum period of time normally permitted for the completion of all requirements for a degree, and it is determined on the basis of consecutive academic years from the date of registration for graduate study at Tulane or at another institution. Tenure is not affected by residence status. Under certain circumstances, upon the recommendation of the chairperson of a student's department or program committee, the Associate Dean for Doctoral or Masters Programs may extend tenure, but a student whose period of graduate study is unduly prolonged or interrupted may be required to perform additional work.

For the Master of Science degree, tenure is five years, although some departments/programs stipulate much earlier completion of all requirements for the degree. For the Doctor of Philosophy degree, tenure is seven years.

GRADUATE-LEVEL COURSES

Courses numbered from 6000 to 6999 are for graduates and advanced undergraduates. Courses numbered 7000 and above are exclusively for graduate students except in cases where individual faculty approve undergraduates to enroll. Graduate credit is not given for courses numbered lower than 6000. Schedules of classes are given in the official timetable posted by the Registrar each semester.

REGISTRATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE CREDIT AND PROVISIONAL GRADUATE CREDIT

An undergraduate at Tulane University with a grade point average of at least 3.3 in their major program may register, normally in the senior year, for up to six credits of 6000-level courses, for credit toward a baccalaureate degree. Permission of the course instructor, advisor, and chair of the major department are required. If passed with B or better on the graduate grading scale, graduate credit may be awarded if the student is admitted to an appropriate graduate program in the School of Science and Engineering. In order to receive graduate credit, the student must obtain a recommendation from the chair of the graduate department and approval of the Associate Dean for the appropriate graduate program.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The department/program concerned, and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Programs must approve the acceptance of graduate credit for work done at other graduate institutions or in another division of Tulane University. Up to 12 semester hours of transfer credit may be accepted toward a Master of Science degree, and up to 24 semester hours of transfer credit may be accepted toward the doctoral degree; SSE departments may use more stringent maximums for specific degrees. Work used toward another degree of equal level will not be accepted (e.g. Courses used for Master's degree at another institution or Tulane School may be applied toward a PhD from SSE, but not toward an SSE MS degree). To be considered for transfer credit, graduate work done at another institution or in another division of Tulane University must carry a grade of B or better. In cases in which transfer credit is requested for work outside the student's program, the SSE department who offers coursework in that area should be consulted (e.g., MATH should recommend transfer credit of MATH courses for students).

The tenure for completion of all work in a Master's program is five years, and tenure deadlines apply to transfer credit. Thus, transfer work applied toward the SSE MS degree must have been completed no more than four years from the date of first registration as an SSE graduate student. The tenure for completion of all work in a PhD program is seven years. Thus, transfer work applied toward the SSE PhD degree must have been completed no more than six years from the date of first registration as an SSE graduate student.

REGISTRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students registering in full-time or part-time residence status should review the University Registrar's Office website for all registration information, which includes information on Tulane

University's Gibson Online, dates, times, and procedures for registration. The Schedule of Classes is also available on the Registrar's website. Students should be mindful that timely registration is necessary to avoid issues with standing, status, and financial considerations such as student loans and stipends.

All admitted students are eligible to register with Gibson Online. All students must confirm their registration by the deadline set by the Registrar each semester. Students assume financial obligations for their courses upon registration.

Change of Courses

Students wishing to add or drop courses should consult the Schedule of Classes posted on Tulane's Registrar's website for deadlines and instructions. Failure to make schedule adjustments promptly and accurately may result in financial or academic penalties.

Change of Departmental Program

A student who has been admitted to a degree program in one department/program and wishes to transfer to another program must apply to the new program and be admitted.

GRADE POLICY

Some courses (typically departmental seminars and practica) are approved by departments as Pass/Fail. These grades may be reported as follows: S: Satisfactory or U: Unsatisfactory.

With the exception of these designated courses, courses that earn S/U grades do not contribute credits toward graduate degree requirements. Note also that grades of U are calculated into the GPA as a D whereas grades of S are not calculated in the GPA. SSE graduate students who wish for courses to appear on their transcript but not be graded or counted toward the degree should explore the AU (audit) option.

QUALITY OF WORK REQUIREMENTS

A minimum average quality-point ratio of 3.0 (B) must be maintained by all graduate students in the School of Science and Engineering. If a student receives one B- grade, the student is immediately considered for probation by the appropriate Associate Dean for in consultation with the appropriate department/program. If a student receives two grades of B-, or one grade less than B-, during his/her tenure in the School of Science and Engineering, the student is placed on probation and considered for dismissal by the Associate Dean in consultation with the appropriate department/program. The terms of the probation are to be worked out by the department/program in consultation with the Associate Dean. It is the department's/program's responsibility to report to the Associate Dean's office any student not making reasonable progress towards the degree. The above guidelines will be applied to all graduate students (master and doctoral degree candidates). It is also understood that these are minimum standards and that some departments/programs may impose more strenuous standards. More details around this and other issues can be found on the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS), <https://ogps.tulane.edu>. The specific link to the grade policy can be found at https://ogps.tulane.edu/sites/default/files/Grad%20student%20grade%20policy%20final_0.pdf

GRADE GRIEVANCE

If a student is dissatisfied with a grade, the student must first discuss the complaint with the professor. If the complaint is not resolved, the student must next submit a written complaint to the department/program chair and the grade appeal will be examined at that level. If there is still no satisfactory resolution to the grade grievance the complaint may be passed in writing to the Associate Dean for Doctoral or Master Programs as appropriate. More details around this process can be found at:

<https://advising.tulane.edu/sites/default/files/GRIEVANCE%20PROCEDURE.pdf>

UNIFIED CODE OF CONDUCT

Graduate students are expected to be aware of, and act consistently with the University Unified Code of Graduate Student Academic Conduct. See the link below for more information:

[https://ogps.tulane.edu/sites/default/files/Unified%20Code%20of%20Graduate%20Student%20Academic%20Conduct%20-%202024%20Final%20\(1\).pdf](https://ogps.tulane.edu/sites/default/files/Unified%20Code%20of%20Graduate%20Student%20Academic%20Conduct%20-%202024%20Final%20(1).pdf)

WITHDRAWALS

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student who has registered for a semester and plans to withdraw from the division must inform the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. The student formally withdraws by writing a letter addressed to the Dean for Graduate Programs. After appropriate action has been completed with the Dean, confirmation of withdrawal will be sent to the student. The official date of the withdrawal from the division must be approved by the Associate Dean and usually is the date of formal notification. The withdrawal date is important for determining possible refunds. Students who officially have withdrawn from the division cannot reside on campus and must surrender their student identification cards at the time of withdrawal. After the last day to drop courses, a student withdrawing from the division without adequate reason, as determined by the Associate Dean, will receive WF grades. A W grade will be recorded if withdrawal has been approved for medical reasons.

Resignation from the School of Science and Engineering must be made in writing to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. The student who finds it necessary to withdraw or to resign should report to the Dean's Office to complete a withdrawal or resignation form.

Medical Withdrawal

A withdrawal from courses for medical reasons requires coordination with Case Management and Victims Support Services and the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. Medical withdrawal letters should be delivered to the Graduate Programs office within 48 hours after they are issued. W grades are assigned when a student withdraws from one or more courses for medical reasons after the last day to drop without record. A partial medical withdrawal (from some but not all courses) or incomplete grades in one or more courses may be permitted upon the recommendation of Case Management and Victim Support Services. Students requesting a partial medical withdrawal must confer with the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, who makes the final decision on this matter. Withdrawals from individual courses for medical reasons are not

given during the last two weeks of classes. The deadline for medical withdrawals from all courses is the last day of classes each term. Requests for retroactive medical withdrawals must clearly indicate the reasons for failure to submit a medical withdrawal request before the end of classes in order to receive consideration.

Required Withdrawal and Denial of Enrollment

A student may be required to withdraw from any course or from the university, temporarily or permanently, for any of the following reasons: 1) possibility of danger to the health of the student or to that of other students if enrollment is continued; 2) refusal to obey regulations; 3) violation of the Honor Code or other serious misconduct; 4) unsatisfactory class attendance; or 5) work below the required scholastic standards. Requests for required withdrawal may be submitted by the dissertation director, department/program chair, teacher of the student in question, or by the Honor Board, and must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs.

The University reserves the right to forbid any student's continued enrollment without assignment of reason. The School of Science and Engineering, however, will provide a student with a statement of explanation in writing from the department/program. An appellate procedure has been established in cases involving academic performance or possible infringement of academic freedom.

There are also appellate procedures in cases involving non-reappointment of fellowships or scholarships when the formal terms of the first award have given reasonable expectation of renewal. Such procedures may also apply to cases in which a graduate, teaching, or research assistant, is relieved of a position before the end of the term of the appointment or is not reappointed when the formal terms of the first appointment have given reasonable expectation of reappointment (see Guideline for Graduate Assistants).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

An officially sanctioned leave of absence is an interruption in a student's graduate enrollment approved by the student's dissertation advisor and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. Students must be in good standing, and their requests must be provided in writing with a suggested timetable for the student's return. This type of leave permits the student to take an absence for no longer than one calendar year without reapplying for admission. Students returning from a leave of absence within the calendar year are not required to file a readmission application.

Students who plan to return from a leave of absence must inform their Department/Program and the SSE Dean's office in writing by the dates outlined in the Leave of Absence Policy form. Financial support, if received prior to the leave, is not guaranteed upon return. Prior to submission of this Request, the student should discuss with the Department Chair and Graduate Advisor a) conditions under which support likely would be provided and b) possible mechanisms of support.

For more information on family medical leave (FMLA) and leave due to childcare, consult the OGPS website.

POLICY ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The University policy on intellectual property applies to all graduate students. Any invention or discovery resulting from projects supported in whole or in part by funds, personnel, or facilities

provided by or administered by the Board of Administrators of Tulane University is the property of Tulane University. The University has a policy of sharing with the inventor any income derived from such discoveries. For more information on Tulane's policy, see <https://tulane.edu/about/leadership-and-administration/handbooks-and-policies/intellectual-property-policy>

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Degrees earned in the School of Science and Engineering are awarded three times a year – in December, May, and August. There is only one commencement program, and it is held in May. A candidate must inform the Graduate Programs office if they will not be present at the degree ceremony. Candidates for degrees are required to complete an application for degree form on or before deadline dates.

II. FINANCIAL POLICIES

Graduate students are expected to follow all university financial policies. More information can be found at <https://studentaccounts.tulane.edu/tuition-and-fees>.