

Academic Regulations

Academic Standards— Retention, Probation, and Suspension

Degree-seeking students are expected to take appropriate courses and make satisfactory progress towards their degree objectives as determined by the graduate program. A graduate student at the master or specialist level must maintain a cumulative GPA of **at least 3.00** for all graduate work completed at MTSU as well as in the major. A doctoral student must maintain a minimum GPA of **at least 3.25 after the initial two (2) semesters of enrollment**. Six semester hours of C grade (C+, C, or C-) coursework may be applied toward a master's or specialist's degree; seven hours of C grade may count toward a Ph.D.; no courses with a C grade are acceptable toward the D.A. degree requirements. A graduate student failing to meet the applicable minimum cumulative graduate GPA retention standard will be placed on **academic probation** for the subsequent term. Probation in itself has no serious consequences other than to alert the student of potential academic problems and the requirement to (re)establish satisfactory academic status. Once on probation, a student has three consecutive semesters in which to restore the cumulative GPA to the minimum required. If the student fails to attain the required GPA at the close of the third semester of probation, the student will be suspended automatically. A student placed on suspension will not be allowed to continue coursework in subsequent semesters. Students wishing to reenroll must formally appeal the suspension to the Graduate Council Appeals Committee. Deadlines and directions for submitting an appeal can be found at www.mtsu.edu/graduate/current.shtml. In the event that a student is suspended and subsequently upon appeal is granted permission to reenroll, should the student fail to maintain the minimum cumulative GPA, there will be no second probationary period. The student will be permanently suspended at the close of the semester and no longer eligible for matriculation in any program at MTSU.

Access to Records

The MTSU policy concerning student access to educational records is printed on page 51.

Appeal of Academic Suspension

A student may seek reversal of academic suspension, for cause, by petitioning in writing the Graduate Council Appeals Committee. Appeal forms are available on the College of Graduate Studies Web site (www.mtsu.edu/graduate) and should be submitted to the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Deadlines are listed in the University Calendar; however, appellants should contact the College of Graduate Studies to confirm the applicable deadline dates.

T.C.A. Sec. 49-7-133, Misrepresentation of Academic Credentials

It is a Class A misdemeanor to misrepresent academic credentials. A person commits the offense of misrepresentation of academic credentials who, knowing that the statement is false and with the intent to secure employment at or admission to an institution of higher education in Tennessee, represent, orally or in writing that such person

1. has successfully completed the required coursework for and has been awarded one or more degrees or diplomas from an accredited institution of higher education;
2. has successfully completed the required coursework for and has been awarded one or more degrees or diplomas from a particular institution of higher education; or
3. has successfully completed the required coursework for and has been awarded one or more degrees or diplomas in a particular field or specialty from an accredited institution of higher education.

Academic Integrity

Students at MTSU are expected to be intellectually honest and forthright in their academic activities. Proper credit should be given to sources of all work done. To attempt to use the ideas or words of others or to falsify data is to plagiarize (i.e., adopt, present, or reproduce ideas, statements, images, or works of others as one's own without proper acknowledgment) or fabricate (i.e., falsify any information or citation) respectively, neither of which is acceptable. Appropriate action will be taken as deemed necessary by the College of Graduate Studies, up to and including expulsion from MTSU and the rescinding of any graduate degree awarded as a result of a breach in academic integrity.

Appeals, Other

Graduate students have the right to appeal **for cause** any decision affecting their academic standing as a graduate student. **Cause** excludes grade appeals, which are under the purview of the MTSU Grade Appeal Committee. The Appeal Advisory Committee of the Graduate Council is an ad hoc committee reporting to the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The committee is convened at the discretion of the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

The Graduate Council and the College of Graduate Studies have approved in principle the document *Appeal Advisory Committee of the Graduate Council*. Copies of this document are made available to all graduate students at the Web site (www.mtsu.edu/graduate) and in the College of Graduate Studies, Sam H. Ingram Building 121A.

Classes—Cancellation of Scheduled Classes

The minimum enrollment requirement is ten students for upper-division and 5000-level graduate classes; eight students for 6000-level classes; and four enrollees for 7000-level classes (excluding graduate research courses). Any class may be canceled if the number of enrollees is deemed insufficient; however, no scheduled class may be discontinued without the approval of the dean of the college in which the course is offered.

Degree Plan—Change a Form

Changes in degree programs are permitted upon proper filing and approval of a Change in Degree Plan Form, which is available at the College of Graduate Studies Web site (www.mtsu.edu/graduate). Changes in degree programs will take effect at the beginning of the semester after the change in degree plan is approved. When unforeseen circumstances arise during the semester of graduation, an exception to the implementation date may occur at the request of the director of graduate studies and with the approval of the dean of Graduate Studies.

Degree Plan—Filing a Form

In consultation with the graduate advisor, each degree-seeking student must file a formal outline of the degree program on a degree plan available at the College of Graduate Studies or on the Web site (www.mtsu.edu/graduate). Degree plans should be completed within the first 21 hours of enrollment. Individual departments are responsible for monitoring the completion of prerequisites. In general, a doctoral student will not be permitted to register for more than 30 semester hours unless an approved degree plan is on file. The degree plan requires the approval of the major professor and/or the graduate coordinator. The degree form may not be filed in the same semester that the student expects to be graduated.

Examinations—Comprehensive (for Specialist's and Master's Students; also see Glossary)

This examination is scheduled by each department during the time period designated by the College of Graduate Studies. Normally, the comprehensive examination may be taken no more than twice, and failure to pass the comprehensive on the second attempt terminates one's degree program. Any exception to this "twice-only" rule must be recommended by the graduate program and approved by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Examinations—Qualifying

Please see the section under Doctor of Philosophy Degree and/or the Glossary.

Examinations—Other

Any graduate student may be required to take one or more additional tests designed to measure general educational achievement and/or achievement in selected major areas.

Graduate credit may not be earned by CLEP or Special Examination.

Grades—Grading System

The following notations are used by faculty of the University to indicate the quality of the work performed by students taking graduate courses:

A, A-
B+, B, B-
C+, C, C-
D+, D, D-
F

Grades That Do Not Influence Grade Point Average

W - Withdrawal
NC - No credit (audit)
I - Incomplete
S - Satisfactory
U - Unsatisfactory
P - Pass

The P/F grade is given only in those courses with prior approval to use pass/fail grading. Courses may be taught on a pass/fail basis only after approval of the Graduate Council. Course descriptions state if pass/fail grading applies.

Pass or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades are **not** used in determining the grade point average. However, satisfactory grades do count toward graduation credit requirements and are treated in every other respect as being equivalent to traditionally graded courses. Any course in which an "unsatisfactory" is received does not count toward graduation credit requirements.

The grade I indicates that the student has not completed all course requirements due to illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those which may occur toward the close of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in required work on time does not provide a basis for the grade of I unless the extenuating circumstances noted above are acceptable to the instructor. When a student fails to appear for a final examination without known cause, the grade to be reported should be determined as follows: If the student has done satisfactory work to that point, the grade I may be reported on the assumption that the student was ill or will otherwise present sufficient reason for official excuse; if the student has attended irregularly and has not done satisfactory work to that point, the grade F should be reported.

The "incomplete" must be removed during the succeeding semester, excluding summer. Otherwise, it converts to a grade of F. A student should not make up the "incomplete" by registering and paying again for the same course. The I grade carries no value until converted to a final grade.

Grades—Appeal of Course Grades

Level One

1. Student appeals concerning a course grade should be resolved by conference between the student and the faculty member who assigned the grade.
2. In the event of an impasse between the student and the faculty member, a student with an appeal of a grade shall discuss it with the department chair within ten (10) days of the conference with the involved faculty member. The department chair shall investigate the circumstances, record his/her findings, and send a copy to the student and the faculty member within ten (10) days of the notification of impasse. Although the department chair does not have the power to change the grade, he/she will make a recommendation concerning the appeal.

Level Two

1. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may, within fifteen (15) days following receipt of the department chair's recommendation, refer the appeal plus all relevant data including stated reasons why he/she believes the appeal has thus far not been satisfied to the Provost's Office. The vice provost for Academic Affairs shall select a college committee to hear the appeal and transmit the appeal documents to the committee chair or to the office of the dean of the college which houses the selected appeals committee.
2. The committee hearing the appeal will receive documents and testimony regarding the circumstances, will record its findings, and shall render a decision. Notification of the committee's decision will be made to the student, faculty member, department chair, college dean, vice provost for Academic Affairs, and the director of Records.
3. The decision of the committee hearing the appeal will be final concerning the grade in question.

NOTE: *In cases where the department chair is the person against whom the complaint is lodged, then the dean in whose college the department is located shall assume the duties of the chair in the investigation and decision making.*

Miscellaneous

1. The number of days indicated at each level above shall be considered the maximum, but every effort should be made to expedite the process.
2. The failure of the student to proceed from one level of the appeal procedure to the next level within the prescribed time limits shall be deemed to be an acceptance of the recommendations and/or decision previously rendered. All further considerations and proceedings regarding that particular appeal shall cease at that point.
3. A grade appeal may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice.
4. All appeal proceedings shall be kept as confidential as may be appropriate at each level.
5. A grade appeals committee shall have reasonable access to all official records for information necessary to the determination of a recommendation.

Grades—Grade Point Average (Quality Credits)

Grade points are numerical values assigned to letter grades in order to provide a basis for quantitative determination of grade (quality) point averages. The four-point system with pluses and minuses is used.

The following system is used in determining grade point average:

Grade		Grade Points
A	=	4.00
A-	=	3.67
B+	=	3.33
B	=	3.00
B-	=	2.67
C+	=	2.33
C	=	2.00
C-	=	1.67
D+	=	1.33
D	=	1.00
D-	=	0.67
F	=	0.00

The scholastic standing of a student is expressed in terms of grade point average (GPA). A GPA is the total number of grade points divided by the total number of credit hours (exclusive of P, S, and U credit hours) at Middle Tennessee State University. Any transferred courses are included in the calculation. For a grade of F, the credit hours count, but zero grade points are earned.

Grades by RaiderNet

Students may view their grades online each semester by selecting the appropriate option on RaiderNet. No student can view grades on RaiderNet until all debts or obligations owed to MTSU have been discharged.

Intent to Graduate

An Intent to Graduate Form, available on the College of Graduate Studies Web site (www.mtsu.edu/graduate), must be filed by the student by end of the second week of the semester in which the student plans to graduate or no later than the end of the first week of S2–June term (for August graduation).

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for the graduate major is an undergraduate minor or its equivalent and/or the recommendation of the director of graduate studies. The prerequisite for the graduate minor is 12 semester hours of undergraduate coursework in that area or its equivalent and/or the recommendation of the director of graduate studies or delegate. If prerequisite coursework is marginally deficient, the student may be admitted to the College of Graduate Studies to make up the deficiencies concomitantly while taking graduate courses. Prerequisite

courses do not apply toward meeting graduate program requirements. Monitoring the completion of prerequisites is the responsibility of the individual departments.

Repeated Courses

A graduate student may repeat graduate courses in which a grade of B- or lower was earned. However, there are certain restrictions and limitations. A **maximum of two (2) courses**, not to exceed eight (8) credits combined, may be repeated. The grade in the second attempt **replaces** the original assigned grade in the first attempt regardless of the earned grade. For all additional courses or subsequent repeated courses, there will be **no grade replacement**; i.e., **all earned grades** will be used in the grade point average calculation and are recorded on the transcript.

Graduate students may not repeat a course in which they have previously earned the grade of A, A-, B+, or B without written approval from the director of graduate studies and dean of the College of Graduate Studies. If granted, there will be no grade replacement in the GPA calculation; i.e., all attempts will be used in the grade point average calculation and recorded on the transcript.

Student Load

A student's enrollment status is determined by the number of credit hours taken per term according to the following:

- Full-time - 9-12 graduate hours
- Three-quarter time - 7-8 graduate hours
- One-half time - 5-6 graduate hours

Graduate students are limited to a maximum of 12 graduate hours per semester. If an exception is requested, overload forms must be signed by the director of graduate studies and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Full-time status for students holding graduate assistantships is six (6) graduate semester hours.

Teacher Licensure

All applications for professional teaching licenses in Tennessee must be filed with the dean of the College of Education who is responsible for recommending each applicant from this University. All applicants for teacher licensing should furnish the Tennessee State Department of Education a report of scores attained on the Praxis. A copy of the scores should be sent to the Office of the Dean, College of Education. MTSU verification of the scores will be forwarded with the Application for Licensure.

Postbaccalaureate Teacher Education Program

The postbaccalaureate teacher education program is designed for individuals who have completed baccalaureate degrees but who did not complete teacher preparation. The College

of Education requires candidates to address any course and program deficiencies in their undergraduate education to ensure the attainment of the knowledge and skills required in general education, professional education, and the major for the teaching field. Additional coursework and program requirements will be determined by the teacher licensure analyst. Transcript analysis forms for the post-baccalaureate program are available in the McWherter Learning Resources Center 173.

Postbaccalaureate students must also make formal application for admission to the teacher education program. Admission to teacher education is a prerequisite to enrollment in upper-division courses in Elementary Education (ELED), Reading (READ), Special Education (SPED) (except SPED 3010), Foundations of Education (FOED), or Youth Education (YOED).

Time Limits

Students have six (6) years from the initial semester of matriculation to complete the requirements for a master's or specialist's degree. There is a ten-year time limit from initial matriculation, to complete all requirements for the doctoral degree. Exceptions to these time limitations, for good cause, will be considered by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies when submitted in writing with a proposed timeline for completion and the recommendation of the advisor and the director of graduate studies.

Transcripts

Student and official copies of a student's record are furnished free of charge upon written request by the student. No transcript will be provided for a student who has any financial indebtedness to the University or who has not completed admission procedures. Official transcripts from other institutions must be obtained directly from those institutions.

Transfer Credit

In general, only coursework taken while in graduate status, prior to attending MTSU, will be transferred and only if those courses were not used in partial satisfaction of degree requirements at the previous university. Coursework transferred or accepted for credit toward a graduate degree **must** represent graduate coursework relevant to the degree, with course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in the institution's own graduate degree programs. Transfer credit requires the recommendation of the director of graduate studies and approval of the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Transfer courses with grades below B will not be accepted for credit in any graduate degree programs.

No graduate credit may be obtained by correspondence or work experience. A maximum of 12 semester hours of residence credit (6 in the major area) may be transferred and applied on a master's or specialist's degree.

Doctoral students should check with their director of graduate studies for the policy on transfer of credits into their doctoral degree program.



Withdrawals from the University

Students finding it necessary to withdraw (completely separate) from the University after having selected classes for a future term should access RaiderNet, www.mtsu.edu, to drop all classes. A student may also initiate the official withdrawal process at the University Withdrawal Office, Cope Administration Building 205. Consult online for each term to determine whether withdrawal should be accomplished by RaiderNet or through the University Withdrawal Office. Once classes have begun for the Summer term, withdrawal for that Summer term cannot be accomplished via RaiderNet.

The Records Office will be notified of the withdrawal and will enter the withdrawal and its effective date in the computer system. Faculty can access class rolls for up-to-date information via RaiderNet.

The grade for a student who officially withdraws from the University will be determined by the student's academic performance prior to withdrawal. Withdrawal early in a term may result in no grades being assigned to the student. The Records Office Web page (www.mtsu.edu/records) carries dates governing withdrawal and appropriate grades.

A student may not officially withdraw from the University after a date in the semester or term which is one week or less prior to the beginning of final examinations, except for reasons of mitigation or extenuation as shall be determined by the University Withdrawal Office.

Any student who leaves the University without officially withdrawing will receive a grade of F for all work attempted.

Requests to withdraw from a term within one year of the end of that term will be considered only if the student presents acceptable documentation of extenuating circumstances to the withdrawal coordinator. In such cases, faculty members will receive a written request for approval to assign a W grade. No requests will be considered beyond one year of the end of the term.

A student under certain conditions may receive an administrative withdrawal from a single course or courses. Similar procedures are provided for a total severance from the University if conditions warrant. The following policy will determine the eligibility for an administrative withdrawal: The entry of W indicates that the student has been withdrawn from a course without reflection of grades. The entry of W results from a situation involving extreme extenuating circumstances as identified and originated with the University physician or counselors at Counseling Services and/or the associate dean of students. The entry of W will be accomplished only with the full knowledge and written concurrence of the faculty member concerned.

Any student who is absent from a state college or university during any school term or portion thereof in excess of thirty (30) days due to active military service shall be entitled to withdraw and receive a tuition credit in the form of credit hours for each credit hour paid by, or on behalf of, such student, or a refund for any payments made. Credit shall be given only if the reserve or National Guard student did not receive a final grade in the course for which tuition credit is sought.