

Academic Regulations

Academic Standards— Retention, Probation, and Suspension

A master's or specialist in education student must maintain a cumulative GPA of **at least 3.00** for all graduate work completed at MTSU as well as in the major, and a doctoral student must maintain a minimum GPA of **3.25**. 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. Courses with a grade lower than C- may not be applied toward any graduate degree requirements. A graduate student failing to meet the applicable minimum cumulative graduate GPA retention standard listed below **or** whose cumulative graduate GPA is less than 3.00 for three consecutive semesters 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. Conversely, however, **suspension** is quite serious. Should a suspended student not be readmitted, termination of graduate status would result.

In addition to minimum GPA standards, degree-seeking students are expected to take appropriate graduate courses towards their degree objective, as determined by the graduate program. Non-degree-seeking graduate students are expected to take graduate courses. The number of "credit hours" listed below **in bold** applies only to those courses graded A through F, and not to S/U graded courses.

NOTE: In addition to the guidelines below, the two-course repeat policy may result in a dramatically increased GPA.

The guidelines below represent the absolute minimum GPA to avert graduate academic probation status. However, a cumulative GPA greater than or equal to 3.00 is required for satisfactory academic progress at the graduate level.

1-6 credit (quality) hours completed 2.00 GPA

(If 6 graduate hours have been completed, a GPA of 2.00 reflects a quality or grade point deficit of 6. Next term, unless a course is repeated, 3 or more hours of B grade with no B- or lower grades will generate a GPA greater than or equal to 2.33.)

Greater than 6-9 credit (quality) hours completed 2.33 GPA

(If 9 graduate hours have been completed, a GPA of 2.33 reflects a grade point deficit of 6. Next term, unless a course is repeated, 3 or more hours of B grade with no B- or lower grades will generate a GPA greater than or equal to 2.50.)

Greater than 9-12 credit (quality) hours completed 2.50 GPA

(If 12 graduate hours have been completed, a GPA of 2.50 still reflects a grade point deficit of 6. Next term, unless a course is repeated, 3 or more hours of B grade with no B- or lower grades will generate a GPA greater than or equal to 2.60.)

Greater than 12-15 credit (quality) hours completed 2.60 GPA

(If 15 graduate hours have been completed, a GPA of 2.60 still reflects a grade point deficit of 6. Next term, unless a course is repeated, 3 or more hours of A grade with no B- or lower grades will generate a GPA greater than or equal to 2.83.)

Greater than 15-18 credit (quality) hours completed 2.83 GPA

(If 18 graduate hours have been completed, a GPA of 2.83 reflects a grade point deficit of 3. Next term, unless a course is repeated, 3 or more hours of B grade with no B- or lower grades will generate a GPA greater than or equal to 2.85.)

Greater than 18-21 credits (quality) hours completed 2.85 GPA

(If 21 graduate hours have been completed, a GPA of 2.85 still reflects a grade point deficit of 3. Next term, unless a course is repeated, 3 or more hours of A grade (or 3 hours of A- and 3 hours of B+ grades) with no B- or lower grades will generate a GPA greater than or equal to 3.00 and the grade point deficit will disappear.)

Greater than 21 credits (quality) hours completed 3.00 GPA

(Master's and educational specialist students must maintain a cumulative GPA greater than or equal to 3.00 and doctoral students must maintain a cumulative GPA greater than or equal to 3.25 in all remaining terms.)

A student on academic probation who fails to meet the above applicable standard during the next term in which enrolled will be suspended.

NOTE: Individual graduate programs may propose higher minimum grade standards than the above.

Access to Records

The MTSU policy concerning student access to educational records is printed on page 43.

Advancement to Candidacy—Filing a Form

In consultation with the graduate advisor, each degree seeking student must file a formal outline of the degree program on a Candidacy Form available at the Graduate Office or on our Web site (www.mtsu.edu/~graduate). The Candidacy Form requires the approval of the major professor, the reader(s), and the graduate analyst. A master's or specialist's student **may not** register for more than 24 semester hours unless an approved Candidacy Form is on file. In general, a doctoral student will not be permitted to register for more than 36 semester hours unless an approved Candidacy Form is on file.

NOTE: Some departments require advancement to candidacy prior to the completion of 24 semester hours (Criminal Justice, 16 hours; Elementary and Special Education, 21 hours).

Appeal of Academic Suspension

A student may seek reversal of academic suspension, for cause, by petitioning the Graduate Council Appeals Committee. Appeal forms are available in the College of Graduate Studies, Cope Administration Building, Room 114, or our Web site (www.mtsu.edu/~graduate). Appellants should contact the Graduate Office for the applicable deadline dates.

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 Graduate Student Orientation and are also available in the College of Graduate Studies, Cope Administration Building, Room 114.

Candidacy—Changing a Form

Changes in degree programs are permitted upon proper filing and approval of a Change in Candidacy Form, which is available at the Graduate Office.

Classes—Adding, Dropping, or Changing Sections

The procedures and deadlines to drop, add, or change a class are listed in the appropriate class schedule book.

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 undergraduate college in which the course is offered.

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 Graduate Office. 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 Arts Degree, 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, they do count toward graduation credit requirements and are treated in every other respect as being equivalent to traditionally graded courses.

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. The appeal must occur within forty (40) days of the graduation date for each term.
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. These findings will become a part of the appeals record.

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. The associate provost 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, associate 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, plus any transferred course work. For a grade of F, the credit hours count, but zero grade points are earned.

Grades by WebMT

To access your grades online go to PipelineMT at www.mtsu.edu. Once logged in **PipelineMT** select **WebMT**, then **Student and Financial Aid** and then select the **Grades** link.

If you owe a student account balance which prevents release of your grades, WebMT will provide an option to allow you to pay your current term balance by credit card or check card (VISA or MasterCard) so that you can view your grades.

Grade reports are mailed only upon request. A printed copy of the current term grade report may be requested by selecting the appropriate option on WebMT. This option is available for approximately ten days after final exams each term. Once the option to request a grade report is no longer available, instructions will be given for requesting a complete transcript. If a printed grade report is requested, it will be mailed to the permanent address unless a different address has been designated for mailing grade reports. Instructions for requesting a transcript are available on WebMT.

Intent to Graduate

An Intent to Graduate Form, available at the Graduate Office, must be filed by the student by the second week of the semester in which the student plans to graduate or no later than the end of the first week of Summer Session II (for August graduation).

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for the graduate major is an undergraduate minor or its equivalent and/or the recommendation of the department chair. 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 department chair 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.

Repeated Courses

A graduate student may repeat graduate courses in which a grade lower than B- was earned. However, there are certain restrictions and limitations. A **maximum of two courses**, not to exceed eight credits combined, may be repeated for a **grade change**, i.e., the grade in the second attempt **replaces** the grade in the first attempt. If a **third** or **subsequent** course is repeated by the student, there will be **no grade replacement**; i.e., **all attempts** will be used in the grade point average calculation. All attempts are recorded on the transcript.

Graduate students may not repeat a course in which they have previously earned the grade of A or B without written approval from the graduate advisor and dean of the College of Graduate Studies. If granted, both the original and repeated grades will count in the GPA calculation.

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 graduate hours
- Three-quarter time - 7 graduate hours
- One-half time - 5 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 graduate advisor and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Full-time status for students holding graduate assistantships is six (6) graduate semester hours. (This is not applicable to students receiving veterans benefits.)

Teacher Licensure

All applications for professional teaching licenses in Tennessee must be filed with the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science 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 Core Battery Tests of the National Teacher Examinations. A copy of the scores should be sent to the Office of the Dean, College of Education and Behavioral Science. MTSU verification of the scores will be forwarded with the Application for Licensure.

Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Education Program

The post-baccalaureate teacher education program is designed for individuals who have completed baccalaureate degrees but who did not complete teacher preparation. The College of Education and Behavioral Science 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.

Post-baccalaureate 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 years after the date they matriculate to complete the requirements for a master's or specialist's degree. There is a ten-year time limit, after 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 recommended by the graduate advisor and department chair.

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 graduate advisor and approval of the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Transfer courses with grades below B- will not be accepted for credit in the M.B.A. and M.S. in Accounting and Information Systems degree programs.

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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.

In the D.A. program, no more than 12 semester hours (only 6 semester hours in the major) beyond the master's degree may be transferred from other doctoral institutions.

Withdrawing from the University

Students finding it necessary to withdraw (completely separate) from the University after having selected classes for a future term should access WebMT (www.mtsu.edu) to drop all classes. A student may also initiate the official withdrawal process in Keathley University Center 130. Consult the class schedule book for each term to determine whether withdrawal should be accomplished by WebMT or through the Withdrawal Office in Guidance Services. Once classes have begun for the Summer term, withdrawal for that Summer term cannot be accomplished via WebMT.

The Records Office will be notified of the withdrawal and will notify each of the student's professors regarding the withdrawal and its effective date as determined by the Withdrawal Office in Guidance Services.

The grade for a student who officially withdraws from the University will be determined by the student's academic per-

formance prior to withdrawal. Withdrawal early in a term may result in no grades being assigned to the student. (The current schedule of classes 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 associate dean of students.

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

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 Guidance Services and/or the associate dean of Student Life. The entry of W will be accomplished only with the full knowledge and written concurrence of the faculty member concerned.

