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EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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## **Graduate School Degree and Certificate Graduation and Transcript Policy**

# **Policy Name: Graduate School Degree and Certificate Graduation and Transcript**

## **Policy Purpose**

This policy specifies the requirements graduate students must meet to be eligible for graduation and degree conferral and the process to request credits above requirements for a degree.

## **Applicability**

This policy is applicable to graduate faculty and graduate students admitted to the Graduate School. This policy does not apply to students who are exclusively admitted to the Quillen College of Medicine in pursuit of their M.D. or the Gatton College of Pharmacy in pursuit of their Pharm.D.

## **Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation**

The Dean of the Graduate School and Graduate Council are responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

## **Defined Terms**

*A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.*

### Cumulative GPA

Cumulative GPA is the average from all graduate coursework at ETSU, as described in the [Graduate School Determination of Grade Point Average Policy](#).

### Program GPA

Program GPA is the average of grades earned in courses included in the program of study for a specific graduate degree or certificate, as described in the [Graduate School Determination of Grade Point Average Policy](#).

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## Matriculation (Time) Limit

The Matriculation Limit is the time limit for graduate degree or certificate completion; the time limit for each type of degree is described in the [Graduate School Matriculation \(Time\) Limits Policy](#).

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## Policy

Students must complete the specific course and other program requirements for earning a graduate certificate, master's degree, education specialist degree, or doctoral degree from ETSU that can be found in the graduate student's catalog of record. In addition, the following conditions must be met:

### 1. Required GPA.

To be eligible for graduation, a graduate student's Cumulative Graduate GPA and Graduate Program GPA must be 3.0 or higher calculated using the [Graduate School Determination of Grade Point Average Policy](#). Programs may have higher graduation GPA requirements. No exception will be granted to the minimum GPA requirement.

### 2. Matriculation (Time) Limit.

All coursework must be within the matriculation (time) limit or have been approved for extension and revalidation per the [Graduate School Matriculation \(Time\) Limits Policy](#).

### 3. Catalog.

Degree requirements for programs of study are listed in the Graduate Catalog. Students are assigned to the Graduate Catalog at the time of first enrollment as a graduate students. Students must use a single catalog for all graduation requirements and cannot use a combination of catalogs. Students can make only one change of catalog during their program as follows:

- 3.1. Students can change to a more recent catalog;
- 3.2. Students cannot change to a catalog that pre-dates their enrollment; and
- 3.3. Students cannot change to a catalog that has not yet been published.

Students request a catalog change by completing at [Change in Program-Catalog](#) form on the Graduate School website.

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## **4. Program of Study and Degree Audit.**

All courses for the program of study are listed in Degree Works as are most of the program requirements per the individual student's catalog of record. To be cleared for graduation, the student's degree audit must be fully complete. The instructor may set an earlier date for completion of the course requirements.

## **5. Incompletes.**

Degree or certificates will not be conferred until all incomplete grades are resolved; however, in unusual circumstances the Dean of the Graduate School or designee may make an exception. Once an Incomplete grade is changed to a letter grade, the GPA will be calculated and the student must meet the GPA requirements for graduation. Refer to the Graduate School Incomplete Grades Policy.

## **6. Apply to Graduate.**

Each student must complete an "Apply to Graduate" form found on [Goldlink](#) by the deadline published on the [ETSU Academic Dates Calendar](#) for each graduate program and/or graduate certificate even if they do not plan to participate in Commencement. If the student does not graduate in the term to which they applied for graduation, the student must complete the [Change of Graduation Term form](#) found on the Graduate School website prior to the published deadline for the desired graduation term. If a student is dually enrolled in two programs (e.g., a degree program and a certificate or two degree programs) and will graduate from each program in different terms, the student must complete a "Change of Graduation Form" for the second program. For general information on graduation, refer to the [Graduate School website](#).

## **7. Credits Earned Above Requirements for a Degree.**

When students earn credits in addition to those required in the planned program of study, a request may be made to the Dean of the Graduate School or designee via the Graduate Specialist to have the extra credit coursework defined on the transcript as post-degree credit. The request must be made prior to awarding of the degree and cannot be so defined once the degree is awarded. The Graduate School will not interpret or alter the transcript once the degree is awarded.

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## **8. Filing Thesis or Dissertation.**

Deadlines for each step involved in completing a thesis or dissertation are published on the [ETSU Academic Dates Calendar](#). These deadlines are firm and will not be extended. The student must successfully complete the oral defense of the thesis or dissertation, make any revisions to the thesis or dissertation required by the committee and/or the Graduate School and submit by the deadline for final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School or designee. If a student does not complete the process and/or submit by the deadline, the degree will not be conferred until the next term, and the student must submit a [Change in Graduation Term form](#). The student may also need to remain in Continuous Enrollment Status; refer to the [Graduate School Enrollment Policy](#).

## **9. Participating in Commencement.**

Students who are graduating from a degree program are not required to participate in a commencement ceremony but are encouraged to do so. Students who are earning only a certificate do not participate in commencement. Students graduating in Spring should plan to attend the May commencement ceremony. Students graduating in Summer and Fall should plan to attend the December commencement ceremony. If extenuating circumstances exist that prevent a student from participating in their designated ceremony, graduate students who wish to participate in an alternate ceremony should petition the Dean of the Graduate School for permission to attend an alternate ceremony. Requests should be made as far in advance of the ceremony as possible; requests made close to the commencement date or requests without extenuating circumstances will be approved or denied in the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate School or designee.

## **10. Other University Requirements.**

Other university level requirements for graduation apply and can be found at the [Office of the Registrar's website](#).

## **11. Consideration of Exception.**

The Dean of the Graduate School or designee may consider granting an exception to a graduation requirement on a case-by-case basis if permitted by this policy. The Dean will notify the requesting party in writing. The decision of the Dean is final.

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## **Procedures**

### 1. Credits Earned Above Requirements for the Degree.

To request that extra coursework be defined on the transcript as post-degree credit, the student makes a request in writing (email) to the Dean of the Graduate School within the timeline stated in this policy. The Dean of the Graduate School notifies the student of the decision in writing.

### 2. Participating in Alternative Commencement Ceremony.

To request participation in an alternative commencement ceremony, the student makes a written request via email to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School notifies the student of the decision in writing.

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## **Applicable Forms and Websites**

## **Authority and Revisions**

**Authority:** TCA § 49-8-203, et seq.

**Previous Policy:** N/A

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.