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EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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## **Graduate School Enrollment Policy**

# **Policy Name: Graduate School Enrollment Policy**

## **Policy Purpose**

This policy specifies the Graduate School's enrollment standards.

## **Applicability**

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

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

The Graduate School is responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact 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.*

### [4XX7/5XX7 Level Course](#)

A course open to both senior undergraduate students and master's-level graduate students. These courses must include clearly differentiated requirements for undergraduate and graduate students, ensuring appropriate rigor for each academic level.

### [5000 Level Course](#)

A graduate-level course designed for introductory study of current topics within a discipline. Content requires significant independent thinking and provides opportunities for research. These courses are intended for students who have successfully completed an undergraduate degree. In addition to foundational and intermediate learning, students are expected to demonstrate analysis and evaluation, show knowledge of the discipline's literature, develop research questions or hypotheses, propose alternative methods or research designs, defend ideas related to research, and/or engage in research or appropriate professional practice.

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## 6000 Level Course

An advanced master's-level course intended for students who have successfully completed an undergraduate degree and meet admission requirements that typically exceed those for undergraduate study. These courses require higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis and evaluation and may include the creation of original work evaluated by faculty. Students may be required to demonstrate knowledge of the discipline's literature, engage in field study or research, work independently to analyze and evaluate theses or research projects, and/or compare and contrast ideologies within the field.

## 7000 Level Course

A doctoral-level course requiring prerequisites from 6000-level courses and/or specific 5000-level courses. These courses prepare students for completion of a terminal degree and require engagement at the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Instruction and evaluation are conducted by faculty with the highest level of academic preparation. Students are expected to demonstrate advanced application of discipline-specific knowledge, develop individual research interests, analyze and evaluate prior research to formulate unique contributions to the discipline, create a comprehensive research plan, and/or acquire advanced technical applications relevant to the field.

## Accelerated Programs

Accelerated Programs follow a nontraditional semester schedule, and terms are typically seven or eight weeks as approved by Graduate Council.

## Confirmation of Registration

May also be called "Confirm Registration" in this policy. The process of informing ETSU of the student's interest in attending the classes for which they are enrolled and/or giving ETSU permission to apply any financial aid resources toward the payment of fees. Students may begin fee payment and confirmation of registration after charges have been applied to the student account. Tuition and fees are subject to change by the ETSU Board of Trustees.

## Compressed Terms

Any term that is less than the traditional 15 weeks for fall or spring terms and less than 10 weeks during a summer term.

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## Enrollment Status

A student is enrolled in the current term and is classified as full-time or less than full-time.

## Support Services

Include, but are not limited to libraries, labs, studios, technology, and access to facilities.

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Every student is required to enroll at the time and in the manner prescribed by the Registrar. Registration dates are posted on the [Academic Calendar](#). Students must Confirm Registration by the date posted by the [Bursar's Office](#).

### 1. Combined Graduate and Undergraduate Enrollment (5xx7 and 5956 Courses).

- 1.1. In some curricula, master's level students may enroll in 5xx7 and 5956 courses which are co-listed with 4xx7 and 4956 undergraduate courses. A student who has taken the 4xx7 or 4956 courses for undergraduate credit cannot repeat the course for graduate credit. Graduate students enrolled in 5xx7 and 5956 courses shall be required to complete specific work over and above that required of undergraduate students enrolled in companion 4xx7 and 4956 courses.
- 1.2. Education Specialist degree students may not enroll for 5xx7 and 5956 courses (except for 5957 "Topic in" of "Special Topics" courses); they must choose courses from the regular graduate-only series of 5000 and 6000 level courses with at least one-half of all courses being at the 60001 level.
- 1.3. Doctoral students should not enroll in 5xx7 or 5956 courses. However, in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, doctoral students may enroll in a 5xx7 or 5956 courses to continue progress towards their degree. Doctoral students must choose courses from the regular graduate-only series of the 5000, 6000, and 7000 level courses with at least one-half of all courses being at the 6000 and 7000 level.

Limitation on 5xx7 and 5956 courses: No more than 30 percent of all courses taken in any degree program may come from the 5xx7/5956 series. There is no limit on the number of 5xx7 courses in a certificate program.

### 2. Graduate Full-time Course Load.

Enrollment Status requirements for graduate students in both traditional and Accelerated Programs with Compressed Terms are approved by Graduate Council and published on the ETSU Graduate School website. Graduate course loads in excess of sixteen (16) credits require approval of the department chair and the Dean of the Graduate School.

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### 3. Independent Studies, Problems, and Workshops.

Students who wish to pursue independent studies, problems, or workshops of special interest may enroll in these courses provided that the topic for study has been defined and approved by the professor and the student's advisor. Independent studies, problems, or workshop courses should not be used to attend a course with a different number or title at any level of course classification without approval from the Dean of the Graduate School or designee.

Limitations on independent studies, problems, and workshops: No more than 30 percent of the credits for a graduate degree program may be taken in independent studies, problems, or workshops or in any combination of these types of courses.

### 4. Experiential Learning Credit.

No graduate credit can be awarded for experiential learning that occurs prior to admission into a graduate program and which has not been under the supervision of the institution.

### 5. Extension and Correspondence Credit.

All work completed at any approved ETSU site is residential and not extension credit. No correspondence work can be applied to any graduate program at ETSU.

### 6. Adding a Course during Late Add or with Enrollment Limit.

A course(s) may be added through the late registration/late add period without special permission, unless the course has reached the established maximum enrollment. To add a class that has reached the enrollment limit, the student must receive permission from the instructor and department chair. After the late registration/late add period, special permission must be obtained from the instructor, the department chair, the Dean (or designee) of the Graduate School, and the Registrar. Special permission is only granted in extenuating circumstances.

### 7. Dropping Courses.

- 7.1. To Drop One or More, but Not All, Courses in a Term. A student who may need to drop one or more courses during a term will follow the university's [Withdrawal from Courses Policy](#). Deadlines for dropping courses are found on the [Academic Calendar](#).

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7.2. Dropping All Courses for the Term. Students who may need to withdraw from all courses in the term will follow the university's [Withdrawal from Term Policy](#). Applicable deadlines are found on the [Academic Calendar](#).

7.3. Dropping a course or courses may impact federal financial aid, NCAA eligibility, international student status, veteran's benefits and/or graduate assistantship eligibility. It is the student's responsibility to consult the appropriate office(s) to discuss the potential impact prior to dropping a course or courses.

### 8. Auditing a Course.

A student may audit a graduate course pursuant to the Registrar's policies.

### 9. Enrollment in Courses by Classification Level.

Enrollment in 5000, 6000, and 7000 Level courses is limited to graduate students or undergraduate students who qualify under the "Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses" section of this policy.

At least 70 percent of all courses taken in a master's program must be in the 5000 Level; at least one-half of all courses taken in a doctoral program must be at the 6000 and 7000 Level.

### 10. Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses.

Undergraduate students have two pathways to take graduate courses, either through the Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's program or with permission. Regardless of the pathway, undergraduate students cannot enroll in more than twelve (12) graduate credits during their undergraduate career.

10.1. The Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's (ABM) program allows students to start a graduate program before completing their bachelor's degree. Students must be admitted to the ABM and follow the policies in the [Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's Policy](#).

10.2. An undergraduate senior who needs to complete nine (9) credits or fewer to graduate may enroll in graduate courses with permission. To enroll, the student must submit the petition form signed by the applicable undergraduate chair. The Dean of the Graduate School or designee will review and sign the petition form if approved by the undergraduate chair. A separate graduate admission application is not required. Requirements for the undergraduate degree must be completed

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during the semester in which the student is allowed to register for part-time graduate work.

### **11. Continuous Enrollment.**

- 11.1. Students who will be using Support Services and/or require faculty guidance for studies, research, or preparation of a prospectus while not enrolled in coursework, thesis, or dissertation must be registered for an appropriate course with a minimum of one credit during each term, including a summer term.
- 11.2. Students who have previously registered for thesis, dissertation, and/or Readings and Research must be continuously registered for a minimum of one graduate credit every subsequent semester, including summer, until completion of the degree.
- 11.3. The Readings and Research course cannot count toward degree requirements.
- 11.4. Candidates for a master's degree with a thesis option must continue to register each semester (minimum of one credit) from the time of the initial registration for 5960- Thesis or Readings and Research until the thesis is accepted by the Graduate School. (Individual programs may require minimum enrollments of up to 3 graduate credits.) No less than three credits nor more than nine credits of thesis may be applied toward the master's degree.
- 11.5. Candidates for doctoral degrees must continue to register each semester from the time of the initial registration for 7960-Dissertation or Readings and Research until the dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School. (Individual programs may require minimum enrollments of up to 3 graduate credits.) No less than twelve (12) credits nor more than 24 credits of dissertation may be applied toward the doctoral degree.
- 11.6. A student must be enrolled for a minimum of one graduate credit during the term of graduation, with one exception: A student who does not meet the deadlines for completing degree requirements, including thesis/dissertation defense and orals, but does complete all requirements, including approval of the thesis/dissertation by the Dean of Graduate School, before the first day of classes for the following semester, will not be required to register for the term in which the degree is awarded.

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## 12. Matriculation Limits.

Matriculation Limits are established under the Graduate School [Matriculation Limits Policy](#).

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## **Procedures**

N/A

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## **Applicable Forms and Websites**

[Matriculation Limits Policy](#)

[Request for Permission to Late Add](#)

[Request for Withdrawal Form](#) (to withdraw from one or more, but not all, courses for a term)

[Term Withdrawal Form](#) (to withdraw from all courses for the term)

## **Authority and Revisions**

**Authority:** Focus Act, Tenn. Code Ann. § 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.