
2022 - 2023 GRADUATE CATALOG

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Degree Works

Degree Works is a software tool utilized by Arkansas Tech University designed to detail academic progression. It allows both students and advisors to monitor course progress towards degree completion and clearly indicates which course requirements have been met as well as how courses transfer into a program. Transfer courses must be approved through the use of a substitution/waiver form available via the Registrar for progress to display correctly within Degree Works.

Degree Works will display course progression based on the 2022 program of study, but a "what-if" scenario can be generated for any program to see how progression looks with the courses 2022ly completed and in progress. Note that if you have applied to and been admitted to a graduate program while still finishing your undergraduate program, Degree Works will show your new program of study in the graduate program and you would have to generate a "what-if" query to see your undergraduate degree progress.

Application for Graduation

In addition to satisfying all degree requirements, a candidate for a degree must file an [Application for Graduation](#) online or at the Graduate College. Students must apply for graduation by Reading day of the *semester prior* to the semester of graduation.

Financial Obligation

Before any transcript or diploma is issued, the student must have paid any debt owed the University.

Commencement

Students must complete all degree requirements prior to participating in the December, May, or August commencement ceremonies. Students completing all degree requirements in the fall semester will participate in the December commencement ceremony; spring semester will participate in the May commencement ceremony; and summer terms will participate in the commencement ceremony held in August. Students will not participate in the commencement ceremony if all degree requirements are not completed prior to the ceremony. Students not completing all requirements will participate in the next scheduled commencement ceremony providing all degree requirements are met. Students taking courses at other institutions must have official transcripts submitted to the Registrar's Office and have completed all degree requirements prior to the commencement ceremony to be allowed to participate.

The candidate is expected to be present at commencement for the conferral of the degree unless written authorization in absentia is granted by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Academic regalia shall be worn by the student during the graduation ceremony. No decorations, writings, necklaces, braids, pins, cords, medallions, or other items shall be worn or placed on the gown. Decoration on caps is permitted.

Diplomas may be available at the time of commencement or will be mailed to graduates following commencement.

Absentia Graduation

Requests to graduate in absentia must be in writing and should be forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled graduation date. Graduate students who have been approved to graduate in absentia will receive their diplomas by mail after the actual conferral of the degrees.

Portfolio

Candidates for the Master of Education in Educational Leadership, School Counseling and Leadership, and Teaching, Learning and Leadership, and candidates for the Educational Specialist in Educational Leadership are required to submit a portfolio for completion of requirements of the degree

demonstrating evidence of the candidate's competencies required by the specific program standards. A satisfactory portfolio is a requirement for completion of the program.

The candidate must enroll in two (2) hours of portfolio study after completion of 28 hours of course work. The portfolio is to be completed at the end of course work during the last semester of enrollment.

Three (3) copies of the portfolio are required. One copy is for the Center for Leadership and Learning, and the other copies are for the portfolio committee members. An oral review of the portfolio is required. The oral review will be in compliance with Arkansas licensure requirements.

Master's Thesis

Candidates who prepare a thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a master's degree must exhibit the capabilities of gathering, organizing, evaluating, and reporting data which are pertinent to the topic of investigation.

The candidate's thesis committee will be appointed by the program director in consultation with the student's department head which will include at least one other qualified member of the graduate faculty. In addition to the regular graduate faculty members, a person having no official relationship with Arkansas Tech University may be appointed to serve with prior approval of the graduate faculty in the program. The program director will have final approval of the thesis chair and committee. Total composition of all thesis/dissertation committees shall be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Dean.

Once the general area of research is determined through conference with the advisor(s), the student begins the process necessary for preparation of the thesis. Under the direction of the committee, the student prepares and submits a Topic Approval Request for approval by the Dean of Graduate College via the program director along with IRB approval letter (if applicable). The Topic Approval Request form is found under Student Resources at [Thesis Topic Approval Form](#). All thesis must be written in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the thesis writing guide "Thesis Preparation Guide." This guide may be obtained at the Graduate College website under [Student Resources](#).

The thesis may be started at any time after the student has been admitted to candidacy for the degree. However, the thesis committee must receive the thesis by October 1, if graduating in the fall term, and by March 1 if graduating in the spring term. An oral defense, conducted by the thesis committee, of the thesis is required. The Dean of Graduate College will be notified by the committee, in writing, when the student has passed the oral defense. The oral defense of the thesis must be passed at least three (3) weeks before the degree is conferred.

The thesis, in its defended and committee approved form, along with corresponding Graduate College forms must be electronically submitted to the Graduate College via the Online Research Commons @ATU no later than two (2) weeks prior to the date of graduation; if revisions are required graduation may be deferred to the following semester.

Students working on thesis and other master's projects beyond the term in which coursework for the degree has been completed, will be required to enroll in at least one (1) hour of coursework each ensuing semester until all requirements for the degree have been met. Students who fail to continuously enroll will be dropped from the master's program.

The grade for the course will generally be CR (Credit) or NC (No Credit), with the understanding the person(s) supervising the thesis or project can assign a letter grade to explicitly indicate a student is making good (A or B) or unsatisfactory (C or lower) progress toward graduation.

A student who has been dropped for failure to continuously enroll as stipulated by this policy (excluding summer, unless the student is planning to graduate in the summer) may be readmitted to a master's program by reapplying to Graduate College with written approval of the person(s) supervising the thesis or project and the Program Director. Readmitted students will be required to reapply for graduation and enroll in a number of hours of coursework equal to the number of semesters that have lapsed since the last time they were enrolled, up to a maximum of three (3) hours.

Dissertation

As a formal research paper, the dissertation should reveal the candidate is able to produce original research that meets the professional standards of the discipline. Preparation for writing a dissertation should include careful and wide reading of professional journals and texts of involved disciplines, including the most recent scholarly work in the academic field. Students must exhibit capabilities of gathering, organizing, evaluating, and reporting data which are pertinent to the topic of investigation, as well as exhibiting their ability to use technology appropriate to the discipline.

Dissertation Committee Composition

The graduate student who plans to write a dissertation is responsible for determining the content area of the projected study in consultation with the dissertation chair. The dissertation chair must have doctoral faculty status and expertise in the selected topic area. Together they will decide upon the other members of the dissertation committee, which will include at least one other qualified member of the graduate faculty. In addition to the regular graduate faculty members, a person having no official relationship with Arkansas Tech University may be appointed to serve with prior approval of the graduate faculty in the program. The program director will have final approval of the dissertation chair and committee. Total composition of all thesis/dissertation committees shall be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Dean.

If more than three members are appointed to the dissertation committee, a majority of the members must hold regular graduate faculty status. A Graduate Faculty member holding non-regular graduate faculty status may serve on a dissertation committee, with prior approval of the program director and written approval by the Graduate College dean.

If a dissertation committee makes a change in its membership, a “**Dissertation Committee Member Change**” form must be submitted to the Graduate College dean for approval.

Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee

The committee will approve the dissertation proposal, and ensure particulars of the proposal are carried out. Other responsibilities include: reading the dissertation for content, style, and standard English usage; ensuring mechanics are followed according to departmental and university guidelines; affirming proper research techniques are followed, an in-depth review of the literature is completed, and the conclusions reached are both legitimate and supported by data; and ensuring plagiarism does not occur. The committee should make certain the dissertation is of quality and reflects high standards of scholarly writing. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for the initial reading and initial corrections of the student’s paper. The chair is then responsible for submitting the dissertation to the committee members for their review. Please use the “**Graduate College Dissertation Timeline**” that governs this process. The committee and chair will meet with the student as needed during the time the student is engaged in the Dissertation process.

Dissertation Committee Appointment Form

Students must submit a “**Dissertation Committee Appointment Form**” with all Committee Members signatures to the Graduate College dean for final approval of the dissertation committee. The form is available on the Graduate College website.

Dissertation Proposal Defense Form

A dissertation proposal must be prepared and defended by the student and approved by the dissertation committee before work on the dissertation continues. A “**Dissertation Proposal Defense Form**” is available on the Graduate College website. After the dissertation proposal has been defended successfully and signed by the dissertation committee and the program director, it is then submitted to the Graduate College dean for final approval. After the oral defense, the student may make no change to the dissertation, unless authorized by the dissertation committee.

Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense Form

The dissertation student and their committee chair must work together to determine a date and time to schedule the dissertation defense. A “**Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense Form**” is available on the Graduate College website. The form must be signed by the dissertation committee and the program director, it is then submitted to the Graduate College dean for final approval.

Dissertation Defense Final Report

An oral defense of the dissertation is required. It will be conducted by the dissertation committee, which will then notify the Graduate College dean, in writing, the student has passed the final oral defense. The “**Dissertation Defense Final Report**” form is available on the Graduate College webpage.

The oral defense of the dissertation be successfully completed at least six (6) weeks before the degree is conferred for fall or spring graduates. After the oral defense, the student may make no changes to the dissertation, unless authorized by the Dissertation Committee.

Dissertation Approval

The dissertation committee, program director, Graduate College reader, and Graduate College dean must approve the dissertation before it is reproduced in its final form.

Credits and Grades

A grade of **R** is given on all dissertation enrollments until the dissertation is accepted, and then appropriate credit is granted. The mark **R** gives neither credit nor grade points toward a graduate degree. The mark **CR** gives credit for hours only. Departments may choose to assign a letter grade or only give credit for hours.

Degree Completion Requirements

- 1 .Obtain from the University an official statement of admittance to graduate study.
- 2 .Develop a planned program of studies (including determined prerequisites) under supervision of designated faculty advisor, with any subsequent modifications approved by advisor and program director.
- 3 .Complete course work for the degree.
- 4 .Successfully complete a thesis, portfolio, comprehensive exam, internship, or research project as set forth in this catalog.
- 5 .Submit an [Application for Graduation](#) form. This must be done by Reading day of the *semester prior* to the semester of graduation.
- 6 .Complete the degree within six (6) years Masters or eight (8) Doctoral from the time unconditional or conditional admission to the program was granted.
- 7 .See specific degree programs for special requirements.