



ETSU GRADUATE COORDINATOR HANDBOOK



GRADUATE SCHOOL
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

ETSU Graduate Coordinator Handbook

From the Dean

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Graduate Coordinator at East Tennessee State University. Maybe you took this position willingly or maybe you had your arm twisted. Either way, I appreciate that you are willing to step into this important leadership position within your program(s).

The Graduate Coordinator role is an administrative activity, and I also view it as a leadership role. During your time as a Graduate Coordinator, your department and program should be looking to you for guidance and direction about emerging best practices in graduate education, trends in applications and enrollment for your program, and direction for revising the curriculum as necessary to remain current with the discipline.

Some of you may know that I am a graduate of ETSU, having earned my master's degree in English. I know first-hand how important ETSU graduate programs are in a student scholar's academic growth, and how valuable the mentorship of you and your colleagues will be to your students. It's important work.

The Graduate School is your partner. In that spirit, we have developed this handbook to serve as a just-in time resource for you as you fulfill the responsibilities of the Graduate Coordinator role. Don't hesitate to reach out to any member of our team with questions, comments, or suggestions.

Wishing you a successful academic year,

Sharon James McGee, PhD
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School



Graduate School Teams

The Graduate School is located in Sherrod Library 355. Take the elevator to the third floor. Turn right off the elevator and turn left at the hallway. Walk straight ahead and you will see our sign. You are welcome to pop by anytime!

Leadership Team

Dr. Sharon James McGee, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
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Dr. Karin Bartoszek, Associate Dean for Enrollment, Graduation, and Student Support
423-439-4704

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Note: Ben's office is in Ada Ernest House

Support Team

Don Rice, Systems Analyst
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Queen Brown, Office Manager
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Emily Redd, Publications and Special Projects Coordinator
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Anna Dampf, Student Engagement and Retention
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If you'd like to put names with faces, visit our "Graduate School Staff" [webpage](#).



The Graduate Coordinator Role

Graduate Coordinators (GCs) are unit leaders in graduate education at East Tennessee State University. They serve as the primary liaison between the department's graduate faculty, graduate program(s) or certificate(s), and the Graduate School—across all locations and delivery methods.

GCs must be members of the ETSU Graduate Faculty, as approved by the Graduate Faculty Subcommittee of the Graduate Council. Each department or unit determines its own process for selecting a GC, with final approval granted by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Coordinators are responsible for implementing and adhering to all ETSU policies and procedures related to graduate education. They work collaboratively with departmental graduate faculty to ensure compliance with both university-wide and program-specific guidelines.

As partners with the Graduate School, GCs have key responsibilities in five primary areas:

- Enrollment management
- Matriculation, retention, and student success
- Assistantship oversight
- Program review and assessment
- Accuracy and consistency of program information

Enrollment Management

The Graduate Coordinator (GC) collaborates with the Graduate School and relevant college personnel to:

- Recruit graduate students in coordination with the Graduate School's Coordinator of Marketing and Recruitment and any college-level support
- Respond to inquiries from prospective students
- Recommend admission decisions in accordance with the program's procedures
- Serve as the primary advisor for new students when no graduate advisor is assigned
- Review and recommend Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's (ABM) applicants
- Evaluate and recommend deferral requests

Matriculation, Retention, and Student Success

The Graduate Coordinator (GC) collaborates with the Graduate School and student success units to:

- Provide program-specific orientation for new students
- Maintain up-to-date records on graduate students, including admission provisions and probationary conditions

- Share information and deadlines related to theses, dissertations, internships, practicums, and similar requirements
- Work with program support staff to ensure accurate academic advising
- Keep students and faculty informed of key deadlines and policies related to enrollment, Course Program of Study (CPOS), thesis/dissertation, graduation, and other academic milestones
- Review and approve transfer credits, dual program credits, and CPOS changes
- Monitor student progress each semester and enforce program and Graduate School policies on academic standing
- Assist in addressing and resolving student issues
- Connect students with Graduate Student Success Specialists and other relevant support services as needed

Assistantship Oversight

As relevant for programs, the GC works in coordination with the department chair and the Graduate School to:

- Oversee the assignment of graduate assistantships, including the funding letters, submission of contracts, enrollment requirements, including Supervised Teaching
- Ensure the department provides appropriate training and resources for graduate teaching and research assistants
- Ensure that graduate assistants receive an evaluation each academic year (at a minimum); submit the evaluation to the Graduate School

Graduate Program Review and Assessment

In collaboration with the program's graduate faculty, the Graduate Coordinator provides leadership to:

- Ensure academic rigor in courses and curriculum
- Support scholarship and research within the program
- Regularly review the graduate curriculum, student learning outcomes, and key issues in graduate education
- Revise the curriculum as needed to reflect disciplinary trends, support credentialing requirements (e.g., certification or licensure), and address future program needs
- Lead program review and assessment efforts as appropriate to the department

Graduate Program Information Consistency and Accuracy

While not always the most visible aspect of the role, the Graduate Coordinator (GC) is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and consistency of program information. This includes:

- Working with graduate faculty to ensure the program's mission, learning outcomes, admission standards, assistantship eligibility, accreditation status, career pathways, and other key details are clearly and consistently communicated across websites and printed

materials

- Reviewing the Graduate Catalog annually for accuracy and reporting discrepancies to the Associate Dean for Enrollment and Graduation in the Graduate School
- Reviewing and updating the program handbook annually (if applicable)

Workload

Serving as a Graduate Coordinator requires dedication and a passion for graduate education and student success. Each college should recognize the critical role GCs play and ensure their responsibilities are appropriately reflected in the faculty member's annual workload plan.

Tools for Success

In this section, we provide you with important tools to help you as a Graduate Coordinator.

Graduate School Website

The [Graduate School website](#) is your central hub for information and resources to support you in your role as a Graduate Coordinator. Take time to explore the site and become familiar with the tools available to you and your students.

Key sections include:

- Forms Page – Access all necessary forms for both faculty and students. Unsure about a form's purpose or requirements? Just ask us!
- Programs Page – Our landing page for all Graduate level programs we offer. Make sure your program's information is up to date and accurate. It is especially important to review this page after any changes to your admissions policies or coordinators have been approved.
- Admission Information – Find ETSU's minimum graduate admission requirements and an FAQ page to help answer common questions.
- Accelerated Programs – Learn about the Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's (ABM) pathway. The process can be complex, so this page offers general guidance. Contact us for further assistance.
- Orientation Information – View details about fall and spring orientations, including online options for remote students.
- Thesis and Dissertation Resources – This comprehensive page includes requirements, training sessions, templates, FAQs, and more to support students through the thesis or dissertation process.

Academic Catalogs

The [Graduate Catalog](#) includes essential information on graduate admissions, program and degree requirements, and student resources. It also provides tutorials and links to helpful campus offices and services for faculty and staff.

When advising students admitted in a previous year, be sure to consult the archived catalog for their catalog of record.

Academic Calendar

The University publishes an [academic calendar](#) each semester with important deadlines for students.

You and your students should check the calendar regularly to avoid missing key deadlines for graduation, course add/drop, and changes to their program of study.

Graduate specific deadlines are highlighted in gold for easy reference on the Academic Calendar. All other dates still apply to graduate students.

International Enrollment and Services

The [International Enrollment and Student Services](#) team has developed a comprehensive website with essential information for both current and prospective international students. It outlines the documentation and steps required to ensure students arrive prepared and on time.

Take time to familiarize yourself with the site, and don't hesitate to contact the team with any questions you or your students may have.

Note: All questions related to visas and I-20s should be directed to International Enrollment and Student Services, not the Graduate School.

Coordinator Training

The Graduate School offers training sessions for all Graduate Coordinators. These sessions cover key policy updates, guidance on graduate forms and processes, and include time for open Q&A. Coordinators will receive email invitations and are strongly encouraged to attend at least once a year.

Missed your department's session? Contact us to schedule a time to address any questions you may have.

CRM Training

ETSU's Graduate School uses TargetX/Salesforce as our CRM (Constituent Relationship Management) system. The CRM has two primary uses: (1) for communicating with prospective students and applicants, and (2) serving as the application system where students submit their applications and coordinators review completed packages. As part of the application system, GCs will have access to a dashboard that provides real time data on the number of applications started and applications completed as well as historical data on applications.

Training on using the CRM system is essential to your role. We offer on-demand training at your convenience, and live training is also available upon request. Please contact our Systems Analyst to schedule a session.

If you are unable to attend a live session or just need a refresher, a PDF training guide is available on the coordinator dashboard in the CRM.

Institutional Research

The [Office of Institutional Research](#) (IR) at East Tennessee State University provides decision support to university leadership and stakeholders by collecting, analyzing, and sharing key institutional data. The office supports executive leadership, unit administrators, departmental staff, faculty researchers, and external data requests.

Need program-specific data? Contact our Technical and Data Analytics Team for more detailed insights.

The University provides a [comprehensive search tool for institutional policies](#). By entering “Graduate” in the search bar, you’ll access a dropdown list of all policies specific to graduate students.

If you have questions or need clarification, please don’t hesitate to contact our team.

Other Useful Resources

[Registrar](#) The Registrar’s website includes links to the Records, Graduation, and Registration offices, along with relevant forms and FAQs. Familiarize yourself with these resources so you can direct students appropriately.

[Financial Aid](#) The Office of Financial Aid offers a comprehensive website covering cost of attendance, types of aid, billing, appeals, FAQs, and more.

[University Health Center](#) The Health Center provides essential services for students and often handles issues that may prevent full-time enrollment, such as missing immunization records. If a student raises this concern, direct them to this office for assistance.

[Bursar](#) The Bursar’s website has information about tuition, fees, setting up payment plans, and other information related to student accounts. You will also find the latest [tuition and fee tables](#).

[Disability Services](#) This unit helps faculty, staff, and students who need accommodations to learn and do their work.

[Curriculum Innovation Center](#) The Curriculum Innovation Center helps faculty with revising existing curriculum, creating new programs, changing admission criteria, and other curricular matters that result in changes to the Graduate Catalog.

Support Systems

Department

Your department—both faculty and administrators—serves as a key source of support and guidance. They can offer insights specific to your program that others may not have. Don't hesitate to reach out to colleagues when you need assistance.

College

Your academic college, including the Dean and their staff, provides college-level support and guidance on the internal operations of the college. They can assist with matters that go beyond the department level.

Graduate School

The Graduate School team supports Graduate Coordinators throughout the entire student lifecycle—from admission to graduation. Whether you know exactly what you need or aren't sure where to start, our staff is here to help you succeed in your role as Graduate Coordinator.

Graduate Council

The Graduate Council serves as the faculty governance body for graduate education at the University. It is composed of graduate faculty from all academic colleges.

The Council is responsible for developing and reviewing policies related to graduate education, approving all curriculum matters—including the creation of new graduate degree programs—and appointing graduate faculty. It also reviews reports from graduate program evaluations, which are conducted regularly to assess program need, quality, enrollment trends, and degrees awarded. The Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee meets on the first and third Mondays of each month during the academic year. The Graduate Faculty Subcommittee typically meets on the third Monday of most months. The full Graduate Council meets on the last Monday of each month.

Graduate Faculty

Your graduate faculty peers are a valuable resource. Many have previously served as Graduate Coordinators and can offer insights and practical advice. They can also help you navigate departmental and college-level processes that may not be well documented elsewhere.

Checklist

The Graduate Coordinator role involves several recurring responsibilities each semester. We encourage you to maintain a personalized schedule to help manage these tasks effectively. As you find what works best for you, here are a few tips to support a successful semester:

Before the Semester Starts

- Meet with prospective students who contact you directly or are referred to you. Faculty contact is important!
- Ensure all applications have a recommendation entered in the CRM.
- Encourage new students to attend the New Graduate Student Orientation and Welcome event, which is held the Monday prior to start of classes in the Fall, and the Thursday prior to start of classes in the Spring.
- Confirm that all students in your program are registered.
- Provide pre-semester advising for students who need or request it.
- Assist students in planning class schedules to support timely degree completion based on their individual needs.
- Confirm that all deferral requests have been processed. The deferral deadline is 5 business days before the first day of classes.

During the Semester

- Verify that provisionally admitted students are meeting their admission requirements.
 - If they are not, advise them correctly to fulfill the provisions. Unmet provisions may lead to dismissal.
- Remind all students—including **certificate students**—to apply for graduation before the deadline, which can be found on the [Academic Dates Calendar](#). Students apply to graduate one semester prior to their intended graduation, which is **September 1 for Spring graduation, and March 1 for Summer and Fall graduation**.
 - Graduation is not automatic; students must submit an application.
 - If you're unsure how to answer a graduation-related question, first consult the [Graduate School's Graduation FAQ](#). If additional clarification is needed, refer the student to a member of our Enrollment and Graduation Team.
- Remind thesis and dissertation students of upcoming deadlines for submitting required forms, scheduling defenses, and submitting their final document. These dates can be found on the [Academic Dates Calendar](#).
- Watch for emails from the Graduate School regarding potential missing documents for current students.

End of Semester

- Watch for emails from the Graduate School regarding student probation or dismissal. The Graduate School checks students' GPAs at the end of each semester. Unfortunately,

some students do not meet the GPA requirements of the [Graduate School Retention Standards Policy](#) and will be placed on probation or dismissal.

- Monitor student grades regularly to ensure students meet program requirements.
 - Some programs have progression requirements, such as earning a “B” or better in required courses. Because of the tight timeline at the end of the semester, the Graduate School is only able to check cumulative GPA; we will not be able to check individual student grades. If your program has specific grade requirements, the Graduate Coordinator will need to review each student’s grades and inform the Technical and Data Analysis team of any student who needs to be placed on probation or dismissed from the program.
- Advise students placed on probation or dismissed on appropriate next steps and available options as outlined in the policy above.

Students who wish to apply for reinstatement are encouraged to meet with you to develop a remediation plan to return to good academic standing prior to submitting the reinstatement request.

Regular Duties

- Regularly check your email for forms requiring your signature.
- Notify the Graduate School of any changes related to your program or department (e.g., department chair, faculty changes, etc.).
- Inform the Graduate School immediately if a student crisis arises.
- Attend all relevant training sessions.
- Review your program’s entry on the Graduate School’s program page to ensure it is accurate and complete.
- If your role as Graduate Coordinator ends, complete the [Coordinator Update Form](#).
 - Be sure you are familiar with ETSU’s requirements for serving as a Graduate Coordinator.
- If necessary, update your program’s application deadline using the appropriate form available [here](#).
 - Application deadlines must be set for the first of the month.
 - Consult with the Associate Dean of Admissions before requesting any changes.

Catalog Review

Please review the [Graduate Catalog](#) each year to ensure all information is accurate, including faculty listings and academic ranks. If you identify any updates or corrections, contact Associate Dean Dr. Karin Bartoszek, who will coordinate the necessary changes with the Catalog Committee.

Administrative Duties

As Graduate Coordinator, you have several administrative duties that support your program. Some of the most important are listed below.

Graduate Coordinators Meetings: Keeping Current

On the Monday prior to Fall classes beginning and the Wednesday prior to Spring classes beginning, the Graduate School hosts a Graduate Coordinator Meeting usually from 8:30-11:30. These meetings cover important information to assist you in your role. Mark your calendars to attend.

Graduate Student Deadlines: Knowing the Dates

Reviewing the University's [Academic Calendar](#) is critical for you and your students. Dates for course substitutions/program changes, drop dates, breaks, etc. are listed for all students; specific dates for graduate student deadlines are listed in gold.

Graduate Faculty Status: Keeping all Graduate Faculty Eligible to Teach and Serve on Committees

Graduate Coordinators and all graduate faculty members who teach graduate courses and/or serve on thesis or dissertation committees must have active Graduate Faculty status. Graduate faculty can check when their graduate faculty status expires/needs to be renewed [here](#). Please follow your department's internal procedures but note that all applications are approved by Graduate Council. Full guidelines and instructions can be found [here](#).

Graduate faculty status is active for a set number of years depending on the level:

- **Member** – 5-year appointment
- **Affiliate** – 3-year appointment
- **Temporary** – May teach as an adjunct and/or serve on, but not chair, committees. Term is one-year or through the life of the student's committee.

Completed graduate faculty applications are due by the first Friday of each month. The Graduate Faculty Subcommittee reviews the applications and makes a recommendation for approval to the full Graduate Council. Once approved by Graduate Council, the applicant will receive a notice of approval.

Program Support: Regular "Housekeeping"

Being an effective Graduate Coordinator involves actively supporting the program you lead. Regular "housekeeping" helps ensure the continued success of your program, your students,

and your department. Key responsibilities include:

- Communicating regularly with graduate faculty to address student concerns, review coursework, and ensure faculty have the resources they need.
- Reviewing departmental curriculum to confirm it meets academic standards for awarding graduate degrees.
- Checking in with students to identify any concerns or challenges and directing them to appropriate support services when needed.
- Keeping track of any program-specific admission provisions for students and submitting a “[Satisfaction or Provisions](#)” form.
- Monitoring any program-specific retention standards (e.g., certain grades in courses) and informing the Graduate School TADA team when those standards haven’t been met. We do not monitor program-specific retention standards.
- Organizing and attending virtual information sessions to promote your program and connect with prospective students.
- Coordinating and participating in recruitment events to support enrollment and program visibility.

Virtual Information Sessions: Recruitment Opportunity

[Virtual Information Sessions \(VIS\)](#) are held throughout the year to provide prospective students with important admissions and enrollment information about your program. These sessions are conducted online to accommodate attendees from around the world and serve as an excellent tool for program marketing.

VIS events are co-led by you, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Director of Recruitment and Marketing. The Graduate School handles the logistics and setup—we aim to make the process as easy as possible for coordinators.

For help scheduling or promoting your session, please contact Tom VerDow.

Forms: The Comprehensive List

Most graduate student [forms](#) are routed through you, the Graduate Coordinator, for recommendation/approval/or denial. It’s important to stay familiar with these forms, as policies and requirements may change between semesters.

If you need assistance or training related to graduate forms, please contact our office.

Recruitment Tips

Tips for Engaging and Supporting Prospective Students

Most importantly, remember: We answer questions about our programs and the University every day — it's second nature to us. Prospective students, however, do not have the same familiarity, which is exactly why they ask. Even common questions deserve thoughtful answers. If you find yourself responding to the same inquiries regularly, consider adding the information to your website in a clear and prominent location.

Research has shown that the most important information prospective students search for is (1) length of time to complete a program/number of credits, (2) program format (e.g., online, hybrid, in-person), (3) cost, and (4) return on investment (e.g., jobs, salary, etc.).

Respond Promptly and Helpfully

Speed matters. Today's prospective students expect quick, informative replies. The faster we respond to questions, the more likely we are to build a relationship and prevent students from turning to other institutions. Prompt, personalized communication can be a major differentiator.

Ensure Your Web Page Is Up to Date and Clear

Your program page should clearly answer the most frequently asked questions:

Program Length

- Include the total number of credits (without factoring in transfer credits).
- Clarify how full-time vs. part-time enrollment affects completion time.

Delivery Format

- Is the program 100% online, hybrid, or fully on-campus/in-person?
- Are there clinical, practicum, or other in-person requirements?
- Can the program accommodate Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's (ABM) pathways?

Tip: Many competitors emphasize "faster, easier, cheaper" options. Focus instead on your program's value, quality, depth, and how its structure supports student success and professional readiness.

Program Start Dates

- Refer students to the Graduate School's program listing page: [ETSU Graduate Programs](#)

- In addition, you may want to include the same information on your website.

Cost and Fees

- Cost is a major factor for most students. While the Bursar's Office provides official tuition info, it can be difficult to interpret.
- Share estimated program-specific costs and fees when possible. You can use the Bursar's [Tuition / Fee Tables & Refund Calendar](#) for information. Always clarify that final figures come from the Bursar and use language like "estimated" as needed.

Tuition and fees for next academic year are approved by the Board of Trustees no later than May. If you include cost on your website, be sure to routinely update the information based on any tuition changes approved by the Board of Trustees.

Student and Alumni Stories

- Recent graduates are often the most relatable to prospective students.
- Highlight their experiences through videos, quotes, or testimonials.
- Consider using alumni as ambassadors at events or in regional outreach efforts.

Create Combined Program Handouts

- Grouping complementary programs into a single document is helpful for recruiting events.
- It allows prospective students to compare similar programs side-by-side and saves space.
- One well-designed, multi-program handout is more effective (and cost-effective) than several small flyers.

Promote the Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's (ABM) Pathway

If your program supports ABM:

- Clearly outline the steps and academic path.
- Emphasize potential time and cost savings.
- Share the ABM program webpage: [ABM Information webpage](#)

If your program would like to develop ABM pathways, please reach out to us.

Collaborate Across Programs and Departments

Cross-program collaboration improves recruitment outcomes. Examples include:

- Digital Media, Brand & Media Studies, and Digital Marketing
- Counseling, Psychology, and Social Work

If prospective students weigh multiple similar options, joint workshops or information sessions can help clarify differences and support better decision-making.

Build Relationships with Regional Institutions

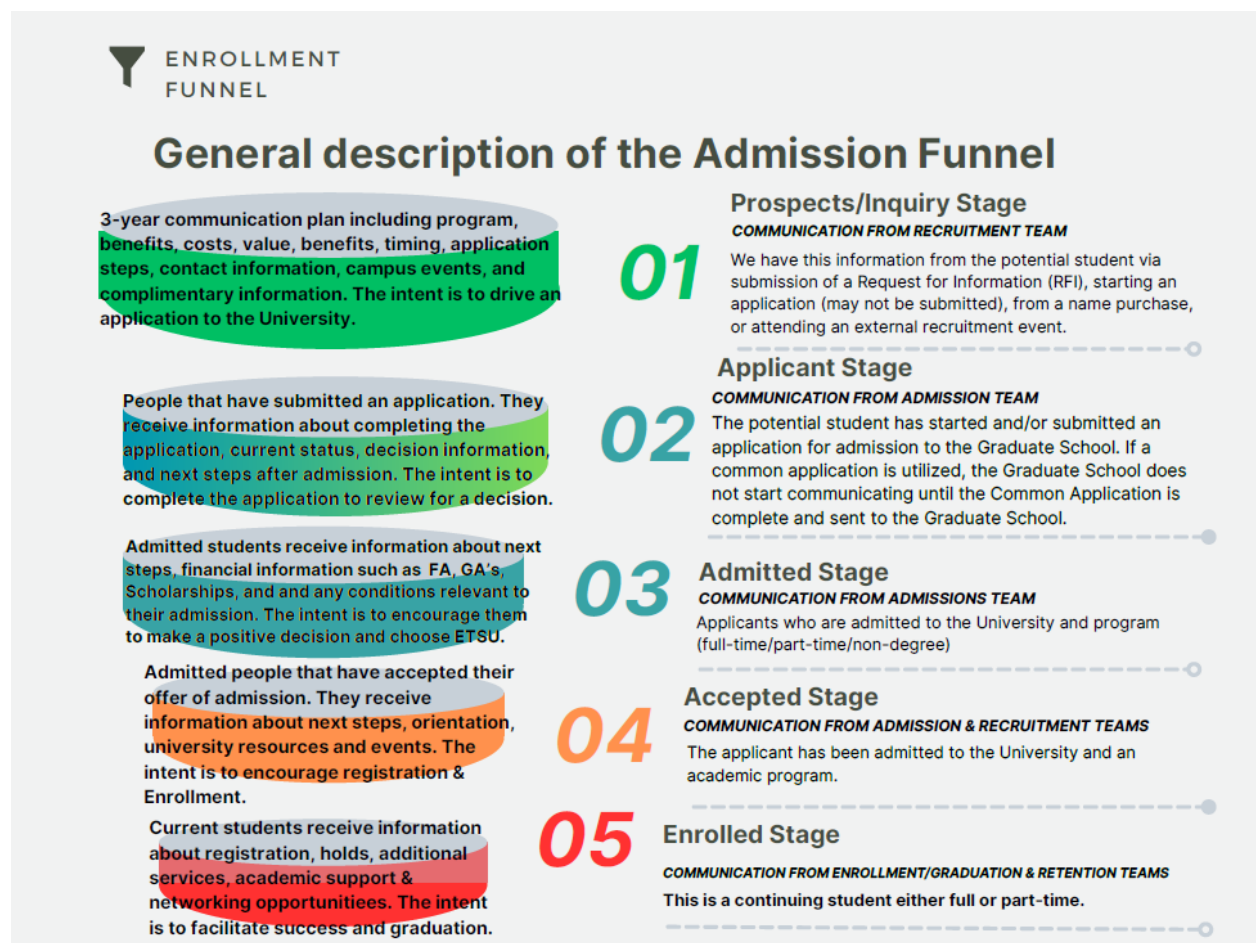
If nearby colleges/universities have strong feeder programs:

- Make faculty-to-faculty connections — they are more productive than general outreach.
- Explore opportunities for classroom visits, joint presentations, or campus tours.
- These relationships can also help identify strong candidates for GA positions and improve recruitment and retention.

The Enrollment Funnel

It takes the entire University to recruit, retain, and graduate high-quality students. Refer to the Enrollment Funnel below to understand the full cycle of student engagement.

The enrollment funnel is a model used in higher education to describe the stages a prospective student goes through from initial awareness of a program or institution to actual enrollment. Below is a visual representation of the Admission Funnel.



Why the Admission Funnel Should Matter to Graduate Coordinators

As a Graduate Coordinator, you play a key role in all stages of the funnel, especially from inquiry to enrollment. As the funnel metaphor shows, it takes many prospects to get to students to enroll in your program. Your responsiveness, communication, and support can have a big impact on whether an interested student becomes an enrolled one.

The Admission Process

Application Requirements

The Graduate School has standard admission requirements for all ETSU graduate programs. Programs may have stricter admission requirements. The Graduate School admission requirements and any program admission requirements are approved by Graduate Council.

General Admission Minimum Requirements

Below is a summary of minimum Graduate School degree and certificate admission requirements. Please [click here](#) to review the full policy.

Transcripts

Transcripts from previously attended institutions (bachelors/US equivalent degree transcript, all transcripts with program pre-requisite courses, and all graduate level work required); Domestic students can provide unofficial transcripts during the application process but must have official transcripts by the end of the first semester; International transcripts must include an official evaluation sent directly from a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) accredited evaluation service. The most common NACES organizations are below with partner landing pages.

- The Evaluation Company Course Analysis (use this link for \$20 off new evaluations and free delivery to ETSU Graduate School*)
- IEE Education Course Report (use this link for \$35 off new evaluations and 3-day turn around after required documents received*)
- ECE Course by Course (use this link for a 10% discount on new evaluations and free delivery to ETSU Graduate School*)
- WES Course by Course iCAP

*Discounts are subject to change and are at the discretion of the evaluation company.

English Proficiency

Students educated outside of the US must show proof of English proficiency; some students may qualify for an exemption. Learn more [here](#).

Grade Point Average

Domestic applicants must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher (on a 4.0 scale); international applicants/global must have a 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale).

Submitted Application

Applicants must complete an application, include all required materials, and pay the application fee (using the [application portal](#)) before their application can move forward for review.

In addition to these baseline requirements, individual programs may establish additional admission criteria. All program-specific requirements must be approved by the Graduate Council through the Curriculog process. If your program wishes to update its admission requirements, please contact the Dean or Associate Dean of Admissions to discuss the process.

You can view each program's current admission requirements on the [Graduate School's Program webpage](#).

Application Fees and Waivers

The current application fee for an ETSU Graduate School application is \$55 for domestic students and \$65 for international or global applicants. Some programs also require students to apply through a CAS (Centralized Application System), which has an additional fee.

Application fee waivers (ETSU application only) are available for:

- Currently enrolled ETSU graduate students or students who have accepted an offer of admissions for a future term
- McNair Fellows
- Active-duty military members or veterans (Must contact Military and Veteran Services to receive waiver code)
- Applicants for programs participating in special promotional or marketing campaigns.

For any application-related questions not addressed on the website, please contact gradadmissions@etsu.edu.

Application Processing

What happens to an application once it is submitted? At that point, the Graduate School's Admission Team gets to work processing the application. What follows is a general description of the workflow for admissions.

Check-In Process

After an application is submitted, the Admissions Team must verify all submitted materials before they are marked as received in the applicant portal. This process typically takes 3–5 business days.

- **Please allow additional time during peak application periods.**

- Once the application is submitted, applicants can no longer upload items through the portal. After the Admissions Team has checked in the application, any missing items (such as transcripts or personal statement) will need to be sent using the provider's official channels.

Grace Period

All applicants are given a seven (7) day grace period after the application deadline to submit any missing materials.

This grace period is for the applicant to provide materials. The Admissions Team may still need time to process these items after they are received.

How to View Applicant Records

Follow these steps to access and review application checklists:

1. Click on the application number in your reports (it will appear as a clickable link).
2. Select the "Related" tab under the application number.
3. Scroll to the "Checklist Items" section.
4. If more items exist than are currently visible, click "View All" to see the full list with status updates.
5. Checklist Status Tips: "In Progress" or "Not Started" statuses mean the item has not yet been processed by the Admissions Team. Neither should be interpreted to mean that the item is further in the process (i.e., "In Progress" does not mean that we have received but not processed the item and "Not Started" does not mean that the item may not currently be in our queue).

Completed Applications

Once all materials have been received and processed, the application is marked as "Complete" and referred to the program for review and an admission recommendation.

Only the Dean of the Graduate School has the authority to extend or imply offers of admission or acceptance. Academic programs may invite students to apply to the Graduate School and may state that they have made, will make, or can make a recommendation for admission once all application materials have been received and reviewed. Programs are **not** authorized to extend or imply an offer of admission, such as indicating that a student has been or will be admitted before the official Graduate School offer is issued or offering a graduate assistantship contingent upon an assumption of admission.

Complete – Pending Review

This status has a few steps. The status on your report may say "Complete – Pending Review," but it is not yet in your Application Review queue. Below is a brief summary of what this

process looks like.

1. Initial Program Specialist Review – Once all materials are received, the Admissions Team will double check all items and make any notes for the program, or ourselves, should the student be admitted. These notes can be seen in the Review History section of your Application Review Document. The Initial Program Specialist Review has three options:
 - a. Meets the Grad School minimum requirements - Application is referred to the program and will then display in your Application Review Queue.
 - b. Close but does not quite meet minimums within some limits – Application referred to Associate Dean of the Graduate School for additional review.
 - c. Does not meet Graduate School minimum requirements – Rejected by Graduate School and will not enter your queue.
2. Associate Dean of the Graduate School Review – Most applications will not need this step. This is only for cases when students do not meet Graduate School minimum requirements but are close or are more nuanced. The Associate Dean reviews to determine the best course of action: Deny, get more info, or allow the program to review.
3. Program Coordinator Review – Your step to review the application and make your recommendation to the Graduate School. **Applications will only show in your Application Review list during this step.** Please see the “Application Recommendations” section for more detailed explanations of your recommendation options.
4. Final Review – Graduate School reviews the program recommendation and processes the application decision. During this step we review any program provisions to ensure they are acceptable (see “Admissions Provisions” section for best practices and guidelines) and add any Graduate School provisions. Once the Graduate School processes the Final Review, the applicant will receive notice that their decision is available and their application status will change on your reports.
5. Note: If we need clarification on any provisions, we may return an application to the Program Coordinator Review stage with the needed information in the Review History section of the Application Review document

Other Admission Options

Nondegree

Students may apply as Nondegree seeking students as outlined in the [Admission of Nondegree Seeking Students Policy](#). Students may enroll as a nondegree seeking student to raise their GPA to meet admission requirements, get a head start on coursework, or to take prerequisite classes.

- Nondegree for personal enrichment students may reach out to coordinators if permits are needed for closed courses.
- Nondegree with Intent to Transfer students are encouraged to reach out to coordinators and ask what classes they may take to apply to a program of study.

Students will need to submit an application to the degree or certificate program. They

cannot graduate as a Nondegree student. Students may only transfer up to 9 credit hours in which they earned a B or better into the full program of study after acceptance.

Nondegree seeking students are not eligible for financial aid with two exceptions:

- Taking prerequisites for admission to a graduate program.
- Taking courses for educational licensure.

Visiting Students

Students from other institutions may apply as a visiting student to transfer coursework back to their home institution to complete their degree. The requirements can be found [here](#).

- Most instances of this are for students to meet course needs their home institution does not offer or will not offer in the timeframe they need.
- The Graduate School may refer prospective applicants to you as the coordinator to discuss if your department can meet their needs.

Academic Fresh Start

[Academic Fresh Start](#) allows students a one-time opportunity to remove prior ETSU graduate grades from their overall GPA. To qualify students must be separated from the university for a **minimum of two years** before applying for a fresh start.

To use the Academic Fresh Start option, students must

- Complete an Academic Fresh Start form; and
- Submit a new application to the program.

Admissions Decisions

For legal reasons, only the Graduate School can extend/imply offers of admission and make admissions decisions.

A program can say that they will make or have made a recommendation to the Graduate School, and that the decision will come from the Graduate School.

It is rare, but sometimes that are reasons beyond the program's knowledge that impacts the Graduate School's ability to extend an offer of admission.

Application Recommendations

Your faculty admissions committee has four options when making decisions on applications:

1. **Admit**
Selecting "Admit" indicates that the program has no concerns about the applicant that would require a program-level provision.

The Graduate School may still apply provisions (e.g., missing official transcripts, required post-admission forms or pending application requirements such as licensure) during final review. If that is necessary, the Graduate School will change the applicants offer from “Admit” to “Admit with Provisions.”

2. **Admit with Provisions**

Use “Admit with Provisions” when the applicant must meet specific requirements to continue in the program.

- Graduate School provisions typically include administrative items such as official transcript required.
- Program-level provisions may be added when the applicant shows potential but may need additional support or monitoring due to prior academic performance or limited experience.

Refer to the “Admissions Provisions” section for best practices when recommending provisions. Program provisions that do not meet best practices, will be returned for clarification/revision.

3. **Deny**

Common reasons a program may deny an applicant include:

- Application materials do not meet minimum requirements;
- English proficiency score is below the required threshold;
- GRE or GMAT scores do not meet the program's standards; or
- The applicant was less competitive than others in the pool

If a student has reached out to you to withdraw their application but did not do so in the application portal, you can return them to us with a Deny recommendation with the English Proficiency test score reason so it stands out and note in the Summary Notes that they requested their application be withdrawn. This will allow us to not send them a denial letter but will remove them from your queue. We would also request that you forward a copy of their email requesting the withdrawal to gradadmissions@etsu.edu so we can connect it to their record.

4. **Waitlist**

Choosing “Waitlist” communicates that the application has been reviewed and that the applicant is still under consideration. This is ideal for programs with capacity limits. Use this option for qualified applicants when you’ve already extended first-round offers but are awaiting responses or would like to see if more competitive applicants apply before extending an early offer.

Benefits of using the Waitlist status:

- Easily admit applicants from the waitlist if space becomes available – just email gradadmissions@etsu.edu to request the student(s) be referred back to you.
- No additional action required at the start of the term if the applicant is not admitted

- Organizes your review queue by removing pending files
- Updates applicant on their status thus reducing applicants reaching out to you for decision timelines
- Enables bulk communication to waitlisted applicants (e.g., checking continued interest, inviting to reapply next year)
- Supports better tracking and reporting

Admission Provisions

If program-level admission provisions are warranted, two types may be used:

1. **Grade Provisions**
Used when a student's prior GPA does not meet expectations, or when it's important to ensure strong academic performance in foundational courses.
2. **Course Provisions**
Typically applied to students who lack a strong academic background in the field. These provisions help ensure students take foundational or prerequisite courses early in their program.
 - Course and grade provisions can be combined (e.g., *"Earn a B or better in [COURSE] during the first semester enrolled."*)
 - Students who fail to meet their provisions are subject to dismissal from the program.

Provision Guidelines

- Avoid excessive provisions. Requiring more than two courses (e.g., MATH 4001, CHEM 4211), especially undergraduate courses, as provisions may be considered excessive.

If an applicant does not have a strong background in the subject area, low test scores, or other factors, it may be more appropriate to recommend the student apply as a non-degree-seeking student or to a related certificate program first.

- All provisions include a registration hold until the condition is met. If the provision must be satisfied before the student begins the program, a hold will stop initial registration until the provision is satisfied.
- For provisions based on course completion or minimum grades, the hold cannot be lifted until grades are finalized by the Registrar's Office at the end of the term, the student submits a Satisfaction of Admission Provisions Form, which is approved by the coordinator, and then processed by the Graduate School.

If students are worried about losing their seat in the courses they need, you (or whomever does so in your department) can issue permits to save their spot until the hold is lifted

Guidelines for Writing Admission Provisions

Provisions should follow this format to align with the admission letter template:

Verb X [with (grade of) Y (or better)] by/in Z time
(Do not include punctuation at the end)

For example: Take CSCI 5100 with a grade of B+ or better by end of first semester.

Best Practices

- Use clear wording that leaves no room for interpretation.
- Course provisions must include course name/subject and number and minimum required grade.
- When referencing time periods, use general terms like “prior to registration” (any provision for prior to start of first term will have a hold to stop registration until satisfied); “first semester of enrollment,” “first Fall semester of enrollment,” “first Spring semester after a Fall semester of enrollment,” etc. Do not reference specific terms (e.g., Fall 2028) because if a student defers, the provision is no longer valid; and do not list specific course types (e.g., “before clinical courses”) as this is sometimes not clear to students and it is hard for the Graduate School to track.
- Earn final grades of XX or better in all courses taken through the semester in which the first XX credits are completed
- For provisions that must be completed in a certain number of credits, use language which includes semester for clarify.
 - Unclear provision example: Provision of Grades of B or better in first nine credits

Why is this unclear? If a student takes 6 credits in the first semester and earns two A's, and then in the second semester takes 6 credits and earns one A and one C. Which course counts toward meeting the provision? Without including the semester in which the 9th credit should be completed, there is argument both that the student met and did not meet the provision.

- Clearer provision example: Earn final grades of B or better in all courses taken through the first semester.
- Any take X course provisions must include with grade of Y or higher and timing of when course must be completed
- Should be for items that can be seen on a transcript or document required for admission (ex. Participate in research or visit writing center are not valid provisions)
- Non-redundant (ex. 3.00 or better GPA is not allowed as it is already the minimum requirement for good standing)

Examples of Strong Provisions:

- “Take MATH 1530 with a final grade of B or better during the first semester of

enrollment”

- “Earn final grades of B or better in all courses taken through the semester in which the first 9 credits are completed”
 - This ensures that even part-time students understand that all courses within the defined credit window must meet the grade standard. This also removes ambiguity of which grades are considered if the student has taken additional credits in the semester they take their 9th credit and ensures equity.

Need Help?

- If you’re unsure how to phrase a provision, reach out to the Admissions Team; we’re happy to assist with writing clear, effective provisions.
 - If a recommended provision does not meet Admissions Team best practices or requires further clarification, it will be returned to your application review queue in the CRM with what is needed in the Summary Notes under the Review History section
- If a student has questions about a hold on their account due to provisions not covered, please direct them to us so we can provide proper guidance.

Applicant/Student Responsibilities

As applicants review and accept their offers of admission, there are several steps they must complete before they are eligible to register for courses.

Replying to an Offer of Admission

All admitted students must respond to their offer of admission through the application portal. They have two options:

Accepting the Offer

- Students must accept their offer in the application portal before they can register for classes or request a deferral.
- Once accepted, they will be eligible to register the following day. (The delay is because Banner must update and the process runs once a day.)

Declining the Offer

- If a student informs you they are not planning to attend and do not wish to defer, please advise them to decline the offer of admission in the portal, otherwise they will continue to receive communication to accept their offer.
- If the offer has not yet been accepted, students can decline it directly in the portal.
- If a student has already accepted their offer of admission and later decides to decline the offer, they will need to email gradadmissions@etsu.edu to update their response.
- Students who do not decline their offer will continue to receive reminders to accept and register.
- Students who fail to reply to an offer before census are assumed to have declined and their offer will be administratively rescinded.

Second/Subsequent Graduate Program

Admitted students who have previously earned a graduate-level credential (degree or certificate) or will complete one by the time their new program starts, regardless of the institution, must complete a Second/Subsequent Graduate Program Form prior to registration.

- A registration hold will be placed on the student's account at the time of admission until the final approved form is processed by the Graduate School Admissions Team.
- Students with a prior graduate credential may be eligible for a credit reduction, as outlined in the Graduate School Reduction and/or Substitution of Credits for Subsequent Degree Policy.

Dual Graduate Program

Students who wish to enroll in more than one graduate program (two-degree programs, a degree and certificate, or other combination) simultaneously will need to complete Dual Graduate Program forms during the application process for the new program. The form must be approved by both program coordinators and the Graduate School associate dean prior to being processed by the Admissions Team. Applications will not be complete or forwarded to the program for review until the final approved form is processed by the Admissions Team.

These forms are required so that DegreeWorks can be appropriately updated for the student.

Note: Any changes to share courses will require a new Dual Graduate Program form be submitted.

Transfer, Dual Degree, Second Degree Table

Please use the table below for information regarding the differences between transfer credit, Dual Graduate Programs, and Second Graduate Programs. If you still have additional questions, please contact gradadmissions@etsu.edu.

	Transfer	Application of Credits	Dual Graduate Program	Second Graduate Program
Definition	Took courses at other institutions	Completed coursework at ETSU but not did not complete a degree	Enrolled in two or more ETSU Graduate degree and/or certificate at the same time.	Completed a graduate level credential at ETSU or another institution prior to starting a new graduate program.
Policy Link	Transfer and/or Acceptance of Graduate Credit		Admission Policy for Degree Seeking Students	Second or Subsequent Graduate Degree or Certificate
Submission Timing	Submit transfer credit requests as soon as possible after admission — or immediately after completing the course if	Prior to registration for a new program.	Before or during application to new program.	Prior to registration for a new program.

	taken post-admission. Students may also submit a pre-approval form before enrolling in a transfer course.			
Time Limits	Normal time limits - First course applied to program starts the time limit. Not eligible for revalidation.	Normal time limits. Revalidation is possible.	Normal time limits - First course applied to program starts the time limit (each program can have different start terms).	No time limit - Program to determine if appropriate time frame.
GPA Inclusion	Non-ETSU courses do not count in GPA.	All credits and grades apply to GPA.	All credits and grades apply to GPA.	Already completed credits do not count towards GPA.
Grade Limits	B or better only.	Minimum program grade requirements.	Minimum program grade requirements.	B or better only.
Credit Limits	Programs with 18 or more credit hours - Max 50% transfer. Programs with less than 18 credit hours - 9 credit hour maximum. ETSU Nondegree - 9 credit hour max.	For students who took courses in non-degree status, 9 credits may be applied. For students who took courses in another program, up to 50% of the total credits for the new program may be applied.	None	Masters and Doctorate - cannot exceed one third of credits required. Certificates - 50% maximum with at least 6 at ETSU in a program

Other Limits	Excludes credits in completed degrees and some international institutions	Credits earned for a prior degree would follow the Second or Subsequent Degree Policy.	Limited combination types pre- approved	Cannot use culminating experience courses
Notes	n/a	Coordinator must approve the credits to be applied.	Both coordinators approve shared credit	n/a
Form	Application for Transfer of Graduate Credits		Dual Graduate Program	Second Graduate Program Form

Deferrals

Students may request to defer their offer of admission once, for a period of up to one year from their original starting term, to enter for a future term without requiring a new application. All deferral requests are first sent to the student for a signature prior to being forwarded to the program coordinators for review. Once the program recommendation is submitted, the Graduate School will review and make the final decision. Students must initiate deferral requests at least five (5) business days before the first day of class for their original start semester or subterm.

- The Graduate School may deny deferral requests submitted after this deadline, even if approved by the coordinator.
- Only one deferral request can be approved per application. Additional requests, even if still within one year from the original start semester, will not be considered.

Early Start

If a student expresses interest in beginning coursework early, coordinators must request an Early Start form from a member of the Admissions team at gradadmissions@etsu.edu.

- Early Start approvals are intended to be rare, as the process is complex and time-consuming. Please use discretion and good judgment when considering such requests.
- **Early Start is not a substitute for meeting application deadlines or for properly assigning entry terms.** Early start requires substantial manual work-arounds for several campus units.
 - If your program needs to add or adjust admission terms, please contact us to discuss available options.

Graduate Application for Readmission

[This form](#) is required for any student who was previously enrolled but missed one or more semesters and has not officially withdrawn, been dismissed or already graduated from the program.

- There is no fee to submit the form.
- To be eligible for readmission, the student must be able to realistically complete their current program within their [matriculation time limit](#).

Transcripts

All transcript-related questions or concerns—from faculty, staff, or students—should be directed to gradadmissions@etsu.edu.

- Unless your program requires a Common Application System (CAS) application, domestic applicants are not required to submit official transcripts during the application process.
 - If admitted with unofficial transcripts, a provision will be placed by the Graduate School for final official transcripts—including proof of degree, if applicable – to be received by the end of the first semester of enrollment.
 - Official Transcript Submission Guidelines:
 - All official transcripts must be sent directly to the Graduate School or CAS (if required for your program). Transcripts provided to the program then forwarded to Graduate School cannot be accepted as official.
 - Electronic transcripts must be sent directly to the Graduate School through Parchment, the National Student Clearinghouse, other accepted electronic transcript service, or sent to gradtranscripts@etsu.edu.
 - Paper transcripts must be delivered in an unopened, sealed envelope issued directly by the originating institution.
 - International transcripts and accompanying evaluations must be submitted through a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). A list of approved members is available at <https://naces.org/members/>. Please see below for our preferred providers:
 - [The Evaluation Company Course Analysis](#) (use this link for \$20 off new evaluations and free delivery to ETSU Graduate School*)
 - [ECE Course by Course](#) (use this link for a 10% discount on new evaluations and free delivery to ETSU Graduate School*)
 - [IEE Education Course Report](#) (use this link for \$35 off new evaluations and 3 day turn around after required documents received*)
 - [WES Course by Course iCAP](#)
- *Discounts are subject to change and are at the discretion of the evaluating company.*

Proof of Lawful Presence in the United States and Residency

Graduate students need to verify that they are lawfully present in the United States (often called EVEA) **and** provide proof of their in-state residency to receive the in-state tuition rate. These are two requirements and are often confused.

Lawful Presence (EVEA)

The State of Tennessee Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act (EVEA) requires public institutions of higher education to verify that any individual seeking a state public benefit is a U.S. citizen, a qualified alien, or otherwise lawfully present in the United States. Because enrollment at a state-funded institution such as ETSU is considered a state public benefit, all ETSU graduate students must complete the EVEA verification process. Students will receive regularly scheduled emails if they have not verified their legal presence in the U.S. starting the day after they accept their offer. If registered students have not verified EVEA by the first day of classes, you may receive emails asking for your assistance in reaching out to the student. The student will either need to

- Provide valid proof of lawful presence in the United States, **or**
- Attest that they will remain outside the U.S. for the duration of their graduate program.

Students who do not verify EVEA prior to census will be dismissed from the University. EVEA can be found [here](#).

Residency Verification

In addition, graduate students seeking in-state or border county classification and in-state tuition (maintenance fees) may be required to complete the in-state residency verification process, if requested. (Students who have submitted FAFSA documents typically do not need to verify residency as FAFSA does this.)

- Regulations for classifying residency can be found [here](#). Note: The legal standard to be classified as in-state is that the student's domicile, not residence, is in Tennessee.
- All residency forms can be found at the top of the [Graduate School forms page](#).
- The Graduate School is required to verify residency for all admitted students, **including those who previously attended ETSU**. Additional information about EVEA can be found [here](#).

Selective Service

Under U.S. law, all U.S. males, including citizens, permanent residents, and asylees, between the ages of 18 and 25 (inclusive), with very limited exceptions, are required to register with the Selective Service System. More information is available at www.sss.gov.

In accordance with Tennessee state law (*citation pending*), individuals who are required to register for Selective Service are not eligible to receive any state public benefit unless they have done so. Because enrollment at ETSU is considered a state public benefit, all U.S. male graduate

students in this age group must adequately document Selective Service registration/exception in order to enroll. US males who fall within the required age range who do not adequately document Selective Service registration/exemption by census will be dismissed from the University.

Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's (ABM)

Designed for high performing undergraduate students, the ABM pathway allows students to complete their bachelor's and master's degree by sharing up to 12 graduate credits towards both degrees. The shared courses mean that students can take graduate courses at the undergraduate tuition rate, which saves them money, and potentially means that they can complete the master's degree quickly. In addition, students who receive the Hope Scholarship are able to use a fifth year of Hope eligibility in their master's program.

We allow flexible ABM pathways; that flexibility means that graduate coordinators and undergraduate advisors must work together to determine the courses that can “double count.”

Some programs have created straightforward ABM paths. If your program is interested in exploring curriculum mapping for an ABM, please reach out to Associate Dean Dr. Scott Kirkby, who works with ABM programs.

We are currently working with Academic Advisement and Registration to create a comprehensive document on the ABM Employee-side processes (Coordinator, Undergraduate Advisor, Registrar/Registration, and Graduate School) and will share the link once available. If you have questions prior to this document being available, please email gradadmissions@etsu.edu.

Contact for ABM Processes

All ABM students are guided through the process by the Graduate Admissions Team and the Associate Dean for Graduate Admissions.

Enrollment: What You Need to Know

All forms for students, coordinators, and faculty are available on the [Graduate School's Forms Page](#). If you're unsure which form you need or can't find a specific form, please contact us at gradschoolforms@etsu.edu.

Key academic deadlines are listed on the [University Academic Dates Calendar](#). Graduate student-specific deadlines are highlighted in gold text.

Note: For forms requiring the student's first and last names, please enter the student's full legal first and last names. Please do not include middle names, middle initials, or use preferred names. Using any names other than the legal first and last names will cause an error in the automated system that routes forms for processing and will cause delays.

Forms, Process, and Policies

Throughout the enrollment and matriculation process, students and/or coordinators may be required to complete various forms. This section provides an overview of the most commonly used forms and their purposes.

Satisfaction of Admission Provisions

This form, located under the "Program Forms" section of our [Forms Page](#), is initiated by students once they have fulfilled some or all of the provisions of their admission.

- The form is first routed to the program coordinator, and then to the Student Retention and Engagement Specialist.
- For grade/GPA based provisions, associated holds cannot be lifted/extended and this form processed until after final grades are processed by the Record's Office for the semester.
- This form is not required for transcript, proof of degree, Selective Service verification, Second Graduate Program Form and/or Dual Graduate Program Form provisions.

Transfer Credit Form

This form is used when a student wants to apply coursework from another university or from a different ETSU program toward their current ETSU program of study.

- It should be submitted early in the program; **the final deadline is the day before the census date of the semester the student plans to graduate**. Refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for specific dates.
- Only courses with a grade of "B" or higher will be considered.

- Review the [Transfer and/or Acceptance of Graduate Credit Policy](#) for more details.

Overload Form

Students wishing to register for more than the maximum 16 credit hours allowed by the Graduate Council must complete [this form](#).

- The form may be signed by the department chair or program coordinator.
- It is submitted to the Graduate School Associate Dean of Enrollment, who forwards it to the Registrar once approved.

Late Add Form

This form is required if a student needs to add a course after the GoldLink add deadline has passed.

- All required signatures must be on the form, otherwise the Registrar will not accept it.
- The form is submitted to the Graduate School Associate Dean who reviews and if approves forwards it to the Registrar.

Request to Drop Some but Not All Courses

[This form](#) is initiated by a student who wishes to drop ***some, but not all***, of their enrolled courses.

- It must be signed by the instructor of the course being dropped, and then by the Graduate School Associate Dean.

Change in Graduate Catalog

Students use this form to request changes to their:

- Program concentration
- Program option (e.g., thesis/non-thesis)
- Catalog year

Note: Deadlines for these changes vary by semester. Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for current dates.

Program of Study—Change Courses

[This form](#) is typically initiated by the program coordinator to update a student's program of study, often for course substitutions.

Please adhere closely to the student's published catalog of record when making changes. Use sound academic judgment and ensure consistency and fairness.

Leave of Absence

This form is used when a student needs to temporarily pause their enrollment and can be found on our [forms page](#).

- It must be reviewed by both the Student Retention and Engagement Specialist and the program coordinator before final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Be sure to follow all form instructions and related [policy](#) guidelines carefully.

Extension of Time/Revalidation of Credit

When students will exceed or have already exceeded the matriculation period, they will need to submit a form, found on our [forms page](#), to:

- Request an extension beyond the matriculation time limit to complete their degree, or
- Revalidate previously earned ETSU credits that have exceeded the time limit. (Note: Previously approved transfer courses are not eligible for revalidation).

[The Matriculation Policy](#) outlines the time limits within which coursework must be completed and applied toward a graduate degree or certificate.

Matriculation begins either:

- At the end of the first semester of enrollment, or
- In the term/year when the first course counted toward the program (including transfer credits) was taken.

Type	Time Limit
Certificates	4 to 6 years (6 years unless otherwise noted in the catalog)
Master's Degrees	6 years
Education Specialist (Ed.S.)	5 years
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership	5 years with Ed.S. prior to enrollment or 7 years without Ed.S. prior to enrollment
Other Doctoral Programs	7 years

Results of Revalidation

If coursework is being revalidated after the matriculation limit has passed:

- The student and departmental faculty must first develop a revalidation plan.
- The program coordinator then completes [this form](#) to report the outcome of the revalidation (e.g., if the student passed required assessments) to the Graduate School.

Withdrawing from a Graduate Program

If a student decides to withdraw completely from their graduate program with no intention to return, they will need to:

- Notify the Graduate School as soon as possible, and

- Work with the Graduate Specialist for Student Engagement and Retention to complete the withdrawal process.

Since withdrawing is a multi-step process that involve several departments across campus such as Financial Aid and the Bursar's Office. It is essential for students to contact the Graduate School directly to receive personalized guidance on how this decision may impact them.

Questions and Support

If you're unsure which form to use, whether a student's situation qualifies for a specific form, or how a form might impact a student, please reach out to a member of our Enrollment and Graduation Team. Forms can be complex—we're here to help!

- Leaves of Absence, Satisfaction of Required Provisions, Late Add/Drop, and Program Withdrawals are managed by our Student Retention and Engagement Specialist.
- Any form requiring a Dean's signature must be signed by the Graduate School Dean or designee, not the Dean of the student's academic college.
- Always include the student's name and E-number in any correspondence to help us provide accurate and timely support.

Thesis/Dissertation

Please remind faculty and students that these forms must be submitted promptly to avoid delays in graduation.

Committee Appointment Form

This [student-initiated form](#), found in the “Thesis/Dissertation” section of our forms page, informs the Graduate School of all members serving on a student's thesis or dissertation committee.

- It also indicates whether the student is on a thesis or non-thesis track, which affects the official program of study.
- Students must submit this form before the end of their second semester in the program.

Change of Committee Form

This form is required if a faculty member can no longer or chooses not to serve on a student's committee and must be replaced.

- Coordinators may receive this form if they are serving on the committee.
- Coordinators may also sign in place of the department chair, if applicable.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement

Once a student enrolls in a Readings and Research or Thesis/Dissertation course, they must maintain continuous enrollment of at least one (1) credit hour every semester, including summer, until the degree is completed. If a student moves from thesis to non-thesis, they will not be required to have continuous enrollment.

Example:

- A student registers for their first Readings and Research course in Fall 2025, intending to graduate in Spring 2026.
- Their plans change, and they now plan to graduate in Fall 2026.
- The student must be enrolled in at least one (1) credit hour in both Summer 2026 and Fall 2026, up to the time they successfully defend.
- The full policy is outlined on page 4 of the [Graduate School Enrollment Policy](#).
- Questions about continuous enrollment should be directed to: gradrecords@etsu.edu

Notification of Defense

[This form](#) must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the scheduled defense date and before the deadline published on the [Academic Calendar](#). This ensures sufficient time for an outside

observer to be assigned.

- The form is initiated by the student, completed by the committee chair, and routed to the program coordinator for notification.
- Timely submission is critical to avoid delays in graduation.

Outside Observer Requirement

All thesis and dissertation defenses must include an outside observer—a member of the graduate faculty from outside the student's graduate program.

- The outside observer's role is to evaluate the fairness and rigor of the defense process and report their findings to the Graduate School.
- Observers are scheduled by the Graduate School's Executive Aide.
- Additional information about the outside observer's role can be found [here](#).
- Given the high volume of defenses each semester, faculty with Graduate Faculty status are strongly encouraged to volunteer as outside observers.

Outside Observer Narrative Report

The outside observer must complete a [brief narrative report](#) following the student's defense. These reports are reviewed only by the Dean of the Graduate School and are used to assess the fairness and rigor of the defense process. In some cases, they have proven useful if a student files a complaint about the defense.

Turnitin Report

After a student has successfully passed their oral defense and completed all committee-required edits, the committee chair must:

1. Upload the final, committee-approved thesis or dissertation manuscript to Turnitin (plagiarism detection software).
2. Download and review the resulting similarity report.
3. Email the report to the Graduate School's Publications and Special Projects Coordinator at red@etsu.edu.

There are two ways to run Turnitin similarity reports, depending on which person is submitting the paper. If the student will be submitting the paper themselves:

- Create a dropbox in the dissertation course.
- In the Evaluation and Feedback menu, click on the blue text that says Manage Turnitin.
- Check the box beside "Enable Similarity Report for this folder."

The student can then submit the file to the dropbox and you and they will both be able to view the similarity report (if you have checked the box to allow students to see their report in the Turnitin options).

If you need to submit the document on behalf of the student, ATS can enroll you in the Turnitin

Submissions admin course. Instructors are enrolled as students in this course and can submit to a dropbox to receive the similarity report. If you need to be added to this course, please contact Denise Swanson in ATS at swansonds@etsu.edu.

Manuscript Review Form

This is a student-initiated online form used to route the final thesis/dissertation for committee approval.

- Students must log in using their ETSU email address (e.g., name@etsu.edu). Do not use "@mail.etsu.edu" or the form will not route correctly.
- The form is available on the [Forms Page](#) under the "Thesis/Dissertation" section, and is based on the number of committee members.

Graduation

Important Note: Students must submit their Application to Graduate during the semester prior to their anticipated graduation term. Example: A student planning to graduate in Spring 2028 must apply by September 1, 2027.

Application to Graduate

Students must submit an Application to Graduate the semester before their anticipated graduation term. Students must apply to graduate even if they do not plan to participate in Commencement ceremonies. Degrees and certificates cannot be conferred without the student initiating the process.

Because the conferring of graduate degrees is a complex process, we need to begin early. This provides the Graduate Specialists time to review the student record to avoid last minute surprises for students.

Deadlines (these dates will be listed on the Academic Calendar under a gold heading)

- March 1 for Summer and Fall graduation
- September 1 for Spring graduation

Example: If a student plans to graduate in Spring 2026, they must apply by September 1, 2025.

Instructions for submitting the application can be found [here](#).

Because of course sequencing and number of credits required, students in some programs—especially certificate programs—will need to apply for graduation during their first semester. Please ensure you are familiar with the graduation requirements specific to your program.

Certificate Programs

Students in certificate programs must apply to graduate in order to have the certificate conferred. Graduate certificate programs are often designed to be completed within one academic year, even for part-time students. As a result, it is not uncommon for students to apply for graduation during the same semester they begin the program.

Example: A student is admitted to a 12-credit hour certificate program in Fall, enrolling in 6 credit hours. If they plan to take another 6 credit hours in Spring, they must apply for Spring graduation by the September 1 deadline.

Results of Culminating Experience

This form, found on our [forms page](#), is completed by the program coordinator once a student has successfully passed all components of their culminating experience (e.g., capstone, comprehensive exam, project, etc.).

- Only submit this form if the student passes their culminating experience.
- If the student does not pass, do not complete the form. Instead:
 - Email the Enrollment and Graduation Team at gradschoolforms@etsu.edu so the student can be removed from graduation for that term.
 - Keep in mind: students who fail a culminating experience will likely need to change their graduation term.

When to Change a Graduation Term

Students should request a [change to their graduation term](#) as soon as they know their plans have changed—or are likely to change. Students may also need to submit this form if they are enrolled in multiple programs but plan to graduate from them during different terms. *Examples include:*

- Failing a culminating experience
- Not passing a thesis or dissertation defense

Use Good Judgment

If a student is uncertain whether they will meet required deadlines or complete their thesis/dissertation, please use discretion when deciding if a graduation term change is necessary.

- In some cases, a student may miss graduation or thesis/dissertation deadlines but still defend before the semester ends. While continuous enrollment may be waived under these conditions, the student will not be eligible to graduate that term.
- For information about manuscript upload deadlines and options to avoid enrolling in an additional semester, please contact the Publications and Special Projects Coordinator, Emily Redd.

DegreeWorks and Transcripts

If students ask when their degree will be conferred, please direct them to check their unofficial transcript in GoldLink. If there is no conferral date, the degree has not been conferred. Our office cannot provide a timeline for when each degree will be conferred.

- DegreeWorks does **not** display the official degree conferral date—it only shows the status of the graduation application.
- Students will receive an email notification once their degree has been officially conferred.
- If you need help interpreting DegreeWorks or have questions about a student's transcript, please contact a member of the Enrollment and Graduation Team.

When Things Go Wrong

Each semester, our Technical and Data Analytics Team conducts end-of-term processing, which includes reviewing:

- Academic probation and dismissals
- Incomplete grades
- Continuous enrollment compliance
- Matriculation time limits

For any questions about these procedures, please contact our Technical and Data Analytics Team.

Grades

Each semester, you will receive communication from the Technical and Data Analytics team regarding students in your program who are:

- Recommended for academic probation or dismissal, or
- Have received an Incomplete grade.

If you, as the program coordinator, have any questions, concerns, or alternative recommendations regarding these students, please notify the Technical and Data Analytics Team at gradrecords@etsu.edu as soon as possible. If we do not receive a timely response, we will move forward with the recommendation, and the student will be placed on probation or dismissed accordingly.

Academic Probation

- Any graduate student whose overall GPA or program GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation until they regain good academic standing (GPA of 3.0 or higher).
- By policy, students are allowed up to two (2) semesters on probation, unless the program coordinator and departmental faculty recommend an earlier dismissal.
 - Students may be dismissed **before** two semesters if their GPA continues to decline or if it is mathematically impossible for them to return to good standing with the remaining credits in their program.
- Probation may be extended beyond two semesters if the student shows significant improvement or if the department requests an extension that is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- For questions regarding academic standing or probation status, please contact our Technical and Data Analytics Team.

Dismissal

Students may be dismissed for a variety of reasons, including:

- Poor academic performance (e.g., GPA below 3.0).
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in their program.
- Failure to meet the provisions of their admission.

If a department wishes to dismiss a student for reasons other than academic standing—such as violations of professional conduct or program-specific requirements—please consult with the Technical and Data Analytics Team prior to taking action.

Appeals

University policy ensures that all students are afforded due process to appeal any:

- Grade
- Academic dismissal
- Other academic decisions made by faculty or Graduate School staff

You can find the full all Appeal Policies using the [ETSU Policy Search page](#).

If you're unfamiliar with the appeals process or need help interpreting policy, please contact the Graduate School or a member of the Technical and Data Analytics Team.

Reinstatement

Students who have been academically dismissed may apply for reinstatement to the program from which they were dismissed. The form for reinstatement can be found on our [forms page](#).

- Reinstatement requests are first routed to the Technical and Data Analytics Team, who will complete the required documentation.
- The request will then be sent to the program coordinator, who may consult with departmental faculty to determine whether to support the reinstatement.
- The final decision rests with the Dean of the Graduate School.

Grade Policies

All university policies related to grading can be found on the [ETSU Policy Search page](#).

For questions or clarification about grade-related policies, please contact a member of the Technical and Data Analytics Team.

Resources for Students

Graduate Student Success Specialists (GSSS)

The GSSS team supports students in a variety of ways, including:

- Setting realistic academic and personal goals
- Navigating day-to-day challenges
- Identifying and resolving problems
- Connecting with campus and community resources

All interactions are confidential. More information is available [here](#).

Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) is a student-managed organization open to all currently enrolled graduate students. Its mission is to enhance the quality of graduate and professional education and overall student experience at ETSU.

- Membership is a one-time \$10 fee for the duration of a student's academic career.
 - Cash payments can be made directly to the Graduate School.
 - Card payments can be made through the Bursar's Office.
- GPSA hosts social events, workshops, and professional development opportunities throughout the year. Check the [GPSA website](#) and university email announcements for updates.

Graduate Webinar Series and GRAD 101 Workshop Series

The Graduate School Webinar Series is designed to provide students with practical information that will aid them in their academic journey and professional development. A variety of experts from across campus will speak on topics that will help students succeed in graduate school and beyond. The GRAD 101 workshop series covers a variety of topics such as APA formatting, Literature Review, Graduate Writing 101, and How to Write like a Graduate Student.

For more information, visit this [webpage](#) or contact the Publications and Special Projects Manager.

Teaching Pedagogy (GRAD 5110)

GRAD 5110: Teaching Pedagogy is a one-credit course offered every fall and spring semester. It covers key topics related to college-level teaching, including:

- Effective communication strategies
- Assessment and instructional design

- Classroom and lab management
- Tools for new teaching assistants

Schedule:

- In-person: Full-day sessions on the Saturday before classes begin and again two weeks later
- Online (asynchronous): One additional session later in the semester

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate Training

New Graduate Assistants are encouraged to attend a GTA Training Crash Course, offered the Tuesday before classes begin the fall. This orientation covers different topics than GRAD 5110. For details, contact the Student Engagement and Retention Specialist.

Events

New Graduate Student Orientation and Welcome Event

Held twice a year—once in August (Fall) and once in January (Spring)—this event welcomes incoming graduate students and introduces them to key resources, policies, and contacts.

- Fall Orientation: Mid-August
- Spring Orientation: Mid-January

For additional questions not addressed on the [Orientation webpage](#), please reach out to our office.

Welcome Week

Welcome Week takes place during the first week of the Fall semester and includes events for all ETSU students.

Details can be found on the [University's Calendar of Events](#).

Online Graduate Student Toolkit

This online resource is designed for students unable to attend orientation in person and includes important information, checklists, and links to campus resources.

Access the toolkit [here](#).

Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week

Held during the first full week of April, this week celebrates the contributions of ETSU's graduate and professional students. The Graduate School will host some activities during this week, and programs are encouraged to recognize their graduate students with an activity, lunch, snacks or other measure of appreciation during the week.

Contact our office for a schedule of events and available resources.

Graduate School Fair

This event promotes ETSU's graduate programs to current undergraduate students.

- Hosted by the Graduate School Recruiter
- Departments are encouraged to host a table to speak with prospective students.
- To participate or learn more, contact our Graduate School Recruiter.

3MT (Three Minute Thesis)

This annual competition for graduate students challenges them to present their research in just three minutes using one slide. Students do not have to be in a thesis program; capstone and other research projects are fine. Registration announcements usually go out in early Fall semester, and this event is typically held in late October.

Direct all questions to Our Publication and Special Projects Manager. More information can be found [here](#).

Graduate School Awards Ceremony

Held every April, this event recognizes the exceptional work of graduate students, faculty, and staff. Watch for an email from our office with nomination instructions and event details.

Student Funding

Graduate school can be expensive, and many students seek financial support to continue their studies. Fortunately, there are several funding opportunities available for eligible students to apply for.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships (GAs) are assigned by the department or unit within the university, **not** the Graduate School. Your department chair can provide additional information about stipend amounts and position availability.

- Open GA positions are posted [here](#). The Graduate School does not have GA positions to award beyond what is advertised here.
- One person processes all contracts in our office. If students come to you concerning their contract, encourage patience. Our office will reach out if we require anything.
- Please refer to the [GA Handbook](#) or the [GA FAQ page](#) for any major questions you may have, for contract questions please contact our office manager.

Eligibility

Students are eligible for a Graduate Assistantship once they have been admitted into a Master's or Doctoral program and accepted their offer of admission. Students enrolled in a certificate program only are not eligible to hold any type of assistantship.

Students who are receiving a Graduate Assistantship of any kind are not eligible to receive any additional university funded scholarships or participate in a tuition remission program. Employees receiving tuition assistance, as part of the employee benefits are also not eligible for GA positions.

Students must remain in good academic standing to receive and retain a Graduate Assistantship (3.0 GPA in both overall and program). If placed on probation, students have one academic semester to bring their GPA up to good standing before they risk losing the assistantship.

Students must be enrolled full time to receive a Graduate Assistantship. To be considered full time, students are enrolled in a minimum of nine (9) graduate credit hours.

- Students in their final semester before graduation may be enrolled in less than nine (9) graduate credits. This requires approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- All other exceptions must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Classifications

Full Graduate Assistantship

A full graduate assistant works 20 hours per week and receives the following benefits:

- Full tuition remission for the maintenance fee
 - Out-of-state domestic and international students also receive a waiver for out-of-state tuition
- Students are still responsible for:
 - Program service fees
 - Any college, department, or course-specific fees
 - Books and school supplies
- A monthly stipend, determined by the department, but not to be less than the university minimum, is paid on the same schedule as university employees.

Half Graduate Assistantship

A half graduate assistant works 10 hours per week and receives:

- Tuition remission for half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the maintenance fee
 - Out-of-state domestic and international students still receive a full waiver of out-of-state tuition
- Students are still responsible for:
 - Program service fees
 - Any college, department, or course-specific fees
 - Books and school supplies
- A monthly stipend, which is half the amount of a full GA stipend, is determined by the department, but not to be less than the university minimum, is paid on the same schedule as university employees.

A student may hold two half assistantships in different departments, which together are equivalent to one full assistantship in terms of tuition support and stipend.

Types of Graduate Assistantships

ETSU has four broad types of Graduate Assistantships. It is important that the contracts accurately reflect the type of work that GAs will do based on these definitions:

1. **Teaching Assistant:** Teaching assistants usually work to support the efforts of faculty members in specific courses. They will generally not teach a course as the primary instructor but may be responsible for a section of a lecture, laboratory, or physical activity course under the direct supervision of an experienced faculty member. Responsibilities may also include grading examinations, leading discussion sections, or performing other duties related to the instructional program.
2. **Teaching Associate:** The graduate teaching associate will normally have primary responsibility for teaching an undergraduate course and for assigning final grades for

said course. A graduate teaching associate shall not have responsibility for teaching a graduate level course. Teaching Associates must have *completed 18 credits of graduate coursework* in the discipline in which they will teach.

3. **Research Assistant:** The research assistant is assigned to conduct research that is for the student's own learning and for the benefit of the university, faculty, or academic staff supervisor or granting agency. Often, the research is directly related to the professional and scholarly goals of the student, but sometimes Research Assistants are hired to work on projects unrelated to their own research.
4. **Administrative Assistant:** The graduate administrative assistant may work at the level of a department, college, or university administrative unit. When at all possible, the work assigned to the graduate administrative assistant should be relevant to the graduate program and the professional and scholarly goals of the student. For example, this work could involve gathering, organizing, and evaluating information, engaging in editorial work related to the preparation and review of papers and reports, generating creative content to support a unit's social media or website, technical systems support and development, serving in residential housing, providing health and wellness care, or the like. The graduate administrative assistantship should provide the opportunity for the student to use knowledge of her or his academic field while enhancing skills relevant to the student's professional goals. The ideal graduate administrative assistantship will provide the student with a broader and deeper understanding of university function and, under the supervision of a mentor, enhance the quality of information available to the university.

Departmental Oversight and Budgeting

The Graduate School oversees the distribution of tuition remission for fall, spring, and summer. However, each department manages its own stipend budget for institutionally supported Graduate Assistantships.

- The university sets the minimum stipend, currently, at \$7,000 per academic year.
- Departments may offer higher stipends, provided they are applied equitably across similar student roles. For example, in some departments second year GAs receive a higher stipend than first year GAs.
- Grant-funded assistantships may have different stipend levels or requirements, as determined by the granting agency.

Departments may adjust stipend levels across all positions to meet their budget and staffing needs, increasing or decreasing the number of assistantships accordingly.

Required Paperwork

Students awarded a Graduate Assistantship must complete all necessary employment documentation to work for the university. This includes:

- Complete an I-9 Employment Eligibility Form (completed in person with ETSU Human

- Resources), and
- Enroll in direct deposit.

Coordinator Tips

- Once a student accepts a GA offer, encourage them to:
 - Sign their contract promptly
 - Register for courses
 - Submit all required documentation to the Graduate School
- Timely contract completion benefits the student, the department, the supervisor, and the Graduate School.

International Students

International students have a few additional steps to complete before they can begin working under a Graduate Assistantship contract:

- Issued I-20 and U.S. Entry
The student must have a valid I-20 and must be physically present in the United States.
- Social Security Number (SSN)
A Social Security Number is required for employment and must be obtained prior to starting work. Currently, this is at least a two-day process: Day one the student applies for a SSN, and day two, they must return to the Social Security Office to pick up their SS card.
- Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
Students whose language of education is not English must complete an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to assess
- spoken English skills.

Contract Processing Time

Graduate Assistantship contracts require coordination between multiple offices and can take anywhere from one week to several months to finalize, depending on:

- Student responsiveness;
- Registration status (i.e., students must be registered in at least one course before their contract can be processed); and
- Volume of contracts being processed university-wide.

Students cannot begin their assistantship duties until the contract is fully processed and approved.

Processing delays often occur for the following reasons: (1) The student has not verified their EVEA/legal proof of residency/work eligibility, or (2) The student has not signed their contract, or (3) International students have not yet obtained a Social Security Number, or (4) The request has been submitted during a high-volume

Using Graduate Assistantships for Recruiting and Yielding Students

Graduate Assistantships are a good tool for recruiting and yielding students. To use GA positions for most impact on recruitment and yield, GA offers should be made as early as possible. Nationally, April 15 is “signing day” for graduate acceptances, which means that many universities are making admission and financial offers in March so that students can review their offers prior to April 15. Your program can have a priority deadline for students interested in a GA position, and you can review and award GA positions early even as you keep your deadline for admissions for open. Talk to the Associate Dean for Admissions about strategies to align your admissions and GA offers.

Scholarships

The Graduate School offers a variety of scholarships for:

- Out-of-state students
- International students
- Thesis/dissertation students
- Students in the first congressional district of Tennessee (Quillen Graduate Scholarships)

A complete list of available scholarships can be found [here](#).

Note:

- Carter, Carter Plus, Gilbreath, International Merit, and Thesis/Dissertation Scholarships are administered by the Graduate School.
- All other scholarships are processed through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.
- If a student has a Graduate Assistantship, they are not eligible for any scholarships listed above.

Travel Money

Graduate students may apply for travel funding to attend academic or professional conferences:

- \$300 is available for students who attend but do not present.
- \$700 is available for students who present at the conference.

Students who present at a conference are also required to present their work at a Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) event.

All travel funding applications are reviewed by the Graduate School’s Travel Funding Committee. The application form can be found [here](#).

- For questions related to travel funding, please contact our office to ensure accurate guidance.

Thank You

We appreciate your hard work as a graduate coordinator. Be sure to reach out to our team. We are happy to help you solve problems and talk about best practices.