

Glossary of Terms

Admission to degree status—Admission to the College of Graduate Studies as a graduate student for the purpose of seeking a graduate degree. This status requires completing a graduate admission application; meeting all entrance and test requirements; transmittal of relevant official transcripts; approval by the graduate program/department; and approval by the College of Graduate Studies.

NOTE: Some graduate programs allow applicants to begin taking classes prior to an admission decision whereas others prohibit such enrollment. An applicant should seek information from the relevant graduate program about its policy.

Admission to non-degree status—Admission to the College of Graduate Studies as a post-baccalaureate student for the purpose of officially taking graduate courses. This status requires completing a graduate admission application; transmitting relevant official transcripts; and approval by the College of Graduate Studies. Not all graduate courses are open to non-degree students; thus the student should consult with the departmental graduate advisor(s).

Advancement to Candidacy—Status of the student who has successfully completed a substantial portion of the curriculum (and relevant examinations) and, in consultation with the graduate advisor, has established a curricular plan to be followed for the purpose of graduation. An Advancement to Candidacy Form must be approved by the pertinent graduate program personnel (e.g., major professor, graduate advisor, etc.), and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies (or designee). The form specifies the courses which the student is required to take to complete the curricular requirements. This form **must** be filed and approved **prior** to completion of 24 credit hours (or earlier if required by the graduate program).

Cognate—Six semester hours of related coursework.

Comprehensive examination—An examination given to master's and specialist's students, generally during the last semester of coursework. The examination may be oral, written, or a combination of both modes. It may be taken no more than twice. The purpose of this examination is to assess the candidate's knowledge of a broad academic field and to evaluate whether the candidate has attained certain standards and/or requirements necessary to successfully complete the program. If the examinations are written, they are to be kept on file in the department. The student has the right of access to his or her graded exam for a period of five (5) years. (Doctoral students, please see qualifying examination.)

Concentration—A curricular component of a graduate program representing a well-recognized subset or branch of the discipline. A concentration appears on the student's graduate transcript.

Conditional admission—The granting of temporary admission into a graduate program with certain stipulations being placed upon the student. Continuation in the program as a degree-seeking student is contingent upon fulfilling specific requirements described in the conditional admission letter.

Encumbrance—A hold placed on registration (or transcripts). For example, a registration encumbrance will be placed on all non-admitted degree-seeking applicants having graduate status and who reach a maximum of 12 credit hours or two (2) semesters, or earlier if required by the graduate program.

Full-time/part-time graduate status—See student load, page 41.

Graduate advisor—A faculty member appointed by the department and approved by the College of Graduate Studies to advise graduate students and provide curricular planning counseling. Graduate students should consult with their graduate advisors prior to or immediately upon being admitted to a graduate program. A list of graduate advisors may be obtained at the College of Graduate Studies or the relevant department.

Graduate coordinator or graduate director—A faculty member appointed to serve as the principal officer of the graduate program with respect to curricular and other relevant matters. The department chair often, but not always, serves as the graduate director.

Graduate status—Status whereby a post-baccalaureate student is declared eligible to enroll in graduate courses at MTSU. The granting of graduate status does not necessarily mean that one has been admitted to a graduate program. (Also see encumbrance and admission.)

Graduation requirements—Those academic and other requirements necessary for successful completion in order to be eligible for receipt of the degree. In general, the requirements in existence at the time of matriculation are those which must be fulfilled. These requirements are listed in the graduate catalog of that year. Changes in a graduate curriculum may occur while a student is enrolled. If so, the student will have the option of fulfilling the new requirements or following the original plan in existence at the time of matriculation. This is subject to "stop-out" limitations and course availability. (See stop-out.)

Intent to graduate—Indication that the candidate is planning to complete all degree requirements during the current term. An Intent to Graduate Form must be filed by the candidate **by the second week of the semester of planned graduation or by the end of the first week of Summer Session II (for August graduation)**. This authorizes release of the student's file for final evaluation and authorizes information to be collected for issuance of the diploma.

Major—A field of study representing a well-recognized discipline in which there is offered a graduate program. A major appears on the student's graduate transcript.

Major professor—The faculty member providing the primary scholarly research mentorship to the graduate student. The major professor serves as the director or chair of the thesis or dissertation committee.

Matriculation—The first semester of enrollment after admission to a graduate program.

Minor—A free-standing curricular component of a graduate program representing an academic discipline. This designation verifies that scholarly expertise in the minor field has been achieved in addition to that attained in the major discipline.

Plagiarism—The use or reproduction of material from another person's work (e.g., publications, productions, or intellectual property) without revealing the source and/or clearly acknowledging the degree of dependency. If materials are reproduced verbatim from another source, or even reproduced in large part with only minor modification, proper citation **must** occur. To avoid allegations of plagiarism, clearly cite the source and use quotations marks to identify the excerpts, or clearly acknowledge the source by indenting and single-spacing the reproduced selections.

Qualifying examination—An examination given to doctoral students to assess the level of mastery of knowledge in the discipline. This examination determines if the doctoral student is qualified to continue as a candidate for the doctoral degree. Written portions of the examination are to be kept on file in the department for a period of five (5) years and the student has the right of access. The examination is a milestone in academic achievement by a doctoral student. (Master's and specialist's students, please see comprehensive examination.)

Readmission and reenrollment—Applications which must be filed if a graduate student breaks continuous graduate enrollment. If granted, the student may reenroll for the identified term. Readmission for non-degree-seeking students is fairly routine. However, readmission for degree-seeking students is not guaranteed. The department should be consulted for its readmission policy.

Repeat policy—The number of graduate courses possible for repetition for the purpose of grade replacement is limited to two. These two courses may not exceed 8 credit hours.

Satisfactory progress—Successful advancement of a student toward his/her degree objective in the judgment of the faculty and dean of the College of Graduate Studies. To be deemed as making satisfactory progress, a graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or greater and **must** successfully complete sufficient and appropriate graduate courses. These graduate courses must apply toward the graduate curriculum in a manner consistent with completion of the degree objective within the established time limit.

70/30 Rule—A curricular stipulation for master's degree candidates specifying that no more than 30 percent of the total degree hours may be dually listed as undergraduate/graduate hours. Candidates with more than 30 percent of the degree program dually listed as undergraduate/graduate hours cannot graduate until the balance is attained. Normally, no more than 3 credits of thesis research (course 6640) will be applied toward the minimum degree hour requirement. Careful curricular planning in consultation with the graduate advisor is essential.

Specialization—A curricular component of a graduate program representing a well-recognized subset or branch of the discipline. A specialization does not appear on the student's graduate transcript.

Stop-out—The period of time during which a student fails to register for successive academic sessions. If the stop-out period exceeds one academic year, the readmitted student may be required to fulfill degree requirements in existence at the time of readmission, rather than those in place at the original matriculation.

Time limits—The time elapsed from matriculation during which a student is required to complete the degree objective. Master's and specialist's students have six years from matriculation. Doctoral students have ten years from matriculation. These time limits are subject to extension but only for compelling reasons. If an extension is to be granted, it must be supported by the graduate program and approved by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Transfer credit—Coursework taken at other colleges and universities which is formally transferred to the MTSU graduate record. In general, only coursework taken while in graduate status **prior** to attending MTSU will be transferred and only if those courses were not used in partial satisfaction of degree requirements at the previous university. Transfer credit requires the approval of the graduate advisor and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

