

Texas A&M University  
Galveston Campus



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
GALVESTON CAMPUS.



# Graduate Student Handbook 2023-2024

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# WELCOME: AGGIES BY THE SEA

Welcome to Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG). This online handbook is a resource for graduate students in residence at Galveston.

In addition to this guide, students are encouraged to visit the following online resource: [Texas A&M University \(TAMU\) Graduate Catalog](#). Other resources are listed or linked as appropriate throughout this handbook and on our website.

Despite our efforts to provide as much information as possible in these publications, personal inquiries are always welcome in our office. So, please reach out to the Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) by emailing [gradstudies@tamug.edu](mailto:gradstudies@tamug.edu).

Welcome to Texas A&M University at Galveston. We're glad that you've decided to be an Aggie by the Sea.

Sincerely,

*Holly*

Holly Richards

Director

Graduate Studies

409-740-4957

MAIN 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 409

# MISSION STATEMENT

## The Mission of Texas A&M University at Galveston

*Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG) is a special-purpose institution of higher education for undergraduate and graduate instruction in marine and maritime studies in science, engineering and business and for research and public service related to the general field of marine resources. The institution is under the management and control of the Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System, with degrees offered under the name and authority of Texas A&M University at College Station.*

## The Mission of A&M Galveston Graduate Studies



*Graduate Studies at Texas A&M University at Galveston supports student success and the academic mission of the graduate community. We foster broad collaborations with graduate studies stakeholders to expand knowledge, enhance skills, and champion personal and professional development. We strive to continually create new opportunities for graduate students to become global thinkers and their success is determined by their enduring commitment and ownership to their educational experience.*

# ACADEMIC LIFE

## Howdy and Email

The [Howdy Portal](#) is a web portal connecting students to university records and resources. On Howdy, students pay tuition bills, register for courses, and view unofficial transcripts plus much more. Please note that students need to activate their Net ID and password to access Howdy. To activate your Net ID and password, please visit the [Howdy page on the Grad Studies website](#).

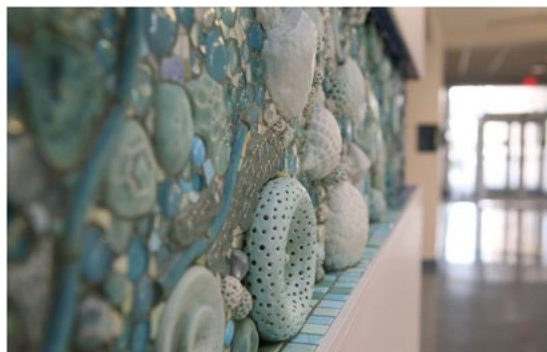
Every student is given an email.tamu.edu account. To activate this email, please visit [here](#).

## Registration

Registration should be done with careful consideration of your options. It is best to consult with your faculty advisor or the staff advisor. Students register online through the [Howdy Portal](#) using your Net ID and password and click the “My Record” tab. Please note that on Howdy, students can only enroll for courses at Galveston and College Station. For example, College Station students can register for courses at TAMU or TAMUG on Howdy. The same goes for Galveston students wanting to enroll for courses at TAMU or TAMUG. If you need assistance with registering for a course on Howdy, please email [gradstudies@tamug.edu](mailto:gradstudies@tamug.edu) with your UIN and course information.

## Billing

Students can view their tuition and fee bill on Howdy. Students are responsible for paying their bill on time to avoid a late fee. To challenge a bill, please view the policies within the university catalog.





## Graduate and Professional School Policies/Forms

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The Graduate and Professional School (The Grad School) at Texas A&M University handles processing documents for each critical step toward obtaining your Master’s or doctoral degree. Please see below for important websites to visit at [The Grad School](#).

<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>The Grad School Current Student Webpage</u></a></p> <p>This site explains policies governing graduate education at TAMU and TAMUG.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>Online Document Plan Submission System (DPSS)</u></a></p> <p>Every graduate student is required to submit a degree plan online. This site provides access for the online degree plan submission system.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>Steps to Fulfill a Master’s Degree</u></a></p> <p>Learn more about the critical steps required for all Master’s students.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>Steps to Fulfill a Doctoral Degree</u></a></p> <p>Learn more about the critical steps required for all doctoral students.</p>

[Petition](#)

At times, students need to change a course, committee member, or may need to take a leave of absence. A petition allows a graduate student to make these requests. Students cannot file a petition until a degree plan is filed and approved. Petitions are filed through DPSS.

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## Education (Study) Abroad

Many of our graduate students participate through Education (or Study) Abroad experiences through courses, research trips, or conferences. When the student leaves the U.S., they are required to register with [Education Abroad](#). Although it is not required, it is recommended that you inform the TAMUG Graduate Studies Office of your travel plans as well.

International students traveling outside the US are advised to contact [International Student & Scholar Services](#) to ensure that they have the proper, most updated documents to exit and re-enter the country.

## Grading

Please note that only an Instructor of Record may grade work conducted by a graduate student. Graduate students in a Teaching Assistantship role cannot grade work conducted by another graduate student.

## Departmental Policies

It is not uncommon for departments to have additional policies for graduate education. To learn more about departmental policies, please contact your department.

## Graduation

Graduation is a big event that requires planning. For the semester of your anticipated graduation date, please apply for graduation early and before the deadline. Critical dates for graduation are posted on the [Academic Calendar](#).

It is recommended that graduate students attend a Graduation Advising session a year before you graduate. Finally, research track students should know the pre-submittal requirements outlined by the [Thesis & Dissertation Services](#) a semester before or during graduation. These requirements will save you time with the editing process.

# EMPLOYMENT

## Assistantships

Graduate assistantship positions are available at TAMUG. Graduate students may be employed as a Graduate Assistant-Teaching (GAT) in an academic department on the Galveston campus. This employment position is handled through the individual academic department and the Human Resources Office. Interested students should contact the academic department for any position openings. First-time GATs must go through training provided by the TAMU Center for Teaching Excellence. In addition, graduate students may be employed as either a Graduate Assistant-Research (GAR), where you would be working with a faculty member in a lab setting or as a Graduate Assistant-Non-Teaching (GANT) where you would be working in a discipline related non-teaching position. All three of these positions are 50% effort positions (20 hours/week), benefits eligible, and qualify for a non-resident tuition waiver and graduate student tuition payment (doctoral students only) in accordance with full-time registration requirements.

## Tuition Waivers

The University will continue efforts to improve the competitiveness of the graduate program by paying the resident tuition and most fees of doctoral graduate assistants involved in teaching (GATs), researching (GARs), and (GANTs) supporting teaching. An eligible graduate assistant does not have to apply for this award; instead, each will have the appropriate amount credited to their fee statement, based on registration and information provided by the employing department.

Out-of-State (non-Texas resident) graduate students, employed as graduate assistants and registered full time, qualify for the non-resident tuition waiver. This waiver will allow the graduate student to pay resident tuition rates.

The Graduate Studies Office files all waivers. For questions regarding tuition payments and non-resident waivers for Graduate Assistants, contact our office at [gradstudies@tamug.edu](mailto:gradstudies@tamug.edu).



## **GAT Responsibilities**

GATs may assist with distance education set-up, lecture, develop material, grade undergraduate student work only, and facilitate labs.

## **Human Resources (HR)**

For the hiring process, you will interact with Human Resources (HR) as well as several departments. Please make sure your hiring department here in Galveston notifies HR as soon as possible. Hiring dates and times should be observed in order for the process to go as smoothly as possible.

HR requires that every new hire complete a Criminal Background Check form. This form can take a long time to process.

To get on payroll, students must work with HR during August or January. Students will attend an Employee Orientation and should bring the appropriate identification as instructed by HR.

During your employee orientation, you have to complete all mandatory HR training which includes “Ethics”, “Creating a Discrimination Free Workplace”, and “Lab Safety and HAZCOM” (where required). This training must be completed online within 30 days of hire.

## HR Requirements for International Students

HR needs the following information for hiring: name, your hiring department, email, unexpired passport, visa, I-20 (if you are an F-1), DS2019 (if you are a J-1), social security card (\*contact HR if you do not have a SSN card before applying for a SSN card), and I-94.

## Benefits (based on % effort)

Not all Graduate Assistants get benefits. If you are a benefits-eligible employee, you are entitled to medical insurance benefits. Please go to the following link for information on insurance premiums: <https://tamu.myahpcare.com/>.



Make sure to select your benefits via [sso.tamus.edu](https://sso.tamus.edu) within 60 days of your start date to select the Graduate Student Worker Insurance Plan to avoid the default A&M Care Plan which you will pay \$300+ per month.

## Health Insurance

In April of each year you will be informed by Human Resources of the cost of your summer health insurance premiums that will be deducted from your June 1 paycheck. This information is sent to you with the assumption that you are returning for the fall semester in the same capacity (GAR, GAT, GANT). If you are not returning in the fall, please notify your employing department and HR. Upon termination of your employment with TAMUG, you may have the option to use COBRA coverage for your medical benefits.

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## International Student & Scholar Services

The mission of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) is to facilitate an international student's transition to life in the United States and at TAMU and TAMUG, promote interactions between the US and international populations, and provide services necessary to meet the special needs of international students.

The services necessary to accomplish the office mission are as diverse as the student population itself. However, there are six general areas of services available:

- Immigration Services and Advising
- Personal Advising
- Liaison for International Students
- Community and Campus Outreach Activities
- Special Programs for International Students
- Administration of Scholarships, Grants and Loan Programs exclusively for International Students

For information specifically for international students attending TAMUG, please click [here](#).

## Check-In

Checking in with ISSS is one of the most important parts of getting your F-1/J-1 status. Your status will not be active until you submit your check-in to ISSS and ISSS processes the request. For more information, please click [here](#).

## Worker Certification

All incoming international students on assistantships must work with their hiring department to complete worker certification, which involves the department verifying all standard documents needed to enter the country (i.e. I-20, DS2019, I-94, etc.). Once worker certification is complete, the department will notify HR who will proceed with the hiring process.

# CONTACTS

<b>A&amp;M Galveston</b>		
<p><b><u>Marine Biology</u></b>            Dr. Dave Wells,            Graduate Advisor            M.S. and Ph.D., Marine            Biology            Telephone: 409-740-4717            Email: <a href="mailto:wellsr@tamug.edu">wellsr@tamug.edu</a></p>	<p><b><u>Marine and Coastal Environmental Science</u></b>            Dr. Wesley Highfield,            Graduate Advisor            Ph.D. of Marine and Coastal            Management and Science            Telephone: 409-740-4726            Email: <a href="mailto:highfiew@tamug.edu">highfiew@tamug.edu</a></p> <p>Dr. Ashley Ross,            Graduate Advisor            Master of Marine Resources            Management            Telephone: 409-740-4485            Email:  <a href="mailto:ashleydross@tamug.edu">ashleydross@tamug.edu</a></p>	<p><b><u>Maritime Business Administration</u></b>            Dr. JoAnn DiGeorgio-Lutz,            Interim Department Head            Master of Maritime Business            Administration and Logistics            Telephone: 409-740-4463            Email: <a href="mailto:digeorgj@tamug.edu">digeorgj@tamug.edu</a></p>
<p><b><u>Research &amp; Graduate Studies</u></b>            Dr. Antonietta Quigg, Senior            Associate Vice President for            Research &amp; Graduate Studies            Telephone: 409-740-4990            Email: <a href="mailto:quigga@tamug.edu">quigga@tamug.edu</a></p> <p>Holly Richards, Director of            Graduate Studies            Telephone: 409-740-4957            Email: <a href="mailto:richardh@tamug.edu">richardh@tamug.edu</a></p> <p>Andrew Reitberger, Assistant            Director of Graduate Studies            Telephone: 409-740-4941            Email: <a href="mailto:areitberger@tamug.edu">areitberger@tamug.edu</a></p> <p>Vacant, Academic Advisor</p>	<p><b><u>Research &amp; Graduate Studies (Continued)</u></b>            Patty Gonzales, Director of            Research Operations            Telephone: 409-740-4748            Email: <a href="mailto:evansp@tamug.edu">evansp@tamug.edu</a></p> <p>Vacant, Research Coordinator</p> <p>Jennifer Mayfield, Program            Coordinator            Telephone: 409-740-4722            Email: <a href="mailto:jmayfield@tamug.edu">jmayfield@tamug.edu</a></p>	<p><b><u>Human Resources</u></b>            Ms. Amanda Shirey, HR Rep            Telephone: 409-741-4061            E-Mail:  <a href="mailto:amanda.shirey@tamug.edu">amanda.shirey@tamug.edu</a></p>

# CONTACTS

## TAMU

### Oceanography

Dr. Chrissy Stover Wiederwohl, Assistant  
Department Head  
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Email: [chrissyw@tamu.edu](mailto:chrissyw@tamu.edu)

### Ocean Engineering

Dr. Vijaykumar Panchang, Associate  
Department Head  
Telephone:  
E-Mail: [panchanv@tamug.edu](mailto:panchanv@tamug.edu)

Peggy Rutkowski, Program Specialist IV  
Telephone: 979-458-5523  
Email: [peggyr@tamu.edu](mailto:peggyr@tamu.edu)

### Graduate and Professional School

979-845-3631  
E-Mail: [grad@tamu.edu](mailto:grad@tamu.edu)  
Website: <http://grad.tamu.edu>

Dr. Fuhui Tong, Associate Provost and  
Dean for the Graduate and Professional  
School  
E-Mail: [grad@tamu.edu](mailto:grad@tamu.edu)

### International Student & Scholar Services

Samantha Clement, Director  
Telephone: 979-845-1824  
E-Mail: [sclement@oar.tamu.edu](mailto:sclement@oar.tamu.edu)

### TAMUG International Student & Scholar Services Liaisons

Danny Roe, Assistant Director  
Telephone: 409-740-4836  
Email: [roed@tamug.edu](mailto:roed@tamug.edu)



## Graduate Studies Office Procedural Advising

### INCOMING STUDENTS

- All incoming students will receive information concerning their admission to Texas A&M University at Galveston and their orientation, handbook, and any registration procedures.
- All incoming students will be required to attend the New Graduate Student Orientation.
- All incoming students who will serve as Teaching Assistants will be required to attend the Teaching Assistantship Training hosted by the Graduate Studies Office and the TAMU Center for Teaching Excellence.
- All incoming students will be required to attend a mandatory First Semester Advising Meeting with a Graduate Studies office staff member.
- All incoming students will be briefed on the specific requirements of their degree and the expected timeline for completion of milestones within the program (degree plan, proposal, prelims, defense, etc.).



## CURRENT STUDENTS

- Current students will have reminders sent to them concerning milestones within their degree program (degree plan, proposal, prelims, defense, etc.).
- All current students must have a degree plan on file with the Graduate and Professional School by the end of their second semester of study. Failure to do so will result in registration holds being placed on your student account.
- Students must follow the calendars and timelines published by the Graduate and Professional School.

## GRADUATING STUDENTS

- All graduating students are encouraged to attend a Graduation Advising Meeting with a Graduate Studies office staff member.
- All graduating students will be briefed on the specific requirements of their degree and the expected timeline for completion of milestones within the program (degree plan, proposal, prelims, defense, etc.) as related to graduation.
- Student records will be checked for completion by Graduate Studies Office staff. Petitions, corrections, or other forms required for graduation will be overseen by the Graduate Studies Office.
- Graduating students must meet deadlines published by the Graduate and Professional School to be eligible to receive their diploma. Failure to do so may delay graduation.