Graduate Student Handbook 2014-2015
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WELCOME: It’s Time to Think Ocean

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 resources: TAMUG Catalog and 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 feel free to come by the Research and Graduate Studies Office, Suite 300 in Building 3026 (the Sea Aggie Center) on Pelican Island.

Welcome to Texas A&M University at Galveston. We’re glad that you’ve decided to Think Ocean.

Sincerely,

Nicole

Nicole Kinslow
Director
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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 A&M System, with degrees offered under the name and authority of Texas A&M University in College Station.

TAMUG programs focus on the scientific, technical, business, socioeconomic and environmental policy issues concerning the oceans, coastal regions and maritime industries. TAMUG accomplishes its missions by providing the following services:

- an integrated program of undergraduate and graduate education, including maritime training for professional maritime licenses in the U.S. flag fleet;
- scholarly research in the marine sciences, engineering and humanities;
- marine and maritime outreach programs for the public and maritime industry; and
- a “window to the sea” that serves as a national resource in support of education, research and public service in marine and maritime fields.

The Mission of TAMUG Graduate Studies

Graduate Studies at Texas A&M University at Galveston supports student success and the academic mission of the graduate community at Texas A&M University at Galveston. 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.
TAMUG Student Handbook 2014-2015

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 in order to access Howdy. To activate your NET ID and password, please visit Howdy log in page.

Every student is given a neo.tamu.edu email. To activate this email, please visit here. To check your neo.tamu.edu email, please visit https://services.tamu.edu/zimbra/. To request a TAMUG (tamug.edu) email address, please send us an email at gradstudies@tamug.edu.

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.

Billing
Students can view their tuition and fee bill on Howdy. Students are responsible for paying their bill on time in order to avoid a late fee. To challenge a bill, please view the university catalog.
OGAPS Policies/Forms
The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) 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 OGAPS.

OGAPS Current Student Webpage
This site explains policies governing graduate education at TAMU and TAMUG.

Online Document Plan Submission System (DPSS)
Every graduate student is required to submit a degree plan online. This site provides access for the online degree plan submission system.

Steps to Fulfill a Master’s Degree
Learn more about the critical steps required for all Master’s students.

Steps to Fulfill a Doctoral Degree
Learn more about the critical steps required for all doctoral students.

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.

Study Abroad
Many of our graduate students participate through Study Abroad experiences through courses, research trips, or conferences. When the student leaves the U.S., he or she is required to register with Study 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 Services to ensure that he or she has the proper, most updated documents to exit and re-enter the country.

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. For all graduate students, it is recommended that you visit your Academic Advisor the semester before you anticipate graduating in order to make sure you are on track.
For students preparing a thesis or dissertation, it is recommended that you attend a Thesis Workshop held by the Thesis Office a year before your anticipated graduation. The Thesis Office visits Galveston twice a year to hold their workshop. Finally, it is recommended that graduate students schedule a pre-submittal conference the semester before or during graduation. This conference will save you time with the editing process.

**Employment**

**Assistantships**

There are graduate assistantship positions available on the TAMUG campus. 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 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 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 his/her fee statement, based on registration and information provided by the employing department.

Out-of-State (non-Texas resident) graduate students employed as a graduate assistant and registered fulltime qualify for the non-resident tuition waiver. This waiver will allow the graduate student to pay in-state tuition rates.

All waivers are filed by the Graduate Studies Office, for questions regarding tuition payments and non-resident waivers for Graduate Assistants, contact Nicole Kinslow at kinslown@tamug.edu.
Human Resources
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. In addition, all hires must complete a Selective Service Registration Status form.

In order to get on payroll, students must attend an HR session during Orientation for fall entrance or schedule an appointment with HR for spring or summer entrance. When you visit HR, please bring the following: photo identification card, and your original social security card. During this visit, please plan to complete new hire paperwork. If you do not, you will be: removed from payroll, not eligible to work, and not get paid for the time worked until you present the appropriate documentation. We will accept a letter from the Social Security Administration that has your name and SSN on it until the card is received. Once you receive your new card in the mail, bring it to HR so a copy can be made.

A new employee who does not have their original Social Security card, must go to the Social Security Administration office in League City (2835 Gulf Freeway South; located between the Petco and Kohl’s) and request a replacement card. You only have 3 days from the hire date to provide proof of identification.

After your visit with HR, you have to complete all mandatory HR training which includes “Ethics” and “Creating a Discrimination Free Workplace”. 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 Graduate Studies if you do not have a SSN card), and I-94.

Benefits
As a benefits-eligible employee, you are entitled to medical insurance benefits. Please go to the following link for information on insurance premiums. http://www.academichealthplans.com/tamus

Health Insurance
In April of each year you will receive a letter from Human Resources informing you of the cost of your summer health insurance premiums that will be deducted from your June 1 paycheck. This letter 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 Services
The mission of International Student Services (ISS) 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
All incoming international students are required to check-in through the ISS Liaison located at TAMUG. To schedule an appointment with the ISS Liaison, please contact the Graduate Studies Office gradstudies@tamug.edu. Students who do not participate in Check-In will be unable to register or get on payroll (if on an assistantship). Also, students must complete an online orientation through ISS prior to scheduling a Check-In appointment.

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

**TAMUG**

**Marine Sciences**
Dr. Wesley Highfield, Graduate Advisor  
Master of Marine Resource Management  
Telephone: 409-740-4726  
Email: highfiew@tamug.edu

**Maritime Administration**
Dr. Joan Mileski, Department Head  
Master of Maritime Administration and Logistics  
Telephone: 409-740-4978  
Email: mmal@tamug.edu

**Graduate Studies**
Nicole Kinslow, Director  
Telephone: 409-740-4937  
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Holly Richards, Academic Advisor  
Telephone: 409-740-4957  
Email: richardh@tamug.edu

Dr. Tammy Holliday, Associate Vice President for Research & Graduate Studies  
Telephone: 409-740-4941  
Email: hollidat@tamug.edu

Patty Gonzales, Business Coordinator III  
Telephone: 409-740-4748  
Email: gonzalep@tamug.edu

**Research Office**
Dr. Antonietta Quigg, Associate Vice President for Research & Graduate Studies  
Telephone: 409-740-4990  
Email: quigga@tamug.edu

**TAMU**

**International Student Services**
Samantha Clement, Student Advisor  
Telephone: 979-845-1824  
E-Mail: sclement@oar.tamu.edu

Kenyatta Dawson, TAMUG  
Telephone: 409-740-4582  
Email: dawsonk@tamug.edu

**Oceanography**
Missy Matthews, Academic Advisor  
Telephone: 979-845-7688  
Email: missy@tamu.edu

**Office of Graduate and Professional Studies**
979-845-3631  
E-Mail: ogaps@tamu.edu  
http://ogs.tamu.edu

Dr. Karen Butler-Purry, Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies  
E-Mail: klbutler@tamu.edu

**Thesis Office**
979-845-2225  
E-Mail: thesis@vprmail.tamu.edu  
http://thesis.tamu.edu

**Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences**
Adrea Dottavio, Academic Advisor  
Telephone: 979-845-5768  
E-Mail: adottavio@tamu.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 sent informational videos related to preparation of their first semester at Texas A&M University at Galveston.
• 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

GRADUATING STUDENTS

• All graduating students will be required to attend a mandatory 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies to be eligible to receive their diploma. Failure to do so may delay graduation.