



GRADUATE SCHOOL

Graduate Student Handbook Template

Purpose of This Document

Effective Date of Handbook is the fall semester of each academic year. An electronic copy PDF is due to the Graduate School (gradschool@utk.edu) by the first day of classes.

This document provides a template for the creation of a Graduate Student Handbook to be distributed by departments/programs to graduate students within their graduate programs. All policies in this document are to be established/changed by faculty based on established departmental and university guidelines. By publishing this handbook at the beginning of academic year, the contents remain valid for the entire year.

Contents of the Handbook

The following sections detail each section of a handbook and the content that must be included in those sections.

Cover Page

Each handbook should include a cover page that has the following information:

- Department/Program Title
- “Graduate Handbook”
- Date issued
- Name of the College

- “University of Tennessee, Knoxville”

Table of Contents

The handbook should include a detailed table of contents to aid the reader in locating information within the document.

Department Head Welcome Statement

The handbook should include a statement from the department head welcoming the students. This welcome can include information about the program, a general idea of what the students can expect, or any other text that the department head would like to impart to the students within the program or department.

Introduction

The introduction of the handbook should include the following elements:

- Graduate School Introduction (wording approved by Graduate Deans, 2010)

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provide for all graduate students.

Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program be disseminated.

The Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies (tiny.utk.edu/grad-policies) noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

- purpose of the Graduate Handbook

- statement that “Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university.” Students should be directed to the Graduate Catalog (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog), to Hilltopics (hilltopics.utk.edu), and to the publications on the Appeals Procedure (gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/understanding-your-rights-and-obligations/).
- description of departmental/program structure for graduate administration, e.g., Director of Graduate Studies, Graduate Committee, Graduate Admissions Committees, support staff and contact information

General Duties/Responsibilities

This section should include the responsibilities of faculty and all graduate students with respect to participation in the program, including, but not limited to:

- emphasis on full commitment to program and participation in professional activities
- repeated emphasis on the absolute necessity of satisfying all university regulations in a timely fashion

Admission Requirements and Application Procedures

This section should include any requirements for admission to the program that are specific to the program, but also include the following:

- reference to the Graduate Catalog (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog)
- a statement that admission to the program is through the Office of Graduate Admissions

Financial Support

This section should include information about any financial support opportunities provided by the department, the college, or the university. Such opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- graduate assistantships: types available through the department/program with application requirements, length of appointment, renewal conditions, workload, requirements for maintaining an appointment (e.g. evaluation process, GPA), implications if an assistantship is revoked, process for resignation from an assistantship,

types of assistantships displayed by the Graduate School

(<http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-assistantships/>)

- fellowships: types available through the department/program, college, Graduate School (<http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/>), or outside of the university
- on-campus employment: direction of students to the Graduate Catalog on policies for on-campus employment
- travel support: policies and procedures for applying for travel support from the department/program, the college, and the Graduate Student Travel Fund (<http://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/>)

Registration and Advising

This section should include information about how to register for classes and get advising, including:

- registration procedures and timelines
- types of courses and course credit
- minimum number of hours required for full-time status with and without assistantships
- proper use of 502, use of facilities
- proper use of 500 thesis and 600 dissertation hours
- selection of advisor and/or advising committee and frequency of advising; expectations students should have of advisors or department

Degree Requirements

This section should include information about the requirements for each program. This should not be in lieu of the requirements from the graduate catalog, but as an accompaniment, providing clarity where needed. Information in this section may include:

- types of degrees: master's, specialist, doctoral, graduate certificate
- major concentrations or specializations

- minors or cognates
- research requirements for thesis/non-thesis options and for dissertation; research expectations such as requirement of publications prior to awarding of degree and requirement or expectation of participation in professional conferences
- foreign language requirements
- residency requirements
- internship/practicum requirements; whether or not the department will assist in placement and conditions of completion for award of degree (include all information regarding requirements for internships/practica)
- preparation for licensing in the field
- applicability of coursework taken outside the department or program
- formation of thesis, non-thesis, and dissertation committees (emphasize specific process for requirements, committee meetings to approve coursework, and processes)
- timetable for completion of degree

Examinations

This section should provide information related to the various examinations required by a department for a student to remain in good standing. Information should include:

- types of examinations for master's, specialist, and doctoral degrees:
 - proficiency, diagnostic, qualifying, foreign language, comprehensive, defense of thesis/dissertation
- procedures for administering and grading examinations
- clear policy determined by department faculty vote on number of failures allowed before termination from program
- termination process and communication with student including process of appeal within the department and route of appeal following department decision

Standing and Appeals

This section should provide information on the requirements to remain in good standing, other than examinations (see above). This section should also explain the process for appealing a department's decision about a student's standing. Information should include:

- requirements to remain in good standing
 - required grade point average for continuation in program; results of failure of required coursework; academic triggers for dismissal (for example, two C's in required coursework)
 - frequency of evaluation and other requirements for good standing; procedure for determining satisfactory progress (for instance, annual review by faculty committee)
 - evaluation of adequate progress toward degree
 - procedure for removal of incompletes
 - compliance with legal requirements for research (departmental and university Institutional Review Boards (IRB))
 - academic honesty: expectations, violations, penalties
- consequences of failure to meet requirements
 - terms of probation (e.g. if GPA falls below 3.0)
 - conditions resulting in termination from the program
- appeals procedures
 - department appeals processes, including time limits for appeals
 - university appeals procedure, located on the Graduate School website (tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations)

Appendices

The following appendices should be included in the handbook, to provide links to resources and necessary forms. Resources to be listed include:

- international students
 - Center for International Education (international.utk.edu)
 - International House (ihouse.utk.edu)
 - ITA Testing Program (tiny.utk.edu/ita-testing)
- professional development & training
 - Office of Graduate Training and Mentoring
(gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship)
 - Best Practices in Teaching Program (tiny.utk.edu/bpit)
 - UT Libraries Information for Graduate Students (libguides.utk.edu/graduate)
 - Center for Career Development (career.utk.edu)
 - Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (tenntlc.utk.edu)
 - UT CIRTl: Center for Integration of Research and Teaching
(tlc.utk.edu/cirtl-program-center-for-integration-of-research-and-teaching/)
 - Experience Learning (experiencelearning.utk.edu)
- funding
 - costs and funding opportunities (tiny.utk.edu/grad-funding)
 - Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards (gss.utk.edu/travel-awards)
 - Financial Aid and Scholarships (onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid)
- student resources
 - Counseling Center (counselingcenter.utk.edu)
 - departments and college websites
 - Graduate School (gradschool.utk.edu)
 - Graduation Deadlines (tiny.utk.edu/grad-deadlines)
 - Graduate School Forms (gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central)
 - Graduate Catalog (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog)
 - Student obligations and appeals process (tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations)

- Graduate Student Senate (gss.utk.edu)
- Office of Graduate Admissions (gradschool.utk.edu/admissions)
- Student Conduct and Community Standards (studentconduct.utk.edu)
- Office of Equity and Diversity (oed.utk.edu)
- Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking (sexualassault.utk.edu)
- Office of Multicultural Student Life (multicultural.utk.edu)
- Office of Research Integrity (research.utk.edu/compliance)
- Thesis/Dissertation Consultant (gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations)
- Office of Information Technology (oit.utk.edu)