

*Graduate Student Handbook*

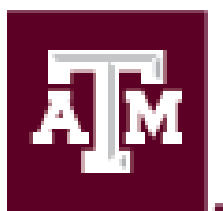
*2025-2026*

**Guidelines and Policies**

**Directing Graduate Studies Completion in**

**Food Science and Technology**

**at Texas A&M University**



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Food Science  
& Technology

©2025 Graduate Faculty of Food Science & Technology, Department of Food Science and Technology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

*Submit all concerns or questions to:*

Food Science and Technology  
373 Olsen Blvd, College Station, TX 77843  
2256 TAMU, 979-321-5384

[foodscience.tamu.edu](http://foodscience.tamu.edu)



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## **Introduction**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to Texas A&M University and the graduate program in Food Science and Technology (FSTC)! As an admitted student, you are now part of a long history of excellence in teaching, research, and service in the food sciences at Texas A&M University. Graduate degrees in Food Science and Technology are administered by the Graduate Faculty of Food Science within the Department of Food Science and Technology in accordance with all relevant policies and procedures of Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

The Master of Science (M.S.) [Thesis option] and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees are offered and may be obtained through an appropriate course of study, completion of research, successful completion of university-directed administrative procedures, and successful defense of the thesis or dissertation. Students may pursue fundamental and/or translational (i.e. applied) research in the areas of food chemistry, products processing, food microbiology and safety including probiotic microbiology, engineering and rheology, food packaging, ingredients technology, meat or poultry science, cereals science and processing, plant bioactives, sensory analysis, etc. A process of research and study will be outlined by the student with guidance from the student's graduate advisory committee membership.

Welcome to Aggieland and Gig 'em!

## Programs of Study and Degree Information

### Participating Academic Departments and Programs

The Department of Food Science and Technology serves as the primary academic home for all students pursuing degrees within the FSTC graduate curriculum. There are faculty who are members of the Department of Food Science and Technology as well as faculty members from other departments who are members of the graduate faculty of Food Science and Technology. Departments and programs with FSTC graduate program-participating faculty are:

- Department of Food Science and Technology (FSTC) ([foodscience.tamu.edu](http://foodscience.tamu.edu))
- Department of Animal Science (ANSC) ([animalscience.tamu.edu](http://animalscience.tamu.edu))
- Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering (BAEN) ([baen.tamu.edu](http://baen.tamu.edu))
- Department of Horticultural Sciences (HORT) ([hortsciences.tamu.edu](http://hortsciences.tamu.edu))
- Department of Poultry Science (POSC) ([posc.tamu.edu](http://posc.tamu.edu))
- Department of Soil and Crop Sciences (SCSC) ([soilcrop.tamu.edu](http://soilcrop.tamu.edu))
- Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences (VIBS) ([vibs.tamu.edu](http://vibs.tamu.edu))

The membership of the Graduate Faculty, along with biographical information descriptions of teaching and research expertise, are listed at: <https://foodscience.tamu.edu/faculty-research/>.

### Departmental Contacts

Comprehensive degree descriptions and completion requirements may be obtained from the Texas A&M University Graduate Catalog (published annually) at <https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/>. A student should download a copy of the Graduate Catalog upon their arrival at TAMU if not provided a copy by department/program personnel and refer to it throughout their degree program. Past editions of the Catalog are posted along with the current edition, and students should download the edition corresponding to the academic year in which they began their degree. Departmental questions can be directed to the following FSTC Faculty and Staff members:

#### Interim Department Head

Dr. David Baltensperger

[David.Baltensperger@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:David.Baltensperger@ag.tamu.edu)

979-845-3041

#### Associate Department Head for Graduate Programs

Dr. Suresh Pillai

[Suresh.Pillai@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Suresh.Pillai@ag.tamu.edu)

979-321-5385

#### Administrator

#### Assistant to the Department Head

Lindsey Naufal

[Lindsey.Naufal@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Lindsey.Naufal@ag.tamu.edu)

979-321-5386

#### Program Coordinator for Academic Programs

#### FSTC Graduate Admissions

Jordan Coburn

[Jordan.Coburn@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Jordan.Coburn@ag.tamu.edu)

979-321-5399

Additionally, students unable to resolve concerns by consulting the Graduate Catalog may direct questions to the TAMU Office of the Registrar and/or the Graduate and Professional School as directed on page 36 of this document.

# Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree

## Program Requirements and Guidelines

### General Expectations

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) indicates the student possesses comprehensive knowledge regarding the field of academic study and research related to his/her work at Texas A&M University. The degree is not granted solely on the completion of academic coursework or the completion of the minimum credit hour requirements, though these are required towards the degree completion. This degree is indicative of a student's mastery of the fundamental concepts and knowledge of the field of food science and technology with intense depth of knowledge in those fields directly related to their dissertation research interests/foci. There are several significant hurdles which must be successfully negotiated before the degree may be granted and it is incumbent upon the student to remain in close contact with their graduate advisory committee members to assure proper progress and timely completion of research and academic requirements. No graduate student should be allowed by their graduate committee membership to become disengaged with the completion of their degree and fall off track with respect to satisfying university and departmental degree requirements. It is incumbent upon the student and committee membership to remain in close communication and collaboration to avoid such occurrences, as they are both destructive to the student's academic progression and faculty/student collegiality.

More information on degree requirement and completion may be gained from the Texas A&M University [Graduate Catalog](#) and from the responsible officials within the Department of Food Science and Technology, faculty ad-loc'd departments, and the Graduate and Professional School.

### Core Curriculum

A student must successfully complete the FSTC curriculum, including minimal coursework in addition to graduate committee-directed coursework, in addition to successful completion of administrative/academic procedures for the degree. The Ph.D. in Food Science and Technology requires a minimum of 64 credit hours beyond the M.S. degree and a minimum of 96 credit hours beyond the B.S. degree. **Students wishing to pursue a Ph.D. in FSTC that have already obtained a M.S. degree (thesis-bearing option only) may not submit coursework previously submitted for completion of the M.S. degree towards the credit requirements of the Ph.D.**

### Minimal Degree Requirements

Minimal degree requirements for the Ph.D. in FSTC are provided below. Students are advised to seek guidance from their primary faculty advisor in selecting appropriate coursework for creation of their Ph.D. degree plan. The degree plan will list all coursework the student wishes to apply toward degree completion requirements (including FSTC 681, 691 and/or 685 credits) and must be filed with TAMU Graduate and Professional School in accordance with university policies on degree completion and with assistance from their graduate committee chair(s). The

degree plan must be submitted by the end of the student's fourth semester and must be submitted electronically at: <https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu>. Students are directed to the TAMU Graduate Catalog for comprehensive information regarding course selection and degree plan submission requirements and timeline for completion (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/>).

Coursework requirements are intended only to provide minimum essential coursework necessary for completion of the Ph.D. degree in order to demonstrate competency in the food sciences. Students will select courses with assistance from their graduate advisory committee chairperson(s) and should select courses that strengthen their knowledge of the field(s) relevant to their field of research and/or are necessary for their academic development. In addition, a Ph.D. student will very likely complete courses offered by other academic programs/departments that are deemed essential for development of competency in academic or research disciplines by the graduate advisory committee. Coursework requirements are intended to provide only a minimum of essential coursework necessary for completion in order to show competency in the food sciences.

In addition to fixed-credit courses that assign a letter grade to the student at the course's conclusion, a student will also enroll for some number of variable-credit courses, including FSTC 685 and 691. Finally, with regards to completion of Seminar (FSTC 681) requirements, the student will enroll for the class for one credit hour three times over the course of their degree program. They will then be expected to enroll for FSTC 681 every semester for zero credit hours until completion of their degree program.

#### **Degree Completion Timeline**

Students must complete the Ph.D. within a period of ten (10) consecutive calendar years. Graduate credit from coursework more than 10 years old will not be eligible for satisfaction of degree requirements. Students must complete all degree requirements and pass a final examination within four (4) years of completion of preliminary written and oral examinations. A student should complete a Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the completion of formal coursework on the degree plan. The student's final corrected dissertation must be accepted by the TAMU Graduate and Professional School Thesis Office no later than one (1) year following the completion of the final examination or within the 10 year time limit, whichever occurs first.

In Texas, public colleges and universities are funded by the state according to the number of students enrolled. In accordance with legislation passed by the Texas Legislature, the number of hours for which state universities may receive subvention funding at the doctoral rate for any individual is limited to 99 hours. Texas A&M and other universities will not receive subvention for hours in excess of the limit. Institutions of higher education are allowed to charge the equivalent of non-resident tuition to a resident doctoral student who has enrolled in 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral coursework.

Doctoral students at Texas A&M have seven years to complete their degree before being charged out-of-state tuition. A doctoral (G8) student who, after seven years of study, has

accumulated 100 or more doctoral hours will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to out-of-state tuition. Please note that the tuition increases will apply to Texas residents as well as students from other states and countries who are currently charged tuition at the resident rate. This includes those doctoral students who hold Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT), Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching (GANT), and Graduate Assistant Research (GAR) appointments or recipients of competitive fellowships who receive more than \$1,000 per semester. Doctoral students who have not accumulated 100 hours after seven years of study are eligible to pay in-state tuition if otherwise eligible. For counting purposes, a year is counted as three semesters – normally fall, spring, and summer. Using this system, a student is allowed 21 semesters as a G8 student to complete the doctoral degree before being penalized with the higher tuition rate. Any semester in which a G8 student is enrolled for a doctoral-level course is counted.

Doctoral students who exceed the credit limit will receive notification from the Graduate and Professional School during the semester in which they are enrolled and exceeding the limit in their current degree program. The notification will explain that the State of Texas does not provide funding for any additional hours in which a student is enrolled in excess of 99 hours. Texas A&M University will recover the lost funds by requiring students in excess of 99 hours to pay tuition at the non-resident rate. This non-resident tuition rate status will be updated for the following semester and in all subsequent semesters until receipt of a doctoral degree. Please see the [Tuition Calculator](#) at the non-resident rate for an example of potential charges.

### Minimum Course Requirements for the 64 Hour Ph.D. in FSTC

Course	Credits
FSTC 605: Chemistry of Foods <sup>a</sup>	3.0
FSTC 606: Microbiology of Foods <sup>a</sup>	3.0
FSTC 681: Seminar <sup>b</sup>	2.0
FSTC 685: Directed Studies	Variable
FSTC 691: Research	Variable
FSTC 600+: Electives <sup>c</sup>	12.0
STAT 600+: Statistics Electives <sup>d</sup>	6.0
Total <sup>e</sup> :	
	64.0

### Minimal Course Requirements for the 96 Hour Ph.D. in FSTC

Course	Credits
FSTC 605: Chemistry of Foods <sup>a</sup>	3.0
FSTC 606: Microbiology of Foods <sup>a</sup>	3.0
FSTC 681: Seminar <sup>b</sup>	3.0
FSTC 685: Directed Studies	Variable
FSTC 691: Research	Variable
FSTC 600+: Electives <sup>c</sup>	12.0
STAT 600+: Statistics Electives <sup>d</sup>	6.0
Total <sup>e</sup> :	
	96.0

- a. Students having completed FSTC 605 and/or 606 for the M.S. degree in FSTC, or their equivalents at another institution for the M.S. degree, cannot list these courses on their degree plan for the Ph.D. However, students may complete these courses for remedial purposes if deemed necessary by the graduate advisory committee.
- b. Seminar is required every semester. Register for either 0 or 1 credit.
- c. At least 3 credit hours must come from outside the student's primary area of research/interest, from within the food sciences. These must be fixed credit courses. Courses from outside the FSTC department can be approved by the Associate Department Head for Graduate Programs or Department Head as FSTC elective course substitutions.
- d. Students must enroll in statistics courses that are not equivalent to previously completed statistics courses, regardless of whether those courses were taken at Texas A&M University or another institution. The student should consult with their graduate advisor and committee to select appropriate statistics courses. Additional courses may be required for remedial purposes. Statistics courses completed during an M.S. degree cannot be counted again toward the requirements of the Ph.D. degree.

- e. Students entering the Ph.D. program (already possessing a M.S. degree) will not be allowed to submit previously completed coursework on their Ph.D. degree plan.

**Steps to Fulfill Doctoral Degree Requirements**

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester.	Before first semester registration.	Graduate advisor
2	Establish advisory committee; submit your <a href="#">degree plan online</a> .	Prior to the deadline imposed by the student's college/school, department, or interdisciplinary degree program, and no later than 90 days prior to Preliminary Examination	Advisory committee, department head or interdisciplinary degree program chair, and the Graduate and Professional School.
3	Complete course work detailed on an approved degree plan.	Before preliminary exam.	
4	Submit <a href="#">Preliminary Exam Request</a> Complete Preliminary Examination. (see Preliminary Examination for Doctoral Students in the Graduate and Professional Catalog).	A student should complete a Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the completion of formal coursework on the degree plan working days after exam date.	Advisory committee, department head or interdisciplinary degree program chair, and the Graduate and Professional School
5	Submit research proposal for dissertation or record of study and the <a href="#">Research Proposal Approval Form</a> to the Graduate and Professional School.	At least 20 working days prior to the submission of the Final Examination Request; students must have an approved research proposal in	Advisory committee, department head or interdisciplinary degree program chair, and the Graduate and Professional School.

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
		order to be admitted to candidacy.	
6	Complete Residence Requirement (see Academic Expectations in the Graduate and Professional Catalog).	Before submitting Final Examination Request	
7	Apply for a degree online at the <a href="#">Howdy portal</a> ; pay graduation fee.	During the first week of the final semester (see the <a href="#">Graduate and Professional School Calendar</a> for deadlines)	
8	Submit <a href="#">Request and Announcement of Final Examination</a> to hold and announce final examination.	Must be received by the Graduate and Professional School at least 10 working days before requested exam date; see the <a href="#">Graduate and Professional School Calendar</a> for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or interdisciplinary degree program chair, and the Graduate and Professional School.
9	Successfully complete final examination.	Must be held by the deadline on the <a href="#">Graduate and Professional School Calendar</a> , and Results should be submitted by the advisory committee within 10 days following the Final Examination.	Advisory committee and the Graduate and Professional School

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
10	Upload one approved final copy of the dissertation or record of study as a single pdf file to <a href="http://etd.tamu.edu">etd.tamu.edu</a> and submit the fully signed <a href="#">Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form</a> to the Office of Graduate and Professional School.	See <a href="#">Graduate and Professional School Calendar</a> for deadlines.	Advisory committee, department head or interdisciplinary degree program chair, and the Graduate and Professional School.
11	Arrange for cap and gown and graduate. <a href="#">More information</a>		

*Note: Once formal coursework is complete, students must still satisfy the [Continuous Registration Requirements](#) until all degree requirements have been met. This includes submission and clearance of the dissertation or record of study.*

## Specific Guidelines and Procedures for Degree Completion

### Progression to Ph.D. Degree Timeline

The chair of the student's graduate committee (major professor) is the primary point of contact for the student for clarification and questions.

#### Year 1

- Core/elective Coursework.
- Select members of advisory committee and hold annual advisory committee meeting by the end of March.

#### Year 2

- Continue core/elective coursework.
- Prepare and submit degree plan before the end of the fourth semester
- Annual advisory committee meeting by the end of March.

#### Beyond Year 2

- Continue core/elective coursework.
- Complete preliminary exam no later than one semester after completing coursework.
- Submit Research Proposal for dissertation
- Annual advisory committee meeting by the end of March.
- Annual advisory committee meetings.

- Complete dissertation.
- Schedule and defend dissertation.
- Prepare and submit publication(s).
- Graduation.

### **Graduate Advisory Committee Selection**

To begin the process of appointing a faculty advisory committee, the student should first consult with their major professor to determine recommended committee members. The major professor will serve as the chair/co-chair of the faculty advisory committee. Only members of the Graduate Committee Faculty located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other members of the Graduate Committee Faculty – including those located outside the university or off-campus if permitted – may serve as a co-chair or member. The committee chair is responsible for scheduling all committee meetings, which must occur at least annually or more frequently if necessary.

Texas A&M University policies mandate that every Ph.D. degree advisory committee consist of at least four graduate faculty members, with at least one member from outside the student's home department. For FSTC students, the Department of Food Science and Technology should be considered the home department for this purpose. The committee is formalized through the development and submission of the degree plan to the Graduate and Professional School, and changes to the committee may be made as needed. Approval of the degree plan signifies each committee member's commitment to guiding and directing the student's academic program and initiating relevant academic actions.

The advisory committee, both collectively and individually, is responsible for advising the student on all academic matters and university-required procedures. This includes guiding and overseeing the student's degree plan, research proposal, dissertation approval, and conducting preliminary exams and the final defense. Should the committee identify any serious deficiencies or obstacles to degree completion, they must take appropriate action to address these concerns or recommend further action to the departmental administration and the Graduate and Professional School.

### **Academic Degree Plan Submission**

All students, in consultation with their graduate advisory committee membership, will submit a degree plan by the end of the fourth semester that outlines all coursework to be completed towards completion of the Ph.D. degree. Failure to file the degree plan within this time period will result in the student being blocked from course registration until this issue is resolved. The degree plan may be amended as needed by the student by the filing of petition to the Graduate and Professional School detailing what course(s) are to be added or removed. Petitions must be approved by committee members via the [Graduate and Professional School submission system](#) before they will be considered for degree plan revision.

The degree plan must fulfill university and departmental requirements for course selection and must be submitted at least 90 days prior to scheduling of the student's preliminary

examination. Course credit hour requirements for the Ph.D. must be adhered to and the degree plan will be filed electronically by the student through the Graduate and Professional School at: <http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu>. Following submission and initial audit, the Department of Food Science and Technology will perform an initial review and then direct the degree plan to the chair(s) of the student's graduate committee and then to its membership. No alterations to the student's degree plan may be requested once the request for final examination has been submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

## **Preliminary Examination**

### **General Policies & Expectations**

While the University allows departments or programs to design preliminary examinations unique to their program and schedule them on the timeline they deem most appropriate, **the completion of a preliminary examination is a requirement for all students working towards the Ph.D. degree.** The preliminary examination is held at the completion of the coursework indicated on the student's degree plan. The committee should assure itself through completion of the preliminary examination that the student has demonstrated comprehensive mastery of the field of food science and the capacity to carry out bibliographical research, utilizing scientific literature and other relevant, reliable citable sources of research or technical data.

### **Format of Examination**

The written portion of the preliminary examination shall precede the oral examination. TAMU policies allow a committee member to waive their written examination, but an oral examination cannot be exempted by a faculty committee member. Committee members may collaborate to submit a joint written exam. The timeline for completion of all examinations, from the beginning of the first written examination to the scheduling of the oral examination, must not exceed three weeks. Within the FSTC curriculum, the graduate advisory committee members retain control over the manner in which the preliminary examination is administered, provided the committee's procedures are in adherence with university policies. Should a department-wide common written examination be instituted for students in FSTC (not currently in existence), this policy on scheduling of written and oral examinations within a 3-week timeframe will be rendered non-applicable.

The preliminary examination will include a written portion and an oral portion. The committee will not waive either of these portions. The written examination can be in class closed book, in class open book, or take-home assignment. For the written portion, no more than one (1) committee member may waive the right to offer a written exam. The written examination shall be designed to examine the student's basic and conceptual knowledge of the field of food science. Questions may be designed to provide focus on the student's area of focus [committee members' area of expertise] as well as application of discipline knowledge related to the student's research.

The oral exam will serve as the primary opportunity for the student to respond to in-depth questions relevant to basic/theoretical and applied knowledge, research strategies relevant to

the student's current progress, as well as to follow up on questions from the written portion of the preliminary examination.

A student is considered to have successfully passed the preliminary examinations if no more than one committee member records a negative or failing vote on the Report of Doctoral Preliminary Examination form at the conclusion of the oral examination.

### **Scheduling of Preliminary Examinations**

The student, in cooperation with their graduate advisory committee membership, should schedule the completion of preliminary examinations no earlier than a date for which the student is within 6 credit hours of completing all formal coursework for their degree (only variable credit courses may yet remain for completion, including 681, 684, 690, 691, and 692 courses). The student must be enrolled for at least one semester credit in the term during which the preliminary examination is scheduled. The exam should be completed and a report of examination results be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School no less than 14 weeks before the final examination and dissertation defense date.

### **Reporting of Results**

Within 10 working days of the student completing the preliminary examination, two forms (completed and bearing original signatures of approved committee members) must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. These forms are sent from the Graduate and Professional School (<https://grad.tamu.edu/>) to the chair of the graduate committee prior to the scheduled date of the oral examination:

- Preliminary Examination Checklist Form
- Doctoral Preliminary Examination completion form

### **Failing the Preliminary Examination**

If a student receives more than one failing vote from committee members at the conclusion of the preliminary examination, they are considered to have failed the preliminary examination. Upon agreement by the department head and the graduate committee (with no more than one dissenting vote), the student may be permitted a re-examination after an appropriate period for preparation—typically ranging from one semester to six months, but not exceeding one academic or calendar year. The graduate committee is not obligated to offer the student re-examination. This period is for the student's benefit, to develop knowledge in areas where they were previously deficient, enroll in academic courses to help strengthen command over topic fields, and progress towards preparing for the re-examination. A second examination will be conducted by the student's committee in the same manner as the first examination and will be subject to the same university and departmental rules.

If the student fails the preliminary examination a second time (if permitted), the graduate advisory committee will recommend to the Department of Food Science and Technology the appropriate action regarding dismissal from the Ph.D. program and/or the awarding of an M.S. degree.

### Steps to Completing the Preliminary Examination

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
1	Establish an advisory committee and submit a <u>degree plan</u> to the Graduate and Professional School.	Prior to the deadline set by the student's college; no later than 90 days prior to preliminary examination.	Advisory committee, department head and the Graduate and Professional School.
2	Complete course work detailed on the approved degree plan.	Before preliminary examination.	
3	Student and chair review eligibility requirements for the preliminary exam using the <u>Preliminary Exam Checklist &amp; Report</u> .	Before preliminary examination.	
4	Student checks the availability of committee members.	Several weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examination.	
5	Student prepares and submits any <u>petitions</u> found necessary by the review of the eligibility requirements.	At least three weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examination.	Advisory committee, department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, and the Graduate and Professional School.
6	When exam date is determined, the department may announce schedule.		Committee chair and department head or intercollegiate faculty chair.

Step	What to Do	When	Approved by
7	Chair submits the <u>Preliminary Exam Checklist &amp; Report</u> to the Graduate and Professional School.	The student should complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of the semester following the completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan. Results must be received by the Graduate and Professional School 10 working days after exam date.	Advisory committee, department head, and the Graduate and Professional School.
8	The Graduate and Professional School notifies the student and chair of any actions necessary to rectify any deficiencies.	Following the review of the <u>Preliminary Exam Checklist &amp; Report</u> .	

### Research Proposal

All graduate students seeking either the Ph.D. or thesis-bearing M.S. in Food Science and Technology are required to complete and submit for approval a research proposal outlining the topic and focus of their graduate research program. The research proposal should be completed in collaboration with their research director(s) and should be initiated as soon as the student is reasonably able to identify the objective(s) and general methods of research to be employed. The proposal must be approved by all members of the student's graduate advisory committee and signatures on appropriate documentation must be obtained before the proposal can be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. In addition to graduate advisory committee signatures, the Head of the Department of Food Science and Technology must also sign the research proposal submission form prior to its submission to the Graduate and Professional School.

At a minimum, the research proposal should provide a strong review of the pertinent literature surrounding the research problem(s) identified as being of interest to the student and research advisor. This can include an explanation of the justification or need for such research, the fundamental biological/physical/chemical processes or phenomena of relevance to the proposed research, and the current state of scientific knowledge. A listing of concise objectives, research hypotheses, and a description of intended or necessary research methods should also be included. The student should, whenever possible, cite previously completed research or other credible sources of information that supports the proposal's reasoning or development.

The student should choose and uniformly apply a style with which to present in-text bibliographic citations and full reference bibliographic material at the proposal's end. The significance and importance of thoughtful construction of the research proposal cannot be overstated, as it forms the framework for later development of the student's dissertation or thesis and can be viewed by some as a minimal criteria for student degree completion (although the proposal in itself does not represent a contract between student and faculty). The research proposal must be submitted and approved at least 20 working days prior to the student submitting the Request for Final Examination. The successful completion and approval of the research proposal is one requirement for a student's admission to Ph.D. candidacy.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student engaged in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at 979-458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities before the proposal is submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. Additional information can also be obtained on the [Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety website](#).

### **Residence Requirements**

A student who enters the doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree must spend one academic year plus one semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. A student who holds master's degree when they enter a doctoral degree program must spend one academic year in resident study. One academic year may include two adjacent regular semesters or one regular semester and one adjacent 10-week summer semester. The third semester is not required to be adjacent to the one year. Enrollment for each semester must be a minimum of 9 credit hours each to satisfy the residence requirement. A minimum of 1 credit hour must be in a non-distance education delivery mode. Semesters in which the student is enrolled in all distance education coursework will not count toward fulfillment of the residence requirement.

To satisfy the residence requirement, the student must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester or 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University for the required period. A student who enters a doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree may fulfill residence requirements in excess of one academic year (18 credit hours) by registration during summer sessions or by completion of a less-than-full course load (in this context a full course load is considered 9 credit hours per semester).

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of employment to the Graduate and Professional School. An employee should submit verification of employment at the time they submit the degree plan. See [Registration](#).

### **Ph.D. Candidacy**

Once a doctoral student has completed the following requirements, he/she may be admitted to candidacy for the PhD. No student may submit a Request for Final Examination and Dissertation Defense without first being admitted to candidacy:

- All coursework filed with the most current form of the student's degree plan has been completed with the exceptions of remaining 681, 684, 690, and 691 courses.
- The student has maintained an overall 3.0 GPA, a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0, and has not received any grade lower than a C on any degree plan-listed course.
- The student has successfully passed both written and oral preliminary examinations.
- The student has submitted an approved research proposal.
- The student has met all residence requirements.

### **Dissertation**

The dissertation document must be an original work of the student and should report in detail the methodologies, findings, analysis, and interpretation of all data collected towards completion of the PhD research directed by the student's committee. It should also present a comprehensive review of pertinent scientific literature, relevant to the student's research and academic preparation. It should be prepared in accordance with TAMU Graduate and Professional School [guidelines for thesis and dissertation preparation and formatting](#) and should be [submitted](#) to the University Thesis Clerk's Office as a PDF file following the student's defense of the dissertation to the committee.

The student must adhere to all [university deadlines](#) for requesting the defense of the dissertation and submitting it to the Graduate and Professional School for processing and approval. Additionally, the policy of Texas A&M University is that the dissertation should be disseminated in as near a final form as possible to the committee with adequate time for its review prior to the defense being scheduled. Should a dissertation be returned as being unacceptable by the Thesis Clerk's Office, the student will be made to make necessary corrections, and the process for the dissertation's approval will begin anew at the point of committee review and approval. The student will schedule a new defense and submit the corrected document for approval by the Thesis Clerk's Office.

The student is required to adhere to all university policies on academic integrity regarding the preparation of the dissertation, and in no instance will a dissertation be approved if it's found that a student has presented fabricated or plagiarized data or literature. These represent the most outrageous of infractions a student may commit and are indicative of lack of integrity and the student's not being worthy to bear the PhD. While it is increasingly difficult to not prepare a written document that is not unlike other scientific literature, the student is expected to structure their thoughts and analyses in such a manner as to provide adequate citation of previous research while simultaneously providing clear, reasoned, defensible arguments for analysis and interpretation of research findings. The dissertation should be completed with cooperation by the graduate committee chairperson or other responsible faculty member, and

the student is encouraged to begin the process of dissertation development as soon as is reasonable so that adequate effort and attention may be given to its completion.

While there is no minimum number of pages that must be included in the body of the dissertation, the student should consult with faculty advisors and work to be comprehensive in their review of literature. Additionally, the student may include an Appendix in which additional forms, documents, data presentations, statistical analysis outputs, etc., may be included for the benefit of the student or faculty review, or for the sake of producing a record of completed activities. Such additions should be completed at the behest of the faculty advisors or by the student's suggestion as approved by faculty advisors.

### **Final Examination and Defense of Dissertation**

The Ph.D. candidate may apply for a final examination and defense of dissertation after admission to candidacy and within university guidelines for scheduling of the final exam. A final defense should not be scheduled/requested until all research has been completed to committee satisfaction and a dissertation has been produced and edited to a state of being nearly in its final form and ready for committee review. At the very minimum, a defense should not be scheduled until the chair of the student's graduate committee has approved such a procedure. Scheduling guidelines are as follows:

- The defense cannot be scheduled less than 14 weeks since submission of results of the preliminary examination to the Graduate and Professional School.
- The defense must be scheduled no less than 25 days since submission of the research proposal to the Graduate and Professional School.
- The student has a degree plan on file and all petitions to change the degree plan have been approved by the Graduate and Professional School.
- The request for final examination must be submitted at least 10 business days/working days prior to the anticipated date of defense.
- All English Language Proficiency (ELP) requirements have been successfully passed by the student, as applicable.

While non-committee members may be invited to attend the final examination and dissertation defense (with agreement by the candidate and the committee), once questioning of the student has been completed, visitors are to be excused and the remainder of the defense remain closed. A student will be said to pass the final examination if they receive no more than one failing vote by a committee member. The final defense and examination may likely focus on the student's research and aligned topics, though there is no restriction against committee members discussing topics outside the immediate research completion.

Final defenses are generally very exciting but also stressful events. The student has successfully negotiated all other hurdles and is ready to complete the last significant process towards completion of the terminal degree. However, some recommendations are in order:

- Students should not seek to schedule a defense unless they have received positive feedback from their graduate advisory chair that the defense is warranted and that research has been completed to the faculty's satisfaction.
- The student should not schedule the defense until the dissertation document has undergone review and editing and is in a form nearly ready for submission to the university, with appropriate formatting and presentation of data included.
- The student has consulted with all members on their committee to choose an available date for the defense that allows for adequate time to review the dissertation by the committee membership.
- The student should confirm all other requirements are met and satisfied prior to scheduling the defense/requesting the final examination. The student should confirm that the Graduate and Professional School possesses all necessary documentation and approvals, and that all other departmental requirements are met.
- The student should consult with the faculty committee chair or research director regarding any special needs for special embargo of the dissertation for the sake of journal publication or realizing intellectual property.
- Final examinations should be conducted in person, with all committee members attending in person whenever possible. Use of Zoom or other virtual platforms may be permitted if necessary, but should be avoided whenever possible.
- It is a common tradition for students to provide food and beverages for the committee members for the examination session. A student should consult with the committee membership to determine any special dietary needs of the faculty and what expectations the faculty have in terms of the types of food that are desired and how elaborate the selection of food/beverages should be.
- The student should spend time preparing for possible questions and challenges to the dissertation, anticipating possible concerns and preparing responses. This will not remove the anxiety completely but can help minimize it by giving an added level of preparedness.
- The student should consider the defense a formal event and be dressed in no less than formal business attire. This is both a show of respect for the gravity of the occasion as well as outward indication of the student's taking the defense seriously.

# Master of Science (M.S.) Degree

## Program Requirements and Guidelines

### General Expectations

The Master of Science (M.S.) indicates the student has completed an original and novel learning and/or research experience in the field of food science and technology. The student should at the degree conclusion be capable of demonstrating advanced knowledge in one of the sub-disciplines of food science beyond the baccalaureate degree. For students completing the thesis-option M.S. degree, the degree is not granted solely on the completion of academic coursework, or the completion of the minimum credit hour requirements (see above), though these are required towards the degree completion. There are several significant hurdles which must be successfully negotiated before the degree may be granted, and it is incumbent upon the student to remain in close contact with their faculty advisors in order to help assure proper progress and timely completion of research and academic requirements. No student should be allowed by their graduate committee membership to become disengaged with the completion of their degree and fall off track with respect to satisfying university and departmental degree requirements. It is incumbent upon the student and committee membership to remain in close communication and collaboration to avoid such occurrences, as they are both destructive to the student's academic progression and faculty/student collegiality.

More information on degree requirement and completion may be gained from the Texas A&M University [Graduate Catalog](#) and from the responsible officials within the Department of Food Science and Technology and the Graduate and Professional School.

### Core Curriculum

A student must successfully complete the FSTC curriculum, including completion of minimal coursework in addition to graduate advisory committee-directed coursework, in addition to successful completion of administrative/academic procedures for the degree. The M.S. in Food Science and Technology requires 32 credit hours beyond the B.S. degree. Students may petition to have some number of credits from another accredited degree-granting institution transferred for purposes of inclusion on the degree plan, provided university policy is adhered to. Specifically, courses taken during the completion of an equivalent graduate degree at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution in which the student earned a grade of B or higher may be considered for transfer. No courses for which a grade is not assigned, but an indication of pass/fail (or satisfactory/unsatisfactory) may be applied from another institution to a TAMU degree. Additionally, courses for which the student earns a grade of D, F, or U at TAMU cannot be absolved by the student completing an equivalent course at another institution and then petitioning for transfer of credit. Up to 12 credit hours of graduate coursework taken by the student while in residence at Texas A&M University may be added to the student's degree plan on top of minimal course requirements, provided that student has obtained graduate committee and Graduate and Professional School approval. **Decisions on**

**transfer of credits ultimately rests with the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Graduate Admissions and procedures are described in detail in the TAMU Graduate Catalog.**

### **Minimal Degree Requirements**

Minimal degree requirements for the thesis-bearing M.S. in Food Science and Technology are provided below and are located the [department's website](#). Students are advised to seek guidance from their primary faculty advisor(s) in selecting appropriate coursework for completion of the M.S. degree. A degree plan, listing all courses the student wishes to apply toward degree completion requirements, must be filed with the TAMU Graduate and Professional School in accordance with university policies on degree completion and with the assistance of their primary faculty advisor. The degree plan must be submitted prior to end of their second academic semester and must be submitted electronically at the following website: <https://ogsdpps.tamu.edu>. Students are directed to the [TAMU Graduate Catalog](#) for comprehensive information regarding course selection and degree plan submission requirements and timeline for completion.

### **Minimal Course Requirements for the M.S. (Thesis Option) in FSTC**

<i>Course</i>	<i>Credits</i>
FSTC 605: Chemistry of Foods	3.0
FSTC 606: Microbiology of Foods	3.0
FSTC 681: Seminar <sup>b</sup>	1.0
FSTC 685: Directed Studies	Variable <sup>c</sup>
FSTC 691: Research	Variable <sup>c</sup>
FSTC 600+: Electives <sup>a</sup>	6.0
STAT 600+: Statistics Electives	3.0
Total	32.0

- a. At least 3 credit hours must come from outside the student's primary area of research/interest, from within the food sciences. These must be fixed credit courses. Courses from outside the FSTC department can be approved by the Associate Department Head for Graduate Programs or Department Head as FSTC elective course substitutions.
- b. Seminar is required every semester. Register for 0 or 1 credit.
- c. No more than 12 hrs may be used in any combination of the following categories:
  - Not more than 8 hrs in the combination of FSTC 691 (Research) or FSTC 684 (Professional Internship) may be used.
  - Not more than 8 hrs of FSTC 685 (Directed Studies) may be used.

### Steps to Fulfill M.S. Degree Requirements

Step	Procedure	When to Complete
1	Meet with departmental graduate advisor to plan course of study for first semester (if required).	Before first semester registration
2	Establish advisory committee. Submit a degree plan.	Prior to the conclusion of the second semester of the student's program start date.
3	Submit Thesis Research Proposal to the Graduate and Professional School.	At least 20 working days prior to submission of the Final Examination Request
4	Apply for degree. Pay graduation fee.	During first week of the final semester. See the Graduate and Professional School Dates and Deadlines Calendar for specifics.
5	Ensure degree plan and advisory committee are up-to-date, and coursework is complete.	At the beginning of the graduating semester, prior to submitting Final Examination Request
6	Complete Residence Requirement. See Academic Expectations in the Graduate and Professional Catalog.	Before or during final semester (if applicable)
7	Submit Final Examination Request.	Must be received by the Graduate and Professional School at least 10 working days before exam date (see the Graduate and Professional School Dates and Deadlines Calendar for specifics)

8	Successfully complete the Final Examination.	Must be held by the deadline on the Graduate and Professional School Dates and Deadlines Calendar, and Results should be submitted by the advisory committee within 10 days following the Final Examination.
9	Upload one approved final copy of thesis manuscript as a single PDF file to the Thesis and Dissertation Submission System ( <a href="https://etd.tamu.edu">https://etd.tamu.edu</a> ) and submit Thesis Approval Form to the Graduate and Professional School.	See the Graduate and Professional School Dates and Deadlines Calendar for specifics
10	Arrange for cap and gown and graduate.	For more information, visit <a href="http://graduation.tamu.edu">http://graduation.tamu.edu</a>

## Specific Guidelines and Procedures for Degree Completion

### Graduate Advisory Committee Selection

To begin the process of appointing a faculty advisory committee, the student should first consult with their major professor to determine recommended committee members. The major professor will serve as the chair/co-chair of the faculty advisory committee. Only members of the Graduate Committee Faculty located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student’s advisory committee. Other members of the Graduate Committee Faculty – including those located outside the university or off-campus if permitted – may serve as a co-chair or member. The committee chair is responsible for scheduling all committee meetings, which must occur at least annually or more frequently if necessary.

Texas A&M University policies mandate that every M.S. degree advisory committee consist of at least three graduate faculty members, with at least one member from outside the student’s home department. For FSTC students, the Department of Food Science and Technology should be considered the home department for this purpose. The committee is formalized through the development and submission of the degree plan to the Graduate and Professional School, and changes to the committee may be made as needed. Approval of the degree plan signifies each committee member’s commitment to guiding and directing the student’s academic program and initiating relevant academic actions.

The advisory committee, both collectively and individually, is responsible for advising the student on all academic matters and university-required procedures. This includes guiding and overseeing the student’s degree plan, research proposal, and thesis, as well as conducting the final defense. Should the committee identify any serious deficiencies or obstacles to degree

completion, they must take appropriate action to address these concerns or recommend further action to the departmental administration and the Graduate and Professional School.

### **Academic Degree Plan Submission**

All students, in consultation with their graduate advisory committee membership, will submit a degree plan by the end of the second semester that outlines all coursework to be completed towards completion of the M.S. degree. The degree plan must fulfill university and departmental requirements. Failure to file the degree plan within this time period will result in the student being blocked from course registration until this issue is resolved. The degree plan may be amended as needed by the student by the filing of petition to the Graduate and Professional School detailing what course(s) are to be added or removed. Petitions must be approved by committee members via the [Graduate and Professional School submission system](#) before they will be considered for degree plan revision.

The degree plan may also include the necessary description of research satisfying the committee's expectations of the degree (although this is most commonly submitted as a research proposal). Course credit hour requirements for the M.S. must be adhered to and the degree plan will be filed electronically by the student through the Graduate and Professional School at: [ogsdpps.tamu.edu](http://ogsdpps.tamu.edu). Following submission and initial audit, the Department of Food Science and Technology will perform an initial review and then direct the degree plan first to the chair(s) of the student's graduate committee and then to its membership.

The degree plan may be amended as needed by the student by the filing of petition to the Graduate and Professional School detailing what course(s) are to be added or removed. Petitions must be approved by committee members via the Graduate and Professional School submission system before they will be considered for degree plan revision. However, no alterations to the student's degree plan may be requested once request for final examination or final examination exemption has been submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

### **Research Proposal**

All graduate students seeking either the Ph.D. or thesis-bearing M.S. in Food Science and Technology are required to complete and submit for approval a research proposal outlining the topic and focus of their graduate research program. The research proposal should be completed in collaboration with their research director(s) and should be initiated as soon as the student is reasonably able to identify the objective(s) and general methods of research to be employed. The proposal must be approved by all members of the student's graduate advisory committee and signatures on appropriate documentation must be obtained before the proposal can be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. In addition to graduate advisory committee signatures, the Head of the Department of Food Science and Technology must also sign the research proposal submission form prior to its submission to the Graduate and Professional School.

At a minimum, the research proposal should provide a strong review of the pertinent literature surrounding the research problem(s) identified as being of interest to the student and research

advisor. This can include an explanation of the justification or need for such research, the fundamental biological/physical/chemical processes or phenomena of relevance to the proposed research, and the current state of scientific knowledge. A listing of concise objectives, research hypotheses, and a description of intended or necessary research methods should also be included. The student should, whenever possible, cite previously completed research or other credible sources of information that supports the proposal's reasoning or development. The student should choose and uniformly apply a style with which to present in-text bibliographic citations and full reference bibliographic material at the proposal's end. The significance and importance of thoughtful construction of the research proposal cannot be overstated, as it forms the framework for later development of the student's dissertation or thesis and can be viewed by some as a minimal criteria for student degree completion (although the proposal in itself does not represent a contract between student and faculty). The research proposal must be submitted and approved at least 20 working days prior to the student submitting the Request for Final Examination.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student engaged in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at 979-458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities before the proposal is submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. Additional information can also be obtained on the [Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety website](#).

### **Residence Requirement**

In partial fulfillment of the residence requirement for the degree of Master of Science, the student must complete 9 resident credit hours during one regular semester or one 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. A minimum of 1 credit hour must be in a non-distance education delivery mode. Semesters during which the student is enrolled in all distance education coursework will not count toward fulfillment of the residence requirement. Upon recommendation of the student's advisory committee, department head or Chair of the Interdisciplinary Program, if appropriate, and with approval of the Graduate and Professional School, a student may be granted exemption from this requirement. Such a petition, however, must be approved prior to the student's registration for the final 9 credit hours of required coursework.

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, students are required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of their employment to the Graduate and Professional School.

### **Thesis**

An acceptable thesis is required for the Master of Science degree for a student who selects the thesis option program. The finished work must reflect a comprehensive understanding of the pertinent literature and express in clear English, the problem(s) for student, the method, significance, and results of the student's original research. Thesis formatting must be

acceptable to the Graduate and Professional School as outlined in the Guidelines for Theses, Dissertations, and Records of Study.

After successful defense (or exemption) and approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the student's major department (or chair of intercollegiate faculty, if appropriate), the student must submit the thesis in electronic format as a single PDF file to <https://etd.tamu.edu/>. Additionally, a thesis approval form with original signatures must be received by the Graduate and Professional School through the Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS). Both the PDF file and the completed approval form must be received by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting the thesis are announced each semester or summer term in the "Graduate and Professional School Calendar" (see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed *via* the [Graduate and Professional School website](#). Each student who submits a manuscript for review is assessed a one-time thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, theses and dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

A thesis that is deemed unacceptable by the Graduate and Professional School because of excessive corrections will be returned to the student's department head (or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable). The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin again. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the resubmittal process to graduate.

The student is required to adhere to all university policies on academic integrity regarding the preparation of the thesis, and in no instance will a thesis be approved if it's found that a student has presented fabricated or plagiarized data or literature. These represent the most outrageous of infractions a student may commit and are indicative of lack of integrity and the student's not being worthy to bear the M.S. degree. While it is increasingly difficult to not prepare a written document that is not unlike other scientific literature, the student is expected to structure their thoughts and analyses in such a manner as to provide adequate citation of previous research while simultaneously providing clear, reasoned, defensible arguments for analysis and interpretation of research findings. The thesis should be completed with cooperation by the graduate committee chairperson or other responsible faculty member, and the student is encouraged to begin the process of development as soon as is reasonable so that adequate effort and attention may be given to its completion.

While there is no minimum number of pages that must be included in the body of the thesis, the student should consult with faculty advisors and work to be comprehensive in their review of literature. Additionally, the student may include an Appendix in which additional forms, documents, data presentations, statistical analysis outputs, etc., may be included for the benefit of the student or faculty review, or for the sake of producing a record of completed

activities. Such additions should be completed at the behest of the faculty advisors or by the student's suggestion as approved by faculty advisors.

### **Thesis Defense & Final Examination**

Students must pass a final examination by dates announced each semester or Summer term in the [Graduate and Professional School Calendar](#). A final defense should not be scheduled/requested until all research has been completed to committee satisfaction and a thesis has been produced and edited to a state of being nearly in its final form and ready for committee review. At the very minimum, a defense should not be scheduled until the chair of the student's graduate committee has approved such a procedure. Scheduling guidelines are as follows:

- The defense cannot be scheduled less than 14 weeks since submission of results of the preliminary examination to the Graduate and Professional School.
- The defense must be scheduled no less than 20 working days since submission of the research proposal to the Graduate and Professional School or by the deadline established in the [Graduate and Professional School Dates and Deadlines Calendar](#), whichever comes first.
- The student has a degree plan on file and all petitions to change the degree plan have been approved by the Graduate and Professional School.
- A request to schedule the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School *via* ARCS a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date for the examination.
- All English Language Proficiency requirements have been successfully passed by the student, as applicable.

While non-committee members may be invited to attend the final examination and dissertation defense (with agreement by the candidate and the committee chair), once questioning of the student has been completed, visitors are to be excused and the remainder of the defense remain closed. A student will be said to pass the final examination if they receive no more than one failing vote by a committee member. The thesis defense and final examination may likely focus on the student's research and aligned topics, though there is no restriction against committee members discussing topics outside the immediate research completion.

Final defenses are generally very exciting but also stressful events. The student has successfully negotiated all other hurdles and is ready to complete the last significant process towards completion of the terminal degree. However, some recommendations are in order:

- Students should not seek to schedule a defense unless they have received positive feedback from their graduate advisory chair that the defense is warranted and that research has been completed to the faculty's satisfaction.

- The student should not schedule the defense until the dissertation document has undergone review and editing and is in a form nearly ready for submission to the university, with appropriate formatting and presentation of data included.
- The student has consulted with all members on their committee to choose an available date for the defense that allows for adequate time to review the thesis by the committee membership.
- The student should confirm all other requirements are met and satisfied prior to scheduling the defense/requesting the final examination. The student should confirm that the Graduate and Professional School possesses all necessary documentation and approvals, and that all other departmental requirements are met.
- The student should consult with the faculty committee chair or research director regarding any special needs for special embargo of the dissertation for the sake of journal publication or realizing intellectual property.
- Final examinations should be conducted in person, with all committee members attending in person whenever possible. Use of Zoom or other virtual platforms may be permitted if necessary, but should be avoided whenever possible.
- It is a common tradition for students to provide food and beverages for the committee members for the examination session. A student should consult with the committee membership to determine any special dietary needs of the faculty and what expectations the faculty have in terms of the types of food that are desired and how elaborate the selection of food/beverages should be.
- The student should spend time preparing for possible questions and challenges to the thesis, anticipating possible concerns and preparing responses. This will not remove the anxiety completely but can help minimize it by giving an added level of preparedness.
- The student should consider the defense a formal event and be dressed in no less than formal business attire. This is both a show of respect for the gravity of the occasion as well as outward indication of the student's taking the defense seriously.

#### **Final Examination Exemption**

A thesis-option M.S. student possessing a degree plan GPR of 3.50 or higher, with the approval of the graduate committee membership, may petition for an exemption of the final examination. This does not absolve the student of the requirements for production, submission, and approval of the thesis document, and the petition must be submitted during the same semester in which the student intends to submit the thesis to committee members and the Graduate and Professional School.

### **Graduate Student Classification Codes**

Every graduate student, upon admission to his/her respective degree program, will be assigned a code that identifies their rank and status as a graduate student at Texas A&M University.

Codes are:

- G6 Post-baccalaureate non-degree classification denotes a student with a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education. Limitations may be placed on coursework taken while in G6 status if, at a later date, a post-baccalaureate non-degree student decides to pursue a graduate degree. Specifically, a college or a department may or may not decide whether to accept any G6 work toward a student's graduate degree; however, with the approval of the student's graduate advisory committee, the department head or chair of the interdisciplinary program, and the Graduate and Professional School, a maximum of 12 credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree status may be used on a student's degree plan. Admission to post-baccalaureate non-degree status does not establish eligibility for admission to degree-seeking status. A post-baccalaureate non-degree student is not eligible to register for 691 (Research) hours.
- G7 Denotes admission of a student to a master's-level program of study or to a doctoral program who has not yet completed a master's degree or 30 hours of eligible coursework taken at Texas A&M University.
- G8 Denotes admission to a doctoral-level program of study.
- G9 Denotes admission to graduate study, but that documents must still be completed before a student is allowed to file a degree plan. Upon receipt of the required documents, the student's classification will change. Approval of the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School is required to change a student from G9 classification to the appropriate classification (i.e., G7 or G8).

## Graduate Courses Fulfilling Curricular Requirements

*The course listing below is not intended as a comprehensive list of courses useful for degree completion.* The student may select any courses beyond the minimal degree requirements deemed useful to their academic or research preparation/completion, in collaboration with their graduate advisory committee members. In addition, MS students may enroll in and utilize up to 9 credit hours of 300+ and 400+ undergraduate coursework towards degree completion in instances where remediation is required for the student's academic preparation. PhD students may utilize up to 9 credit hours of 400+ undergraduate coursework towards degree completion in instances where remediation is required for the student's academic preparation. Undergraduate coursework may not be used as a substitution for FSTC 600+ coursework requirements. In instances where the course is cross-listed, register for the FSTC component.

### Fixed Credit Required FSTC Courses - Course Descriptions

- FSTC 605                      **Chemistry of Foods. (3-0). Credits 3.** Chemical covalent and noncovalent interactions in food systems; the glass transition and moisture in foods; carbohydrate chemistry; reactions of food lipids; food protein functionality; chemistry of flavor; processing chemistry; food additives; and nutraceutical phytochemicals. Prerequisites: BICH 410 or BICH 603.
- FSTC 606                      **Microbiology of Foods. (3-0). Credits 3.** Nature and function of beneficial and defect-producing bacteria in foods; food-borne illness, effects of processing, storage and distribution; techniques for isolation and identification from foods.

### Variable Credit Required FSTC Courses - Course Descriptions

- FSTC 681                      **Seminar. (1-0). Credit 0 or 1.** Oral reports and discussions of current research and developments in food science and technology designed to broaden understanding of problems and to stimulate research.
- FSTC 684                      **Professional Internship. Credit 1 or more each semester.** Experience in application of formal training to a commercial operation under supervision of operations manager and designated faculty member; investigation of matter of mutual interest and report results in a professional paper approved by the graduate committee.

FSTC 685                    **Directed Studies. Credit 1 to 4 each semester.** Directed study of selected problems emphasizing recent developments in research techniques.

FSTC 691                    **Research. Credit 1 or more each semester.** Investigations leading to thesis or dissertation in various areas of food science and technology.

#### **Courses Fulfilling FSTC 600+ Elective Credits Requirement**

ANSC/FSTC 607            **Physiology and Biochemistry of Muscle as a Food. (3-0). Credits 3.** Biochemical, histological, anatomical and physical characteristics of muscle cells and factors associated with transformation of muscle cells into meat. Prerequisite: BICH 410 or approval of instructor.

FSTC/NUTR 610            **Nutritional Pharmacometrics of Food Compounds. (3-0). Credits 3.** Introduction into nutritional pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of food compounds; specific examples of toxicological and pharmacological effects of food compounds. Prerequisite: NUTR 202, NUTR 203, FSTC 201, CHEM 227, or CHEM 222, or instructor approval.

FSTC 616                    **Food Biomanufacturing and Cellular Agriculture. (3-0). Credits 3.** Basic principles and techniques of food biomanufacturing, including bioprocessing, fermentation science, cellular agriculture, space food, and molecular farming, by addressing bioprocessing, microbial community, bacterial and yeast-based fermentation, bioreactors, cellular agriculture technologies, enzymes applications in food production, and sustainability; introduction to the concepts of cellular agriculture, fermentation and precision fermentation, bioprocessing, different bioreactors, and life cycle analysis roles in making decisions about the final products; learning to read papers to develop protocols and how to modify them; understanding of upstream and downstream processing, which will cover the bacterial, and yeast-based fermentation, precision fermentation, cellular agriculture, bioprocessing and food safety aspects of these products; biomanufacturing applications for different products developed from plants, insects, algae, and animals' byproducts.

FSTC/POSC/SCSC/VTMI 619    **Molecular Methods for Microbial Characterization. (2-2). Credits 3.** Underlying principles of molecular methods for microbial detection and characterization in natural and man-

made ecosystems; emphasis on method application and data interpretation; emphasis on microbial pathogens and indicator organisms in foods and environment; laboratory covers select protocols. Prerequisites: FSTC 326; SCSC 405; POSC 429; approval of instructor.

FSTC/POSC 629

**Electron Beam and Ionizing Technologies. (3-0). Credits 3.**

Underlying theory of ionizing technologies cobalt-60 gamma, electron beam (eBeam) and X-ray technologies; focuses on the myriad of applications of these technologies in the agriculture, food, environment, medical industry, plastic polymers and other industries; environmental remediation, medical device sterilization, as well as agricultural industry applications in food safety, food quality and phytosanitary treatments.

FSTC 631

**Food Carbohydrates. (3-0). Credits 3.** Chemistry, structure, functionality and nutritional properties of food carbohydrates; fiber chemistry, functionality and nutritional properties, artificial sweeteners, starch structure and functionality and hydrocolloid functionality. Prerequisite: BICH 410.

FSTC 632

**Innovative Functional Food Ingredients. (3-0). Credits 3.**

Exploration of the impact of functional food ingredients on human health and the microbiome, processing, quality control, and regulatory compliance under FDA and FTC guidelines.

ANSC/FSTC 647

**Technology of Meat Processing and Distribution. (3-0). Credits 3.** Quantitative and qualitative characteristics of meat and meat products as related to food technology processing operations; manufacturing, preservation, packaging, and merchandising.

ANSC/FSTC 657

**Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System. (3-0). Credits 3.** Examination of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles specifically related to meat and poultry; microbiological and process overviews; good manufacturing practices (GMP) and standard operating procedures (SOP) development; team-building and implementation into industry operations. This class is designed for the production of food and fulfills the training requirements of USDA's HACCP regulation for meat and poultry (9 CFR Part 417), and FDA's HACCP regulations for fish and fishery products (21 CFR Part 123 and 1240) and for juice (21 CFR Part 120).

FSTC 664	<p><b>Fundamentals of Food Law. (3-0) Credits 3.</b>  History, development of, and fundamental principles behind current food regulations, including food labeling, adulteration, food safety, food additives, dietary supplements, and import and export laws; overview of government agency jurisdiction, international law and ethics.</p>
ANSC/FSTC 667	<p><b>Industrial Processed Meat Operations. (2-2). Credits 3.</b>  Application of scientific principles and business practices to manufactured meat products; interrelationships among marketing, manufacturing, product development, regulatory compliance and quality assurance in commercial processed meat operations. Prerequisites: Approval of instructor.</p>
FSTC 670/ANSC 670	<p><b>Quality Assurance for the Food Industry Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours.</b> Principles of food system process control; statistical process control (SPC); tools required to assure uniform communication and understanding of quality assurance systems.</p>
ANSC/FSTC 687	<p><b>Sensory Evaluation of Foods. (2-2). Credits 3.</b> Application of sensory science principles and practices to food systems including an understanding of discriminative, descriptive and consumer sensory techniques. Prerequisites: CHEM 222 or CHEM 228.</p>
FSTC 689	<p><b>Special Topics in... Credit 1 to 4.</b> Special topics in an identified area of food science and technology. May be repeated for credit.</p>
ANSC/FSTC 697	<p><b>Applied Microbiology for Foods of Animal Origin: Processing, Sanitation and Sanitary Design. (3-0). Credits 3.</b> Application of basic food microbiology knowledge and principles to food production processes and products; sources of microbiological contamination and their impact on food safety and spoilage; application of sanitary design and validation; testing and auditing to monitor and trouble-shoot the process. Prerequisites: DASC/FSTC 326 or FSTC 606 or equivalent.</p>

### Statistics Courses Useful Towards Fulfillment of Degree Requirements

Courses listed are not intended to be an exhaustive list of statistics graduate-level offerings at Texas A&M University, but rather have been chosen as being representative of most frequently utilized courses to fulfill statistics requirements for the FSTC graduate degree. The student should consult with their graduate advisory committee members when selecting statistics courses in order to select those courses that will provide essential learning towards the utilization and completion of required statistical analyses as related to their research foci. Students are reminded that statistics courses completed during the M.S. degree, or their equivalents cannot be submitted for completion of requirements of the Ph.D. degree.

- STAT 651                    **Statistics in Research I. (3-0). Credits 3.** For graduate students in other disciplines; non-calculus exposition of the concepts, methods and usage of statistical data analysis; T-tests, analysis of variance and linear regression. Prerequisite: MATH 102 or equivalent.
- STAT 652                    **Statistics in Research II. (3-0). Credits 3.** Concepts of experimental design, individual treatment comparisons, randomized blocks and factorial experiments, multiple regression, Chi-squared tests and a brief introduction to covariance, non-parametric methods and sample surveys. Prerequisite: STAT 651.
- STAT 653                    **Statistics in Research III. (3-0). Credits 3.** Advanced topics in ANOVA; analysis of covariance; and regression analysis including analysis of messy data; non-linear regression; logistic and weighted regression; diagnostics and model building; emphasis on concepts; computing and interpretation. Prerequisite: STAT 652.

# University and Program Resources

## University Resources

### Office of Admissions

Students wishing to apply for acceptance into the graduate FSTC program at Texas A&M University are directed to the Office of Graduate Admissions at the website <http://admissions.tamu.edu/graduate/>. Methods of admission, required documentation necessary for application for admission, application deadlines and procedures, fellowship and grant application opportunities are available from the Office of Graduate Admission.

#### *Office of Admissions*

#### [General Services Complex](#)

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 1601

College Station, TX 77843-1186

979-845-1060

<https://admissions.tamu.edu/>

### Graduate and Professional School

The Graduate and Professional School is responsible for oversight of student degree requirements management and student degree completion. Graduate students will interact with the Graduate and Professional School personnel and systems in multiple ways throughout their degree, and students are advised to become familiar with the Graduate and Professional School systems and deadlines to expedite the completion of required forms and documentation. In addition to degree audit, degree plan, research proposal, preliminary exams (Ph.D.) and final defense paperwork submission and processing, the Graduate and Professional School provides Thesis & Dissertation Services. These services include assisting students in the proper production and formatting of their research thesis or dissertation. Updated thesis/dissertation submission guidelines, electronic submission procedures, and copyright information are located on the Graduate and Professional School website at:

<https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/academic-success-resources/thesis-dissertation-services>.

#### *Graduate and Professional School*

#### [Nagle Hall](#)

454 Throckmorton Street, Room 204

College Station, TX 77843-1113

979-845-3631

<https://grad.tamu.edu/>

### Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety

The Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety (RCB) within the Division of Research serves as the administrative body within the TAMUS to provide oversight for all research activities. Responsibilities are varied but include completion and logging of all research procedures and

regulations training for investigators and students. Students conducting human subjects research, research on biological agents/pathogens, or involving the use of animals must submit to all project-specific required training and certification procedures as directed by the research advisor and RCB personnel.

*Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety*

[General Services Complex](#)

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701

College Station, TX 77843-1186

979-458-1467

<https://research.tamu.edu/units/research-compliance-and-biosafety/>

**International Student & Scholar Services**

The International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) office serves as a resource to students of non-U.S. citizenship and are primarily functional in providing documentation to allow non-immigrant student visas for study at Texas A&M University. In addition, ISSS personnel will coordinate with university admissions and payroll offices to complete admissions procedures and other administrative procedures once the student has been admitted and arrived on campus. The ISSS office also offers students counseling services on issues related to immigration, employment, finance, medical insurance, adjusting to the U.S., and taxation.

*Global Engagement*

[Pavilion](#)

424 Spence Street, Room 110

TAMU 1226

College Station, TX 77843-1226

979-845-1824

[iss@tamu.edu](mailto:iss@tamu.edu)

<https://global.tamu.edu/iss>

**Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid**

The Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid can assist students in identifying applicable sources of financial aid for supporting the costs of degree completion and will assist the student in accepting financial aid received. Emergency and short-term loans for educational and living expenses may be available from the office; for more information visit the office at contact below.

*Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid*

[General Services Complex](#)

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 102

College Station, TX 77843-1252

979-847-1787

[fellowschol@tamu.edu](mailto:fellowschol@tamu.edu)

<https://financialaid.tamu.edu/>

## University Health Services & Insurance

University Health Services empowers Texas A&M students through integrated care that supports their physical and mental health. As part of Texas A&M Health—the university's comprehensive health science center—our clinicians provide the highest level of care in medicine, counseling, psychology and emergency medical services that fosters students' academic, personal and professional success.

Graduate assistants assigned to teaching or research assistantships (GTA, GRA) are identified as TAMU employees and thus receive employer contributions towards the cost of student health insurance. Students will also contribute to the cost of their medical/health insurance, in a pro-rated fashion, based on their status.

Students attending TAMU on fellowship or training grants will not be considered TAMU employees and must purchase medical insurance on their own, choosing their own insurance provider. Students should be certain that local physicians and medical professionals will accept their chosen insurance program for services. More information on medical insurance for TAMU students can be located at <http://www.tamuinsurance.com/>.

All students enrolling in TAMU will be required to submit proof of vaccination against bacterial meningitis as part of their application to TAMU. More information on vaccinations for incoming students can be found at <https://uhs.tamu.edu/medical/immunizations.html>

Tuberculosis (TB) screening is required for all incoming international students that were born in or resided in a high risk country\* for more than three (3) months. Many students complete the TB screening once they arrive at Texas A&M. Students are also welcome to complete the TB screening prior to arrival. Submission requirements include the [Tuberculosis Screening Form](#) and a copy of the blood test results (lab report). Return the completed Tuberculosis Screening form by fax: (979) 458-8319 or by email: [tbhold@tamu.edu](mailto:tbhold@tamu.edu).

*\*View the [American College Health Association guidelines](#) for a list of these specific countries, or find these countries on the Tuberculosis Screening Form.*

Newly admitted international students automatically have a **Tuberculosis screening hold** placed on their account. The hold is removed once the appropriate documentation and/or test results have been provided to University Health Services. The Tuberculosis screening hold will keep a student from registering for classes, but does not affect his/her VISA, immigration status, admission to Texas A&M, or ability to participate in the new student conference.

University Health Services  
[A.P. Beutel Health Center](#)  
311 Houston Street  
College Station, TX 78843-1264  
979-458-4584; 979-458-8319  
[uhsinfo@tamu.edu](mailto:uhsinfo@tamu.edu)  
[uhs.tamu.edu](http://uhs.tamu.edu)

Student Counseling & Mental Health Center  
[Student Services Building](#)  
471 Houston Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
College Station, TX 77843-1263  
979-862-4383

## University Housing

Texas A&M University has a variety of on-campus and campus-adjacent housing options for graduate students, in particular married students with families. Applications for such housing can be located at <https://reslife.tamu.edu/>. In addition to on-campus housing, numerous apartment complexes and rental homes are available for students. These should be directly investigated by the student.

*Department of Residence Life*

[Student Services Building](#)

College Station, TX 77843-1253

979-845-4744

[housing@tamu.edu](mailto:housing@tamu.edu)

<https://reslife.tamu.edu/>

## Transportation Services

### Transit

The university operates an on-and off-campus transit system that can be used by anyone on campus, fare-free. The off-campus transit system serves most of the major apartment complexes and housing areas in College Station, as well as the Blinn College Campus and RELLIS Campus. Campus bus transit routes and pickup schedules can be obtained from:

<http://transport.tamu.edu/transit.aspx>.

There is also an app that provides live bus locations at:

<https://transport.tamu.edu/Transit/busapp.aspx>.

All transit services are included in student registration fees and do not require a bus pass, however, passengers are required to present their Texas A&M, Blinn, or Brazos Transit District (BTD) ID when boarding at off-campus stops. Members of the general public possessing a Brazos Transit District ID may ride both on- and off-campus bus routes. In addition, students may ride [The District](#) buses fare-free by showing their IDs upon entering the bus. For BTD bus route information, visit <http://btd.org>.

For updates about transit routes, subscribe to the RSS feed at

<https://transport.tamu.edu/about/rss.aspx> or follow [@aggiespiritbus](#) on X. For transit information, including maps and leave times, visit <https://transport.tamu.edu/transit.aspx>.

### Parking

Those who choose to bring a vehicle to campus are required to purchase a parking assignment (virtual permit) or pay-by-the-hour to park in designated visitor areas. (Download the Parkmobile app, available on the AppStore, Google Play, or Windows Store, or those without a smartphone may use the mobile web app at <https://parkmobile.io/>.) See also [Optional Campus Services](#).

Parking is at a premium on Texas A&M's campus; MOST customers are not assigned their first choice for parking. Often the available parking may not be immediately adjacent to your building or facility. Students may register for parking at <https://transport.tamu.edu/parking/faqpermit.aspx> To get the best parking available, register online by the July 7 priority deadline. Maps of parking lots available to students can be located at: <https://transport.tamu.edu/parkingmap//tmap.htm>. Parking pass instructions follow:

1. First select My Account at the top right corner and sign in using your NetID or SSO login information. <https://transport.tamu.edu/parking/faqpermit.aspx>
2. Click the Permits tab followed by Purchase Vehicle Permits
3. Purchase a Lot 100 permit
4. Permit payments can either be drafted monthly by payroll as a credit card payment
5. Click the Permits tab again followed by My Waitlists. Add yourself to applicable parking lot/garage waitlists and rank order your preferred lots.
6. When approved for a waitlisted lot, you will receive an email to swap your Lot 100 permit with your new parking permit. If you did not receive your highest preferred parking lot, you can leave your name on the waitlist and a permit will be assigned to you when it becomes available. Note that changing from Lot 100 to any of your other waitlisted parking lots does not remove you from the waitlist for other parking lots. Any amount paid will be prorated.
7. Parking lots in proximity to Cater-Matil and the Heep Center include, 70,64, 67, and 74
8. Waitlist priority numbers are based on several factors including: status as a former student and/or employee of Texas A&M University and length of time as a current student

Parking pass costs can be deducted pretax from the student's monthly stipend if they are on a departmental assistantship (TAMU employee) or there are other payment options available for non-employees.

For updates about parking, traffic, and construction, subscribe to the RSS feeds at <https://transport.tamu.edu/about/rss.aspx> or follow [@aggieparking](#) on X or [@TAMUTransportation](#) on Facebook and Instagram.

For more information about parking or to view Parking Rules and Regulations, visit <http://transport.tamu.edu/parkingreg>.

### **Bicycles**

Bicycles are a great way to get to, from, and around campus. Bike services include the bike share program, bike lease program, borrow-a-bike, bike registration, summer bike storage, and maintenance stations.

For more information visit <http://transport.tamu.edu/bicycles>.

## Alternatives

Don't have a car? There are plenty of alternatives, including carshare, rideshare, and break/weekend shuttles to major Texas cities. For more alternative transportation options, visit <http://transport.tamu.edu/alternative>.

### *Parking & Customer Assistance*

#### [Polo Road Building](#)

322 Polo Road, Suite 350

College Station, TX 77843-1250

979-862-7275

[parking@tamu.edu](mailto:parking@tamu.edu)

<https://parking.tamu.edu/>

## New Student Orientation

### **Graduate and Professional School Orientation**

Coordinated by the Graduate and Professional School, the [New Graduate Student Orientation](#) provides an overview of graduate and professional education and services at Texas A&M University – including information on financial aid, procedures and processes, campus safety, writing services, and additional campus services. There are both in-person and distance options available for the orientation. New graduate and professional students will have the opportunity to meet campus leaders, administrators, and fellow graduate and professional students. Experienced graduate students will be present to answer questions and provide insight about thriving in graduate school, balancing school, work, and personal life, and making the most of living in the local communities. Designed to get new graduate and professional students off to a good start, students will also have the opportunity to explore resources and meet representatives of campus services and organizations who serve the graduate and professional community. International students should consult this website for specialized instructions regarding orientation of non-U.S. citizens as incoming graduate or professional students.

### **Department of Food Science and Technology Orientation**

The Department of Food Science and Technology will offer an orientation to new graduate students in the Food Science and Technology degree programs. This orientation will provide graduate students with department and academic program-related information, expectations for student academic performance, policies and regulations regarding student completion of coursework, required documentation and timely submission for completion of degree requirements, and completion of thesis or dissertation research. This orientation is mandatory for all incoming graduate students without exception, and documentation of circumstance preventing student attendance must be provided to the Associate Department Head for Graduate Programs (Suresh Pillai, Ph.D.) for absence excuse to be granted. Scheduling of the orientation will be coordinated by FSTC and students will be informed of the orientation date, time, and location by email through the departmental student listserv.

### English Language Proficiency Requirements for Incoming Students

All international graduate students must meet minimum English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards for admission and registration at Texas A&M University. This is attainable by achieving a minimum required score on an acceptable standardized examination, citizenship with an [English-speaking country](#), or completion of a Bachelor's or Master's degree at an accredited academic institution within the United States.

Any graduate student wishing to be considered for a graduate teaching assistantship, or applying for any type of teaching-type position must also be English Proficiency Certified before they can be assigned to any such position.

The following global test scores are acceptable to meet the ELP Requirement for admission and registration:

- Minimum TOEFL-iBT score of 80 (in person or Home Edition) from a test date within two years (Texas A&M University does not accept the MyBest TOEFL score)
- Minimum TOEFL Essentials score of 8.5 from a test date within two years (Texas A&M University does not accept the MyBest TOEFL score)
- Minimum IELTS Academic test score of 6.0 overall band from a test date within two years (Texas A&M University does not accept the IELTS General test nor the One Skill Retake for admission purposes)
- GRE Verbal Reasoning score of at least 146 (subject to departmental approval) from a test date within five years; or
- GMAT Verbal Score of at least 77 on the new scale or 22 on the old scale (subject to departmental approval) from a test date within five years.

Any student wishing to be considered for English Proficiency Verification or Certification should coordinate submission of documentation with their graduate advisor(s) and the departmental administration for collection and submission of appropriate forms and supporting documentation. **For all graduate students, ELP requirements must be completed prior to request for the final examination and defense of their degree. For Ph.D. students, ELP requirements must be completed successfully before the student may register for preliminary/comprehensive examination as a precursor to admission to candidacy.**

Students seeking more information are directed to the Texas A&M University Graduate Catalog for more information regarding ELP completion requirements, scheduling of ELPE, English Language Institute offerings, and appropriate procedures for ELP completion.

Additional information for ELP can be found on the [international graduate admissions website](#).

## Registration for Courses

### General Policies for Course Enrollment

As a general rule, a graduate student should consult with his/her graduate advisory committee members when selecting and registering for specific sections of desired classes, as well as for building a schedule of classes to be completed. In some instances, a new graduate student may be required by their academic advisor(s) to complete some form of remedial training (e.g., completion of upper-level undergraduate courses as prerequisites for graduate course enrollment). Again, these should be coordinated with the student's graduate advisor(s) in order to ensure the student makes measured and steady progress towards completion of graduate degree requirements while selecting courses that will be of benefit in knowledge development and research planning/completion.

### Full-Time Student Enrollment

A graduate student is considered to be a full-time enrolled student if enrolled for a minimum of:

- 9 semester credit hours for each of the academic semesters (Fall, Spring)
- 6 semester credit hours for the 10-week summer term, or;
- 3 semester credit hours each for each of the two 5-week summer terms

Any student on an assistantship should check with their graduate advisor to determine what impact enrollment for any number of credits less than those given here will have on their financial stipend, tuition support, etc.

A student may enroll for up to 15 semester credit hours during the Fall or Spring semesters, and up to 12 semester credits during the 10-week summer term. Up to 9 hours for each of the 5-week summer terms may be enrolled. Any student wishing to take more graduate coursework must submit request and petition for exception to the Graduate and Professional School.

### Continuous Enrollment

Once a student has begun their degree program, that student must remain in enrollment until all degree requirements are fulfilled. Subject to university requirements, this requirement for continuous enrollment may be fulfilled through the use of *in absentia* or other registration status classifications. Any student needing to register for classes/academic credits in *absentia* should consult the Texas A&M University Graduate Catalog for policies and definitions of *in absentia*-appropriate conditions for student enrollment purposes.

If a student needs to take a semester off they must submit a leave of absence petition to the Graduate and Professional School in the [Document Processing Submission System](#). Failure to submit a leave of absence petition will result in the student's account becoming inactive and may require a new application for admission to the university.

## **Other Significant Procedures and Policies**

### **Student Travel for University Business**

#### **Scientific Meetings**

All students traveling to a scientific meeting for the purpose of presenting research findings are subject to all TAMU policies on the travel of university employees regarding proper expenditure of funds, retention and submission of original receipts from expenses for funds reimbursement, etc. The student should coordinate with his/her graduate advisor in order to determine sources of funding that may be applied to offset the costs of travel. For students whose graduate committee chairperson or research advisor is not adloc'ed within the Department of Food Science and Technology, the student should also check with the relevant departmental officers to determine appropriate procedures for travel scheduling and costs reimbursement for that department.

Students will be expected to submit travel expense reports within the Emburse system and should coordinate setting up an account within Emburse so as to allow for proper travel request and expense report submission. Requests for travel of any nature should be submitted via Emburse prior to the travel date and must contain all critical information designated by the Emburse system in according with TAMU System policies.

#### **Travel for Research or Outreach Activities**

Students traveling for the purposes of collecting research data or conducting various forms of training or outreach are subject to TAMU System policies for travel similar to those enforced for travel to present research findings at scientific meetings. All travel requests and expense reports must be submitted through Emburse and should be in a timely fashion according to directives of the Department of Food Science and Technology as well as any other academic departmental unit as needed.

#### **International Travel**

In the event that international travel is deemed worthwhile or necessary, the student should collaborate with departmental officers and other university offices to ensure that all necessary procedures are satisfactorily completed prior to the dates of travel. The student should confirm with their research advisor any special needs or instructions for preparation for travel. Travel requests for international travel must be submitted a minimum of 30 days prior to the anticipated date of departure through Emburse and must indicate that international travel is to occur. A student is responsible for the maintenance of a valid passport, and in the event that visa documentation is also required for entry into the destination country, the student is responsible for obtaining such paperwork. The research or academic faculty advisor may be contacted to provide assistance in obtaining visa paperwork, but the responsibility will rest upon the student.

### **Travel Financial Assistance Application**

Students traveling for the purpose of presenting research findings may apply for financial assistance from the [Department of Food Science and Technology](#), in addition to travel assistance opportunities offered by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) and university offices. A copy of the student's submitted and accepted abstract of research is required to accompany the application for funding. The student must obtain approval of their faculty advisor for the submission, indicated by signature of the faculty advisor. Funds will be dispersed to students based upon availability of funds and numbers of students applying for travel assistance within a calendar year. If the purpose of travel is to present a research poster, only the primary author of the poster may be awarded a travel award from the Department of Food Science and Technology. Co-authors must be funded by other means.

Any student receiving travel assistance must acknowledge the receipt of such funds in an appropriate manner on the research poster or presentation, typically in an Acknowledgements portion of the presentation/poster. The student must include the following language in their acknowledgements of funding for research/travel, etc.: *Financial travel assistance was received by the Department Food Science and Technology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.*

### **Representatives of Texas A&M University**

Regardless of the destination or reason(s) for travel, a graduate student is a representative of Texas A&M University as well as the Food Science and Technology program. The student is expected to act with integrity and not compromise the reputation of the program and university through word or action.

### **Departmental Affiliation Identification on Printed Materials and Presentations**

As a graduate student in the FSTC graduate program within the Department of Food Science and Technology, the student's academic home department is the Department of Food Science and Technology. As such, all documents, research posters or presentations where the student must indicate their departmental affiliation must list the Department of Food Science and Technology as their primary affiliation, regardless of the departmental affiliation of their graduate committee chairperson(s). A student whose graduate committee or research advisor is not an ad-loc'ed member of the Department of Food Science and Technology may indicate dual affiliations on the document, poster, or presentation using an acceptable system of indicating affiliation, but the primary affiliation for the student must be the Department of Food Science and Technology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2256. A student should consult with their research/faculty advisor to determine appropriate affiliation reporting for all co-authors during preparation of the document, poster, or presentation.

### **Ownership of Research Original Data**

As a graduate student in the Food Science and Technology program of Texas A&M University, ownership of any research data gathered during the completion of granted or sponsored research activities is the property of the State of Texas and Texas A&M University. The student must, upon completion of all research activities, turn over to the supervising research faculty member all data and records of research (including but not limited to original research

laboratory notebooks, original data-containing sheets, electronic media, etc.) for secure storage. While students may utilize a personal computer for the completion of statistical analysis or manuscript preparation from research and may store data on such a device, the original data should always be first captured in a paper format and then be entered into a spreadsheet for later analysis. These paper forms must never leave the laboratory or offices of the student and must be surrendered along with other original data-containing systems/media upon project completion. Per researcher desire, paper forms may be scanned to electronic file storage and destroyed once the successful scanning and file integrity has been verified.

### **Laboratory Notebook(s)**

A student should invest in a laboratory notebook for the recording of original data, thoughts, observations gathered during research completion, and research methods. The notebook should not have any perforated pages and should be numbered sequentially. At a minimum, the student should sign and date each page as it's completed. This notebook should never leave the laboratory or student office, as the student is not the final owner of the data within the notebook. Alternatively, a student may obtain two notebooks, one that constitutes the primary laboratory notebook for the recording of methods and data, and the second to record significant observations, essential notes, data, or methods, that may be taken off campus. This practice is discouraged as it may result in a non-unified system of notetaking and data capture. The student is encouraged to consult with the research advisor as to proper procedures for data capture and lab notebook maintenance, as well as appropriate securing of lab notebooks. The research faculty may choose to provide a lab notebook to the student, and in such instances, this notebook is to be used by the student as the primary laboratory notebook.

### **Seminars**

All FSTC students are required to attend the Food Science seminars (FSTC 681) during the fall and spring semesters. These seminars provide graduate students with an excellent opportunity to learn about research being done by other students and faculty in the department.

The FSTC Seminar (FSTC 681) is a variable credit (0-1 credit) course. All food science graduate students are required to register for a food science seminar every semester. 0 credit seminar cannot be used on degree plans, and it does not count for continuous registration requirements. Students who need the course credit for their degree plan should register for 1 credit.

### **Annual Graduate Student Evaluation**

All graduate students in the Department of Food Science and Technology are required to have an annual committee meeting and submit an annual graduate student evaluation form. The form will be due to the graduate advisor every year on March 30. If an evaluation has not been received by the deadline, the student will not be considered for a Graduate Assistantship or Graduate Scholarship from the Department. Students will also be blocked from course registration.

## Ombuds Officer

[The Ombuds Officer](#) serves as an informal, neutral and confidential resource for graduate students to discuss questions and concerns related to their graduate experience. The university is a large and complex institution and graduate students often play multiple roles (e.g., student, research collaborator, instructor, technician, peer). Misunderstandings and conflicts can arise in any one of these roles. Having a safe, off-the-record conversation with an Ombuds Officer can be a first step if you do not know where to turn. The Ombuds Officer is here to help graduate students identify options for addressing concerns and will promote a fair and impartial process for all parties involved.

The Ombuds Office values and protects the privacy and identity of students seeking assistance. We do not disclose confidential communications unless required by state law such as in situations of child abuse or neglect; imminent risk of serious harm to the visitor or another person; or a court order with appropriate authority.

According to Texas A&M System Regulation 08.01.01, Ombuds Officers are considered Mandatory Reporters and are required to report any alleged sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, discrimination, or any other prohibited conducted committed by or against a person who was a student or employee at the time of the incident. Ombuds Officers are also obligated to report discrimination based on a protected status.

The university is structured with various layers of policies and procedures that guide its operations. The ombuds office can assist with providing clarification on how university policies and/or procedures apply to your situation such as excused absences and religious holy days, work hour expectations, grade appeal process, or similar matters related to your graduate education experience.

The Graduate and Professional Student Ombuds Officer promotes the University mission of excellence in graduate education by providing a service to support graduate students and facilitate environments in which they can thrive and prosper. To that end, the Graduate and Professional School holds the Ombuds Officer accountable to the same high standards that Texas A&M prides itself in.

You might want to contact the Ombuds Officer when:

- You need an impartial and independent person to listen.
- You think someone at the university has treated you unfairly.
- You have an issue that you and others have not been able to resolve and that you would prefer not to address through formal channels.
- You are not sure how to interpret a University policy or procedure or how it applies to your situation.
- You feel that a University policy, procedure, or regulation has been applied unfairly, or itself is unfair or ambiguous.
- You have a problem that requires an outside party to help facilitate communication and/or negotiate a solution.

The Ombuds Officer hears about a wide range of experiences and concerns related to graduate education. Some common concerns include:

- Academic-related issues (e.g., grade disputes, testing procedures, instructor/student misunderstandings).
- Intellectual property issues.
- Interpersonal conflicts, lab politics and problems with workplace climate.
- Concerns about professional ethics.
- Initiating and conducting difficult conversations.
- Concerns about procedural fairness or due process.
- Conflicts between graduate students and their research advisors.
- Concerns about inequities in work expectations and/or funding opportunities.
- Disagreements with or misunderstandings of university policies/procedures.
- Cultural conflicts.
- Concerns about unethical or inappropriate behavior.

The Ombuds Officer can:

- Listen and help you achieve a greater understanding of the problem.
- Help you find information applicable to your situation and identify possible solutions to your problem.
- Explain University policies and procedures and how they apply to your specific case.
- Help you identify options for resolving conflicts with colleagues, staff, faculty and advisors.
- Help you achieve fair and equitable solutions to problems.
- Facilitate communication among people in conflict.
- Provide other types of assistance to help you resolve a problem informally.
- Refer you to formal grievance or appeal procedures if you wish to engage in a formal process.
- Identify trends or patterns of complaints that might be systemic.
- Offer recommendations for changes to policies/procedures that appear outdated or problematic, while maintaining confidentiality.

The Ombuds Officer cannot:

- Advocate for the University or the student, or any particular point of view.
- Make or change University decisions, rules or policies.
- Set aside a decision or supersede the authority of another University official.
- Participate in formal grievance procedures.
- Provide legal advice.
- Conduct formal investigations.

The Ombuds Office is located in the Graduate and Professional School in 204 Nagle Hall. Email us to schedule an appointment in person, over the phone, or on Zoom. The Ombuds Officer will listen and work with you through to create a range of options and strategies for moving forward. Please include UIN, availability, and a brief description of the issue. (Be advised that

confidentiality cannot be ensured in email communication. Thus, we discourage you from sending sensitive information via email.)

Phone: 979-845-3631

Email: [ombuds@tamu.edu](mailto:ombuds@tamu.edu)

### **Academic Integrity and Honor Policy**

Students are expected to, at all times, complete coursework and all degree procedures in accordance with Texas A&M University Aggie Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policy. Detailed explanation of the Aggie Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policy, as well as other information related to academic and research ethical behavior and integrity, including university disciplinary procedures for student infractions of the Honor Code, are located at: <https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>.

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

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