

KU Department of Aerospace Engineering Graduate Handbook



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to present in one document all material needed to plan and monitor your graduate program. The handbook includes requirements for four graduate degree programs as well as any associated policies, rules and procedures.

The Department of Aerospace Engineering offers traditional Master of Science (MS) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs which emphasize original analytical and experimental research. In addition, two unique programs are offered: the Master of Engineering (ME) and the Doctor of Engineering (DE), which emphasize system design and management. All these programs provide excellent preparation for employment in industry, in private and government laboratories, and an academic career in teaching and research.

Graduate coursework is available in the following areas of aerospace engineering:

- Aerodynamics
- Aircraft design
- Computational fluid dynamics
- Flight testing
- Flight dynamics controls
- Orbital mechanics
- Propulsion
- Structures
- Spacecraft design

Graduate courses are taught by faculty with a strong background in graduate education and in industry and government laboratory experience. All faculty are currently active in funded or unfunded research in their areas of expertise. Department research programs are typically funded by: NASA, DOD, DOE, NSF, FAA, and the Aerospace industry.

Richard Hale

C.E. and M.J. Spahr Professor and Chair

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1 DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

1.1 DEPARTMENT HISTORY

The KU Aerospace Engineering (KUAE) department originated as the Department of Aeronautical Engineering on January 2, 1941, with its first degree program being the Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering (BS). Until that time the degree program had been an option under the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

In 1961 the name of the department was changed to Aerospace Engineering. Graduate programs leading to the Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering (MS) and Doctor of Philosophy in Aerospace Engineering (PhD) degree plans were established soon thereafter. During 1962-1967 the departments of Mechanical Engineering and Aerospace Engineering were merged, but in 1968 the department, once again, became independent under its current name.

In 1968 the Master of Engineering in Aerospace Engineering (ME) degree plan was added. The Doctor of Engineering in Aerospace Engineering (DE) degree plan followed in 1969. Also, in 1968 approval was sought to form the Flight Research Laboratory (FRL). Approval was granted in 1969.

In 1970 a short course program was established. The Aerospace Engineering Short Course Program currently operates as a unit of Jayhawk Global, the University's division for online and distance learning. In 1980 the department began offering several space science and engineering courses to align with typical course offers of an aerospace program.

In 2022 in collaboration with Jayhawk Global, KUAE started its online Master's program. All three Master's degree options are available via the online program.

Today, the KUAE program offers 5 different graduate degree options, with both in-person and online options for the Master's degree. In addition, through the short course program, KUAE offers more than 50 public and in-house short courses per year in the US and abroad. The program offers a wide range of courses tailored specifically to the needs of industry and government organizations.

1.2 AEROSPACE ENGINEERING FACULTY AND STAFF

1.2.1 Faculty

Mostafa Aghaei Jouybari, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., Michigan State University)

Emily Arnold, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Kansas)

Ronald Barrett-Gonzalez, Professor (Ph.D., University of Kansas)

Brina Blinzler, Assistant Professor of Practice (Ph.D., The University of Akron, Ed.D. Chalmers University of Technology)

Haiyang Chao, Professor (Ph.D., Utah State University)

Mark Ewing, Associate Professor (Ph.D., Ohio State University)

Adam Gorrell, Assistant Professor of Practice (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

Richard Hale, Professor, C.E. and M.J. Spahr Professor and Chair (Ph.D., Iowa State University)

Cheng Huang, Assistant Professor, (Ph.D., Purdue University)

Shawn Keshmiri, Charles E. & Mary Jane Spahr Professor, (Ph.D., University of Kansas)

Craig McLaughlin, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Colorado at Boulder)

Amir Mirzendehtdel, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Ray Taghavi, Professor and Associate Chairperson (Ph.D., University of Kansas)

ZJ Wang, Spahr Professor (Ph.D., University of Glasgow)

1.2.2 Staff

Eve Bonner, Graduate Program Coordinator

Kelly Bellmyer, Office Coordinator

Steven Fullerton, Student Program Coordinator

Cody Holtrop, Research Technician/UAS Test Pilot

Brad Schroeder, Laboratory Program Director

2 ADMISSION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

2.1 ADMISSION STANDARDS

Applicants must have as a minimum, a BS degree or a BS degree in a closely related field from a university or college with a program equivalent to the KU BS program. Applicants without an equivalent of BS background may have to complete certain undergraduate AE courses at the discretion of the department Graduate Program Director. Such applicants may be admitted conditionally as a non-degree seeking student until a plan of study for gap courses is completed.

Master's program admission requires an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 while the doctoral program requires an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 and a GPA of 3.5 for courses taken as part of a master's program.

2.2 ADMISSIONS DEADLINES

Typical application deadlines for admissions are:

Fall Admission:

- Priority Deadline: December to early January
- Final Deadline: early April
- Online Deadline: June

Spring Admission:

- Priority Deadline: early October
- Final Deadline: early November
- Online Deadline: early December

Specific dates can be found on the AE website [Graduate Admission](#) page.

For full consideration for fellowships, scholarships and research/teaching assistantships, applications must be received by the priority deadlines. All applicants that submit their application by the priority deadlines are considered for scholarships/fellowships.

2.3 APPLICATION MATERIALS & PROCEDURES

2.3.1 Application Overview

All application materials must be submitted via the [online application portal](#). Applications are not reviewed until they are complete, and hard copies of materials are not accepted. Completed applications include:

Required Materials:

- One official transcript from each post-secondary school
- Three letters of recommendation
- Resume or CV

- Statement of purpose
- Official TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE score report (non-English speaking applicants only)

Optional Materials:

- Official GRE score report
- Writing samples such as conference or journal publications

Note: Applicants are encouraged to provide the optional materials as part of their application package. Doing so provides the graduate admission committee with the most complete picture of you, the applicant. This can make you more competitive for scholarships, fellowships, or assistantships. Only applicants who have been admitted to the program can be considered for any financial assistance.

2.3.2 Application Document Specifications

2.3.2.1 Transcript

A transcript must be provided for each post-secondary institution the applicant attended. Determinations of equivalency and officiality of a transcript are made by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Degree conferral transcripts must be received by the end of your first semester of graduate enrollment to be eligible for continued enrollment. The official transcript must show that your undergraduate degree has been conferred.

Application Requirements

KU Transcript Policy

2.3.2.2 Letters of Recommendation

Recommenders will automatically receive submission instructions after the application is submitted, which includes the recommendation form and instructions for uploading documents. A professional recommendation letter should be written on official institutional or organizational letterhead as the letter is highly valued by Admission Selection Committee. Recommendations must be submitted through the online submission portal.

2.3.2.3 Statement of Purpose

Statements of purpose must be written by the applicant. The statement should address the applicant's intended research area, possible faculty member with whom they wish to work, motivations for pursuing a graduate degree, and long-term career goals. Typical statements of purpose are approximately two pages in length.

2.3.2.4 GRE Scores

GRE score reports are optional. Preferred scores are a minimum of 50% on the Verbal and Analytical sections of the GRE and 85% on the Quantitative section. GRE scores must be received by the University directly from ETS. Student copies or copies provided by the student are not official.

2.3.2.5 *Non-Native English-Speaking Applicants*

The following standardized tests are required to demonstrate an applicant's level of English proficiency: TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE; test scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to the University. All testing results are considered expired after two years. For other options to demonstrate English proficiency, please check [English proficiency requirements](#) and [Applied English Center](#).

2.3.3 *Application Fees*

Applications fees are paid at the time of application submission.

2.4 **ADMISSION CONTACT INFORMATION**

For general questions about the application process and navigating the online application portal, please contact the Office of Graduate Admissions. For specific questions about the Aerospace Engineering graduate program and admission requirements, please contact the KUAE graduate program.

Graduate Admissions	KU Aerospace Engineering Graduate Program
KU Visitor Center 1502 Iowa St Lawrence, Kansas 66045 785-864-3140 graduateadm@ku.edu Website: https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply	1530 W. 15th Street 2120 Learned Hall Lawrence, Kansas, 66045 785-864-2960 AEROhawk@ku.edu Website: http://www.ae.ku.edu

3 PRE-ENROLLMENT AND ENROLLMENT

3.1 DEFINITION OF A FULL-TIME GRADUATE STUDENT

The department follows the University's definition of a full-time graduate student. The University's definition of a full-time graduate student is described by:

[Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students Policy](#)

3.2 COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM AND GUIDELINES

Courses offered by the Aerospace Engineering department are listed as AE XXX. The course numbering system used by the Department of Aerospace Engineering is:

Course Numbers	Description
1-99	Courses not applicable toward any degree.
100-299	Freshman/Sophomore courses.
300-499	Junior/Senior courses.
500-699	Courses designated primarily for juniors and seniors. May also be taken for graduate credit.
700-799	Graduate credit: courses designated primarily for graduate students. Open also to undergraduates for undergraduate credit.
800-899	Graduate credit: courses designated for graduate students.
900-999	Graduate credit: courses designated primarily for research or project hours.

3.2.1 Course Restrictions for Graduate Students

- Courses numbered below 500 will not be counted towards the graduate student's GPA or required hours for degree, even if required to make-up any deficiency
- Courses numbered 500-599 will count towards the graduate student's GPA but will not count towards required hours for the degree, even if required to make up any deficiency. The only exception to this policy is for 500-level MATH courses (see next bullet)
- Graduate mathematics courses are considered those taken at the 600-level and higher. Master's students are allowed to take one mathematics course (up to 3 hours) at the 500-level. The only 500-level mathematics course accepted at the doctoral level is MATH 590.
- All AE courses other than AE 690 must be 700 level and above.
- No more than two courses below the 700 level may be used to satisfy degree requirements for Master's students and no more than three courses for doctoral students.
- AE 712, Techniques of Engineering Evaluation, is the only mathematics-intensive engineering course that will help fulfill the doctoral program Core requirement

- There are limitations on the number of special problems hours (AE 790 and/or AE 892) a student can take for credit towards degree.
 - Master's students may take up to 3 hours of AE 790, Special Problems in Aerospace Engineering for Master's students.
 - Doctoral students may take up to 6 hours of special problems. Doctoral special problems hours can be either all AE 892, Special Problems in Aerospace Engineering for Doctoral students, or a combination of AE 892 and AE 790, if AE 790 was taken as a Master's student.

3.3 TRANSFER CREDIT FOR GRADUATE COURSES

The Department follows the [University's Graduate Transfer Credit](#) policy.

3.4 REDUCTION OF HOURS

For doctoral degrees, up to 24 credit hours of relevant coursework from an MS degree completed at a recognized graduate school may be considered for a reduction of hours. The AE Graduate Committee considers course reductions on a case-by-case basis, and any approved course reduction must be documented by the student in their Plan of Study. Doctoral students must complete at least 18 hours of KU graduate coursework.

For both Master's and Doctoral students KUAEE defines an "especially well prepared" student as a student with a BS from KU and an undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students with a KU BS degree earning a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher may petition to reduce the degree requirements of up to 6 credit hours for their degree plan in MS, ME, PhD, or DE. These 6 hours reflect the technical electives, AE courses 700 and higher, taken to satisfy the KU BS degree requirements. This can be done by submitting an [Application for Reduction of Hours](#) form.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

3.5 ENROLLMENT

3.5.1 How to Enroll

After students have been accepted and create an online KUID, they may enroll in classes via the online [Enroll & Pay system](#). Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor prior to enrolling in classes. If students have not already identified an advisor, the Graduate Program Director serves as their advisor until they identify an advisor during their first semester. Students may find a list of course offerings at classes.ku.edu. Only online students may enroll in online sections of courses.

3.5.2 Permission Numbers

Students that do not have the KU prerequisite(s) for a graduate course will be required to obtain a permission number to enroll. If the student believes they have completed equivalent coursework,

they should contact the course instructor to obtain their concurrence and approval. The student must then forward this approval to the Graduate Coordinator who will issue the permission number. Students are also required to have a permission number to enroll in thesis, project, and dissertation hours. Students must include these courses in their plan of study to automatically have them applied.

3.5.3 Changes in Enrollment/Late Enrollment

Students who are not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. Further the University Registrar will subsequently deactivate the KU ID of any student not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must submit a [Permit to Re-Enroll](#) within one academic year to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the Graduate Program Coordinator of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the “Withdraw from the University” option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

Students should contact the Graduate Coordinator regarding any changes in their active enrollment status. To avoid problems on your record, students should consult with the Graduate Coordinator and their advisor prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

- [Permit to Re-Enroll Policy](#)
- [AE Application for Reduction of Hours](#)
- [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#) (Office of the Registrar)

Other Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)

3.5.4 Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The [Credit/No Credit \(CR/NC\)](#) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA. The student should consult with their advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)
- Registrar CR/NC [online request](#) form

3.6 FINANCIAL AID

When possible, the department offers financial support to graduate students. Financial support may be offered in the following forms:

- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): GTA positions include a stipend, tuition waiver, and other benefits
- Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): typical GRA positions include a stipend, possible tuition waiver, and other benefits
- Fellowship: The department strives to provide approximately equal total compensation for GTA and GRA positions

*Important note: acceptance into the graduate program does not guarantee financial aid.

To be considered for any financial aid, applications must be received before the priority application deadline (See Section 2.2). Applicants will be contacted if they have been selected for such support.

GTA and Fellowship appointments are made by the department chair following a review and recommendation by the faculty.

GRA appointments are typically made by individual faculty members who have research funding. Students interested in applying for a GRA appointment are advised to contact the faculty member(s) directly to explore suitable research projects and financial support.

A full review of assistantship benefits can be found on the [GTA/GRA/GA Benefits](#) page.

International students may have additional work restrictions due to visa type and should consult with [International Support Services \(ISS\)](#).

3.6.1 GTA and GRA Eligibility

GTA and GRA eligibility requirements are different than those required for admission. The following University policies define GTA/GRA eligibility.

- [Eligibility and Policy Information](#)
- [Policy on Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants](#)
- [Full-time-Enrollment-for-Graduate-Students](#)

4 DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

4.1 DEPARTMENT GRADUATE PERSONNEL

4.1.1 Graduate Program Director Role and Responsibilities

The Graduate Program Director provides leadership and oversight to support graduate student success and ensure compliance with program and university requirements. This role is responsible for ensuring that students receive timely, consistent advising and guidance regarding degree progress and program expectations as outlined in the graduate handbook and other program materials. The Director serves as a resource for resolving academic conflicts between students and faculty, facilitates clear communication regarding graduate policies and procedures, and acts as the primary point of contact for questions or concerns related to communications from the University, the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, and the academic unit. In addition, the Director interprets and disseminates policy updates to graduate students, faculty, and staff; establishes and communicates expectations for advising and mentoring; and ensures continuity of advising when a student's primary advisor is unavailable for an extended period.

4.1.2 KUAE Graduate Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The KUAE Graduate Committee consists of 3-4 KUAE faculty as well as the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Program Coordinator. The Graduate Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing and recommending admissions decisions for all applicants to the graduate program.
- Reviewing and recommending students for school- and department-level funding
- Providing recommendations for department-level policies and procedures
- Reviewing student academic status and providing recommendations for continued enrollment.

4.1.3 Primary Advisor Role and Responsibilities

The primary advisor guides students through their degree program by overseeing academic progress, facilitating research, helping with career planning, and referring students to University resources. To serve as a primary advisor/committee chair for PhD, DE, and MS students, the faculty member must hold the appropriate graduate faculty privileges. Faculty advisors are expected to meet regularly with their graduate advisees and provide timely feedback on student work completed outside of course work. It is recommended that faculty advisors of students in research-based degrees meet at least bi-weekly with advisees, but they must meet with their students once a month (unless the advisor is on an extended absence and has assigned a temporary advisor to the student). Advisors of coursework-only students are expected to meet with students once a semester. Faculty advisors are recommended to provide feedback on student work completed outside of course work within two weeks.

Additional graduate mentoring and advising responsibilities for faculty advisors are outlined in the University's [Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Policy](#).

4.1.4 Graduate Program Coordinator Role and Responsibilities

The Graduate Program Coordinator plays a central role in supporting the graduate program by overseeing all aspects of the admissions process, including managing applications, conducting correspondence with prospective students, and processing required paperwork. Once enrolled, the Coordinator monitors each student's academic progress to ensure timely adherence to degree requirements, serving as a key point of contact for questions related to graduate policies and procedures. In this capacity, the Graduate Program Coordinator maintains ongoing communication with students, the graduate admissions office, student advisors, and research faculty to facilitate a cohesive and well-supported graduate experience.

4.1.5 Office Coordinator Role and Responsibilities

The Office Coordinator plays a supporting role within the graduate program by assisting in graduate recruitment efforts and coordinating prospective student visits. Working closely with the Graduate Program Director, Department Chair, and faculty, the Office Coordinator facilitates the assignment, onboarding, and evaluation of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), as well as the keying of other 3G appointments to ensure accurate and timely processing. Additionally, the Office Coordinator organizes graduate student events and manages the logistical coordination of dissertation and thesis defenses, including reserving rooms, posting flyers, and adding events to the KU Event Calendar to ensure broad visibility and professional experience for all involved.

4.2.5 Graduate Student Role and Responsibilities

General expectations and responsibilities of a graduate student are outlined in the University's [Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Policy](#). Further, every faculty advisor has their own expectations of their graduate students. It is important for students to meet with their faculty advisor regularly to ensure they understand the full range of expectations.

4.2 ADVISOR

4.2.1 Selecting and Advisor

All graduate students must have a primary advisor. Upon admission, the Graduate Program Director serves as the de facto primary advisor for all students until they identify their permanent advisor. It is the student's responsibility to identify a primary advisor, and they must do so by the end of their first semester. This primary advisor must be an AE faculty member that holds graduate status. For PhD, DE, and MS students, the primary advisor also serves as the chair of the dissertation/thesis/project committee. While ME students may keep the Graduate Program Director as their primary advisor for the entirety of their degree, they are highly encouraged to identify an alternate primary advisor in a subdiscipline most closely aligned with their interests.

4.2.2 Change of Advisor

Occasionally, students and/or advisors determine that a change in advisor is necessary. The student and their current advisor should first discuss the need for the change. The student or advisor should then email the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Program Coordinator notifying them of the intent to change advisors. Immediately thereafter, the student must initiate the change of advisor process by first identifying a new advisor and meeting with the faculty member to obtain their agreement for changing advisors. Once a new advisor has been identified, the student must complete a [Change of Advisor form](#). The student has until the end of the semester to finalize the

change of advisor process. Should a new advisor not be agreed upon by the end of the semester, the department may dismiss the student.

4.3 RESPONSIBLE SCHOLARSHIP

All graduate students are required to take AE 690, Professional Development for Graduate Studies. Master's students must take 1 semester of AE 690. Doctoral students are required to take 2 semesters of AE 690. AE 690 is not offered every semester, so it is advised that students enroll in the first sections available. Students that do not meet the responsible scholarship requirement prior to their last semester may be required to take an alternate course of at least 3 hours to fulfill the requirement.

4.4 RESEARCH SKILLS

The university requires all graduate students to receive training in research skills pertinent to their field of study. Details for satisfying these requirements are described in Section 6.3.3. Additional information can also be found in the [University's Research Skills and Responsible Conduct of Research policy](#).

4.5 PLAN OF STUDY

A [Plan of Study](#) must be completed and approved no later than the end of the student's first semester. The Plan of Study serves as a record of the student's intentions, an indicator of the likely time-to-degree, and as an official acknowledgement of the advisor's and committee member's approval of the student's study plans. The form can be accessed and changed by the student subsequent to initial approval, but any changes must be approved by the advisor and the graduate director.

Information included as part of the Plan of Study is:

- Committee – MEAE students are only required to have an advisor, MSAE students are required to enter at least 3 committee members, and doctoral students are required to enter at least 5 committee members. For further guidance on dissertation and thesis committee composition please see University policy on [Doctoral Dissertations](#) and [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#) as well as Sections 5.2.2 and 6.3.2
- Proposed area of research (not required for MEAE)
- Proposed semester of graduation
- Proposed sequence of courses through the semester of graduation
- Proposed qualifying exam date (doctoral students only)
- Proposed date of residency completion (doctoral students only)
- Proposed date of research skills completion (doctoral students only)
- Proposed date of comprehensive exam (doctoral students only)
- Proposed date of responsible scholarship completion (doctoral students only)

When completing the plan of study, the following course types should be used:

- Undefined - AE 690
- Core - courses that fulfill the math requirement
- Depth - courses directly supporting the student's area of research/interest
- Breadth - courses that do not directly support the student's areas of research/interest
- Research - Thesis & dissertation hours
- Deficiency - Gap courses satisfying pre-requisite requirements, but do not count toward degree

The [online Plan of Study](#) must be updated each semester to enroll. Detailed course descriptions are in the [catalog](#).

Aerospace Engineering requires that all students update their plan and have it approved each semester before the enrollment hold is lifted. The first time the plan is submitted, it must be approved by the full committee, subsequent submissions only require the approval of the committee chair and Graduate Program Director. During the final semester of enrollment, the plan must also be approved by the full committee.

New AE students must have their plan completed and approved by the end of their first semester of graduate work for their hold to be removed and enroll in the second semester.

The plan should include all courses through time of graduation. This includes any pre-requisite courses that may be required, as well as any hours taken in addition to the minimum required hours. Permission for enrollment in special problems courses (AE 790 & AE 892) or thesis and dissertation hours (AE 895 & AE 996) will not be automatically granted unless they are included in the approved plan of study.

Students are encouraged to complete their plan of study at least one month before the end of the semester. If the plan is not submitted and approved before the beginning of the enrollment semester, students will incur late enrollment fees.

4.6 LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)

Please see the University's policy on [Leave of Absence](#). Students must first receive an approval from their advisor before emailing the leave of absence request to the Graduate Program Coordinator for Progress-to-Degree processing. Students must provide the Coordinator with the semester they wish to begin their LOA and the semester in which they intend to return.

4.7 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The AE Department regards academic misconduct as a very serious matter. Students who violate conduct policies will be subject to severe penalties, up through and including dismissal from the School of Engineering. Please refer to the [University Senate Rules and Regulations policy](#) and the [Rules and Regulations of the School of Engineering](#) for specific guidelines about actions considered to be academic misconduct and the repercussions of such action.

4.8 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Grievances arising within the School of Engineering must be heard under the [School's Grievance Procedure](#) (Article VIIIr). The School of Engineering grievance procedure applies to the faculty members, unclassified professional staff, and students.

Note: This procedure does not apply to graduate students in matters related to their employment as teaching assistants. A separate grievance procedure outlined in the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) between the University of Kansas and the Board of Regents and the Kansas Association of Public Employees is available for that purpose.

4.9 CHANGE OF AE GRADUATE PLAN

If students wish to change their current degree plan or add an AE plan, they must complete a [Change of AE Graduate Plan](#). Both the primary advisor and Graduate Program Director must sign off on the change of plan.

4.10 GRADING

4.10.1 Grading for Coursework

A passing grade in graduate coursework is considered a C and above. Students earning below a C in any class will not receive credit for that class toward their degree. Overall, students must earn at least a B average (i.e. 3.0 GPA) on coursework counted toward the graduate degree. Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation the first semester after their GPA is below 3.0. If a student is placed on academic probation, they will be notified via email by the School of Engineering.

Students may use the [KU GPA Calculator](#) to estimate their current or projected GPA.

Additional information can be found in the [Graduate Grading Policy](#).

4.10.2 Grading for Thesis and Dissertation Hours

The department grades research and project hours (AE 895, AE 996, and AE 997) using a Satisfactory Progress (SP), Limited Progress (LP), and No Progress (NP) scale. Students receiving a NP grade for one semester or an LP grade for two semesters may also be placed on academic probation.

4.10.3 Waiting Grade

After one semester a Waiting Grade (WG) must be changed to an Incomplete (I). Students with a WG or I on their transcript are not eligible for GTA/GRA positions.

4.11 GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The department or school initiates the

probation process, and the department will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative [GPA dropping below a B average \(3.0 on a 4.0 scale\)](#). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

In addition to the University's requirements for [good academic standing](#), the AE department may also place students on probation or dismiss them from the program if they do not make satisfactory progress in research. If students receive NP for a single semester or LP for two consecutive semesters they may be put on probation by the department. Subsequent semesters receiving less than SP may result in dismissal of the student.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, and in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

4.12 TIME LIMITS

The University expects that master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of full-time study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six to seven (6-7) years of full-time study. Students pursuing part-time study may be slower in progress to degree, limited only by degree time constraints outlined below.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. To support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate-Students](#)
- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time to Degree Information](#)

5 MASTER'S PROGRAM

5.1 OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

The KUAE department offers three different options for the master's degree, each of which can be completed either as an in-person or online student. The three offerings include two research-based Master of Science (MS) degrees and one coursework-only Master of Engineering (ME) degree. All three degrees require a minimum of 30.25 credit hours.

- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

5.2 MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS) IN AEROSPACE ENGINEERING

5.2.1 MS General Description

The Master of Science program in Aerospace Engineering (MS) is a research-oriented program in which students conduct original work related to Aerospace Engineering.

The Master of Science (MS) program in Aerospace Engineering (AE) has two options.

- The **Thesis Option** requires a minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate work. The required credit hours include 6 hours earned in the satisfactory completion of a thesis (AE 895, M.S. Thesis or Project).
- The **Project Option** requires a minimum of 30 hours of graduate work. The credit hours include 3 hours in the satisfactory completion of a project (AE 895, M.S. Thesis or Project).

Students must take at least one semester of AE 690, Professional Development for Graduate Students. No more than two courses below the 700 level may be used to satisfy degree requirements, in addition to the required AE 690 course. Graduate mathematics courses are considered those taken at the 600-level and higher; however, Master's students may also use no more than 1 mathematics course (up to 3 hours) at the 500 level to meet degree requirements. All AE courses other than AE 690 must be 700 level and above.

The candidate must pass a final oral examination in which the thesis or research project (results of the independent investigation) is defended, and the candidate demonstrates a working knowledge in aerospace engineering.

5.2.2 Thesis or Project Committee

Prior to submitting the [Plan of Study](#) (see Section 4.5) for the first time, a student is required to form a thesis or project committee with a minimum of three Graduate Faculty. The three committee members consist of the Committee Chair (the student's primary advisor and KUAE faculty member) and two additional committee members, at least one of which must be AE faculty. The Master's committee chair must hold Master's Chairing status. Additional committee members may be selected by the student from either AE or other School of Engineering faculty members. More information regarding the thesis or project committee is detailed in the [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#).

Substitutions of the committee chair (and/or co-chair) are prohibited after the committee has been approved by the AE Graduate Committee. If a committee chair (and/or co-chair) needs to be

replaced, the revised committee must be approved by the AE Graduate Committee in advance of the exam.

Substitutions of the committee members are permitted as long as the new members hold committee status. Special members can be added after the committee has been approved by the AE Graduate Committee, but these additions must be approved by the AE Graduate Committee in advance of the exam.

5.2.3 Final Defense for MS Degree

The MS-Thesis final defense includes both a written (thesis) and oral component, while the MS-Project defense only requires an oral component. Once a date is agreed upon by the student and their committee, students must complete a [MS Defense Form](#) three weeks in advance of the defense date seeking a procedural approval. Students must provide their thesis or project document(s) (excluding presentation materials) to their committee at least two weeks prior to the defense.

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University-level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

5.3 MASTER OF ENGINEERING IN AEROSPACE ENGINEERING (ME)

The Master of Engineering (ME) in Aerospace Engineering (AE) is a program which emphasizes systems design and management skills and procedures rather than the more analytical emphasis of the MS program.

5.3.1 ME General Description

The minimum course requirements for the ME degree are:

- At least 30 credit hours of graduate-level courses; which shall include either 3 or more credit hours in aerospace design or at least 3 and up to 6 semester hours of approved management courses.
- Students must take at least one semester of AE 690, Professional Development for Graduate Students.

- No more than two courses below the 700 level may be used to satisfy degree requirements, in addition to the required AE 690 course. All AE courses other than AE 690 must be 700 level and above.

5.3.2 *Advisor*

Unlike the MS degree, the ME degree does not require a three-person committee, only an advisor. The Graduate Director serves as student's advisor upon admission. While a student may keep the Graduate Director as their advisor, students are highly encouraged to identify a permanent primary advisor that is in their subdiscipline of interest. To learn more about faculty subdisciplines, students can review the [faculty page](#) on the AE website. The student will work with their faculty advisor to develop a formal Plan of Study that includes a sequence of courses through the semester of graduation that are consistent with the student's academic background and identified degree goals. See Section 4.5 for more on the Plan of Study.

5.3.3 *Completion of MEAE Degree*

A final culminating effort is not required for the ME degree. Upon completion of all coursework, the student's plan of study must meet final approval, and the student must complete and submit the [ME Completion Form](#).

5.4 **OUTLINE OF TYPICAL MASTER'S PROGRAM**

An outline of a typical Master's program in Aerospace Engineering is as follows:

Upon arrival, the student selects or is assigned a major advisor based upon the student's area of interest. The MS/ME major advisor assists the student in selecting courses for the first semester.

- If the student hasn't decided on a specific area of interest, the Graduate Program Director will assist in identifying courses for the first semester and an advisor for their graduate degree plan.
- During the first semester, the major advisor assists in:
 1. The preparation of a plan of study (Section 4.5)
 2. The formation of an initial thesis or project committee
 3. Defining an area of thesis or project research for MS students
- Each semester the student meets with their advisor and updates the plan of study
- By the 3rd semester, an MS thesis should have made progress in research and begins writing of final thesis
- During the 4th semester students:
 1. Schedule a meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator to discuss final semester timeline and graduation checklist/requirements.
 2. MS project students complete their project & project presentation and MS thesis students conclude their research and complete their thesis.
 3. The student schedules their defense by coordinating a time with their committee.
 4. Apply to graduate in Enroll & Pay.

- After scheduling their defense, the student
 1. Completes the [MS Defense Form](#) and submits it at least 3 weeks prior to the defense
 2. Reviews the [Master's degree checklist](#)
 3. Updates the study plan and submits it for final committee approval
 4. Defends the thesis or project before the student's master's committee, other faculty, students, and invited guests
 - After the defense, the student must complete [Master's degree checklist](#) and upload all required documents

6 DOCTORATE PROGRAMS

The KUAE department offers two different options for doctoral degrees. The first is a traditional Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program that requires students to conduct original research and make a unique technical contribution to their field of study. The Doctor of Engineering (DE) program emphasizes system design and management skills. Both programs require 66.5 hours.

6.1 **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN AEROSPACE ENGINEERING DESCRIPTION AND COURESE REQUIREMENTS**

6.1.1 *Degree Description*

The Doctor of Philosophy program in Aerospace Engineering (PhD) is a traditional program that requires students to successfully demonstrate their abilities in a broad spectrum of aerospace technology, mathematics and original research. To earn the PhD degree students must:

1. Complete PhD course requirements in accordance with an approved plan of study with a 3.0. Grades of C-, D, and F are not allowed.
2. Pass the Doctoral Qualifying Exam (DQE)
3. Complete the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship (RS2) requirement
4. Satisfy the residency requirements
5. Pass a comprehensive oral examination
6. Prepare and defend a PhD dissertation which must contain an original contribution to the field by the candidate.

6.1.2 *Course Requirements*

The Ph.D. program requires 66.5 credit hours beyond the B.S. These 66.5 credit hours consist of at least 24 credit hours of dissertation and at least 36 credit hours of coursework. The 36 hours of coursework can include up to 24 credit hours of relevant coursework from an MS degree completed at a recognized graduate school. Students must complete at least 18 hours of approved coursework as a KUAE graduate student. The minimum coursework requirements are as follows:

Core Courses (9 credit hours)

- The 9 credit hours must include a minimum of 6 credit hours of graduate-level courses from the Mathematics Department.
- Graduate mathematics courses are MATH 590 or any other math course 600-level or above.
- Only AE 712, Techniques of Engineering Evaluation, is considered a mathematics-intensive engineering course that meets the Core requirement.

Breadth Courses (12 credit hours)

- Credit hours distributed outside the area of specialization in aerodynamics, structures and materials, dynamics and controls, design, propulsion, and astronautics.

Depth Courses (15 credit hours)

- Technical courses (600-level and above) in the area of specialization.

Students must also take at least 0.5 hours (two semesters) of AE 690, Professional Development for Graduate Students. AE 690 is not offered every semester, thus students are highly encouraged to complete the class early in their tenure.

No more than three courses below the 700-level may be used to satisfy degree requirements, in addition to the required AE 690 course. All AE courses other than AE 690 must be 700-level and above.

6.2 DOCTOR OF ENGINEERING IN AEROSPACE ENGINEERING DESCRIPTION AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

6.2.1 Degree Description

The Doctor of Engineering emphasizes systems design and management skills, often in applied rather than theoretical research. To be awarded the D.E. degree in Aerospace Engineering all the following requirements must be satisfied:

1. Complete all D.E. course requirements in accordance with an approved plan of study with a 3.0. Grades of C-, D, and F are not allowed.
2. Pass the Doctoral Qualifying Examination (DQE)
3. Complete the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement
4. Satisfy the residency requirements
5. Pass a comprehensive oral exam
6. Prepare and defend an approved D.E. dissertation which must contain an original contribution to the field by the candidate.

6.2.2 Course Requirements

The DE degree requires 66.5 credit hours beyond the B.S degree. These 66.5 credit hours consist of at least 24 credit hours of DE project (AE 997) and at least 42 credit hours of coursework. The 42 hours of coursework can include up to 24 credit hours of relevant coursework from an MS degree completed at a recognized graduate school. Students must complete at least 18 hours of approved coursework as a KUAE Graduate student. The minimum coursework requirements are as follows:

Core Courses (9 credit hours)

- The 9 credit hours must include a minimum of 6 credit hours of graduate-level courses from the Mathematics Department.
- Graduate mathematics courses are MATH 590 or any other math course 600-level or above.
- Only AE 712, Techniques of Engineering Evaluation, is considered a mathematics-intensive engineering course that meets the Core requirement.

Breadth Courses (21 credit hours)

- Technical courses comprising at least 21 credit hours of technical courses (beyond 600 level) which must be distributed in the areas of
 - structures and materials
 - aerodynamics

- design
- dynamics and controls
- propulsion
- astronautics

Depth Courses (12 credit hours)

- Management courses (beyond 600 level) must be taken in Engineering Management courses

Students must also take at least .5 hours of AE 690, Professional Development for Graduate Students.

No more than three courses below the 700 level may be used to satisfy degree requirements, in addition to the required AE 690 course. All AE courses other than AE 690 must be 700 level and above.

It is required that the doctoral qualifying exam (DQE) be taken within the first year for students with a master's degree, and within the second year for students without a master's degree. To be eligible for the DQE, students must be in good academic standing and have a KU GPA of 3.0. If the student fails to meet these requirements, they will work with their major advisor to develop an alternate plan of study.

6.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR BOTH PHD AND DE PROGRAMS

6.3.1 Doctoral Qualifying Exam

It is required that the doctoral qualifying exam (DQE) be taken within the first year for students with a master's degree, and within the second year for students without a master's degree. To be eligible for the DQE, students must be in good academic standing and have a KU GPA of 3.0. If the student fails to meet these requirements, they will work with their primary advisor to develop an alternate plan of study.

The DQE tests the breadth of knowledge and determines the student's ability to formulate mathematical representations of real physical situations. The examination covers mathematics and 2 of these 5 areas:

- Aerodynamics
- Astronautics
- Dynamics and controls
- Propulsion
- Structures and materials

A student is allowed only 2 attempts to pass this examination. Student failing to pass the DQE in 2 attempts will be dismissed. If a student has completed AE 712 with a grade of B or higher, the mathematics section of the qualifying exam is waived.

Students may not enroll in research hours until they successfully pass the DQE.

6.3.2 Dissertation Committee and Plan of Study

The aspirant forms a dissertation committee and completes a Plan of Study after the first semester and before the end of the second semester. The dissertation committee must have 5 members, including 3 tenured or tenure-track faculty from aerospace engineering and at least 1 member from a department other than aerospace engineering. All committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty authorized to serve on doctoral exams. The committee approves the aspirant's program and administers the comprehensive examination and the formal oral defense and dissertation.

When the aspirant has completed most of the course work and satisfied the research skills, responsible scholarship and residency requirements, they must take the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive exam cannot be taken until research skills, responsible scholarship, and residency requirements have been met.

6.3.3 Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship (RS2)

The research skill requirement provides the aspirant with a research skill distinct from, but strongly supportive of, the dissertation research. One research skill is required. Possible research skills include computer science, mathematics, statistics, specific laboratory skills, and specific skills in the physical or biological sciences. The selected research skill must be listed on the Plan of Study form.

The responsible scholarship requirement serves to ensure that students are trained in responsible research practices. Aspirants can satisfy the responsible scholarship requirement by enrolling in 2 semesters of AE 690, Professional Development for Graduate Students. This course covers ethical behavior for graduate students, intellectual property, and technical writing.

In addition, the university requires doctoral students to complete a series of online Research Skills and Responsible Conduct of Research modules in their first semester of study. Details on this training can be found the [University's Research Skills and Responsible Conduct of Research](#) policy.

6.3.4 Residency Requirement

The department's Doctoral residency requirement aligns with the university's [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#) policy Enrollment Requirement.

6.3.5 Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is made up of two parts. The first part must consist of a written research proposal outlining in some detail the work to be done for the dissertation. The second part is an oral examination in which they must defend the research plans and demonstrate competence in their particular and related areas. The student must first coordinate a time with their committee in which all members are available. Once a date is determined the student must submit a [Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Form](#) at least three weeks prior to the exam date to notify graduate staff.

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University-level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

Upon passing the comprehensive oral examination the aspirant becomes a candidate for the AE Ph.D. or D.E. degree. The dissertation committee directs the preparation of the approved dissertation topic and research.

6.3.6 Dissertation Completion and Defense

The candidate now completes the dissertation work or research and writes the dissertation document. The dissertation must contain an original contribution made by the candidate to the field. In addition, a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature must be included. This dissertation must be approved by the candidate's dissertation committee. A formal oral and public defense of the dissertation is required before the candidate's committee, any other interested members of the graduate faculty, and the general public. Candidates for the Ph.D. or D.E. must also satisfy the university's general requirements for the degree.

Students must again first coordinate a date with their committee and then submit a [Doctoral Final Defense Form](#) at least three weeks prior to the oral defense. Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Students must provide their thesis or project document(s) (excluding presentation materials) to their committee at least two weeks prior to the defense.

Note well:

- a. The dissertation must be publicly defended in the presence of the candidate's dissertation committee. Public notice of this defense must be given at least two weeks before the defense. The dissertation defense must be public and reasonable questions from the public must be addressed by the candidate.
- b. At least four months must elapse between passing the comprehensive oral examination and conducting the final dissertation defense.

6.4 MAXIMUM TIME TO DEGREE

For both the Ph.D. and D.E degrees, the dissertation must be completed within eight years after being admitted to the doctoral program. Under compelling circumstances, the dissertation committee may grant an extension beyond this period.

6.5 DOCTORAL ANNUAL REVIEW

Each Spring, doctoral students will be asked to complete an Annual Review. The survey is generally sent out at the beginning of the calendar year and is administered by the Graduate Program Director. The review covers their academic and research accomplishments from the previous calendar year and asks students to set goals for the current calendar year. After completing the online survey, results are sent to the student's advisor, Graduate Program Director, and Graduate Program Coordinator. Students must then schedule a meeting with their

advisor to discuss their responses to the survey. The survey must be completed before the student can enroll in the following Fall semester.

7 RESOURCES

- Graduate student organizations
 - Description of Organization
 - Officers
 - Guidelines/Duties of Officers
- [SPEAK Test Administration](#)
- [Policy on Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#)

GTA Resources

- KU Policy on [Benefits-for-GRAs-GTAs-GAs](#)
- [CTE Support & Resources for GTAs](#)
- [GTA Memorandum of Agreement](#) between GTAC and KU
- [3G Benefits](#)
- [Graduate Research Assistant, Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Assistant Appointment: General Guidelines and Eligibility](#)
- GTA Appointment [Eligibility](#) Policy

GRA Resources

- [GRA Appointment Eligibility Policy](#)
- [KU Policy - Benefits-for-GRAs-GTAs-GAs](#)
- [3G Benefits](#) (Office of Postdoctoral and Graduate Affairs)

A APPENDIX: UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included.

Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

A.1 GENERAL POLICIES

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

A.1.1 Admission

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor’s degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

A.1.2 English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are multiple ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score

Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.

- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU Applied English Center (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' Spoken English Competency page.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study](#)
- [Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy](#)

A.1.3 Enrollment

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While individual units may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full-time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full-time enrollment it as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;

- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a Competency-Based Education (CBE) program

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a CBE program

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must submit a Permit to Re-Enroll to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does not automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the "Withdraw from the University" option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current Academic Calendar.**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript.

Your graduate program coordinator (or similar title) is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

A.1.4 Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)

The University's Graduate Credit policy defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course "counting" towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for Master's students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper-level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the Ph.D. In circumstances where students enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the Ph.D. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit

hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript.

Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below.

In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the Ph.D., reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements \(on Reduced Hour Master's Degree\)](#)

A.1.5 [Credit/No Credit](#)

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC online request form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU Academic Calendar. Please keep in mind, short courses may have alternate dates.

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

A.1.6 Probation & Dismissal

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making satisfactory progress toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative GPA dropping below a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Individual Schools/the College may set more stringent GPA requirements.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
 - Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams)
 - Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
 - An unsatisfactory result in their department's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the Good Academic Standing policy for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, and in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

A.1.7 Grading

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' (GPA) Grading policy governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in Article II of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of GPA.

Students should also consult their advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)

A.1.8 Time Limits

The University expects that master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six-seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that individual schools/the College/degree programs may require Mentoring Agreements for students who are nearing their maximum time to degree.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams \(on exam expiration and recertification\)](#)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time to Degree Information](#)
- [KU CLAS Mentorship Agreement Template](#)

- [Univ. Michigan Rackham Graduate School Mentoring Plan Templates](#)
- [KU Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs IDP template](#)

A.1.9 Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while “stopping the clock” on their time to degree. When a student is on Leave of Absence status it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department’s internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student’s need for a leave of absence.

In order for a Leave of Absence to be approved, the student must be withdrawn from all active and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the KU Academic Calendar for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If at any time plans change and a student wishes to return and enroll before leave was supposed to end, they may contact their department to be reactivated early.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Leaves of Absence \(policy\)](#)
- [Leave of Absence \(GPA website, form linked at bottom of page\)](#)

A.1.10 Required University Milestones

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master's degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the school/College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on the student's behalf by their department after the exam date has been scheduled. The school/College reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their departments well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

There are additional policies requirements for oral exams. The following are University policies pertaining to oral exams:

Oral Exam Committee Composition

All voting committee members must be appointed members of the Graduate Faculty of KU. Additionally, a majority of committee members serving on a graduate student oral examination committee must be tenured/tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department or program of study.

Many additional restrictions apply, especially for doctoral exam committees. Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the University policies pertaining to exams, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies when forming an exam committee. Your graduate program coordinator can assist with confirming the qualifying status of any faculty member at KU, or outside of KU.

Oral Exam Attendance

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the policies below, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies in the formation of an oral exam committee.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

A.2 DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the student's individual Ph.D. program's degree requirements, the following are University requirements for graduation with a Ph.D. at KU.

A.2.1 Enrollment Requirement

Prior to the semester in which the comprehensive exam is held, all doctoral students must complete a minimum program engagement equivalent to two full-time semesters. This may be accomplished through either of the following:

- Two semesters (fall and/or spring) of full-time enrollment in KU coursework, as defined by University policy
- At least 18 hours of enrollment in KU coursework spread out over several part-time semesters

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)

A.2.2 Continuous Enrollment for Post-Comprehensive Students

During the semester in which the doctoral oral comprehensive exam is completed and each fall and spring semester follows, doctoral students must adhere to very specific enrollment requirements. These requirements may be different than enrollment requirements prior to the oral comp exam.

Failure to properly comply with the enrollment requirements may cause delays to graduation or additional enrollment requirements to make up what was missed, increasing tuition expenses near the end of your degree program.

To avoid delays or additional costs, you are also strongly advised to meet with your graduate program coordinator the semester before your oral comprehensive exam. Your graduate coordinator will work with you to develop an enrollment plan that meets all policy requirements, while also preventing unnecessary or avoidable fees.

Post-comprehensive enrollment requirements also apply to students with GTA/GRA/GA appointments, but these students must be certified to drop their enrollment levels. Departments are responsible for tracking student enrollment and will submit the certification form on the student's behalf **at least two weeks prior** to the beginning of the semester in which the enrollment will drop below 6 hours. Students who are certified to reduce hours continue to meet the University's definition of full-time enrollment, as well as the enrollment requirements of their employment contract.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Doctoral Candidacy](#)

A.3 GRADUATE CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

The University offers a variety of Approved Graduate Certificate Programs to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

A.4 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (MASTER'S & PH.D.)

In addition to all program requirements, students planning to graduate must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs Graduation Checklists ([Master's](#) | [Doctoral](#))

These graduation checklists provide a comprehensive list of all University requirements for graduation and should be consulted by every graduating master's or doctoral student as soon as graduation is expected. Submission of the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is done electronically. Students must comply with all University requirements for formatting and electronic submission of the thesis or dissertation. There is no University requirement that students provide a bound or printed copy of the draft.

We strongly encourage students to submit an Application for Graduation as early as possible; ideally prior to the 20th day of classes of the semester they intend to graduate.

A.5 GRADUATE & POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs (GPA) offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to the department's Director of Graduate Studies or to GPA. Some of the available funding includes:

[Summer Research Scholarships](#): intended primarily for post-comp doctoral students.

[Graduate Student Travel Fund](#): intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750) only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

[Doctoral Student Research Fund](#): Designed to support KU doctoral students who need assistance to carry out research that advances progress toward the degree. Applications for this fund are accepted only for a limited time as funding is available. Students are eligible to receive one award from this fund during their doctoral career. Students should check the link above for additional information and restrictions.

A.6 POLICIES REGARDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ON CAMPUS

Kansas State Law (HB2333) requires postsecondary educational institutions in Kansas to publish in their handbooks and orientation programs the institution's policies, regulations, or expectations of students regarding free expression on campus.

Per KU General Counsel, this includes the following two policies:

- [KU Public Assembly Policy](#)
- [Kansas Board of Regents Statement on Free Expression](#)

Note that the two policies listed above apply to ALL members of the campus community; they are not specific to graduate students.