

# **Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Administration**

## Program Handbook

Department of  
Educational Leadership & Policy Studies  
University of Kansas

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## Program Overview

The 9-credit-hour graduate certificate in higher education administration is designed to introduce education professionals to academic scholarship on higher education. This generalist certificate program allows students to extend and apply their knowledge of colleges and universities and to learn from expert scholars and practitioners, as well as fellow classmates, who bring diverse leadership experiences to the program.

### Career Outcomes in Higher Education Administration

The graduate certificate in higher education administration is primarily intended for 1.) administrators wanting to familiarize themselves with the academic literature on higher education topics to help them develop in their administrative positions; 2.) current administrators who may wish to update their knowledge of the theory and research; 3.) students who wish to pursue advanced study in educational leadership & policy studies; and 4.) current higher education professionals who intend to work in higher education in other areas such as academic advising, student affairs, academic affairs, residential life/housing etc. Students who pursue careers in higher education administration are likely to accept positions as directors, program coordinators, or other leadership roles in various institutional units, such as advising, housing, admissions, student leadership, and involvement.

### Mission of the School of Education and Human Sciences:

Within the University, the School of Education and Human Sciences serves Kansas, the nation, and the world by:

- preparing individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human science fields
- expanding and deepening understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavor
- helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges

To accomplish this mission, the School of Education and Human Sciences

- offers an extensive curriculum leading to academic degrees and professional licensure
- requires faculty and students to engage in scholarship
- provides a wide range of professional services to schools, other institutions, and individuals

# Department Directory

## Program Faculty

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- **Dallas Doane**, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Practice & MSE Director
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- **Tammara Durham**, Ed.D., Courtesy Professor & Vice Provost for Student Affairs
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- **Amanda Mollet**, Ph.D., Associate Professor
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- **Eugene Parker III**, Ph.D., Professor and Higher Education Administration Graduate Certificate Program Coordinator
  - JRP 419, [eparker@ku.edu](mailto:eparker@ku.edu)
- **Lisa Wolf-Wendel**, Roy A. Roberts University Distinguished Professor & Sr. Associate Dean, EdD Program Coordinator
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## Program Staff/School Support

- **Erin Tarnowicz**, Administrative Assistant, ELPS
  - JRP 421, [etarnowicz@ku.edu](mailto:etarnowicz@ku.edu)
  - Registration; Degree Progress Reports; Enrollment troubleshooting
- **Tracy Rockers**, Graduate Student Services Manager, SOEHS
  - JRP 214D, [tracy.rockers@ku.edu](mailto:tracy.rockers@ku.edu)
  - Graduation/Commencement; School level admissions information

## Program Admissions

Admission to the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Administration will require successful submission of the following application materials:

- Personal Statement
- Official Transcripts of All Institutions Attended
  - 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).
- Completed Application
- Application Fee of \$65 for domestic students and \$100 for international students

For international applicants, the following additional requirements apply:

- [Proof of English proficiency](#)

- English translation of transcripts
- In most cases, KU can evaluate international transcripts internally. In cases where Graduate Admissions cannot, the applicant will be asked to produce an external evaluation through a service such as WES.

For inquiries about admissions, please contact department administrative assistant, Erin Tarnowicz.

## **Enrollment**

### **Course Enrollment Procedures**

The University course enrollment process is completed entirely online. The schedule of courses for upcoming semesters is available on the Schedule of Classes website at <https://classes.ku.edu/>. All active students are notified by the University as the enrollment period approaches. Subsequent changes in enrollment are handled online through add/drop procedures, or with the use of paper forms after the first few weeks of the semester. In addition to speaking to their advisor prior to making a change in enrollment, students should also review the [Considerations and Impacts of a Drop or Withdrawal](#). Enrollment may impact financial aid eligibility and enrollment in locations or courses outside the School of Education and Human Sciences may have a different tuition and fee cost.

Students should be mindful of enrollment deadlines listed on the [Academic Calendar](#). Failure to enroll in at least one course before 12:00am on the first instructional day of the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters for full-term courses is considered enrolling late and students will be charged a [late enrollment fee](#). As such, it is important for students to be aware of issues such as enrollment holds that might inhibit or postpone enrollment.

### **Leaves of Absence**

If a student does not wish to or cannot enroll in courses for a given semester or year, the student must request a leave of absence using the [Leave of Absence Request form](#) found on the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs website. A leave of absence may be granted when circumstances temporarily prevent a student from continuing graduate study (e.g., cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military service), due to family responsibilities, or when a student wishes to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals. All requests for a leave of absence should be discussed with the advisor and program coordinator.

### **Good Academic Standing**

Students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 (B) GPA in order to be in good academic standing. Students earning less than a 3.0 cumulative GPA will be placed on academic probation and will normally be given a semester to improve their GPA to a 3.0. Two continued semesters with a GPA below 3.0 may result in dismissal, although in cases where improvement is noted, the student may be given an additional semester to raise their GPA.

## Grading

The program uses the traditional SOEHS grading scheme: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, etc. We expect students to earn B's and A's in order to remain in good academic standing. Although grades of C+ and C will count for graduate credit, a course grade of C- will not. Any student who earns a C- in a course must repeat the course.

## Incomplete Grades

Faculty *may* assign an 'I' (Incomplete) grade if you are unable to complete some portion of the assigned coursework because of a significant unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. An Incomplete grade is not intended to give you additional time to complete course assignments or extra credit unless there is indication that the specified circumstances prevented you from completing course assignments on time.

## Annual Student Progress Review

The program requires all students to participate in an Annual Student Progress Review once per year. The review is conducted collaboratively by the program faculty. The assessment is formative in nature and designed for continuous improvement and to support the students' growth. The review meeting typically includes a discussion on the student's work performance, academic progress, and future professional development.

## Grievance Procedures

The Educational Leadership & Policies Studies Department follows the [School of Education and Human Sciences Grievance Procedure](#).

***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.***

## Petitions

The Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Administration program recognizes that, in limited circumstances, students may wish to request exceptions to program requirements or policies. Students may submit petitions to request consideration of such exceptions.

Students seeking to submit a petition should first consult with the Program Coordinator to discuss the request and determine the appropriate petition process. This ensures that the student receives guidance on required documentation, applicable policies, and any additional steps needed for petitions that extend beyond the ELPS department. Some petitions relate to program-level requirements and may be reviewed and decided internally within the department. Other petitions involve School or University policies and therefore require additional review or approval by offices outside the department. When applicable, the program will advise students on the appropriate process and required approvals.

For petitions requiring School or University review, students will be directed to the appropriate office or provided with the most current form and submission instructions. To ensure accuracy and compliance with current policies, School and University forms are not reproduced in this handbook.

## Curriculum

The [Academic Catalog](#) is the definitive source for requirements and regulations for every academic program; students are subject to the requirements in the catalog of the year they are admitted. The degree requirements listed in the Catalog have been approved by established University Governance procedures. Degree and program requirements and course descriptions are subject to change. This handbook serves as a supplement to provide further details on the requirements, policies, and procedures described in the Catalog.

Students should consult the university catalog and program advisor for the most up-to-date information regarding the required sequence of courses. An example sequence of courses is provided below.

### Course Listing

*Table 1 Course Listing for the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Administration program*

| Core Course            |                                                       |                |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| ELPS 780               | Introduction to Higher Education                      | 3 credit hours |
| Electives (select two) |                                                       |                |
| ELPS 782               | Higher Education and Society                          | 3 credit hours |
| ELPS 786               | Intro to College Leadership                           | 3 credit hours |
| ELPS 882               | Higher Education in the United States                 | 3 credit hours |
| ELPS 883               | The College Student                                   | 3 credit hours |
| ELPS 884               | College Student Access, Persistence, and Success      | 3 credit hours |
| ELPS 885               | Assessment and Program Evaluation in Higher Education | 3 credit hours |

## Advising & Mentoring

### Graduate Certificate Coordinator

The graduate certificate coordinator meets with prospective students, oversees admissions, curriculum planning and scheduling, enrollment, communication with students regarding program milestones, and engages in other general program oversight. The graduate certificate coordinator often advises students in their first semester courses.

### Advisor Assignment

The graduate certificate coordinator will be the faculty advisor for all students in the certificate program.

### Changing Advisors

Changes to the student's advisor assignment may be made by consulting with the current advisor (i.e., the certificate coordinator) and the new advisor (i.e., a program faculty member). Advisor

changes may be made at any time during the program and must be approved by the new advisor and the certificate coordinator.

### **Advisor–Advisee Expectations**

Advisor–advisee roles are somewhat different in a graduate certificate program than they are in a more traditional graduate program in which students must make course choices each semester. We recommend that advisors (i.e., certificate program coordinators) meet with each of their advisees at least once per semester, although more frequent communication is recommended.

*Students are expected to:*

1. Know and understand the requirements necessary for completion of the program.
2. Meet with the certificate program coordinator, when needed.
3. Learn how to use online registration tools.
4. Be honest and forthcoming about their academic progress and performance in their coursework.
5. Monitor and keep informed about their progress toward the completion of graduation requirements.

*Certificate Program Coordinators are expected to:*

1. Know and understand the requirements for students in the ELPS department and/or School.
2. Encourage students to engage fully in the coursework.
3. Assist students in thinking about and planning for their careers after completion of the certificate program.

### **Regular and Timely Feedback**

For the graduate certification in higher education, the faculty will consider a portfolio based on a collection of students' submitted coursework. Although the portfolio is often a course-based culminating experience and is not subject to university policies governing culminating efforts that require a faculty advisor, the program is committed to ensuring that students receive regular and timely feedback throughout the portfolio development process.

Students will receive clear expectations and evaluation criteria at the beginning of the semester. The certificate coordinator will provide structured opportunities for feedback on the portfolio process and progress throughout the semester, including feedback within approximately 2-3 weeks after the conclusion of coursework. Through ongoing feedback, progress monitoring, and opportunities for revision, the portfolio process is designed to support student learning and successful demonstration of the program's learning outcomes.

## **Graduate Student Responsibilities**

All graduate students are responsible for informing themselves of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' requirements and policies. Students should visit the [Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs website](#) for the most up-to-date requirements and policies. Graduate students are also expected to

be familiar with the regulations and requirements of their Graduate Divisions and of their home academic departments and programs. Members of the Graduate Faculty and staff members in the Graduate Divisions are expected to be ready to answer questions and offer counsel.

It is each graduate student's responsibility to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the graduate degree program the student is pursuing. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception be granted because students plead ignorance of, or contend that they were not informed of, requirements, regulations, procedures, and deadlines. Responsibility for following all policies and meeting all requirements and deadlines rests with the student.

## **Academic Misconduct**

The Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies expects students and faculty members to demonstrate academic integrity in conducting their coursework and research. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in our program. An instructor may, with due notice to the student, treat as unsatisfactory any student work which is a product of academic misconduct. Cases of academic misconduct may result in any or all of the following penalties: reduction of grade, admonition, warning, censure, transcript citation, suspension, or expulsion. The following information about Academic Misconduct is discussed in Article II, Section 6 of the rules and regulations of the University Senate. "Academic misconduct by a student shall include, but not be limited to, disruption of classes; threatening an instructor or fellow student in an academic setting; giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of notebooks, themes, reports or other assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work; unauthorized changing of grades; unauthorized use of University approvals or forging of signatures; falsification of research results; plagiarizing of another's work; violation of regulations or ethical codes for the treatment of human and animal subjects; or otherwise acting dishonestly in research."

## **AI Expectations for Students**

The following are general guidelines applicable to certificate program students. Students should note that faculty members will vary in their approach. Students are encouraged to review individual faculty members' expectations. The general guidelines are:

1. Ask questions about course policies and make sure expectations around the use of generative AI in assignments and courses are clear.
2. Avoid the use of generative AI in ways that conflict with the course and University policies.
3. Disclose the use of generative AI and in what ways AI was utilized.

## **Additional Recommendations**

- Students should learn to use generative AI responsibly and ethically. This includes understanding how large language models are created; how they generate output of text, code, and media; why the output must be scrutinized and its use evaluated through an ethical

lens; how generative AI is being used in various disciplines; why there are times we should not use generative AI; and how generative AI should be cited when it is used.

- Students should be free to ask AI-related questions. They should be encouraged to ask instructors about AI-related policies, procedures, and use in their classes, and they should not be treated with suspicion when they do.
- Students must join in trust-building efforts with faculty.

## **Applying for Graduation**

Students earning a graduate certificate must apply for graduation, but they will not be recognized in any of the KU graduation ceremonies. **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.**

## Appendix A

### Graduate Regulations in the School of Education & Human Sciences

The School of Education and Human Sciences follows the regulations and policies of the University and the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs (for example: [Academic probation](#), [enrollment status](#), [grading policies](#), etc.). In some cases, the School of Education and Human Sciences and departmental policies are more restrictive than those of the broader University. Students are encouraged to work closely with their department and advisor for specific program requirements. Below include a description of the key School of Education and Human Sciences policies related to graduate studies.

#### Good Academic Standing

Evaluation of graduate student academic standing includes, but is not limited to, consideration of performance in and progress through a graduate program according to program expectations.

Graduate students must maintain an expected level of performance throughout their program. Criteria for evaluating satisfactory performance include, but are not limited to:

1. For degree- and certificate-seeking students, a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher and, for non-degree-seeking students, a cumulative graduate GPA of 2.0 or higher. Students must have a 3.0 minimum GPA to graduate with a KU graduate degree.
2. For students enrolled in dissertation, master's thesis or project hours the expectation is that students will make satisfactory academic progress. Earning a grade of NP in one semester or earning a grade of LP in consecutive semesters indicates a lack of satisfactory academic progress and will result in probation and may result in dismissal.
3. Academic and scholarly integrity;
4. Compliance with academic policies at the university, school, and departmental level; and
5. For degree- and certificate-seeking students, satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree or certificate, as determined by the program. Progress may be determined by factors including:
  1. Satisfactory completion of coursework, milestones, exams, or other program components on a specified timeframe; and
  2. Official time to degree and total time in program.

Failure to maintain an expected level of performance will result in a student not being in good academic standing. Lack of good academic standing will result in the graduate program placing the student on probation or dismissal from the program. For more information, please see the policies on [academic probation](#) and [dismissed enrollment](#).

#### Academic Probation

Upon falling below a cumulative graduate grade-point average of 3.0, computed with the inclusion of grades earned at KU for all courses acceptable for graduate credit, or earning a grade of NP (no progress) in thesis, project or dissertation, or consecutive semesters of LP (limited process), the student is placed on probation by the School. The grades of SP, LP, NP and I, for which no numerical equivalents are defined, are excluded from the GPA computation.

If the student's overall graduate grade-point average has been raised to 3.0 by the end of the next semester of enrollment after being placed on probation, the student may be returned to good academic standing. If not, the student is not permitted to re-enroll and will be dismissed unless the graduate division of the School acts favorably on a departmental recommendation for the student to continue enrollment.

### **Continuous Enrollment**

Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment (fall & spring) while in their academic program.

A student may petition the Graduate Division through the department for a leave of absence if they experience extraordinary 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. Appropriate documentation related to these extraordinary circumstances may be requested from the student directly. Evidence of progress towards degree will also be a determining factor in the decision to grant a leave of absence. If approved, a leave of absence is typically granted for one year, with the possibility of extension upon request. The time taken for a leave of absence does not count against the student's time to degree. However, after an absence of five years, a master's candidate loses status as such and must apply for readmission to the program and the Graduate Division.

If a student has been actively enrolled in a graduate program and has not applied for a leave of absence, but has not been enrolled for one academic year, they will be discontinued from their program. If they wish to return, they will need permission from the department and will need to submit the Permit to Re-Enroll form and must reapply for graduate admission.

## Appendix B

### 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.

#### 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.

##### *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](#)

##### *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](mailto: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](#)

*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](#)

### *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 \(on Reduced Hour Master's Degree\)](#)

*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](#)

*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](#)

### *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](#)

*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](#)

### *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 \(GPA website, form linked at bottom of page\)](#)

### *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](#)

## **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.

### *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](#)

### *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](#)

## **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](#)

### **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.**

### **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.

## 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.**