



▶ Graduate Student Handbook

**Information You Can Use**

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## Introduction

### About this Handbook

Hello and welcome (or welcome back) to the Department of Oceanography at Texas A&M University! We hope that your course of study here remains rewarding and productive as you proceed toward an advanced degree in oceanography. We provide this handbook to:

- Familiarize you with department, college and university policies and resources.
- Provide a practical guide to using departmental and university facilities and graduating.

Familiarize yourself with this handbook and refer back to it when you need information on departmental policies. To maintain standards in graduate education the university has several mechanisms for monitoring your progress. Failure to adhere to university rules can delay your graduation and cost you money.

This guide provides much of the information you need, but it is not exhaustive and may not cover your circumstances. Specific requirements change frequently. Current information is always available from the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). To contact OGS, visit <http://ogs.tamu.edu> or phone 979-845-3631. You can also consult the graduate advisor in your section or the department's academic advisor.

Details about academic programs and rules are published annually in:

### The Graduate Catalog

The *Graduate Catalog* provides information about the academic programs of Texas A&M University to students, prospective students, faculty and staff of the University. Included is information concerning admissions, academic regulations and requirements, services available to students, academic offerings and a list of the administrative officers and faculty of the University. It is important to remember that graduate students are not “bound” to a catalog like undergraduate students are—graduate students must always comply with the rules and regulations outlined in the most current University catalog. You may purchase a copy at the Memorial Student Center (MSC) Bookstore, or you may view it online at [http://www.tamu.edu/admissions/catalogs/GRAD\\_catalog/](http://www.tamu.edu/admissions/catalogs/GRAD_catalog/).

### The Graduate Handbook

The *Graduate Handbook* is a guidebook of University rules and procedures published by the Office of Graduate Studies. Copies may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies or you may view it online at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentGraduateHandbook.htm>.

### Graduate students in Galveston

Some oceanography students conduct research at the TAMU-Galveston campus. This handbook applies to graduate students on both campuses except where otherwise noted.

The Oceanography graduate program is headquartered in College Station and all official documents are handled there. There is a Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Galveston who acts as an intermediary between students there





and university offices in College Station. The coordinator handles some paperwork associated with registering for classes, paying tuition, etc. Nevertheless, be aware of these important points:

- You follow the same steps toward graduation as students in College Station.
- You obtain financial aid, submit degree plans and proposals, communicate with the department and the Office of Graduate Studies, and submit your theses and dissertations in the same ways as students in College Station.
- You should allow extra time for required forms to be submitted in College Station, even when you have enlisted the help of the graduate studies coordinator in Galveston.
- Address questions about any of these topics to your graduate advisor (usually the chair of your student advisory committee), the department's academic advisor in College Station, or the graduate studies coordinator in Galveston.

## **Mission Statement**

The Department of Oceanography discovers and disseminates knowledge about the oceans. We prepare students for careers in ocean sciences in the 21st Century in the classroom and through research ashore and aboard ships in the world oceans. We collect, analyze, and interpret large data sets, and model the oceans to study processes and interactions among the oceans, atmosphere, biosphere, and geosphere and their potential impacts on man.

## **Education**

We provide an effective learning environment for students interested in careers in ocean science or related fields, and also for students with other interests who will be responsible citizens, stewards of the environment, and public supporters of science.

## **Research**

We conduct interdisciplinary research in the ocean and on its boundaries, maintain advanced laboratory facilities at sea and ashore, seek public and private research funds, and recruit and retain quality faculty, staff and students.

## **Outreach**

We serve our constituents by providing information, education and guidance about the ocean environment and by enhancing the general economic and intellectual well-being of society.

## Graduate Advisors

Your graduate advisor is the advisor in your section until you file a degree plan. After you file a degree plan, your committee chair is your advisor.

The departmental Academic Advisor is a staff member who handles all official graduate student documents. Jana Corley, Academic Advisor II is located in 1204D of the O&M Building, and her phone number is 845-7412.

### Biological Oceanography

Dr. Dan Thornton  
Room 518AB, O&M Building  
Phone: (979) 845-4092  
E-Mail: [dthornton@ocean.tamu.edu](mailto:dthornton@ocean.tamu.edu)

### Geological Oceanography

Dr. Matthew Schmidt  
Room 408A, O&M Building  
Phone: (979) 862-8342  
E-Mail: [mschmidt@ocean.tamu.edu](mailto:mschmidt@ocean.tamu.edu)

### Chemical Oceanography

Dr. Shari Yvon-Lewis  
Room 412, O&M Building  
Phone: (979) 458-1816  
E-Mail: [syvon-lewis@ocean.tamu.edu](mailto:syvon-lewis@ocean.tamu.edu)

### Physical Oceanography

Dr. Achim Stössel  
Room 605, O&M Building  
Phone: (979) 845-5527  
E-Mail: [astoessel@ocean.tamu.edu](mailto:astoessel@ocean.tamu.edu)

## History

### Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University (TAMU) opened its doors to students in 1876 as a result of federal land grant legislation in 1862. The university was founded as the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and was the first public institution of higher education in Texas. Renamed Texas A&M University in 1963, the school now carries the land-, sea- and space- grant designation and has grown to include over 46,500 students and ten colleges. TAMU was originally an all-male military college, but since 1963 service in the Corps of Cadets has been voluntary, and now there are almost as many women (47%) as men on campus.

### Department of Oceanography

The Department of Oceanography was founded in 1949 under the direction of Dr. Dale F. Leipper. The impetus came from Dr. A.A. Jakkula, the first director of the Texas A&M Research Foundation, who perceived the need for scientific data about the oceans and particularly the Gulf of Mexico.

The College of Geosciences was founded in 1964, incorporating the departments of oceanography, geology and geophysics, geography, and meteorology (now named atmospheric sciences).

The Department of Oceanography offers only masters' and doctoral degrees. Students seeking an undergraduate degree can obtain a bachelor's degree in Marine Sciences at Texas A&M University-Galveston. Undergraduates in College Station can pursue a Minor in Oceanography. Graduate students work toward the Master of Science, Master of Geosciences, and Doctor of Philosophy in Oceanography

on both campuses.

The Department of Oceanography offers studies in the four traditional disciplines of biological, chemical, geological/geophysical, and physical oceanography, but an interdisciplinary approach to research is encouraged.

## The Research Foundation & Research Project Funding

The Texas A&M Research Foundation (TAMRF) is an independent non-profit service organization formed to manage finances and provide administrative support for research projects throughout the university.

Most research grant funds awarded to the oceanography faculty and research scientists are handled by the TAMRF.

When a faculty member or research scientist obtains a grant he or she becomes the principal investigator of a research project. The project funds are tracked using a TAMRF account number, and that number is invoked to pay for goods and services required for that project.

Employees hired to participate in the project as researchers or support staff are paid through the university using funds from the TAMRF account.

Other campus organizations also support oceanography research. Details concerning the management of funds vary among these organizations. They include the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEES), the Sea Grant College Program, University Contracts and Grants, the Development Foundation (gifts to the university), and the Texas Institute of Oceanography (TIO)

## Your Responsibilities

You are at Texas A&M University to:

- Gain advanced knowledge in your area of interest.
- Learn to conduct research.
- Show that you can express your thoughts clearly in oral presentations and written papers.
- Demonstrate that you can produce a written document of your research at the masters or doctoral level.

University faculty and staff guide and support you through this process, but ultimately your education is **your** responsibility. Consult with your graduate advisor concerning course selection and assembling a committee. Find out what your degree requirements and deadlines are and meet them. Ask questions if you need further explanation. It is your responsibility to know the requirements for your degree and to meet all deadlines. Familiarize yourself with the *Graduate Catalog*, departmental requirements, and all University deadlines.

Take advantage of the many opportunities to learn about organization, management and leadership in the oceanographic community. Whether or not you enter academia upon graduation, you will enter a workplace in which you will probably have a decision making role. Graduate student organizations provide opportunities for students to participate in real decision-making and gain practical experience.

Graduate students are frequently employed by the principal investigators as assistants. They also usually chair your advisory committee. The principal investigator is responsible for making sure that proper procedures are followed to put the student on the research project payroll on time, although the department business coordinator helps with the paperwork. Graduate students employed as assistants frequently make purchases and use department facilities on behalf of the principal investigator.

If you hold a research assistantship (GAR): You must differentiate between purchases made and equipment used for the research project and purchases made and equipment used for private purposes and coursework. Research-related purchases and use of equipment must be billed to a research project account. You may not make purchases through the department or use departmental facilities for private purposes. You must sign and return to the Operations Manager a Property End User Responsibility Statement.

## Resources and Facilities

### Campus offices

Campus offices listed in this section are located on the College Station campus. Graduate students in Galveston should become familiar with them as they will send paperwork through these offices from Galveston.

### The Office of Graduate Studies

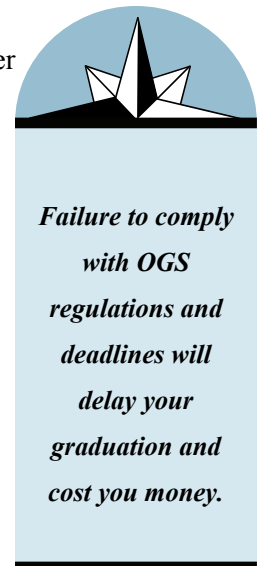
The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) maintains the official record for each graduate

student, and in this role serves as the primary administrative body and overarching source of information for graduate education. Once a graduate student is accepted by an academic department or college, OGS assists and facilitates progression towards completion of a graduate degree through maintenance of all official documents.

The Office of Graduate Studies has final approval on all degree plans, research proposal, preliminary examination results, schedules and reports of the final examination, petitions to change the degree plan, and final clearance for graduation. Failure to comply with OGS regulations and deadlines will delay your graduation and cost you money.

Each semester the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) sets deadlines for graduate students preparing to complete their degrees. The Office of Graduate Studies deadline calendar can be accessed from their web site at <http://ogs.tamu.edu>.

Failure to meet OGS deadlines will delay your graduation until the next semester.





The Office of Graduate Studies is located in room 302 of the Jack K. Williams Administration Building, and their phone number is 979-845-3631.

## **The Thesis Office**

The Thesis Office helps students understand and adhere to format and style requirements for theses and dissertations and reviews theses and dissertations to insure they comply with the requirements.

It is very important that you utilize the resources available to you through the Thesis Office. The most important resource and guide is the Thesis Manual, which contains detailed instructions for formatting and submitting theses and dissertations. The Thesis Manual is available on-line at <http://thesis.tamu.edu>. The Thesis Office is located in Room 612 of the Evans Library, and their phone number is 979-845-2225.

The staff of the Thesis Office encourages you to visit their office and discuss your manuscript before you submit a final draft. When your defense date draws near, schedule a Rough Draft Conference at the Thesis Office to review your draft. This step could save you time and money when you are ready to submit the final version.

Contact the Thesis Office any time you have questions concerning the style and format of your thesis or dissertation.

## **Student Financial Aid**

Student Financial Aid offers guidance to students seeking financial aid, provides resources for locating scholarship and fellowship opportunities, and administers short-term, emergency tuition loans, and “little loans.” These small loans help students weather unexpected expenses and expenses associated with graduation, as well as assist students who are temporarily unable to pay tuition on time. The loans carry different interest and payment arrangements, and availability may be limited.

Student Financial Aid is located on the 2nd floor of the Pavilion, and their phone numbers are 979-845-3236 and 979-845-3987. You can visit their web site at <http://financialaid.tamu.edu>.

## **Student Life**

Student Life provides programs and services for graduate student and other students living off campus, including special resources and programs for women.

Some of Student Life’s services include:

- Aggie Search – an online database that includes listings of all campus housing options and roommate referrals.
- A housing vacancy listing.
- Roommate counseling
- Conflict mediation A problem solving service for resident/manager disputes
- Support for other issues associated with off-campus living.

For a complete list of services, please visit their website at: <http://studentlife.tamu.edu>.

## Student Counseling Services

A variety of counseling services are offered on campus at no charge to students. The types of counseling available from Student Counseling Services include:

Study skills assistance.	Educational planning.	Career counseling.
Personal counseling.	Couple/marriage counseling.	Counseling on human sexuality.
Relaxation training.	Group counseling & workshops.	Testing.
Referrals to counseling	Emergency counseling.	Self-help materials.
	Community resources.	

Student Counseling Services is located in Cain Hall, and their phone number is 979-845-4427. Their web site is <http://scs.tamu.edu>.

## Graduate Student Organizations

There is more to being a graduate student in oceanography than attending class, studying, conducting research, and preparing for the thesis or dissertation. You will be working closely with faculty members, research scientists and staff in the department, many of whom are deeply involved in the planning and administration of the academic and research programs at TAMU.

Participation in graduate student organization allows students to gain experience and skills in planning and administration that will remain valuable in their professional lives, whether in academia, the corporate world, or civil service.

To get involved, you can attend meetings and contribute your opinion, serve on committees, run for office, or accept leadership roles.

## Oceanography Graduate Council

All oceanography graduate students in College Station and Galveston are members of the Oceanography Graduate Council (OGC). OGC is administered by four executives (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer), two representatives from each section (biological, chemical, geological and physical), and two at-large representatives. OGC elections are held each April. You are encouraged to run for a position or attend OGC meetings to stay informed of OGC activities and contribute your opinions.

Through OGC, students:

- Communicate their needs and concerns to the department administration.
- Participate meaningfully in all types of decision making, including the hiring of new faculty.
- Elect representatives to the Graduate Student Council.
- Help manage the Graduate Program Enhancement Fund (GPEF), which is provided by the university to the college and department.

OGC awards mini-grants from the GPEF to oceanography graduate students for travel to professional meetings and otherwise unfunded research. Each student is eligible to apply for a maximum of up to

\$750 per year. Applications for the mini-grants can be accessed via the web site at <http://ocean.tamu.edu/ogs/index.html>.

The OGC sells t-shirts, mugs and other items to raise funds and increase exposure for the group. For information about the OGC, its activities, and mini-grants, contact your section representative.

### **Graduate Student Council – College Station**

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) cooperates with administration, faculty, and the Student Government Association to insure that the needs of graduate students are understood and considered when campus policies concerning academic excellence, tuition, finance, and research are made. The GSC is comprised of elected representatives and alternates from each graduate program, led by an executive committee. Meetings are held twice per month to discuss information important to graduate and professional students.

Elections to choose departmental representatives for GSC are held each fall. GSC officer elections are held each April, and candidates must have served GSC for one year to be eligible. GSC encourages all graduate students to participate in planning committees. You do not have to be a department representative to serve on a committee. The GSC office is located in room 138 of the Koldus Building, and their phone number is (979) 862-1974.

### **Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)**

WISE is an interdisciplinary organization of graduate students, staff, and faculty that seeks to enhance the representation of women in science and engineering programs, improve women's career development skills and employment strategies, and to establish a support network for women in science at TAMU.

WISE accomplishes these goals by holding monthly meetings which primarily feature women scientists in industry and academia as guest speakers, holding career development workshops, and developing a mentor program to match incoming students with more advanced students, advanced students with postdoctoral students, staff or faculty, and postdoctoral researchers with faculty. Each year WISE holds a Professional and Career Development Conference which provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences for women graduate students across the campus. For information on WISE, contact Nancy Magnussen, Office of the Dean, College of Science by e-mail: [nancy@isc.tamu.edu](mailto:nancy@isc.tamu.edu).

### **Galveston Graduate Student Association (GGSA)**

For more information on the Galveston Graduate Student Association (GGSA) please contact the Director of Graduate Programs by phone at 409-741-4937 or Dr. Donald Harper, Jr., GGSA Faculty Advisor by phone at 409-740-4540 or by email at [harperd@tamug.edu](mailto:harperd@tamug.edu).

### **Other Student Organizations**

Texas A&M University is large and diverse, and there are student organizations for virtually every ethnic group, interest, hobby, political group, and lifestyle. The Memorial Student Center (MSC) holds an Open House for student groups to advertise their activities and recruit members around the first Sunday afternoon after classes begin in the fall and spring semesters. Call 845-1515 for the exact dates.

## **Campus Facilities, College Station**

### **The Memorial Student Center (MSC)**

The Memorial Student Center (MSC) – Rudder Tower complex is designed to be the focal point of campus activity in College Station. It houses dining areas, the TAMU Bookstore, performing arts theaters, lecture halls, a copy center, a post office, a browsing library, a craft center, an art gallery, several lounge areas, and more.

Campus committees affiliated with the MSC organize student groups and special events, including performance arts series, film festivals, a distinguished lecturer series, and more. More information about the MSC and its affiliated activities and organizations.

### **Evans Library**

Evans Library is the main library on the College Station campus. It houses books, periodicals, reference materials, government documents, microfilms and microfiche, maps, special collections, rare books, audio-visual resources, access to on-line and CD-ROM databases, and much more.

Graduate students may schedule individual tours of the library to learn about the resources which pertain to their specific research interests. To schedule a tour contact Evans Library Tours at 979-862-1060 or [instruction@tamu.edu](mailto:instruction@tamu.edu).

### **Computer Information Services (CIS)**

Texas A&M provides extensive computer resources for all students, including access to electronic mail, workstations, microcomputer labs, access to the internet, printing and graphics facilities, presentation equipment, open-access computer labs with help desks, and more.

Students pay a computer fee with their tuition bill each semester which entitles them to full access to all the university computer resources.

The Department of Oceanography maintains its own computer labs which are networked with the university system. Graduate students in oceanography may use the university or departmental systems or both for their computing needs.

Computing & Information Services (CIS) provides the students, faculty and staff of Texas A&M University with access to a vast array of computing resources, facilities and support (845-8300). Besides Internet access, e-mail accounts and Web servers for university use, CIS also operates seven generally accessible computer labs equipped with top-of-the-line computers, software, printing systems and peripherals including scanners, digital video editing suites, CD/DVD-burners, and projectors. Access to the university's supercomputers, mainframes and WebCT online course management system is also facilitated by CIS.

CIS provides students, faculty and staff with 24-hour a day telephone computer support, offers professional training courses and free short courses on a number of topics, and develops/supports Web sites and applications for Texas A&M use including SIMS, CLAIM, Web Registration and online bill payment. CIS maintains the campus network infrastructure as well as acts as the point of contact for information security related issues.

The Texas A&M University Open-Access Computer Labs (OALs) are available for faculty and students of the University. Five Open-Access Labs, six supported locations, and one dedicated Printing Center provide access to email accounts as well as Web navigation, image-manipulation, desktop Publishing, spreadsheet applications, computer-to-computer communications software, programming languages, and a number of course-specific programs. Lab access is twenty-four hours per day when classes are in session in the Student Computing Center (SCC) in order to better serve the needs of the students and faculty.

If you are considering using file sharing (especially peer-to-peer) read this: <http://itim.tamu.edu/filessharing.html>. It contains important information about using A&M resources for file sharing. Otherwise, you could be in violation of copyright laws and University Rules.

To use the computers in the OALs, you need to set up a BASIC account through CLAIM in addition to the NEO account and NETID the university asks you to set up.

Students are allocated a print allowance of \$15.00 each regular semester and \$7.50 for the summer session to cover some of their black and white printing.

For more Student Computing Issues, see <http://www.tamu.edu/scip> or phone CIS at 979-845-4211 or the Help Desk at 979-845-8300.

### **Beutel Health Center**

Beutel Health Center is the on-campus health-care facility for students. Graduate students who are not eligible for a TAMU employee health plan (students who are not at least half-time employees) and have no dependents sometimes use Beutel Health Center.

Students who are eligible for an employee health plan will have the opportunity to select a plan and find out how to use it at the orientation for new employees.

Although most oceanography graduate students do not need to use this health center, all registered students who have paid the Student Health Center Fee with their tuition are eligible to receive care there. Students' dependents may not receive health care at Beutel Health Center unless they too are TAMU students.

The Health Center Fee covers most services that the center provides but does not provide comprehensive health insurance. If you are not listed as a dependent on someone's health insurance or if you have dependents who are not TAMU students, you should purchase student health insurance for yourself and/or your family.

Beutel Health Center offers out-patient services such as physician appointments, basic laboratory tests, physical therapy, nutrition counseling, some types of specialist care, and a pharmacy that provides in-stock medications at discount prices.

Appointments and most services are available at no charge, but nominal fees are charged for some tests, x-rays, and medications. Beutel Health Center is not equipped to provide highly specialized care or in-patient care. Some patients may be referred to a specialist off-campus or to one of the Bryan/College Station hospitals.

For appointments, phone 979-845-6111. For emergencies, phone: 9-911 if you are on campus or 911 if you are off campus. For the Dial-A-Nurse services which provides advice on non-emergency health concerns, phone 979-845-2822.

### **Student Health Insurance**

You are free to purchase any health insurance plan for which you are eligible. All registered TAMU students are eligible to purchase the Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan, which has been made available by the university in cooperation with Guarantee Trust Life Insurance Company. There is no minimum credit-hour requirement. All international students are required by university regulations to maintain a specified amount of health insurance coverage for themselves and their dependents.

The student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan fulfills the requirements for international students but other policies also qualify. You can get information about available health plans from International Student Services or the Department of Oceanography academic advisor.

International students will be blocked from registration until they present proof of adequate insurance coverage at the Beutel Health Center. You should consider buying student health insurance if you are not eligible for a TAMU employee health plan ( you are not eligible for TAMU employee health insurance unless you are employed at least half-time by the university), OR you or your dependents are not covered as dependent on someone else's health plan OR you are an international student and you are not eligible for a TAMU employee health plan, but you need health insurance to comply with university regulations.

There is a mandatory 90-day waiting period before the state will pay any of your insurance premiums. You have the option of paying the entire premium yourself or providing insurance for yourself during this time from some other source. An option available to you is purchasing the Student Accident and Sickness Plan for one quarter (about \$250). This will provide you with insurance for the 90-day waiting period, which is a requirement for international students.

The student health insurance plan described above meets university requirements but other plans may also qualify. Although the student insurance plan is designed for students, make sure it meets your needs before buying the policy. Pre-existing conditions that you or your dependents have are not covered by the plan during the first year of coverage (this can include not only illnesses, but conditions such as pregnancy as well).

For more information on the student insurance plan, call the College Station health insurance representative at Dunlap Financial Services at 979-260-9632.

### **Student Recreation Center**

The Student Recreation Center west of Wellborn Road provides sports facilities for students. The cost of the recreation center is covered by student fees paid with tuition and students will not be charged to visit the center.

For a full list of facilities and programs offered by the Student Recreation Center, please visit <http://recsports.tamu.edu/>.

The Student Recreation Center will be open 360 days per year. A wide variety of intramural sports teams compete throughout the year, including softball, volleyball, soccer, and much more. For more information contact: Recreational Sports at 979- 845-7826.

**Department Facilities, College Station**

The Eller Oceanography & Meteorology Building (O&M) houses the offices of the College of Geosciences, the Department of Oceanography, the Department of Atmospheric Sciences, and the Department of Geography. The Department of Geology and Geophysics located in the Halbouty Building.

The departmental offices are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The O&M Building is locked after 5:00 p.m. each day until approximately 7:00 a.m. in the morning and on week-ends.

**Department of Oceanography**

Room 1204, O&M Building  
MS 3146  
College Station, TX 77843-3146  
Phone: (979) 845-7211

**Department of Atmospheric Sciences**

Room 1204, O&M Building  
MS 3150  
College Station, TX 77843-3150  
Phone: (979) 845-7671

**Department of Geography**


Room 810, O&M Building  
MS 3147  
College Station, TX 77843-3147  
Phone: (979) 845-7141

**Department of Geology and Geophysics**

Room 109, Halbouty Building  
MS 3115  
College Station, TX 77843-3115  
Phone: (979) 845-2451

**Office of the Dean**

College of Geosciences  
Room 204, O&M Building  
MS 3148  
College Station, TX 77843-3148  
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**845-2947**

## The Role of Support Staff, College Station

University, college, and department staff are here to manage the daily operations of the institution and help you along the path toward graduation. They can answer questions and guide you through the process of submitting paperwork and forms to the proper offices. Staff members want to help you when they can, but you must remember that it is your responsibility to meet deadlines and insure that your course of study proceeds in a timely manner.

You should actively pursue your education by:

- Participating in university and departmental activities.
- Planning ahead.
- Getting help from the proper sources when required.
- Asking questions to obtain the information you need.

Departmental staff do not help students fulfill classroom, thesis or dissertation requirements, such as typing papers or preparing presentation materials.

## Student Offices

Office space will be assigned to you. Please note that office space in the department is limited, and you will probably share an office with at least one other person. Offices are equipped with desks, chairs, and bookcases for each student, and one phone to be shared by the occupants. Semi-private carrels in Evans Library are also available to graduate students working on a thesis or dissertation.

## Keys

University and department facilities, including the O&M Building are locked at night, on holidays, and on weekends. See Laura Caldwell (Room 1204, 845-7211) to obtain keys to the O&M Building, your office, research laboratories, and other facilities that you use. You are responsible for returning the keys when you complete your studies.

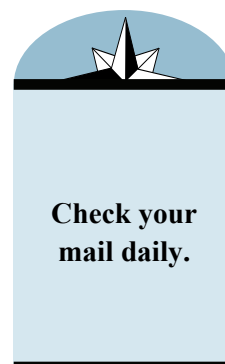
## Office Supplies

The department provides office supplies for tasks related to teaching (for teaching assistants) and university business, but not for student course work or research. Office supplies needed for research must be purchased independently and billed to a research-project account. Consult Laura Caldwell (Room 1204, 845-7211) for information about office supplies provided by the department.

## Mail

Campus and regular mail is delivered to and picked up from the department office in Room 1204 twice each day. Delivery and pick-up normally takes place between 8:30 and 9:30 AM and 1:30 and 2:30 PM, but the schedule varies slightly from day to day. The student workers will distribute mail to your mailbox on your floor.

Students have mailboxes are located in a central location on the fifth floor. You are encouraged to check your mail daily.





## Telephones

Phones in student offices may be used for local calls only. Students working as employees of the department or on contracts/grants may occasionally need to make long-distance phone calls for research or university business purposes.

Ask your supervisor (committee chair) what phone you may use and record the call in that phone's log. The record of the phone call should include the date, the number called, the purpose of the call, and the research-project account number to which the call should be billed.

Laura Caldwell regularly sends a copy of the bill for each phone line in the department to the persons responsible for those lines. All research-related long-distance calls which appear on the bill must be billed to a research-project account. Personal long-distance calls may not appear on the bill under any circumstances.

It is a violation of state law to make personal long-distance phone calls from any phone in the department. Exceptions are allowed ONLY when the call is charged to a personal long-distance calling card and does not appear on the departmental phone bill.

## Fax Machine

A fax machine in the department office is for university business and research purposes only. Students working as employees of the department or a research project may occasionally need to send faxes for research purposes. No charges are incurred for sending local or on-campus faxes, but long-distance research-related faxes must be billed to a research-project account. The billing process for faxes is more complicated than for phone calls. See Laura Caldwell for assistance if you need to send a research-related fax.

Some faculty have fax machines in their offices and laboratories which are used for university business and research purposes. If you work with a professor who has a fax machine and are authorized to use it, consult that professor for proper billing procedures.

It is a violation of state law to send personal long-distance faxes from ANY fax machine in the department. The only mechanism for sending long-distance faxes is to use a personal long distance calling card.

## Photocopy Machines

The photocopy machine located in the department office on the 12th floor is for university business only. It may not be used for research-related or personal business. You may use the department copy machine to make up to 5 transparencies when you have a class presentation (most presentations now use PowerPoint).

Students working for the department as GATs may occasionally make copies for departmental business or teaching. If you are a GAT and you need to make copies for university business purposes, consult departmental office staff for assistance using the copy machine.

The machine in the department office does not have any mechanism for billing copies. If the research project funds are managed by the Texas A&M Research Foundation (TAMRF), you may go to a copy

center on or off campus to make copies, then bill the charges to the correct TAMRF account. Other research-support organizations may require that you use a copy center on campus in order to bill the charges properly.

You may not make personal copies on the departmental copy machine. The OGC manages a copy machine for graduate students to use through GPE funds. The OGC copy machine is located in room 617A of the O&M Building. You will receive a code number which you may use to make up to 2000 copies per month on the OGC copy machine. Once you reach the limit you must use the copy centers on and off campus for additional copying.

## **Computer Facilities**

In addition to the university computer systems, the Department of Oceanography maintains its own computers, network, and workstations. The department relies heavily on network computing for research and departmental business. Open a computer account on the university's or the department's computer system when you arrive. New students should open a departmental account when they arrive on campus. Contact Mark McCann for more information.

You can use your account from any networked computer on campus, any computer in the oceanography computer lab, or from remote computers via the Internet. As an alternative, you can use the university computer system. To find out about the university system, see the CIS website at: <http://cis.tamu.edu>

Most faculty and staff in oceanography use Macintosh computers for general computing and intra-department networking, and some faculty and students use PC's. UNIX workstations and other platforms for research projects.

The department computer lab in room 617 (O&M Building) contains:

- Macintosh computers equipped with standard Mac software for word processing, statistics, and graphics.
- UNIX workstations for student, staff, and faculty use.
- PC Windows computers.

A computer lab in Room 319 (O&M Building) is available to all oceanography graduate students. It is equipped with:

- Six Power Macintosh 7600s
- A color scanner
- A black-and-white laser printer.
- Software for word processing and graphics.

The department computer facilities are not funded through the computer fee that you pay with your tuition. To maintain the department facility, computer use is monitored and billed to faculty research-project accounts or the department.

As a graduate student you do not have to pay to use the department's computers, but you should be aware that your computer use is being monitored and billed to either a research-project or a department account.

### **Scanning & Color Printing with Equipment Owned by the College**

Graduate students may also use a color flatbed scanner and/or print class-and research related documents in color on the Tektronix 350 color printer in the Dean's Office (Room 204, O&M Building). Contact Mark McCann for more information.

### **Teleconference Facilities**

The College of Geosciences has a specially designed and equipped teleconference facility in Room 203 of the O&M Building. The facility enables professors to teach teleconferenced courses to students in College Station and Galveston and facilitates meetings which require the presence of parties on both campuses.

As a graduate student, you may attend teleconferenced classes or meetings, or you may need to use the facility for a teleconferenced meeting with your committee.

Schedule teleconferenced meetings as far in advance as possible. Variables which must be considered in scheduling include: 1) the schedules of the people attending the meeting; 2) the availability of teleconference rooms in College Station and Galveston, and 3) the availability of the broadcast time slot.

The broadcast schedules are managed by KAMU-TV the TAMU television station. To schedule a teleconferenced meeting first contact the participants and determine two or three acceptable dates and times for the meeting. Then contact staff in the dean's office, who will determine whether or not the teleconference rooms and the broadcast time slot are available at one or more of those times. A few minutes before the teleconferenced meeting begins, ask the dean's office staff to establish the teleconference connection.

## **Campus facilities, Galveston**

### **Fort Crockett Campus**

Most graduate students in Galveston work at the Fort Crockett campus, a complex of buildings located on Avenue U in Galveston. Students and faculty from different departments share the original Fort Crockett building, which contains office and laboratory space. Bulletin boards on the Fort Crockett campus advertise employment opportunities for students.

### **Mitchell Campus**

The Mitchell campus of TAMU-Galveston sits on Pelican Island and constitutes the central location of the undergraduate programs there. The campus houses facilities and offices which graduate students need to use including the Williams Library, the Fiscal Office, the Police Department, the Physical Education Facility, the Department of Oceanography Marine Operations (Oceanography building near dock), and the department offices of the Marine Science Program.

Bulletin boards on the Mitchell campus advertise employment opportunities for students.

### **The Director of Graduate Programs**

The Director of Graduate Programs acts as an intermediary between graduate students in Galveston and university offices in College Station, and coordinates services, events, and access to facilities for graduate students on the Mitchell and Fort Crockett campuses. If you need assistance registering for classes, paying tuition and fees or obtaining copies of forms and schedules related to graduate study, please contact the Director at (409) 740-4937.

### **Williams Library**

The Jack K. Williams Library houses a large collection of marine-related publications and materials, study and meeting areas for students, and computer facilities. To find materials in Williams Library, use the computerized LibCat system. This is the same system used for Evans Library in College Station, whose catalog is also accessible via the Galveston ClipperCat system. ClipperCat terminals are located in the library. You can also connect through the Williams Library web site:

<http://www.tamug.tamu.edu/library/>. Terminals in the library and the website also provide access to other on-line databases such as CRLCATALOG and WorldCat among others.

If you are accessing the databases from a computer on the Mitchell Campus, no authorization or password is required. Otherwise contact a librarian for more information.

### **Teleconference Facilities**

TAMU-Galveston has five teleconference facilities on the Mitchell campus used for classes and meetings by faculty, staff and students. Two classrooms can accommodate 20-40 people and are located in the Classroom Laboratory Building (CLB & ATMG). Three conference rooms can accommodate 4-12 people and are located in the Jack K. Williams Library (GAL), Kirkham Hall (KRK) and the Sea Aggie Center (SAGC).

As a graduate student you may attend teleconferenced classes or meetings, or you may need to use the facility for a teleconferenced meeting with your committee.

Schedule teleconferenced meetings as far in advance as possible. Variables which must be considered in scheduling include: 1) the schedules of the people attending the meeting; 2) the availability of teleconference rooms in College Station and Galveston, and 3) the availability of the broadcast time slot.

Broadcast schedules are managed by KAMU-TV, the TAMU television station in College Station. To schedule a teleconferenced meeting from Galveston first contact the participants and determine two or three acceptable dates and times for the meeting. Then contact the Williams Library, and speak to someone who can determine whether or not the teleconference rooms and the broadcast time slot are available for one or more of those times.

A few minutes before the teleconferenced meeting begins, ask the person in charge of scheduling teleconference facilities to establish the teleconference connection.

**Fiscal Office**

The TAMU-Galveston Fiscal Office is located on the Mitchell Campus. Graduate students need to go to the Fiscal Office to purchase parking permits.

**Police Department**

The TAMU-Galveston police department is headquartered on the Mitchell Campus. Graduate students pick up their parking permits at the Police Department after paying the parking fee at the Fiscal Office.

**Physical Education Facility**

A physical education facility on the Mitchell campus houses racquetball and basketball courts, a weight room, and rooms for aerobics and dance. Students must present a valid picture ID for admission.

**Student Center**

The Mary Moody Northen Student Center houses dining facilities, a snack bar, a game room, a bookstore, and administrative offices.

**Health Center**

TAMU-Galveston contracts with a local clinic to provide basic health services for undergraduate students. Graduate students in Galveston are usually employed as graduate assistants and are eligible for a TAMU employee health insurance plan. You should obtain primary and specialized health care according to the terms of your health plan. If you have questions, consult your graduate advisor.

**The Role of Support Staff, Galveston**

The support staff at Galveston are here to manage the daily operations of the institution and help you along the path toward graduation. They can answer questions and guide you through the process of submitting paperwork and forms to the proper offices. Staff members want to help you when they can, but you must remember that it is your responsibility to meet deadlines and insure that your course of study proceeds in a timely manner.

You should actively pursue your education by:

- Participating in university and departmental activities.
- Planning ahead.
- Getting help from the proper sources when required.
- Asking questions to obtain the information you need.
- 

Departmental staff do not help students fulfill classroom or thesis/dissertation requirements, such as typing papers or preparing presentation materials.

## Funding Your Graduate Education

### Financial Aid

Oceanography graduate students typically receive one of six types of financial aid:

- Graduate Assistantship-Teaching (GAT)
- Graduate Assistantship – Research (GAR)
- Fellowship
- Scholarship
- Student Loans
- Sponsorship (International students)

Each type of financial aid carries different requirements and benefits, pays different amounts, etc.

Most fellowships, scholarships, and loans are available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents only, but a few are available to international students also.

When you apply for admission to graduate studies in oceanography you are automatically considered as a candidate for financial aid opportunities controlled by the department and faculty (GAR, GAT, some fellowships) but other types require separate applications (fellowships, scholarships, loans, sponsorships, etc.).

### Graduate Assistantship – Teaching (GAT) in Oceanography

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are normally offered to newly-enrolled graduate students for nine months (two semesters) when other sources of support (i.e. GARs, fellowships, scholarships) are not available. TA positions may be assigned to domestic (US) students, or to international students who first demonstrate adequate language skills by passing the English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE) and can demonstrate to RAAC and the TA co-coordinator that their spoken English is acceptable. It is intended that TA support will be replaced by research or other support after the first two semesters. When such support is not available, the TA appointment may be extended on a semester-by-semester basis up to a maximum of four semesters, subject to adequate performance. Thereafter, graduate students wishing to have TA positions will be placed on a wait list, with highest priority for students who have never been a TA. Continued appointment as a TA beyond four semesters will occur only in the event of an unmet teaching need.

#### *Responsibilities:*

You teach labs for an undergraduate introductory oceanography course or serve as a teaching assistant in an undergraduate or graduate oceanography course. During the term of the GAT, the professor in charge of the labs supervises your work. Your academic advisor is still either the graduate advisor in your section or your committee chair.

In this capacity you are expected to work 20 hours a week in the fall semester (Sept.- Jan. 15) or spring semester (Jan. 16-May 31). In addition to teaching labs, TA's help in cleaning up and organizing teaching labs, material and equipment, proctor exams, and assist in departmental inventory and surplus.

You will be a half-time employee of the Department of Oceanography, TAMU, and the State of Texas. You must register full-time ( 9 hours in the spring or fall, or 6 hours in the summer) for classes before beginning work. Vacations consist of university holidays, not academic breaks. Fall and Spring holidays typically include two days at Thanksgiving, one week at Christmas, one day in January, and two days in March.

*How to apply:*

You are automatically considered for a GAT when you apply for admission. If you are accepted to the program, you are notified in your acceptance letter if you will be offered a GAT. If you are already a student in TAMU oceanography graduate program, discuss your interest in a GAT with your graduate advisor.

If your first language is not English, you need English Proficiency Certification to hold a GAT. You will need to complete the English Language Proficiency Examination (ELPE) unless you are eligible to be certified by alternate means. Having completed a four year Bachelor's degree at a U.S. institution is an acceptable means of alternate certification.

*Number of GAT Positions Available*

The number of GATs depends on available funds and the number of teaching opportunities. There are generally 12 GATs offered per year.

*Benefits:*

GATs receive a waiver of out-of-state tuition, and the in-state portion of tuition is paid for up to 9 hours. GATs are also eligible for half-time employee benefits, including health insurance. There is a mandatory 90-day waiting period before the state will pay any of your insurance premiums. You have the option of paying the entire premium yourself or providing insurance for yourself during this time from some other source. This will provide you with insurance for the 90-day waiting period, which is a requirement for international students.

*Eligibility:*

You must remain enrolled as a full-time student (at least 9 hours in the fall and spring and 6 hours in the summer) throughout your assistantship. For more information contact your graduate advisor or the department's academic advisor.

### **Graduate Assistantship- Research (GAR)**

Principal investigators (PIs), faculty and research scientists with research projects managed through the Texas A&M Research Foundation or other research support organizations. GARs are hired by a principal investigator to work on a specific, funded research project.

The principal investigator who hires a GAR may be a professor or research scientist in the Department of Oceanography, or a researcher or adjunct faculty member at an affiliated research organization such as the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP), or the Geochemical Environmental Research Group (GERG).

*Responsibilities:*

Responsibilities vary but duties usually involve conducting research which may ultimately become the topic of your thesis or dissertation.

You are a half-time employee, employed to work 20 hours per week. First-semester international students must register for classes before beginning work.

Vacation consists of university holidays, not breaks in the academic year. Fall and spring holidays typically include two days at Thanksgiving, one week at Christmas, one day in January, and two days in March. Exact dates vary each year. If you are employed during the summer (June 1 – August 31), you should check the university holidays calendar for scheduled days off.

*How to Apply:*

You are automatically considered for a GAR when you apply for admission to the graduate program. When you apply, your application is circulated among the faculty in the appropriate discipline (biological, chemical, physical, geological/geophysical). Faculty members assess your overall qualifications and evaluate whether or not your abilities and interests are compatible with existing or planned research projects.

If you are accepted into the program you may be offered a GAR by a PI who has funding. You will be contacted by that PI prior to acceptance and will be notified of the offer in your acceptance letter. You are encouraged to contact PI's who are doing research in an area of interest to you.

If you are already enrolled in the graduate program, you may apply for a GAR by consulting with the principal investigator of a research project you find interesting.

*Number of GAR Positions Available*

The availability of GARs is determined by the individual budgets of research projects being conducted by oceanography faculty. Openings fluctuate from semester to semester as projects are initiated and completed. Most students who do not receive GATs or other aid are offered GARs.

*Benefits:*

Your salary and benefits are paid using research funds awarded to the principal investigator who hired you. GARs receive a waiver of out-of-state tuition, and the in-state portion of tuition is paid for up to 9 hours. GARs are also eligible for half-time employee benefits, including health insurance. However, there is a mandatory 90-day waiting period before the state will pay any of your insurance premiums. You have the option of paying the entire premium yourself or providing insurance for yourself during this time from some other source. This will provide you with insurance for the 90-day waiting period, which is a requirement for international students.

*Eligibility:*

You must remain enrolled as a full-time student (at least 9 hours in the fall and spring semesters and 6 hours in the summer) throughout your assistantship. For more information contact your graduate advisor or the department's academic advisor.



## Fellowships

Fellowships are sometimes the most generous and always the most prestigious forms of financial aid. Under the traditional notion of a fellowship, you do not do any work for the university in exchange for fellowship funds. Instead, you are free to pursue required course work and thesis or dissertation research under the guidance of an advisory committee.

The terms of fellowships vary. Some may be awarded specifically for you to carry out a project and produce a report on a topic partly or completely determined by the funding organization. Under these circumstances the funding organization might provide funds for your medical insurance in addition to other funds.

Many organizations offer graduate student fellowships to outstanding students on a competitive basis. The Department of Oceanography offers the following:

- Regent's Fellowship—offered to one incoming student each year.
- Scherck Fellowships, which cover half of the total financial burden of graduate students. These are often matched with GAR support.
- Sharp fellowship—awarded on an irregular basis.

Other organizations that offer fellowships include:

- The Office of Graduate Studies offers Merit Fellowships and Diversity Fellowships to highly qualified students on a university wide competitive basis.
- Texas Institute of Oceanography
- Sea Grant
- National Science Foundation
- Other governmental and non-governmental entities that support graduate education.

You are automatically considered for the Regents, Diversity, Merit and Scherck Fellowships when you apply for admission to the oceanography graduate program. Once you are accepted to the program you will be notified if you are being considered for the fellowship. You will not be required to submit further application materials.

When the Sharp fellowship is offered, an announcement will be made to faculty and students. Faculty can nominate students for the fellowship, and a nominee will be selected by the department's Recruiting and Academic Advisory Committee.

Other fellowships are offered independently of the department or university, and have separate application procedures and deadlines. You need to initiate and follow through with the application procedures yourself. You may wish to consult your graduate advisor, as some fellowship applications require that you define a research project.

Finding information about available fellowships requires persistent investigation on your part. If you are interested in obtaining a fellowship, you should thoroughly investigate the available funding and apply

for any and all fellowships for which you qualify. Many university and public libraries have reference books which list graduate fellowships. The TAMU office of Graduate Studies has fellowship information, and fellowship opportunities are frequently advertised on the internet.

*Requirements:*

Traditionally there are no work requirements beyond satisfactory progress toward your degree, but this varies with the terms of each fellowship.

*Benefits:*

Under current state law you may be eligible to pay resident tuition regardless of your official residency status, as long as your fellowships funds are handled through TAMU. Fellowships not handled through TAMU may not qualify you for resident tuition.

Study the terms of each fellowship you consider to determine whether or not it provides funds for medical benefits. If it does, contact the TAMU organization which will handle the funds and ask how to obtain the health benefits. If you do not know which TAMU organization will handle the funds, consult your advisor or the funding organization.

If the terms of the fellowship do not include medical benefits, you may need to make other arrangements for health insurance. As a fellowship recipient you are not a state employee and therefore not eligible for employee benefits such as health insurance. Unless prohibited by the terms of your fellowship, you may apply for additional financial aid either to help pay for a health insurance policy or qualify for TAMU employee benefits. All TAMU students are eligible to purchase the discounted student health insurance policy. Please inquire about this policy at Student Health Services, the Office of Graduate Studies, or the department's Academic Advisor.

*Eligibility:*

Each funding entity determines the eligibility criteria for its own fellowships, but most require that the recipient be enrolled as a full-time student. While most fellowships are awarded to U.S. citizens only, many are available to international students also.

## **Scholarships**

Scholarships are awarded to graduate students on a competitive basis, and are intended to reward superior academic achievement. Although scholarships normally will not meet all of your financial needs, may make you eligible for resident tuition. Depending on the terms of each, you may be eligible to hold a scholarship in conjunction with a graduate assistantship, fellowship, loan, or other type of financial aid.

Some scholarships are designated for international students. Consult ISS for more information.

Various university offices and entities offer competitive scholarships to graduate students with superior academic records. The Department of Oceanography occasionally offers limited scholarships.

*How to Apply:*

Scholarships are awarded by different entities with different application processes. To find out about available scholarships consult the Student Financial Aid Office or their website, the reference section of the library, or do a search on the internet.

International students can apply for scholarships available through the International Student Services Office.

*Requirements:*

There are no work requirements beyond satisfactory progress toward your degree. Specific requirements are outlined by the entity that awards the scholarship.

*Benefits:*

Under current state law you may be eligible to pay resident tuition regardless of your official residency status, if you hold a competitive scholarship of \$1,000 or more that is handled through TAMU.

*Eligibility:*

Each funding entity determines the eligibility criteria for its own scholarships. Most require that the recipient be enrolled as a full-time student. Most scholarships are awarded to U.S. citizens only, but many are available to international students also.

**Student Loans**

Student loans are offered through federal, state, and university programs. Federal and state student loans are low-interest loans. Some examples of these loans are the Federal Stafford Loans, the Perkins Loans, and the College Access Loans

Terms of loans vary, but on many federal loans, interest is deferred until six months after the student graduates, withdraws from the university, or drops below half-time enrollment. Students do not begin repaying the loan until that time. Terms of student loans are subject to change.

In addition to the loans described above, the Student Financial Aid office administers short-term, emergency tuition loans, and “little loans.” These small loans help students weather unexpected expenses and expenses associated with graduation, and they assist students who cannot pay tuition by the deadline. Each loan carries different interest and payment arrangements. Availability may be limited. Contact the Student Financial Aid office for more information.

International Student Services (ISS) administers the Watkins International Loan Fund for international students who face emergencies such as illness, sudden loss of financial support, etc. Circumstances and needs will be individually assessed by an ISS advisor. Contact ISS for more information or visit their web site.

*How to apply:*

To apply for a federal or state student loan submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the central processing site. Have the results sent to TAMU. There is no specific deadline for submitting the FAFSA, but you should try and submit the application by June 30 if you want to receive a loan for the academic year, which begins in September. The application is available in the Student Financial Aid Office or on-line at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

To apply for short-term loans, emergency-tuition loans, and “little loans”, contact the Student Financial Aid office or visit their website at <http://financialaid.tamu.edu/>.

To apply for a loan from the Watkins International Loan Fund (international students only), contact International Student Services.

*Eligibility:*

Eligibility differs depending on the type of loan that you receive. Read the terms of the loan carefully to determine eligibility requirements.

**Sponsorship for International Students**

Governments of various countries, international foundations or companies can sponsor a student. Students receive sponsorship to fund their graduate studies at a U.S. university through a variety of organizations before they come to Texas A&M. Specific selection procedures are determined by the sponsor.

If you are a sponsored student, you are probably familiar with some terms and arrangements of your sponsorship. The International Student Services Office (ISS) can help you understand your agreement with your sponsor, your payment arrangements, and the limitations or opportunities that are associated with your sponsorship.

You may or may not be eligible to receive any other form of financial aid, depending on the terms of your sponsorship. Consult ISS to make sure that you are fully familiar with all the requirements imposed by your sponsor and the university.

**Mini Grants**

You can apply for small grants to defray your travel costs when you attend professional conferences, or when you need to travel to conduct your research. Mini grant awards range from \$100 to \$500, and are offered by the OGC, OGS, and GGSA.

## Being a State Employee

### State Law and University Policy

If you are paid by the university, you are an employee of the State of Texas. You are bound by state law and university business and ethics policies just like full-time TAMU employees.

The department is audited periodically, and non-compliance by employees will be exposed. Disciplinary action can be taken against the department as a whole when employees do not comply with university policy.

The quality of education that the department can offer is partially dependent on its ability to avoid such disciplinary action. Departmental staff take university policy and procedure very seriously, and expect that you will also.

The guidelines for conduct of university business are written in the University Rules. Rules may be accessed via the University Rules web at <http://rules.tamu.edu>.

### Bi-weekly Employees

Graduate students who hold student-worker jobs on campus are bi-weekly employees. If you are a bi-weekly employee you must submit a time sheet every two weeks. Use the time sheet to record the number of hours you worked and ask your supervisor to sign it. Student workers may not work more than 20 hours per week.

GATs, and GARs are not bi-weekly employees, and do not need to submit time sheets. If you are not sure if you are a bi-weekly employee, ask Wendy Gamble (845-7213).

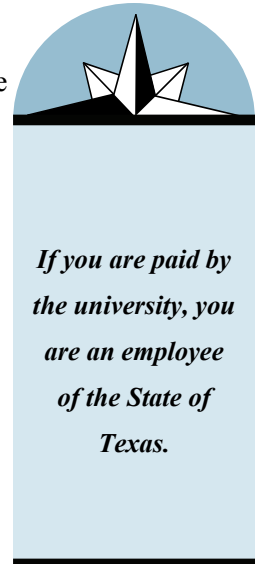
### University Business or Research-Related Travel

University or research-related business travel is any travel billed to a university or research-project account. For students, this usually includes travel to professional conferences and meetings, travel for class, travel to conduct research, and research cruises.

When planning university business or research-related travel, be sure to consult Karol Hutson well in advance. State law governing travel can be complex, and the specific regulations that apply to each trip will vary.

Three days prior to departure, file a Request for Business Travel form (also known as a T&L form). On the form, state the dates and times that you will depart and return, your destination, purpose and mode of travel, and estimated expenses.

To obtain a blank form or for help completing the form, contact Karol Hutson or Laura Caldwell (Room 1204, O&M Building; 845-7211).



### **Using department facilities**

All students use department facilities and equipment in some way. Graduate assistants are most likely to use such facilities in a manner that is governed by state law, such as placing long-distance phone calls and faxes or using the copy machine. Department equipment such as phones, faxes and copiers may only be used for university and research-related business.

It is critical that graduate assistants carefully differentiate between use of equipment that is billable to a research-project account, use of facilities for academic and university business, and all other use.

If you are not sure whether your use of department facilities constitutes research, academic, or university business-related use, or if you have any questions concerning university policy and procedure, consult Laura Caldwell or Karol Hutson.

## **International Student Services**

### **Mission Statement**

The Texas A&M University student population is a diverse group numbering approximately 44,000 individuals. Nowhere is this diversity more evident than among the international student population. Approximately 3,800 students from 120 nations attend the University. Their presence and integration into academic, community, and student life is essential to the overall vision of International Programs: ensuring that all Texas A&M graduates have the experience and skills to excel in the global environment of the 21st century. As part of this vision, the mission of International Student Services (ISS) is to facilitate the international student's transition to life in the United States and at Texas A&M, promote interactions between the US and international populations, and provide services necessary to meet the special needs of international students.

International students begin their studies at Texas A&M wanting guidance as they overcome cultural barriers and gain an understanding of the requirements under which they are pursuing their educational objectives. They have many questions about US customs and values, government and university regulations, academic issues, campus and community facilities, medical care, banking, shopping, and amusement. ISS responds to these questions and serves as an information resource for all the partners in the international education process, those in the campus community and those outside of it.

The ISS staff is composed of seven professionals, four support staff, two graduate assistants, and five students (some of whom are international and some US citizens). The office provides leadership opportunities to international and US students through coordination of more than 50 international student organizations including the International Student Association. Such activities as I-Camp, International Week, Mini-Olympics, Diwali, Spring Festival, Moon Festival, and hundreds of seminars, performances, and conferences focused on country or regional celebrations integrate US and international awareness and an appreciation for people of all cultures. In addition, the office facilitates joint programming efforts with traditionally US organizations such as Student Government, MSC Hospitality, Festi-fall, and other groups to encourage interaction and integration among the various cultural groups on campus and in the community.

Responding to the needs of international students also means serving as a liaison between the many partners involved in the international education process. ISS staff assist US and foreign government officials, family members, businesses and faculty and staff from Texas A&M and foreign institutions in coordinating the academic and support services for international students. From simple activities (such as assisting with money shortfalls through loans and scholarships or helping family members understand how immigration laws impact a Texas A&M international student taking an extra class at Blinn College) to complex situations (such as helping students make contact with family members during civil unrest or return home during emergency situations), ISS links all these partners and provides a support network for them.

## Services Available

The services necessary to accomplish the office mission are as diverse as the student population itself. However, there are six general areas of services available.

### *Immigration Services and Advising*

- Review a portion of the prospective student applications, evaluate financial resources, and issue Certificates of Eligibility (Forms I-20 and DS-2019) to allow students to obtain visas and attend the University.
- Represent the University on immigration related matters involving non-immigrant students and serve as the liaison between ISS and campus departments and offices, government agencies, businesses, and members of the community on these matters.
- Serve as a resource about federal regulations that impact international students.
- Manage information regarding the legal status of Texas A&M international students, as required by federal regulations.
- Provide education and counseling for students regarding federal regulations and assist them with procedures including, but not limited to:
  - Extensions of stay, work authorizations and reinstatements.
  - Changes of status and degree level changes.
  - Transfers to and from TAMU
  - Concurrent enrollment and full course student waivers.
  - Lost document replacement.
  - Letters of invitation, certification and expense statements.
  - Review and endorsement of immigration documents for travel abroad.
- Research and compile reports and census information.
- Assist in developing Texas A&M standards, policies, and procedures for student immigration concerns.
- Provide referrals to immigration attorneys and to consulates and embassies.
- Verify international student employment eligibility for Texas A&M University, TAMU Health Science Center, and TAMU Galveston, through the use of the Employment Eligibility Certification (EEC) System.

### *Personal Advising*

- Advise students on a broad array of matters that include the following:
  - Cultural adjustment and socialization issues, orientation and readjustment to home country.
  - Academic concerns and University policies.
  - Health insurance and health care.
  - Personal and family tragedies.
  - Travel, transportation, banking, and other settling in needs.
  - Personal safety, income taxes, and legal issues.

### *Other Advising Areas*

- Represent the interests of international students.
- Provide assistance in accessing community and campus resources.
- Encourage leadership opportunities and training for international students.
- Provide linkages with government, business, university, and community officials.
- Facilitate conflict resolution.
- Advise International Student Association (ISA) on activities and programs such as:
  - Mini Olympics and Mini World Cup Soccer.
  - International Week (cultural displays, international buffet, consuls' general banquet, talent and fashion show).
  - President's Council meetings and General Assemblies.
  - Jointly sponsored activities with Texas A&M and community groups.
- Coordinate community outreach programs including:
  - Speakers' Bureau
  - International Friendship Partners and Host Family program.
  - International Loan Closet.
  - Cultural awareness programs and classes.
  - Volunteer program for helping settle new students.
  - Volunteer recruiting and training sessions.
- Special Programs for families of international students.
- Secondary advising for international clubs.
- Programs for faculty and staff regarding international student issues.

### *Special Programs*

- Two week orientation (each semester) providing the following information:
  - Check-in program, including immigration check, Health Center check, English Language Placement Exam (ELPE) information, information on banking/utilities, assistance locating housing, community and campus information, Social Security applications.
  - Seminars on car buying, computer facilities and test preparation.
  - Campus tours, shopping trips and a welcome party.
  - Providing airport and bus station pick-up and temporary housing.



- Formal orientation workshops within the above schedule on the following:
  - Personal safety issues
  - Transportation and travel
  - University policies and federal regulations.
  - Health facilities and health insurance.
  - International organizations and student activities.
  - TAMU traditions.
  - Basic academic information.
  - Banking and tax obligations.
  - Living essentials and off-campus housing.
- Seminars on federal regulations for students with non-immigrant visas on such topics as:
  - New federal regulations.
  - How to qualify and apply for work authorization and extensions of stay.
  - Income tax filing seminars and question/answer sessions.

#### *Administration of Scholarships, Grants and Loan Programs*

While all students are eligible for financial aid, the following are only available to international students:

- *Appala Scholarship*  
Self supported international student in their first, second, or third semester are eligible for this \$500 award based on academic merit, financial need, and length of time at A&M.
- *Eppright Outstanding International Student Award*  
All international students are eligible to apply. One \$2,000 award for leadership, service and academic excellence.
- *Good Neighbor Scholarship*  
Citizens of countries in North America (excluding the U.S.A.), Central America, South America, and the Caribbean are eligible to apply, if they have attended TAMU at least one semester. Full tuition waivers are provided.
- *International Education Fee Scholarship*  
All international students are eligible to apply for one of the 8 scholarships available per year, based on financial need, academic qualifications and international activities.
- *International Education Study Fee Grant*  
All international students are eligible to apply for up to \$300 when presenting a paper at or attending a recognized conference.
- *Khalil Ghattas Lebanese Scholarship*  
Available to Lebanese students only. Two scholarships of \$1,200 per year.
- *Bill and Rita Stout Academic Excellence Award*  
Available to current A&M undergraduate non-immigrant visa holder students, who have not previously received this award. This \$600 award is based on academic merit and on strong interest promoting international relations among people of all cultures.

- *Shibata International Memorial Scholarship*  
All international students are eligible to apply for this \$500 award based on academic merit and organization/community involvement.
- *Texas/Mexico Education Scholarship*  
Mexican citizens are eligible to apply. Out-of-state tuition waivers are provided. Limited number, based on financial need.
- *Watkins Emergency Loan Fund*  
Loans are available to international students for emergencies only. This loan cannot be used for tuition and fees.

## Types of Visas and Employment

Immigration laws change regularly, and each student's case may differ. Consult ISS to ensure that you maintain legal immigration status whenever your situation as a TAMU student changes (for example, if you decide to pursue another degree).

If you are a non-immigrant international student with an F-1 or J-1 visa:

- You can be employed on-campus by TAMU without further authorization from Immigration and Naturalizations Services (INS).
- You must obtain further authorization to work for TAMU off-campus, for another employer, or after you complete your academic program.
- You can work for TAMU up to half-time (20 hours/week) during the regular semester, and full-time between semesters as long as you enroll full-time in the subsequent semester.
- Dependents of F-1 visa holders (F-2 holders) are not eligible for any type of employment.
- Dependents of J-1 visa holders (J-2 holders) may not seek employment without further documentation from INS.

Sponsored students may need authorization from their sponsor to seek employment.

## Health Insurance

All international students are required by university regulations to maintain specific levels of health insurance for themselves and their dependents.

You must have insurance with:

- Benefits up to \$50,000 per accident or illness.
- A deductible no higher than \$500 per accident or illness.
- \$7,500 in repatriation insurance.
- \$10,000 in medical evacuation insurance.

ISS has information about several health insurance plans that meet these requirements and ISS staff can advise you on choosing the right plan.

Beutel Health Center will block you from registering until you produce proof that you have the level of coverage described above. To have the block removed, go to the health center and present your proof of coverage. Proof of coverage consists of:

- A receipt showing you purchased the student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan.
- A copy of a current insurance policy you brought with you from home. If the policy is not written in English, you must provide translations of the portions that demonstrate it meets university requirements.
- A letter from the Department of Oceanography stating that you will be a graduate-assistant in the upcoming semester, and that you will be covered by a TAMU employee health plan. There is now a mandatory 90-day waiting period before the state will pay any of your insurance premiums. You have the option of paying the entire premium yourself or providing insurance for yourself during this time from some other source. New international students who arrive without adequate insurance can buy a policy and have the registration block removed during ISS check-in and orientation.

If you decide to buy a policy other than the student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan, you might not obtain a receipt in time to register. To have your registration block removed in time, go to the health center with your check written to the insurance company, the forms you are sending to the company with your check (if any), and a stamped addressed envelope. The health center staff will remove your registration block and mail the insurance materials for you.

Students registering in absentia do not need to carry the minimum coverage to comply with university regulations. If you are registering in absentia, ask the department's academic advisor to submit a letter to that effect to the health center. You may still need to carry some type of coverage to comply with federal regulations and maintain legal immigration status. Consult ISS for more information about federal requirements.

### **Enrollment Requirements**

The Department of Oceanography requires all students who are on assistantships to register for at least 9 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters, and at least 6 credit hours in each 10 week summer term. Even though ISS does not require you to be registered for the summer, the University requires that you register for 6 credit hours in the summer if you are on an assistantship.

### **Enrollment and Withdrawal issues**

The following activities may require federal authorization, which you may obtain with the assistance of an ISS advisor.

- Withdrawal from classes.
- Enrollment at another school.
- Transfer to another school.
- Commencement of a new academic program.
- Participation in a study-abroad program.
- Registration in absentia or the taking of a leave of absence.
- Pursuit of academic research at a location other than Texas A&M.

## **Sponsored Students**

Governments of several countries, including the United States, and many international foundations and companies sponsor selected students to pursue graduate studies at U.S. universities. Agreements between sponsors and students are arranged before the student arrives at TAMU.

If you are a sponsored student, you are probably familiar with some terms and arrangements of your sponsorship. The International Student Services Office (ISS) can help you further understand your agreement with your sponsor, specific payment arrangements, and the limitations or opportunities that are associated with your sponsorship. You may or may not be eligible to receive any other form of financial aid, depending on the terms of the sponsorship.

Consult ISS and make sure that you are fully familiar with all the requirements imposed by your sponsor and the university.

## **English Proficiency Requirement**

All international graduate students whose native language is not English must fulfill an English proficiency requirement, through either English Proficiency Verification or English Language Certification. This proficiency requirement should be met early in a student's program, and it must be completed before scheduling either the final examination for the master's degree or the preliminary examination for the doctoral degree.

There are two levels of English Proficiency Status for graduate students: English Proficiency Verified and English Proficiency Certified. English Proficiency Certification is required, by the State of Texas, before a graduate student is eligible to serve as a Graduate Assistant-Teaching, or any other position considered to be a teaching position (e.g., instructor, lecturer, etc.). If you are interested in teaching opportunities at TAMU, or if you will hold a GAT in an upcoming semester, you must obtain English Proficiency Certification. For all other students, English Proficiency Verification will suffice.

English Proficiency Verification can be achieved by presenting:

- a TOEFL score of at least 213 computer-based, or
- an IELTS score of at least 6.0, or
- a GRE Verbal score of at least 400, or
- a GMAT Verbal score of at least 22.

Scores from TOEFL examinations administered more than two years before submission of the application for admission shall not be eligible for English Proficiency Verification.

English Proficiency Certification can be achieved by:

- scoring at least 80 on each of the four sections of the English Language Proficiency Examination (ELPE),
- obtaining grades of A or B in English Language Institute (ELI) courses at the 300-level or higher, or
- requesting alternative certification by the Office of Graduate Studies. Students who have received a baccalaureate degree following four years of study at an accredited U.S. institution will qualify automatically for English Proficiency Certification under this alternative.

International students who fail to attain a score of at least 80 on ONE of the four sections but attain a score of 80 or more on the other sections, may appeal their results. Such students should contact their departmental graduate advisor for further information.

Graduate students who have completed an equivalent English training program at an institution other than Texas A&M may request English Proficiency Verification or Certification. Verification or certification on this basis is requested through the Departmental Graduate Advisor. The student should provide the Departmental Graduate Advisor with documentation to support Verification or Certification. If the department concurs with the request, the Departmental Graduate Advisor will submit a letter recommending and requesting Verification or Certification (with documentation attached) to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will determine on a case-by-case basis whether Verification or Certification is granted. See the Graduate Catalog for more details.

International students who have not met the minimum requirements for Verification upon admission to Texas A&M University will have to take the English Language Proficiency Examination (ELPE) given by Measurement and Research Services. The test is administered twice each semester. The ELPE evaluates English reading, listening, written composition and oral communication skills.

A score of 80 or above on each section of the ELPE certifies you as English Proficient. If you do not score 80 or above on each section, you must take English courses at the English Language Institute (ELI). A grade of A or B in ELI courses at the 300 level or higher will certify you in English proficiency.

You may be able to postpone both the ELPE and enrollment in ELI courses by one semester, but if you choose to postpone, you will be required to take the ELPE the next time it is offered, or begin courses at ELI.

Graduate students can take ELI and regular TAMU courses concurrently for a total of up to 15 hours during the fall or spring and 12 hours during a ten-week summer session.

See the Graduate Catalog, your graduate advisor, or ISS for more information.

## English Language Institute

The English Language Institute (ELI) offers courses and resources for international students who must enroll to fulfill the English language requirement or who simply want to improve their English. Basic, intermediate, and advanced courses are available in:

- Grammar
- Composition
- Reading
- Vocabulary
- Listening Comprehension
- Speaking skills

Student who wish to improve their skill but do not enroll in a course may use:

- ELI's directed and independent communication labs.
- A computerized training facility.
- Short courses.
- The conversation partner program.
- And more.

Spouses of international students may enroll in ELI courses also.

A single ELI course costs about \$700. Each additional course during the same semester costs an additional \$350.

## Registering for Classes, Paying Tuition, and Obtaining your Financial Aid Funds

You should NEVER wait until the last minute to begin any of these procedures. Failure to plan ahead can:

- Cost you hundreds of dollars
- Delay your access to financial aid
- Delay access to employee benefits
- Delay your graduation date

Each student's situation is different and you may encounter obstacles not foreseen in this handbook which will cause delays.

### Note to All Students:

It is extremely important that all students register as early as possible and pay tuition on time. The university receives state funding for each registered student. The amount of the state contribution is significantly higher than your tuition and fees. The university does not receive any of this state funding for students who register or pay tuition late.

Pre-registration does *not* require early payment of tuition and fees. Pre-registration facilitates planning for students and faculty. Each graduate course must have at least five students or it will be cancelled. When you pre-register you allow faculty to foresee if a small class will be offered or if it is in danger of being cancelled. The department can then inform you of the status of the course in time for you to register for another class if necessary.

## Your First Semester

### International Students

Report to International Student Services located on the first Floor of Bizzell Hall East. Their phone number is (979) 845-1825.

International Student Services will:

- Determine whether or not you have met the English Language Requirement
- Instruct you on how to proceed if you have not met the English requirement
- Help you obtain a health insurance plan that meets university requirements and have the health center's registration block removed
- Explain a variety of other services that will be useful to you while at TAMU

If your immigration document says "for Ph.D." or "for M.S." you may not pursue a different degree. Contact International Student Services for more information.

International students follow the same steps as U.S. Citizens when registering.

## All Students

When you arrive at TAMU meet with the graduate advisor in your section to decide which classes you will take during your first semester. The graduate advisors in each section are:

Biological Oceanography	Dr. Dan Thornton
Chemical Oceanography	Dr. Shari Yvon-Lewis
Geological Oceanography	Dr. Matthew Schmidt
Physical Oceanography	Dr. Achim Stoessel

When you assemble a committee and submit a degree plan your committee chair will become your advisor. Until the degree plan is submitted the graduate advisor for your section is your advisor, even if you were hired as a GAR to work on a specific research project and you know that your supervisor will later become your committee chair.

Whenever you choose courses or you are preparing to fulfill one of the other requirements, discuss your decisions with your graduate advisor/committee chair.

## The Course Catalog

The course catalog is no longer distributed in hard copy. It is available on-line via the web at <http://courses.tamu.edu>.

If you hold an assistantship you must be registered full time (9 hours in fall and spring semesters, and 6 hours in the summer). If you are receiving financial aid of any sort, please familiarize yourself with the terms of the aid and make sure that you are registered for at least the minimum number of hours. International students should be aware of International Student Services Regulations regarding the minimum number of hours for which they must register.

Graduate assistants and recipients of competitive scholarships of \$1,000 or more are eligible for a waiver of out-of-state tuition. It is your responsibility to ensure that this waiver is entered. If you believe that you are eligible for a tuition waiver, e-mail the departmental academic advisor for verification of eligibility and entry of the waiver.

The in-state portion of tuition is paid for most graduate assistants. Please contact the departmental academic advisor for verification of eligibility and entry of tuition payment.

## How and Where to Pay

Student Business Services accepts the following forms of payment: Cash, Personal Check, Cashiers Check, Western Union Quick Collect, Money Order, and Wire Transfer. Payments using E-Checks, American Express, Master Card, and Discover Card can be made online at <http://aggie-pay.tamu.edu>. Payments made with credit cards or E-checks will incur a convenience fee charged at the time of payment. Payments made with credit cards will incur a 2.25% convenience fee (minimum charge of \$3.00) and E-checks will incur a \$.50 convenience fee.



When mailing payment please include your name and UIN (Universal Identification Number) on the check to ensure accurate posting of payments.

**Payments can be mailed to:**

Texas A&M University  
Student Business Services  
PO Box 30015  
Bryan, TX 77805-3015

**Payments can be mailed Priority or Overnight to:**

Texas A&M University  
Student Business Services  
750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2801  
College Station, TX 77843-6001

**Wire or ACH Transfer:**

Wells Fargo  
ABA#: 1210-0024-8  
ACCT#: 2475688897  
SWIFT #: WFBIUS6S (for international wires)  
Student's Name and UIN  
ATTN: Cashiers

**Western Union Quick Collect:**

At any Western Union office, request: Blue Quick Collect, code city: TAMUCOLLEGESTATION (no spaces), State: TX, Account #: your UIN. For Western Union agent locations, go to their web site at [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com).

**In Person:**

Payments can be made to the Cashiers at the General Services Complex, Suite 2801, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Graduate assistants and fellows do not receive regular fellowship checks or payroll checks on the first day of classes or on September 1st. New students should arrive at TAMU with enough money to move in, and pay their first semester tuition and fees, and pay their expenses for at least one month. Short-term loans are available to students who are unable to pay tuition on time.

After you pay your bill, obtain your student ID card in Suite 2801 at the General Services Complex. Your picture will be taken and your card will be made while you wait.

Consult the Graduate Catalog for information dropping and adding classes. Only classes dropped within the first five days of the semester will be omitted from your record

If the terms of your financial aid specify a minimum enrollment requirement, you must maintain at least the minimum number of hours throughout the semester. If you drop courses after registration and fall below the minimum requirement for the remainder of the semester, you can be penalized, including loss of your assistantship for that semester.

## Registering and Paying Tuition, Galveston

The Director of Graduate Programs helps graduate students in Galveston to register and pay tuition. Contact the director when you arrive and he/she will tell you when you can report to his/her office to register.

When you arrive at TAMU-Galveston in the summer-after your first academic year, consult with the graduate advisor and your Galveston mentor to decide on classes. You will already know who your graduate advisor is. If you were hired as a GAR to work on a specific research project, your graduate advisor may be the faculty member who is the principal investigator of that project.

Make sure you know whether or not you will receive a GAT or GAR, fellowship, or scholarship. If you are not sure if you have one, ask your advisor. These types of financial aid may entitle you to a tuition waiver so that you can pay resident tuition.

Graduate students in Galveston can register, obtain tuition waivers and pay tuition through the Graduate Studies Coordinator on predetermined dates approximately one week before the semester starts. Contact the Graduate Studies Coordinator in advance for the precise dates each semester.

New international students may be required to be present in College Station during the Graduate Studies Coordinator's registration period, and can instead follow the same procedures for registration and paying tuition as College Station students.

Always register for at least the minimum number of hours either required by the department or necessary to remain eligible for your financial aid.

## Obtaining your financial aid funds

### *Fellowship holders*

Fellowships are handled by different offices at TAMU-College Station and TAMU-Galveston. Most fellowships awarded to oceanography students are managed through the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). If you are not sure who to contact regarding your fellowship funds, call OGS or the person with whom you corresponded when you applied for the fellowship.

If your fellowship is managed by OGS, you will be asked to submit a letter in which you accept the fellowship and agree to one of a few different payment arrangements. For example, you can receive payments in 12 equal monthly payments, or obtain start-up funds at the beginning of the first semester and receive the balance of the fellowship funds in 12 equal payments.

The Office of Graduate Studies uses the information in the acceptance letter to complete a Scholarship/Fellowship Request to Student Financial Aid for you. This form designates how the funds are distributed to you and is mailed from the office of Student Financial Aid to your current address.

Monthly fellowship checks are mailed near the END of the month for which you are being paid. Thus, new students do not receive a monthly payment until, on, or about October 1st, and that check constitutes their stipend for the month of September. If you need some of your fellowship money before that, you need to arrange for start-up funds when you choose a payment arrangement.

Be aware of the length of your fellowship and make advance arrangements for other financial aid before that term ends if you will need further assistance.

If the terms of a fellowship require enrollment for a minimum number of credit hours, you must maintain that enrollment throughout the term of the fellowship, and not fall below the minimum by dropping credit hours during the semester. Your records will be periodically audited, and you will be penalized if you have not met the requirements.

### *Student Loans*

Student loan funds are normally mailed directly to you. The time it takes to process the loan application governs when you will receive the funds. For more information about student loans, contact the Student Financial Aid office.

### *Scholarships*

The mechanism for obtaining scholarship money, once it has been awarded, depends on the scholarship terms. Contact the funding organization, the Office of Graduate Studies, or ISS (International Students Only) for information.

Funds for many scholarships are automatically credited to your tuition bill. If funds remain after the TOTAL university bill is paid, the money is returned to your billing address. In cases in which no billing address is on file, the balance is mailed to your permanent address if the credit shows on the bill more than two weeks before classes start, or to your local address if the credit appears less than two weeks before classes start.

### *Sponsored Students*

The International Student Services office handles all payments to sponsored students. Sponsored students, like all international students, should visit ISS before registering for first-semester classes. Contact ISS for more information.

## **Getting on the Payroll GAT and GAR-holders**

Make sure you have been officially added to the payroll within the first week of classes. Many of the steps must be completed by staff members in conjunction with your advisor, but you should verify that the proper forms have been submitted.

Processing payroll paperwork takes time, especially at the beginning of the semester when hundreds of new employees are being added.

If your new employee paperwork is not processed by September 1 (or January 16 for spring) your paycheck for September (or January) may be delayed. You may not be able to receive your pay until the second payday of the academic year, as much as two months after you begin work.

Consult your advisor if you experience problems getting on the payroll, and keep him or her informed of your status as an employee.

You will be required to complete an I-9 as part of your payroll paperwork. When completing this document, you will be required to show the business coordinator for the department two forms of identification. Acceptable forms of identification can be found on page 3 of the following link: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/files/i-9.pdf>.

Like all TAMU employees, GATs and GARs are paid for work performed after the end of the month in which the work is performed. Thus, if you are added to the payroll on time, you still will not receive a paycheck until on or about October 1st (mid-February for spring). You should arrive in College Station with enough money to move in, pay tuition and fees, and pay your expenses for at least one month.

## ACADEMICS

### DEGREES AND ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

#### Introduction

This section explains in detail how to complete each step toward your degree. In most cases careful reading of these instructions will save you a lot of time and frustration that can arise from inaccurate or incomplete information.

Plan ahead when you are trying to file your degree plan, proposal, thesis or dissertation, or schedule exams and defenses. Faculty frequently travel out of town during the semester. If you wait until the deadline to obtain necessary signatures, you may not be able to get them.


When you are ready to schedule your preliminary examination or your defense, remember that classroom space can be limited. You may need to plan far in advance to find a time slot in a room that can accommodate your committee.

The information in this section comes from the Graduate Catalog, the department's Recruiting and Academic Advising Committee (RAAC), and the department's academic advisor. If you have questions or need more information refer to these sources for help.

#### The Master of Science

The Master of Science in Oceanography is awarded to students who complete the requirements listed in this section. Students specialize in one of four disciplines: biological, chemical, geological, or physical oceanography. Requirements for completing the degree are set by the section, the department, and the university.

When you choose courses or you are preparing to fulfill degree requirements, discuss your decision with your graduate advisor. Your graduate advisor is the advisor in your section before you submit a degree plan and your committee chair thereafter.



*Failure to plan ahead can:*

- Cost you hundreds of dollars
- Delay your access to financial aid
- Delay access to employee benefits
- Delay your

All M.S. students in oceanography are expected to propose, write, and defend a thesis. You should complete all degree requirements in two calendar years.

Your committee oversees the completion of the requirements, but you must also gain approval at various stages from the department head and the Office of Graduate Studies, which oversees graduate education for the university.

If you wish to bypass the M.S. you will need to take a qualifying examination during your third academic semester of study.

If you wish to pursue a doctoral degree after you successfully complete the M.S., you may file a Letter of Intent which states that you intend to continue your studies. This letter must be approved by your advisor and the department head.

#### *Time Limit*

All degree requirements must be complete within seven consecutive years. Course work more than seven calendar years old may not be used for credit toward the degree.

Students who have chosen the thesis option must have the final corrected copies of the thesis accepted by the Thesis Office no later than one year after the final examination, or approval of a petition for exemption from the final exam, or within the seven-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to do so will result in the degree not being awarded.

#### *Degree Requirements*

##### **University Requirements**

- Minimum 9 credit hours in residence
- Minimum 32 credit hours
- Degree Plan
- Thesis proposal
- Thesis

##### **Department of Oceanography Requirements**

- OCNG 608 Physical Oceanography – 3 hours
- OCNG 620 Biological Oceanography – 3 hours
- OCNG 630 Geological Oceanography – 3 hours
- OCNG 640 Chemical Oceanography – 3 hours
- OCNG 681 Oceanography Seminar (Two semesters)
- Thesis Defense

**Additional Requirements:**

***Biological Section***

- OCNG 625 Current Topics in Biological Oceanography
- Plus two of the following five courses:
  - OCNG 610 Ecological Modeling
  - OCNG 622 Benthic Ecology
  - OCNG 627 Continental Shelf/Ecology
  - OCNG 650 Aquatic Microbial Ecology
  - OCNG 654 Plankton Ecology

***Chemical Section***

- OCNG 641 Marine Chemistry

***Geological Section***

- No additional requirements

***Physical Section***

- OCNG 609 Dynamical Oceanography
- Plus two of the more specialized courses offered in this section.

*Steps Toward the Masters Degree*

*Meet with the graduate advisor in your section or your advisor to plan your first semester classes. This is done before classes begin each semester until you file a degree plan. Approved by your advisor.*

*Assemble an advisory committee and submit a degree plan. This is done before registering for your third semester. No later than 90 days before thesis defense. Approved by your advisory committee, department head, and OGS.*

*Submit your thesis research proposal. As soon as possible after your research project is identified. No later than 14 weeks before scheduling thesis defense. Approved your advisory committee, department head, and OGS.*

*Apply for the degree and pay the diploma fee. At the beginning of your final semester. See the OGS calendar for deadlines.*

*Verify that your degree plan is current and that you will finish your courses in the semester you want to graduate. Do this well before scheduling thesis defense.*

*Complete the residence requirement. Before or during your final semester. Approved by OGS.*

*Prepare a draft of your thesis. Well before your defense.*

*Go to the Thesis Office for a Rough Draft Conference. Do this before your defense.*

*Submit copies of your thesis to each member of your committee for review before scheduling your defense. Allow two weeks for their comments before scheduling your defense.*

*Schedule your thesis defense and defend your thesis.* See OGS calendar for deadlines. OGS must receive the request to schedule the defense 10 business days before the proposed defense date. Approved by Advisory committee, department head, OGS.

*Submit your thesis to the Thesis Office.* See OGS Calendar for deadline. Approved by Advisory committee, department head, Thesis Office, and OGS.

*Submit an electronic copy of your thesis or dissertation to the department's academic advisor after you graduate and before you leave town.*

*Complete your thesis corrections.* See OGS Calendar for deadline. No later than one year after thesis defense. Approved by Thesis Office.

## **The Doctor of Philosophy in Oceanography**

The Ph.D. in oceanography is awarded to students who complete the requirements listed in this section. The degree is awarded in oceanography, but students specialize in one of four disciplines: biological oceanography, chemical oceanography, geological oceanography, or physical oceanography.

Requirements for completing the degree are imposed by the academic section, the department, and the university.

When you choose courses or prepare to fulfill other degree requirements, discuss your decisions with your section's graduate advisor or your committee chair.

You should complete all requirements for the degree in five calendar years, including any work for a master's degree.

If you were admitted to the master's program and wish to bypass the M.S., or if you do not hold an M.S. in oceanography or an allied field when you were admitted to the Ph.D. program, you need to take a qualifying exam during your third academic semester of study.

If you enter the Ph.D. program with an M.S. in oceanography or an allied field you may apply to waive one or more required courses that teach material already covered in courses you took for the previous degree.

Your committee oversees the completion of the requirements, but you must also gain approval at various stages from the department head and the Office of Graduate Studies, which oversees graduate education for the university.

The information in this section comes from the graduate advisors in each section, the Graduate Catalog, and the department's academic advisor. If you have questions or need more information consult one or all of these resources.

### *Time Limit*

All degree requirements must be completed within ten consecutive years. Graduate course or exam credit more than ten calendar years old at the time of the defense may not be used for credit toward the degree.

After passing the preliminary exam, Ph.D. students must complete the remaining degree requirements within four calendar years or repeat the exam.

The thesis clerk will accept final corrected copies of the dissertation up to one year after the defense or within the ten-year time limit, whichever comes first.

### *Doctoral Hour Cap*

In Texas, public colleges and universities are awarded “subvention” funds by the state according to the number of students enrolled. In accordance with legislation passed by the Texas Legislature, the number of hours for which state universities may receive subvention funding at the doctoral rate for any individual is limited. Texas A&M and other universities will not receive subvention for hours in excess of 99 hours. Different state universities handle the matter differently. The approach adopted by Texas A&M University is to allow students 7 years to complete the doctoral degree. This is counted by the number of terms G8 students are registered. You have 21 terms of registration without penalty. If at the end of the 21 terms you have exceeded 99 doctoral hours, you will be charged the equivalent of nonresident tuition regardless of residency status or support status (GAR, GAT, fellowship, scholarship). For more information regarding this cap, please see the departmental Academic Advisor.

## **Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy**

You must fulfill the requirements for your section, the department, and the university. Courses you took as a master’s student in this department do not need to be repeated.

The Department of Oceanography requires all students to remain registered for a minimum number of hours each semester, including summer sessions.

### **University Requirements**

- Residence Requirement: One year (two semesters) plus one semester enrolled for 9 hours on campus in College Station or Galveston if entering without a master's degree, or 1 year (two semesters) enrolled for 9 hours on campus in College Station or Galveston if entering with a master’s degree.
- 64 credit hours for students who enter with a master’s degree
- 96 credit hours for students who enter without a master’s degree
- Degree plan
- Preliminary examination
- Dissertation proposal
- Dissertation
- Dissertation defense



**Department of Oceanography Requirements**

- Oceanography 608 Physical Oceanography – 3 hours
- Oceanography 620 Biological Oceanography – 3 hours
- Oceanography 630 Geological/Geophysical Oceanography – 3 hours
- Oceanography 640 Chemical Oceanography – 3 hours
- Oceanography 681 Oceanography Seminar (Two semesters)
- Oceanography 691 Research
- Qualifying exam \*

\* *Applies only to students who wish to bypass the M.S. or students admitted to the Ph.D. program without an M.S. in oceanography or an allied field.*

**Additional Requirements*****Biological Section***

- OCNG 625 Current Topics in Biological Oceanography
- Plus three of the following five courses:
  - OCNG 610 Ecological Modeling
  - OCNG 622 Benthic Ecology
  - OCNG 627 Continental Shelf/Ecology
  - OCNG 650 Aquatic Microbial Ecology
  - OCNG 654 Plankton Ecology

***Chemical Section***

- Oceanography 641 Marine Chemistry

***Geological Section***

- No additional requirements

***Physical Section***

- OCNG 609 Dynamical Oceanography
- Plus three of the more specialized courses offered in this section.

**Steps toward the Ph.D.**

*Meet with the graduate advisor in your section or your advisor to plan your first semester classes before classes begin each semester until you file a degree plan. This is approved by your advisor.*

*If you do not have a master's degree, take a qualifying exam during your third academic semester. This is approved by the graduate advisor in your section.*

*Assemble an advisory committee and submit a degree plan during the first year of study. This is approved by the Advisory committee, department head, and OGS.*

*Complete degree plan course work prior to preliminary examination.*

*Schedule and take your preliminary examination no later than the end of the first semester after you complete degree-plan course work. Submit the Preliminary Examination Checklist and the Report of the Preliminary Examination to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than 10 working days after the examination. The preliminary examination cannot be given until the degree plan has been on file with the Office of Graduate Studies for at least 90 days, and must be completed at least 14 weeks prior to the final examination.*

*Submit your dissertation research proposal as soon as possible after a research project has been identified. This is approved by the Advisory committee, department head, and OGS.*

*Complete the residence requirement prior to scheduling a defense. This is approved by OGS.*

*Apply for the degree and pay the diploma fee at the beginning of your final semester. See OGS Calendar for deadlines.*

*Prepare the draft of your dissertation well before scheduling your defense.*

*Go to the Thesis Office for a Rough Draft Conference before you give a draft to your committee and well before scheduling your defense. Allow two weeks for committee members to review the draft before scheduling your defense.*

*Schedule your dissertation defense and defend your dissertation. See OGS Calendar for deadline. OGS must receive the request to schedule the defense at least 10 business days before the proposed defense date. This is approved by OGS.*

*Submit your dissertation to the Thesis Office. See OGS Calendar for deadline. This is approved by the Advisory committee, department head, Thesis Office, and OGS.*

*Submit an electronic copy of your dissertation to the department before you leave Texas A&M.*

*Complete your dissertation corrections. See OGS Calendar for deadline. No later than one year after dissertation defense. This is approved by the Thesis Office.*

## **Graduate Program Academic Details**

### **Admission to Candidacy (*Ph.D. students only*)**

Ph.D. students are admitted to candidacy for the degree after the following requirements have been completed:

- You have satisfied the residence requirement
- You have passed the preliminary examination
- You have completed formal course work
- Your approved dissertation proposal is filed at the Office of Graduate Studies

You must be admitted to candidacy well before the date when the degree is to be granted. The final examination will not be authorized until you have been admitted to candidacy.

**Preliminary Examination** (*Ph.D. students only*)

You must take a written and oral preliminary examination no earlier than a date when you are within six credit hours of completing the formal course work on your degree plan, and no later than the semester following the completion of all formal course work on the degree plan. (Formal course work does not include courses with the numbers 681, 684, 690, 691, or 692.)

To schedule a preliminary examination you must be registered during the semester in which the exam will take place, have a 3.00 GPR or higher, and have no more than 6 hours of formal course work remaining at the end of the semester in which you take the exam.

The written examination can cover all fields of study on your degree plan (including core courses). Each of your committee members must either administer a written exam in his or her field or waive his or her right to administer a written exam.

Discuss the exam in advance with each member of the committee so that you can agree on the specific topics and the examination rules for each (length of time, open/closed book, etc.)

Read the section about the preliminary examination in the *Graduate Catalog* and *Graduate Handbook* very carefully before scheduling the exam.

Follow these steps to schedule and complete the preliminary examinations:

1. Complete your formal course work or come within six hours of completing it.
2. Consult each member of your committee to schedule written examinations. All members of your committee must be on the schedule.
3. Consult each committee member to schedule an oral examination. Normally, the oral portion of the exam must take place within two weeks of the written portions. All the members of your committee must be present for the oral portion of the examination. If a committee member cannot attend the examination, he or she should arrange for a substitute and the substitution should be noted on the Report of the Preliminary Examination. The committee chair may not be substituted. If the committee chair or two or more other members of the committee cannot attend the exam, then it must be rescheduled.
4. The student and the chair of the advisory committee should fill out the Preliminary Examination Checklist in advance of the exam in order to ensure eligibility. This form should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies following the exam along with the Report of the Preliminary Examination.
5. Take the written and oral portions of the preliminary examination as scheduled. Before you take the oral portion of the exam, the results of each written portion must be reported to the committee chair as satisfactory. Your committee will record the vote on the Report of the Preliminary Examination.

After successfully passing the preliminary exam, you must complete the remaining degree requirements within four calendar years or else repeat the exam.

If you do not pass the exam, your committee and the Office of Graduate Studies may agree to allow you one chance to retake it. Consult with your committee to schedule the date. The new exam should be administered after you have had enough time to address the inadequacies that emerged from the first exam, normally six months later.

### **Bypassing the Master's Degree**

Students who enter the master's program and wish to bypass the M.S. may ask to do so. The decision to allow you to bypass the M.S. is made by the faculty in your section and/or your committee.

If you were admitted to the M.S. program and wish to bypass the M.S., consult your graduate advisor. Also, consult an immigration advisor at International Student Services if you are an international student.

### **Classification**

Student records at TAMU are maintained on a centralized computer system. In this system, M.S. students carry a G7 classification. Doctoral students who have a masters degree or who have completed approximately 30 hours carry a G8 classification. Doctoral students who do not have a masters degree and have not completed 30 hours are classified as G7. The rate of pay for graduate assistants depends on this classification.

### **Continuous Registration**

Once you complete all the course work on your degree plan, you must remain registered for a minimum number of credit hours each fall, spring, and 10-week summer session until you graduate. To satisfy this requirement you can register In Absentia or In Residence.

International students must enroll for the number of hours required to maintain legal immigration status.

Most oceanography graduate students must remain registered for nine hours each fall and spring semester and six hours each summer to fulfill the requirements of their financial aid and the department.

### **Degree Plan**

A degree plan is required for all students. The degree plan lists all courses which you intend to use in fulfillment of your degree requirements and officially establishes the membership of your advisory committee.

You should assemble a committee and file the degree plan early in your course of study. The plan effectively constitutes an agreement between you and your committee that you will complete the coursework listed in pursuit of your degree.

The Office of Graduate Studies announces deadlines for the submission of degree plans each semester for students graduating that semester. A calendar of deadlines is available each semester from the Office of Graduate Studies. In addition, doctoral students must file a degree plan prior to registration for the fourth regular semester (not including summer), and masters students must file a degree plan prior to registration for the third regular semester (not including summer).

Changes to an approved degree plan can be made only by filing the appropriate petition with the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **Student Advisory Committees in Oceanography**

#### *Choosing a committee chairperson:*

Select a committee chair who can guide you in researching the general topic that you choose for your thesis or dissertation. If you already work for a faculty member as part of a specific research project (i.e. if you hold a GAR), then your supervisor is likely to become your committee chair, but that is not required. If you are not sure whom to ask to serve as your committee chair, consult the graduate advisor in your section.

The committee chair must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Oceanography. Two people may co-chair your committee, but at least one of them must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Oceanography.

#### *Selecting other members of your committee:*

Consult your committee chair in selecting the other members of your committee. The people you select for your committee should be able to provide guidance and insight in your research.

#### *M.S. Committees*

- Must have a minimum of 3 members on the committee, all of which must be on the University Graduate Faculty.
- Chair or co-chair must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Oceanography.
- Must have one member with Graduate Faculty status in a department other than Oceanography (this is your “outside” member).
- Committee must have 2 tenure/tenure track faculty (joint appointments included).
- One committee member must be in College Station and must have full membership on the University Graduate Faculty.
- Faculty from other institutions or staff from other agencies may be added as a Special Appointment to your committee. The Special Appointment is an “extra” member, and does not count as one of the three required members.

#### *Ph.D. Committees*

- Must have a minimum of 4 members on the committee, all of which must be on the University Graduate Faculty.
- Chair or co-chair must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Oceanography.
- Must have one member with Graduate Faculty status in a department other than Oceanography (this is your “outside” member).
- Committee must have 3 tenure/tenure track faculty (joint appointments included).

- One committee member must be in College Station and must have full membership on the University Graduate Faculty.
- Faculty from other institutions or staff from other agencies may be added as a Special Appointment to your committee. The Special Appointment is an “extra” member, and does not count as one of the four required members.

### **Graduate Faculty**

All members of your committee must be members of the graduate faculty. Occasionally non-professors are added to the graduate faculty and are available to serve on student committees.

Under some circumstances, special appointments can be made to allow someone who is not regularly on the graduate faculty to serve on a student’s committee. Special appointments are “extra” members on a committee and do not count as one of the required number of committee members. The Special Appointment cannot be considered the outside committee member.

For more information about special appointments consult your committee chair or the academic advisor.

### **M.S. Degree Plan Requirements**

You must file a degree plan prior to registration for your third regular semester of study (fall or spring), and no later than 90 days prior to the final oral exam or thesis defense.

The following limitations apply to courses listed on the degree plan for an M.S.:

- A minimum of 32 credit hours of approved courses and research is required.
- No more than 12 or one third of the total number of hours (whichever is greater) may be transferred credit.
- A maximum of 8 hours each of 691 (Research), or 485 and/or 685 (Directed Studies), and up to 3 hours of 690(Theory of Research) or 695 (Frontiers of Research). The total of all 691, 485/685, and 690/695 must not exceed 12 credit hours.
- No more than 2 credit hours of 681 (Seminar)
- No more than 9 hours of advanced undergraduate course credit (300 or 400 level).
- No credit may be obtained by correspondence study.

### **Ph.D. Degree Plan Requirements**

You must file your degree plan prior to the start of your 4th regular semester (fall or spring), and at least 90 days before your plan to take your preliminary examination.

### **General Degree Plan Requirements**

The degree plan should be completed and submitted for approval online at: <http://ogsdps.tamu.edu>.

You should consult your committee chair and advisory committee members to select the courses to include on your degree plan. All courses in which you intend to count toward the degree should be listed on the degree plan. You should make sure your course selection fulfills the department and the university requirements for the degree you seek.

Credit for course prerequisites does not count toward the degree unless they are also on the degree plan. You may not list courses in which were counted toward a previous degree.

If you have questions consult the department's academic advisor.

Approval of the degree plan is electronic, but you should still allow plenty of time for your committee and the department to review your degree plan. Once approvals for the committee and the department have been entered, your degree plan will automatically be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval.

Once the degree plan is approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, you will receive electronic notification. Please note that the Degree Plan Submission System uses your neo e-mail address.

### **Full-Time Enrollment Status**

The University considers you a full-time student if you are registered for 9 credit hours during a fall or spring semester, 6 credit hours during a 10-week summer semester, and 3 credit hours during a 5-week summer semester

International students must always maintain the minimum enrollment required by their immigration status. This information can be obtained by checking with the International Student Services Office.

All students who are supported in the form of a fellowship or an assistantship administered through the Office of Graduate Studies, including Graduate Assistants, Research (GAR), must be registered for a minimum of 9 credit hours during a fall or spring semester; and 6 credit hours the summer. Failure to maintain the minimum registration requirements will result not only in termination of the fellowship or assistantship but also the requirement to retroactively pay out-of-state tuition.

The Department of Oceanography requires all other students in residence (i.e. non-supported students) to register for at least 4 credit hours during fall and spring semester and at least 3 credit hours over the 10-week summer session (or 3 credit hours over the first summer session only).

As a student in residence you may register for only one credit hour if your committee has approved your thesis or dissertation and you only need to register to submit the manuscript to the Thesis Office and graduate.

International students who are in their final term and who need less than 9 hours to graduate may register for only one hour (or more if necessary) if a full course waiver is approved by International Student Services (Note: If for some reason the student becomes unable to graduate within the semester for which

they requested this full course waiver (based on final term), they may be subject to losing legal immigration status and will require a reinstatement. Because of this, a student will want to carefully consider whether or not to use this option. If a change in the graduating semester occurs, the student should report to ISS immediately to discuss whether or not there may be some way to maintain legal status – for example, the student may be able to enroll in additional hours to meet the full-time requirement and request that the ISS take SEVIS action to resume their full course of study.) Also, please note that you can not hold an assistantship of any kind and receive a full course waiver. If you are a GAR or GAT you must always be registered full time. Please note that a full-course waiver can be granted only once during your study at TAMU. The department considers these requests very carefully before granting an approval.

If you do not graduate as expected you will need to continue registering for 4 hours (if unsupported) or 9 hours (if GAT or GAR) each fall and spring semester and 1 hour each summer session until you do.

Registration is not required if you have completed all requirements including final clearance of the thesis or dissertation by the Thesis Clerk by the last day to register for that semester. This will be effective unless you have other minimum enrollment requirements (e.g. immigration, financial support).

Exceptions to the department's enrollment requirements are listed below. Note that these requirements apply even if you must register after defending your thesis or dissertation:

*Students enrolled in absentia:* You may register for 1-4 credit hours each fall and spring semester. A leave of absence may be granted when unusual circumstances exist.

*Students employed full time by the department:* Register for at least 4 credit hours during each fall, spring, and 4 hours during the 10-week summer term.

*Students who hold graduate assistantships during the fall and spring but temporarily become full-time research assistants during the summer:* Register for at least 4 credit hours during the 10-week summer session you are a research assistant.

Students holding graduate assistantships or fellowships administered through the Office of Graduate Studies are subject to the registration requirements listed above. Other types of financial aid, including other fellowships, scholarships, and sponsorships, may require that you remain registered for more hours than the university or department minimum. If the terms of your financial aid specify a minimum enrollment requirement, you must maintain that minimum number of hours throughout the semester.

Registration for more than the maximum credit hours requires a petition approved by the student's department head, committee (if formed), and the Office of Graduate Studies.

If you drop courses after registration and fall below the minimum requirement for the remainder of the semester, you may be penalized.

## **Graduation**

You should apply for your degree at <http://degreeapp.tamu.edu> by the deadline on the Office of Graduate Studies Calendar. A diploma fee must be paid either at registration or at the Fiscal Office (Pavilion).



For more information, including information on ordering your cap, gown and hood, see <http://graduation.tamu.edu>.

### **Letter of Intent**

If you wish to stay at TAMU to pursue another degree in oceanography after graduating with the M.S., you should consult your advisory committee and the graduate advisor in your section. If you wish to pursue a degree in another department you should contact the advisor in that department to find out how to apply for admission to the program. International Students should also consult International Student Services to ensure they can maintain legal immigration status.

If your section or the other department agrees to admit you for another degree, you will need to submit a Letter of Intent to the Office of Graduate Studies. If you remain continuously registered at TAMU after obtaining the M.S., the Letter of Intent must be submitted during the first semester after your graduation. If you do not register immediately after graduation, you may submit the letter up to one year following graduation. After one year you will need to reapply for admission to the university if you wish to pursue another degree.

The Letter of Intent may be downloaded from the Office of Graduate Studies web site at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/pdf/intent.pdf>.

Once approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, a copy of the letter will be sent to Graduate Admissions and also International Admissions and International Student Services if applicable.

### **Petitions**

Petitions must be submitted and approved by the Office of Graduate Studies before any of the established rules governing your course of study are broken, or any time that you need to make changes to an approved degree plan. Any time unusual circumstances exist throughout your course of study, you may need to file a petition. Consult the departmental Academic Advisor if you are not sure whether or not you need to complete a petition.

Petitions must be signed by each member of your committee as well as the department head. Students in Galveston should have their committee members in Galveston sign the petition, and then fax it to the Academic Advisor in College Station. As long as the department head signature is original, the Office of Graduate Studies will accept the document.

Petitions may be downloaded from the Office of Graduate Studies web site at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentPetitions.htm>.

### **Research Proposal**

All oceanography graduate students must submit a research proposal to their committee during an early stage of the thesis or dissertation research. The proposal should concisely identify the objective of your proposed research, present the status of the question, and outline the procedures that you will follow to gather and analyze data. The narrative portion of the thesis and dissertation proposals is limited to 10

pages. The proposal should not be as detailed as the thesis or dissertation, but should show your committee and the Office of Graduate Studies that you have thought through the research process and are ready to proceed.

Do not wait until you have already obtained a substantial portion of your data to submit the proposal. Submitting your proposal early not only insures it is properly written, but also protects you from having your project extended after it is already underway.

The completed research proposal must be submitted along with the properly signed original title page (available at <http://ogs.tamu.edu>). The title page should be signed by you, all members of your advisory committee, and the department head

A research proposal must be submitted to OGS at least 15 working days prior to the submission of the Request and Announcement of the Final Examination. If the research involves human or animal subjects, infectious biohazards or recombinant DNA, you must check with the Office of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at 979-845-8585 to ensure that all compliance responsibilities have been met. Additional information can be found on their web site at <http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/>.

#### Proposal Tips:

1. Discuss and plan your research topic with your committee.
2. Obtain and read the Thesis Manual. The Thesis Manual describes the strict guidelines for submitting proposals, as well as theses and dissertations. It is available from any university copy center or the MSC bookstore and online.
3. Complete the proposal. Prepare the proposal according to the Thesis Manual guidelines and submit it to each member of your committee for review.
4. Obtain committee signatures. Submit your final proposal and the proposal title page to each committee member and the department head for his or her signature. Allow plenty of time for each signature, and at least 24 hours for the department head signature.

#### **Qualifying Examination**

You must take a qualifying examination if you were admitted to the M.S. program and you want to bypass the M.S. or if you were admitted to the Ph.D. program without an M.S. in oceanography or a related field.

Take the qualifying exam during your third academic semester of study. Most students will take the qualifying exam during the fall semester of their second year.

The exam is administered by the graduate advisor in your section (not your committee chair). The advisor solicits the exam questions from faculty in your section and consults with your committee chair to prepare the exam.

The exam focuses on your research interests in oceanography, but may include questions on material from the core courses that is related to your interests.

The exam may include a written and oral section each of which should require less than four hours to complete.

### **Residence Requirement**

During the course of study, M.S. and Ph.D. students must spend a minimum amount of time in residence in College Station or Galveston, enrolled as full-time students. The university imposes this requirement to ensure that students spend enough time on campus to reap the benefits of the academic setting and university resources.

The residence requirement is not related to Texas residency status. Texas residency status is based on multiple factors such as length of time you have lived in Texas and your employment status. Your residency status determines eligibility for resident tuition. All graduate students, regardless of Texas residency status, must fulfill the university residence requirement.

#### *M.S. Students*

To fulfill the residence requirement master's students should complete nine credit hours of course work during one semester on campus in College Station prior to graduating.

This requirement can only be waived if a petition for exemption is approved by your committee and the Office of Graduate. A petition to waive the residence requirement must be approved before you begin the final nine credit hours of course work for the degree.

#### *Ph.D. Students*

The residence requirement must be completed before you can be admitted candidacy. To fulfill the residence requirement, doctoral students who hold a master's degree should spend one academic year in residence in College Station or Galveston. Students entering without a master's degree must spend one academic year plus one semester in residence in College Station or Galveston.

One academic year in residence is accomplished by enrolling for nine credit hours each in two adjacent fall and spring semesters or nine credit hours in one regular fall or spring semester plus one adjacent ten-week summer term.

### **Scholastic Requirements**

Graduate students must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Ratio (GPR) of 3.00 or higher. All graded graduate and advanced undergraduate (300 and 400 level) courses eligible to be counted toward a degree are used in computing the cumulative GPR.

If your GPR falls below 3.00, you may be suspended from the university or placed on scholastic probation. You may not hold a graduate assistantship while on scholastic probation, and you must meet with your graduate advisor to form a plan to improve your grades.

If you do not attain the minimum GPR of 3.00 within a reasonable time, you may be dropped from graduate studies.

If you receive a grade of D, F, or U for course work that appears on your degree plan, you must retake the course and earn a grade of C or higher. Both grades will remain on your permanent record, and only the second will be used to compute your cumulative GPR.

### **Thesis and Dissertation**

All M.S. and Ph.D. students in the Department of Oceanography must complete and defend a thesis or dissertation. Each semester the Office of Graduate Studies announces deadlines for the submission of manuscripts to the Thesis Office for students graduating that semester. A calendar of deadlines is available each semester from the Office of Graduate Studies.

#### *Thesis*

Begin thinking about your thesis topic during the first semester. The thesis must be approved by all advisory committee members and the department head. It should reflect a comprehensive understanding of the pertinent literature and describe the method, significance, and results of the student's original research. Instructions for formatting are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which can be purchased at the copy centers on campus and at the Memorial Student center and online at <http://thesis.tamu.edu>.

#### *Dissertation*

The dissertation is intended to demonstrate the student's ability to perform independent research and must be the original work of the candidate. Acceptance of the dissertation is based primarily on scholarly merit, but also must exhibit credible literary workmanship. At the time of submission to the Thesis Office, the dissertation must bear the signatures of the department head and advisory committee. This and other valuable information is available in the Thesis Manual.

#### *Completing the Thesis or Dissertation:*

It will be easier to satisfy the thesis/dissertation format requirements if you comply with them from the beginning. These requirements are detailed in the Thesis Manual which is available online at <http://thesis.tamu.edu>.

1. Familiarize yourself with the *Thesis Manual*.
2. Schedule a rough draft conference at the Thesis Office. This conference is to review the format and style of your thesis or dissertation. This staff of the Thesis Office is there to help you avoid unnecessary frustration and delays in submitting your thesis or dissertation. Reviewing a rough draft with them early on may save you time and money when it is time to submit a final draft.
3. Consult the Office of Graduate Studies calendar for appropriate deadlines. The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) sets deadlines each semester for graduate students preparing to complete their degrees. The OGS deadlines govern when you must have your degree plan, proposal, examination, and defense completed and your thesis or dissertation turned into the Thesis Office. **EXTENTIONS**

***ARE NOT GRANTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.*** Failure to meet the OGS deadlines will delay your graduation until the next semester.

4. Apply for graduation. You should apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which you intend to graduate. Apply online at <http://degreeapp.tamu.edu>.
5. Make sure your paperwork is current. Verify that your degree plan is up-to-date and that you are within one semester of completing the required course work.
6. Prepare final manuscript. Work with your committee chair to prepare your manuscript for submission.
7. Consult with the Thesis Office well in advance of your submission deadline if your thesis includes unusual features, such as oversized figures or color.
8. Give copies of your manuscript to each member of your committee for review at least two weeks before you schedule your defense.
9. Schedule and complete your defense.

*Submitting the Thesis or Dissertation to the Thesis Office:*

You must submit your thesis, dissertation, or record of study as a single PDF file (uploaded to our website at <http://thesis.tamu.edu>). Additionally, a signed approval page must be brought to the Thesis Office. Both the PDF file and the signed approval page are required by the date announced in the OGS calendar as the last day to submit your thesis or dissertation in final form. There is a processing fee which must be paid before the manuscript can be cleared from the thesis office.

Each committee member must sign for him or herself, with no exceptions. An authorized signer can sign for the department head. Contact the Thesis Office if you have trouble obtaining the needed signatures.

Theses, dissertations, and records of study needing an excessive number of corrections will be deemed unacceptable by the Thesis Office and will be returned to the head of your department. You must resubmit the manuscript as a new document, and the entire process must begin anew. All original submission deadlines must be met during the resubmission process in order to graduate that semester.

*Note to Geological Oceanography Students:*

Geological oceanography thesis and dissertations are recorded in the GeoRef and Bibliography & Index to Geology databases each year by the American Geological Institute. In order to include your work, the institute requires certain information about your thesis or dissertation, including: the number of pages in your thesis or dissertation, the number of plates and tables, the type and scale of fold-out maps, and the number of references cited in your bibliography.

**Thesis or Dissertation Defense**

All oceanography M.S. and Ph.D. students must defend the thesis or dissertation before their committee prior to submitting the final draft to the Thesis Office. Oceanography students may not petition to waive the defense.

To schedule your defense:

- You must be registered during the semester in which the defense will take place.
- You must have a cumulative and degree plan GPR of at least 3.00 and you must not have any unsolved grades of D, F, or U for any course listed on your degree plan.
- You must also have an approved research proposal on file with the Office of Graduate Studies.
- All committee members should attend the final examination. If one member of the committee cannot attend, he or she must find an appropriate substitute. The committee chair cannot be substituted.

There are deadlines in each semester for the scheduling and conducting your defense in order to graduate. These deadlines are typically earlier in the semester than most students anticipate. A calendar of deadlines is available each semester through the Office of Graduate Studies.

### *Thesis Defense*

To schedule the defense you must have completed all course work on the degree plan with the exception of those hours for which you are currently registered, and you must have an approved thesis proposal on file with the Office of Graduate Studies.

The M.S. defense may cover your thesis and the work covered on the degree plan, may be written, oral, or both, at the discretion of the committee, and may not take place until all the committee members have had sufficient time to review the completed draft of the thesis (at least two weeks before you schedule the defense).

### *Dissertation Defense*

To schedule the defense you must have finished your degree plan course work except courses with the numbers 691 and 692, and you must have been admitted to candidacy.

The Ph.D. defense concentrates on the dissertation and closely-related topics, may be written, oral, or both, at the discretion of the committee, and may not take place until all the committee members have had sufficient time to review the completed draft of the dissertation (at least two weeks before you schedule the defense).

## **Time Limits**

### *M.S. Students*

All degree requirements must be completed within seven consecutive years. Graduate credit more than seven years old may not be used for credit toward the degree. The Thesis Office will accept final corrected copies of the thesis up to one year after the defense or within the seven-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit the thesis within this time will result in the degree not being awarded.

### *Ph.D. Students*

All degree requirements must be completed within ten consecutive years. Graduate credit more than ten calendar years old at the time of the defense may not be used for credit toward the degree.

After passing the preliminary exam, Ph.D. students must complete the remaining degree requirements within four calendar years or repeat the exam.

The thesis clerk will accept final corrected copies of the dissertation up to one year after the defense or within the ten-year time limit, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit the dissertation within this time will result in the degree not being awarded.

### **Tuition Waiver**

A tuition waiver allows you to pay resident tuition whether or not you are an official Texas resident. Graduate students employed at least half-time as teaching assistants, research assistants, or graduate assistants non-teaching whose job duties are related to teaching or research in an academic program associated with their field of study may be entitled to pay resident tuition and fees for themselves, their spouse, and their children.

Fellowship holders may also be eligible for the nonresident tuition exemption. The exemption for scholarship holders, however, is dependent on the amount of the scholarship. The minimum amount necessary to make you eligible for the tuition waiver changes from year to year and students should contact the Scholarship Office (979) 845-3982 or the Fiscal Department (979) 845-8127 in the Pavilion to determine the current guidelines.

If you have questions regarding your eligibility for the nonresident tuition exemption contact the Student Accounts and Billing Services Office (979) 845-8130.

Please notify the departmental Academic Advisor at the beginning of each semester that you are eligible for a non-resident tuition waiver so that the waiver can be entered into SIMS.

### **Waiver of Core Courses**

All oceanography students are expected to complete the 5 disciplinary core courses (OCNG 608, 620, 630, 640, and 681(2)) listed as department requirements, or demonstrate equivalent knowledge. Students accepted to the Ph.D. program who hold an M.S. in oceanography or a related field may wish to waive one or more of these core courses.

To waive a core course, you must provide evidence that you have sufficient knowledge of the material covered in the course. As evidence, you need to provide an official transcript showing you took the course and earned an acceptable grade. You should also provide the course syllabus and/or copies of the textbooks you used, and/or copies of the examinations you took

Deliver these materials to the graduate advisor in your section. He or she will consult with the instructor of the core course you are applying to waive and decide if a waiver is justified. If the waiver is justified, the Request to Waive Required Course form should be completed and submitted to the Academic Advisor in the department.

If the materials are not sufficient to justify a waiver, the advisor may allow you to take an oral and/or written exam, which will determine if you can waive the course. The decision whether or not to allow the exam is left entirely to the discretion of the graduate advisor in your section.

