



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Graduate School Admission to Doctoral Candidacy Policy

Policy Name: Graduate School Admission to Candidacy

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the requirements for graduate school admission to candidacy.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to graduate students in doctoral programs. This policy does not apply to students who are exclusively enrolled in Quillen College of Medicine for the M.D. degree or the Gatton College of Pharmacy for the Pharm.D. degree.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Dean of the Graduate School and Graduate Council are responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

Early-stage Doctoral Candidacy

A student formally admitted to graduate study and whose major academic endeavor consists of formal course work directed toward fulfilling requirements of a doctoral degree.

Late-stage Doctoral Candidacy

A student who has been advanced to candidacy for a doctoral degree, or one whose principle academic endeavor consists of independent study, research, or work toward fulfilling requirements for a doctoral degree.

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Matriculation Limits

Matriculation limits are established under the Graduate School [Matriculation Limits Policy](#).

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1. Early-stage Candidacy.

When a doctoral student accepts their offer of admission from the ETSU Graduate School, they are classified as an Early-stage Doctoral Candidate. They remain an Early-stage Doctoral Candidate until they complete the requirements to become a Late-stage Doctoral Candidate. Being an Early-stage candidate does not imply that a student will be admitted to Late-stage Candidacy.

2. Late-stage Candidacy.

Admission to Late-stage Doctoral Candidacy marks the end of the doctoral student's initial study period. Admission to Late-stage Candidacy is a judgment by the faculty in the student's degree program that the student has the disciplinary knowledge and scholarly/research ability to complete the research project and present it as a dissertation or other capstone within the Matriculation Limits.

To be admitted to Late-stage Doctoral Candidacy, the student must:

- 2.1. Remove all provisions, if any, placed by the Graduate School at the time of the offer of admission;
- 2.2. Have a graduate program GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- 2.3. Have a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- 2.4. Complete successfully the program requirement(s) for candidacy (e.g., comprehensive examination, qualifying examination, dissertation prospectus or proposal defense, or the like). Each doctoral program will have its candidacy requirements documented in the program handbook and the Graduate Catalog; and
- 2.5. Students in Ph.D., Ed.D. (Education Leadership), and Dr.P.H. programs must submit the [Candidacy Form for Doctoral Degree](#) form.

Students in other doctoral programs do not need to submit the “Candidacy for Doctoral Degree Form.”

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Procedures

N/A

Applicable Forms and Websites

[Candidacy for Doctoral Degree Form](#)

Authority and Revisions

Authority: TCA § 49-8-203, et seq.

Previous Policy: Previously part of the Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements Policy

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.