Changes in TAMU Policy Regarding First Year Grade Exclusions and Q-drops

Over the summer President Loftin enacted changes to student policy governing First Year Grade Exclusions and Q-drops. These changes were initiated by the Student Senate and were reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate.

Beginning at 5:00 PM, Friday, August 23, 2013, the following changes to First Year Grade Exclusion and Q-drop policy will occur:

1. Students will no longer be able to request First Year Grade Exclusions
2. Students will be granted the lesser of:
   • four Q-drops for coursework taken at Texas A&M University or
   • a total of 6 drops for undergraduate coursework taken at any state-funded institution of higher education in Texas
3. The q-drop deadline will be extended from the 50th class day to the 60th class day during the fall and spring semesters

Students are encouraged to work with their academic advisors to determine whether or not they wish to use First Year Grade Exclusion and to prepare and submit appropriate paperwork prior to the change date.

Words of Wisdom

“We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.”

~ Jesse Owens

Continuing Student Scholarship Application is Up!

https://scholarships.tamu.edu

Below is a listing of all the dept/colleges that participate with our one application:

- Scholarships & Financial Aid
- College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
  - Department of Agricultural Economics
  - Department of Entomology
  - Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences
  - Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications
  - Department of Horticultural Sciences
- College of Education & Human Development
- Department of Health and Kinesiology
- College of Engineering
  - Department of Aerospace Engineering
  - Department of Chemical Engineering
  - Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
  - Department of Engineering Technology & Industrial Distribution
  - Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Engineering Study Abroad
- College of Geosciences
- College of Science
  - Department of Chemistry
- Mays Business School
  - Department of Information & Operations Management
- Department of Biomedical Sciences
- Department of English
- International Student Services
- Study Abroad Programs Office
- Texas A&M Foundation
Career Center Spotlight: What if I want to go to Graduate School?

If you are considering law, medicine, dentistry, health-related or other graduate programs, another excellent resource on campus is the Office of Professional School Advising (OPSA).

What exactly IS graduate school?

Graduate school encompasses master’s degrees, Ed.D.’s, and Ph.D.’s. Master’s degrees typically lead more directly to a career outside the university. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) primarily prepares you to do research and teach at the university level, but in some fields, such as the life sciences, more and more opportunities are opening up in industry. The Doctor of Education (Ed. D.) prepares you for administrative or specialized positions in education, but is less common than the Ph.D.

How long does graduate school take?

The time required to complete an advanced degree can vary considerably. Most Master’s programs can be completed in 2-3 years. Because the earned doctorate is a specialized professional degree, often requiring original research, it can take 5-7 years.

Do you want to go to graduate school?

• It may be necessary for a career you’re interested in. If you’re not sure, ask people in that career—use the Aggie Network, talk to your professors about their graduate school experience or visit a Career Coordinator.

• It should not be a “fall-back” plan that you follow because you think you have no viable options without it. Graduate school is a very intense experience—and costly, in terms of money, personal time and emotional fortitude.

• You may need 2-4 years of related experience in your field to be admitted, depending on the graduate degree sought. For example, a Master’s of Business Administration often encourages or requires at least 2 years of business experience after the undergraduate degree before you can be admitted to a graduate program. Education doctoral programs may require that you have 3 or more years of teaching experience for admission.

How can I prepare myself for graduate school?

• Get excellent to stellar grades. Highly competitive doctoral programs may look for GPA’s of 3.8 to 3.9. Less competitive, but still demanding, programs will seek GPA’s in the range of 3.5 to 3.7. More applied master’s degrees will seek anything from a 3.0 to a 3.7. While it is possible to get into graduate school with less than a 3.0, it is not typical. Your best guide is to ask the advisor for the programs you are considering what the average incoming GPA was for their current class. Extenuating circumstances and related work or internship experience may help offset a lower GPA.

• Get to know your professors. You will need 2-3 letters of recommendation. Talk to your professors during office hours—ask for their advice. Let them know you are considering graduate school.

• Volunteer to help on research. Take an independent study course. The better you know your professors and they know your capabilities, the better your letters will be.

• Keep a file of written research or term papers. Some programs will ask for a copy of your best written work. Make any corrections noted by your professors, then submit the new, improved version. If you have not written a term-length paper (10-15 pp.), ask a professor to guide you through an independent study, with a paper suitable for graduate school applications. Ask your professors if a written work is usually asked for in your chosen area of study.

• Prepare for the entrance exam you’ll be taking—GRE, GMAT, etc. You can find out which one you will need by checking with the programs you wish to apply to. The weight given to test scores varies widely from program to program—ask what the incoming class’s average score is. Less-than-desired grades can be balanced by an outstanding test score. At the same time, a less-than-outstanding test score can be balanced by excellent grades. Independent companies offer test preparation classes, and there are self-help books and CD’s available in your library or any large bookstore chain.

• Formulate your personal statement. You need to tell the programs why you want to go to graduate school, how you have prepared yourself, and what you want to do with the degree. This is the time to explain extenuating circumstances that may help the admissions committee evaluate your file—difficult first year in college, better grades later on, family issues, illness, first-generation in college, etc. Writing this 1-2 page statement always takes longer than you think it will—start early!

How do I pay for graduate school?

Usually, you pay for graduate school through a combination of fellowships (scholarships), assistantships and loans. Fellowships are usually not tied to employment, but to your own research. Assistantships are employment offered by universities (usually 20 hours/week) as research or teaching assistants. Assistantships sometimes come with tuition waivers. Many programs offer tuition waivers, but this varies by state, university and program. You can also get student loans to finance a good deal of graduate education, but cost can be minimized if you live very frugally.

Popular business magazines often rank graduate programs, but the rankings may not validly measure a number of variables. These rankings are typically based on a very limited amount of information about the programs. That said, they do provide one more means to evaluate a program.

• Petersons.com and Gradschools.com offer additional information on graduate programs in an easily searchable interface. Here you can find information on schools, financial aid, tests and more.

• Books in the Career Center and Evans library.

What is the timeline for applying?

1. As a general rule, you will apply one year before entering graduate school. If you plan to start the fall after graduation, you will go through the application process during the fall of your senior year. Some programs will admit for the spring semester, but most start graduate students only in the fall.

2. Start the process early in the semester that your applications are due.

3. First, find application information online for the programs you’re applying to. Check their deadlines. Deadlines may run from November to May for the following fall.

4. Second, polish and update your resume and start working on the personal statement. Your references may want a copy of both to help them write strong letters.

5. Ask references if they are willing to write a letter, at least a month in advance. Hopefully, you have established a scholarly relationship with them previously to this time. Give them all the information for each application, including addresses, stamped envelopes if they are to send the letter directly to the graduate program.

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Retrieved and adapted from http://careercenter.tamu.edu/undergrads
Have you ever Googled yourself, just to see what would come up? Well, you might not be the only one.

A few months ago I read an article about how a Live Journal blog kept one student from being admitted to Reed College in Portland. I looked a little further into it, and found out that over the past year articles about Facebook and MySpace profiles affecting students’ ability to graduate and find jobs after high school have popped up in the Washington Post, U.S. News, and the New York Times. In fact, supervisors often Google potential employees before hiring!

Protecting Yourself

With potential employers and colleges able to gain access to MySpace, Facebook, personal blogs, and lots of other information online, you need to rethink the “anonymity” of the internet. Here are a couple ideas that may help you protect your privacy online:

1. **Limit Access.** Facebook and MySpace both offer options that limit who can view your profile; they also have options that allow people to view only the portions of your profile that you specify. Most blogs have this option, too.

2. **Google Yourself.** Seriously. Run a Google search on your name, and see what comes up. Try the other popular search engines, too. If there is anything questionable, try to get it taken down!

3. **Guard Your Words.** If you have something to say that could possibly taken the wrong way by a potential boss or admissions officer (or anything that is too personal for them to know), you’re better off NOT posting it in a public place. Instead, keep personal comments safer by writing them in more private correspondence like emails or IMs. And if someone else leaves a questionable comment on your page, better make it private or delete it just to be safe.

Oh, and if you don’t like your current job or boss, you might want to leave that tidbit out of your profile. Just in case.

Promoting Yourself

The use of Facebook by college committees and employers doesn’t have to slow you down; in fact if you play your cards right, it could even be a good thing. Why waste the opportunity to promote yourself if they’re looking anyway? Think of your social networking sites as dual-purpose; not just as a place to connect with friends, but also as a sort of virtual résumé. It’s totally fine to have appropriate personal info & photos up to share with friends, but don’t neglect to point out your strong points, and even past work experience (if you feel comfortable sharing that).

You can also use sites like Facebook, MySpace, or a personal blog as a portfolio. If you’re an artist or a writer, for example, consider posting some of your pieces for viewing (unless they’re copyrighted by someone else, like work you may have done for a previous employer). It’s an easy way to offer access to your body of work.

Adapted from http://www.survivingcollegelife.com/2008/02/14/bosses-facebook-too-keeping-your-online-persona-employable/.
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**November 2012**

- **VOLLEYBALL vs. Arkansas**
- **RSO General Meeting**
- **MCS OPAS Presents Carol Burnett**
- **Student Senate Meeting**
- **Preregistration for 2013 spring semester.**
- **Singing Cadets Football Weekend Concert**
- **FOOTBALL vs. Mississippi St.**
- **FOOTBALL vs. Alabama**
- **Elephant Walk/Jr. E-Walk**
- **Transgender Day of Remembrance**
- **Student Senate Meeting**
- **MSC Hospitality Seasons of Aggieland Bazaar**
- **AIDS Awareness Week**
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