

# Graduate Program Directors' Resource Manual

## I. Overview of core tasks and responsibilities

- Admission of new students to the program
- Administration of assistantships and supervision of Graduate Assistants
- Advising students and filling out student degree plans, monitoring academic issues such as probation and suspension
- Program assessment, maintaining requirements, submitting new course requests, coordination of course scheduling. Program revisions should be undertaken in concert with the Associate Dean of the Graduate College
- Department liaison to the Graduate College

These duties can be distributed to graduate faculty members or committees, depending on the will of the graduate faculty of the department, but the program director is the primary contact with CGS and is ultimately responsible for the above tasks.

## II. Admitting students to the program

### 1. The Admissions Process

Students fill out an on-line application ,and once processed a file is created in DocuShare. After the initial welcome letter the applicants receive a letter, via email, every two weeks that prompts them to provide the various required materials: transcripts, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, etc. As these materials arrive, they are added to the student's **DocuShare** file

All required documents must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies at [graduate@mtsu.edu](mailto:graduate@mtsu.edu). *Please do not ask students to send documents to the Department, the Graduate Director, or the graduate analyst as this has caused a good deal of confusion in the past resulting in lost documents, as well as impediments to processing time.*

Keep in mind that last minute applicants are not guaranteed to be processed in time to avoid a late fee. Remind students that admission or readmission is not guaranteed.

### 2. Accessing DocuShare:

The link to DocuShare is <http://cgsdocushare.fsa.mtsu.edu:8080/docushare/dsweb/HomePage>. You will need a Username and Password to enter; these must be transferred from one Graduate Director to the next. Your support staff should also have this Username and Password. The program director/support staff are given a password once the account is established. CGS does not keep track of your password. Please contact Rick Henegar if you cannot access Docushare with your password. He will reset the password. Please do not call the graduate analyst about this as they cannot reset passwords.

DocuShare must ordinarily be accessed from an Ethernet connection. Wireless connections need additional security with a VPN connection available through this web address: [access.mtsu.edu](http://access.mtsu.edu) (will give you ok connection). There is a better way to establish a connection; it requires calling the ITD helpdesk number and letting them walk you through the process.

<http://www.mtsu.edu/security/vpn.php>, **Help Desk: 898-5345**. (Please do not call the graduate analyst for assistance with this.) The Help Desk will put in a work order to establish a VPN account for you. If you had one in the past, you will need to establish a new one. If you use your VPN account regularly you can use it by accessing it through the Junos Pulse App or however you normally establish your VPN connection. (You will need to download the Junos Pulse app to your phone for this security procedure, but once it is installed it should be easy to use.)

When the student file is complete, your program analyst will notify the Program Director or support staff, by email, with an attached routing form which includes a link to the student's application documents. This form must be returned with a decision. All application materials are scanned into this database. Here you will find the application, letters of recommendation, transcripts, and any other materials required by your program.

During the process of collecting materials, however, the Program Director can view the DocuShare files to see whose file is developing. Students can also view their progress through their Pipeline account. Students are not allowed access to DocuShare. Do remember that DocuShare is not the official record. **BANNER** is the official student record. If you do not have a Banner account (most faculty members do not), you can ask your support staff to access these **BANNER** records.

You, or your departmental committee, will need to make a decision about whether or not to admit a student. As soon as a decision is made, please complete the routing form and click **REPLY**. You must state any conditions you require for admission. Departments are responsible for monitoring any conditions the department places on the student's admission. If the response is denial, please include a brief statement of why the student was denied, since they frequently call CGS to ask about the reason for denial. Any student application that is left open without decision will automatically default to "denied" once the start semester indicated on the application is past. A student must reapply to be reconsidered for admission for a subsequent semester.

Please be aware that all of these documents are public records, and the public would be able to see any comments you make on this form concerning acceptance or denial.

Notes on using **DocuShare**: If you enter the site outside of the email link, you will need to choose your college, then your program to see the files.

You can choose to see the most recent applications by clicking on the "Edited" tab above the date until the arrow points down. You can also click on the "What's New" button at the top of the screen.

Do not worry if there are no notes on the files such as "routed" or "admitted." These are for use by the analysts.

Keep in mind that DocuShare functions as a sort of electronic file cabinet filled with various files. **BANNER** is still the official record.

### 3. The ARGOS database

The **ARGOS** database draws its information directly from **Banner**, so it is there that you see more reliable information about the applicant's current status.

**ARGOS.** Access the ARGOS database here: [evmaps.fsa.mtsu.edu](http://evmaps.fsa.mtsu.edu). You can use Firefox, Chrome, or Explorer for best results. Your username and password are the same as for your FSA account (email login.) These reports and numbers are updated at midnight every night. Your support staff can also access these reports for you.

<http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/pdf/ArgosReportingInstructionsCampus.pdf>

When you get to the home page of Argos, click the WebLauncher. Scroll down on the left to the Student General tab and click to open. Choose the Graduate Studies folder on the left and click to open. You will have several options of reports to run. Don't forget to follow the directions carefully, including clicking on the final "Run" directive. This action will download an Excel document with the requested information.

Some important information that Argos will gather for you:

**The Admission Tracking Report** will show you the status of students applying for a particular semester and will note if the student file has been routed to the Program Director, if the student has been admitted, or if admittance is still pending.

**SGR Currently Enrolled Students By Program** will list the students currently in your program with email address, M number, degree and concentration.

**SGR Current Term Prospective Graduates** will let you know the names of students who have submitted the forms to graduate.

**SGR Degrees Awarded in Multiple Terms** will give you information for assessment purposes since it can tell you the number of graduates for the past AY, 5 AYs, etc.

### III. Important notes and forms:

#### 1. Admissions

- Admission decisions, whether to admit or deny a student, need to be made as soon as possible so that students can be notified of their status. In addition, the Graduate College support staff must close files that are denied (including sending a letter of denial) and continue to process those that are admitted. Although programs recommend acceptance or denial for a student, the student is not officially admitted until CGS completes the acceptance process.

- An application is only valid until the start date of the semester for which the student has applied to enter. If a department does not make a decision on an application in a timely manner, that application will by default be denied by the system. The student will have to reapply to be admitted and begin classes.
- **Transfer equivalency form.** This form must be turned in before a student can start the program. A student must provide descriptions of the transferring course, including a syllabus or course content description, before the course can be applied to the student's transcript. Students cannot take courses at another university while they are an MTSU student.

## 2. Assistantships

- There are specific deadlines based on deadlines set by HR, the business office, and end of term processing that can take up to two (2) weeks. Please adhere to your deadlines and process applications as soon as possible so that your candidates won't be caught unprocessed, or unable to receive a paycheck until the following month.
- All graduate assistants must have at least a 3.0 in graduate classes and/or undergraduate classes for acceptance.
- All applicants for the graduate assistantships must first be fully admitted to the program. We are no longer doing pre-admissions.
- The Graduate Assistantships pay for courses necessary for the degree, and specified in the degree plan. Students are not allowed to take additional courses unless explicitly approved by the Graduate Program Director or Advisor.

## 3. Advising students through the program

- **Degree plans** need to be done in the first semester – in the first 2 months - instead of at 21 hours. Please remind your students about these plans, since they are responsible for submitting them, but they very often forget. A **HOLD** is placed on the student's account two months from the admission term date if a degree plan is not received. A student will not be able to register for the next semester until the degree plan is received by the College of Graduate Studies. When CGS receives the plan (drop it by, email it, fax it, etc.) the analyst will check the degree plan. When it is approved, it is scanned into DocuShare and a copy is emailed to the student.
- **Suspension and probation** – emails are sent at end of term detailing affected students. Suspension re-admission terms are currently under renegotiation; instead of readmission decisions being made by the Graduate Council Suspension Appeals Committee, the decision to re-admit will be made by the program which will recommend to the Graduate College. Masters and EdS students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0, Doctoral students must maintain 3.25. Below these minimums will put a student on probation; after 3 semesters of probation a student is suspended.
- **Doctoral forms.** Doctoral programs have different forms, including those that document Preliminary examinations, qualifying examinations, and the advancement to candidacy. These forms must be completed in the department then sent to the Graduate College in order for the analyst to flip the code from early to late in process. The analyst cannot make this change until the form has been received.

- **Normal Loads and Overload form** – A full time load for graduate students is nine (9) hours, but they can take up to 12 hours. Graduate Assistants and those applying for additional financial aid must take a minimum of six (6) hours to be considered full-time in the fall and spring. Exceptions are possible to the six (6) hour load requirement when a student is at the end of their program of study, but this may impact Financial Aid. (Those Graduate Assistants on a 12-month contract must register for at least one (1) hour in the summer.) In order to register for a 13<sup>th</sup> hour, a form must be completed allowing the overload. The Graduate Program Director needs to consider carefully the capability of the individual student before signing off on an overload.
- **Repeat courses request.** Only when a student earns a B- or below will he or she be allowed to retake a course. Beyond just checking the grade, a Graduate Program Director should be sure to check and make sure the class is available before signing off on the form. Graduate students can only repeat two courses for grade replacement.
- **Advising of students.** The College of Graduate Studies does not offer academic advisement. This is a department function. The Graduate College does not choose or approve classes for a student; only the Graduate Program Director can do this. Nor can the Graduate College issue permits for students – this must be done in the Department. Normally, all students are advised prior to registration each semester.

#### 4. Awarding the degree

- Courses that count towards a degree should be detailed in the **Degree Plan** so that the Graduate Analyst can verify progress and completion of the degree. If the student takes courses other than outlined in their degree plan, then they must see the advisor and submit a Revision to Degree plan.
- **Hoarding Forms** - There is a separate Intent to Graduate form for doctoral students that includes their hoarding form. These forms must be submitted by the second week of the semester in which the candidate intends to graduate. Deadlines are listed on CGS website and in the Registration Guide for each term. The Doctoral Intent to Graduate and Hoarding form is now submitted through the new Dynamic Forms software. Students will insert their Major Professor's name and MTSU email address while completing this form. This triggers the form to be routed to the professor for approval prior to being submitted to the College of Graduate Studies for processing.
- Master's and EdS Intent to Graduate Form – Master and EDS students must file an Intent to Graduate Form by the second week of the term in which the students is planning to graduate. These forms are not routed to the program for approval and must be submitted directly to CGS for processing.
- **Thesis submission deadlines**
- <http://mtsu.edu/graduate/student/calendar.php>. Extensions may be available, but these requests, with justification, must come from the Program Director or Thesis/Dissertation Advisor to the CGS Associate Dean. Students may not make this request to CGS under any circumstances.
- **Dissertation submission deadlines** <http://mtsu.edu/graduate/student/calendar.php>. Extensions may be available, see above.
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- **Comprehensive Examination deadlines**  
<http://mtsu.edu/graduate/student/calendar.php>.

Please report results to the program analyst in a timely manner, as the examinations are a graduation requirement for some program.

**ALL FORMS ARE ON THE COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES WEBPAGE**