



Sam Houston State University

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Graduate Handbook

Master's Studies in Computer Science

This handbook is for students enrolled in Master's and Graduate Certificate programs offered in the Department of Computer Science, Sam Houston State University.

Revised for the 2023-2024 Academic Year



Preface

This handbook is intended for students enrolled in Master's and Graduate Certificate programs administered by the Department of Computer Science (CS), Sam Houston State University. It undergoes annual updates by the Graduate Coordinator, in collaboration with the department's Graduate Admission Committee and Graduate Curriculum Committee.

The handbook covers policies, regulations, procedures and essential information that affect both students and faculty members engaged in the programs. Certain sections of this handbook correlate with and mirror segments of the [Graduate and Professional Catalog](#). It's essential to note that while no regulation promulgated by the CS Programs may contradict Graduate School regulations, certain CS rules and standards are more stringent than the Graduate School policies. In cases where no specific policy has been stated in this handbook, Graduate School regulations remain applicable.

All graduate students are entrusted with the responsibility of familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the policies outlined by both the Graduate School and the Department of Computer Science.

August 22, 2023



Graduate Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Student Name: _____ SAM ID: _____ Email: _____

Personal Email: _____ Semester of Admission: _____

Major: **Computing and Data Science (CDS)** – Thesis Non-Thesis
 Digital Forensics (DF) – Thesis Non-Thesis
 Information Assurance and Cybersecurity (IAC) – Thesis Non-Thesis

Certificate: **Cyber Security**
 Data Assurance
 Data Science
 Digital Investigation

Upon signing this form, I, _____, affirm that I have been provided with a copy of the Graduate Handbook for Master's Studies in Computer Science, Sam Houston State University. I acknowledge my commitment to adhere to all policies, deadlines, and timelines specified within both the handbook and the Graduate Catalogue. I understand that the responsibility to meet these obligations and deadlines lies solely with me, and it is not the responsibility of the Graduate Coordinator or university members. Furthermore, I consent that any financial assistance provided by COSET may be retracted if it is determined that I have not faithfully adhered to these policies.

Student Signature and Date

Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Min Kyung An
Signature and Date



Section 1. Programs

The Department of Computer Science (CS) at Sam Houston State University (SHSU) currently offers three Master's programs and four Graduate Certificate programs:

- Master of Science in Computing and Data Science (CDS)
- Master of Science in Digital Forensics (DF)
- Master of Science in Information Assurance and Cybersecurity (IAC)
- Graduate Certificate in Cyber Security (Cert-CS)
- Graduate Certificate in Data Assurance (Cert-DA)
- Graduate Certificate in Data Science (Cert-DS)
- Graduate Certificate in Digital Investigation (Cert-DI)

Section 2. CS Graduate Program Administration

A. Graduate Coordinator

Dr. Min Kyung An, serves as the Graduate Coordinator for students pursuing an MS degree or Graduate Certificate within the Department of Computer Science. In this capacity, the Graduate Coordinator provides guidance to all CS graduate students regarding their academic paths and fulfillment of degree prerequisites. Contact: an@shsu.edu.

B. Graduate Faculty

The below list consists of graduate faculty members who are deemed qualified to supervise the thesis and MS projects of CS students:

- Dr. Min Kyung An, Graduate Coordinator, Associate Professor
- Dr. Hyuk Cho, Professor
- Dr. ABM Islam, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Haodi Jiang, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Pat Ko, Assistant Professor of Practice
- Dr. Li-Jen Lester, Professor
- Dr. Fan Liang, Assistant Professor
- Dr. (Frank) Qingzhong Liu, Professor
- Dr. Xing Liu, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Van Vung Pham, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Amar Rasheed, Assistant Professor
- Dr. N. Karpoor Shashidhar, Professor, Director of DCFS Doctoral Program
- Dr. Gary W. Smith, Associate Professor
- Dr. Cihan Varol, Professor
- Mr. Kirk Burns, Lecturer
- Dr. Bing Zhou, Department Chair, Associate Professor



The full list of faculty members can be found here: <https://cs.shsu.edu/people/>

C. Staff Members

- Ms. Pamela Martin, Assistant to the Chair
- Ms. Cynthia Zinakova, Administrative Associate
- Ms. Donna Murray, Research and Student Development Coordinator
- Mr. Ricky Malcom, System Administrator
- Mr. Dustin Thornton, Lab Manager

Section 3. Admission

The Graduate School outlines its [Admission Policies and Procedures](#) in the Graduate and Professional Catalog. The following provides an overview of the Graduate School's requirements that frequently impact CS students, along with the department's requirements that exceed the standard regulations of the Graduate School.

A. Application

Applicants seeking admission to MS in CDS/DF/IAC programs must submit the following directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions:

1. Graduate Application
2. Application fee
3. Official transcript(s) of *all* previous college work with minimum GPA 2.5 (Note that GPA 2.5/4.0 does not always guarantee an admission.)
4. Two letters of recommendation that address the applicant's qualifications for graduate study
5. (International Applicants Only) TOEFL or IELTS scores. The minimum requirement for TOEFL is 550 paper-based, 213 computer-based, and 79 internet-based. The minimum requirement for IELTS is 6.5

In general, applicants whose GRE score exceeds 300 will likely be able to complete the master's degree successfully. Admission preference is given to those applicants with an undergraduate GPA in excess of 3.0. However, please note that a holistic review of each student's application file will be completed, and admission will be granted on a competitive basis.

Applicants seeking admission to Graduate Certificate programs must submit the following directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions:

1. Graduate Application
2. Application fee
3. Official transcript from the baccalaureate degree granting institution
4. Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or a closely related field with minimum GPA 2.5 (Note that GPA 2.5/4.0 does not always guarantee an admission.)
5. Up-to-date Resume



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

At the minimum, candidates are expected to present a background comparable to that provided in the following courses as described in the Undergraduate Catalog of Sam Houston State University:

- Background courses:
 - MS in CDS:
 - COSC 1436 Programming Fundamentals I
 - COSC 1437 Programming Fundamentals II
 - COSC 3318 Database Management Systems
 - COSC 3319 Data Structures and Algorithms
 - COSC 4318 Programming Languages
 - COSC 4327 Computer Operating Systems
 - MATH 1420 Calculus I
 - STAT 3379 Statistical Methods in Practice
 - MS in DF/IAC and Certificates:
 - COSC 1436 Programming Fundamentals I
 - COSC 2327 Introduction to Computer Networks
 - COSC 3318 Database Management Systems
 - MATH 2385 Fundamentals of Calculus
 - STAT 3379 Statistical Methods in Practice

B. Application Deadlines

A student applying for admission to our programs must submit required documents by deadlines:

- Fall Deadline: August 1
- Spring Deadline: December 15
- Summer Deadline: May 15

C. Admission Types

A domestic student applying for admission to our programs is considered for three types of admission:

1. **Regular Admission:** Regular admission is granted to a student who meets all of the University and our program-specific admission requirements.
2. **Probationary Admission:** Probationary admission is granted to a student who has submitted all of the required admission materials but does not qualify for regular admission. Probationary admission allows a student to enroll in courses to demonstrate the ability to succeed at the graduate level. A student may complete a maximum of 12 graduate semester credit hours with probationary admission. A student with probationary status may be limited to fewer than 12 graduate credit hours by the appropriate academic dean. To petition for regular admission, a student must earn a grade of “B” or better in each course completed under probationary admission. Probationary admission does not guarantee regular admission upon completion of the requisite coursework. Probationary admission does not qualify for federal financial aid.
3. **Stem/Preparatory Admission:** Stem/Preparatory admission is granted to a student who has not qualified for regular admission and needs to complete one or more prerequisite (stem) courses,



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

COSC 5301/5302. Stem/Preparatory admission does not guarantee regular admission upon completion of the stem courses, regardless of the student's performance in the preparatory (stem) courses taken. Stem/Preparatory admission does not qualify for federal financial aid.

An international student applying for admission to our programs is considered for the below type of admission:

1. **Regular Admission:** This type of admission is extended to the following categories of students:
 - 1) a student who meets all the University and our program-specific admission requirements
 - 2) a student who needs to complete one or more prerequisite (stem) courses: These students will be notified by Admission Committee with instructions to fulfill prerequisite courses.

D. Subsequent Master's Degree

A student can only be enrolled, seeking one graduate degree at a time. If a student wishes to pursue more than one master's degree at Sam Houston State University, he or she must complete one degree before beginning another. A student may seek a second master's degree at Sam Houston State University, provided that the field of study differs from the field of study for the first master's degree.

E. Double Dip

Students can get admitted and enrolled in the two of our programs, maximum, and work in parallel. Please note that only "one master and one certificate" or "two certificates" are allowed. The overlapped credits are count towards both the programs. Students must apply to both programs to double-dip.

Section 4. Registration

The Graduate School outlines its [Registration](#) policies in the Graduate and Professional Catalog. The following provides an overview of the Graduate School's requirements that frequently impact CS students, along with the department's requirements that exceed the standard regulations of the Graduate School.

A. Graduate Advisement

Before the initial registration, the student should consult with the Graduate Coordinator. All students should confer with the Graduate Coordinator on a regular basis, monitor their own academic progress, and review the degree plan on a continuous basis. Following the initial advisement, which is typically conducted in the form of an orientation, students are required to sign on and submit the Graduate Handbook Acknowledgement Form. This step is essential to remove "graduate advising hold" that might be in place.

Late Arrival

In order for students to have the best chance for academic success, it's essential to start your program on time. For international students, it is also crucial to arrive by the date indicated on their I-20 to secure



housing, finalize your enrollment and payments, undergo the necessary TB testing (if needed), and familiarize yourself with MySAM before classes begin.

In exceptional cases, a graduate student may receive approval to arrive after the semester has begun unless the student is offered a GA position. Students with GA offers must arrive at least 10 days before the first day of classes as stated in the GA offer letters. If the student doesn't arrive before the semester begins, the GA offer will be rescinded.

A request for a late arrival should only be made if a student is not offered a GA position and is certain they can reach campus by the 10th day of the semester (the last day of the schedule change), which is the final approved arrival date. Be aware that even with the late-arrival approval letter, there remains a risk of being denied entry to the US. The student must be enrolled full-time when seeking approval for late arrival.

If unsure about arriving by this date, students should seriously think about deferring their admission.

B. Master's and Graduate Certificate Courses

Typically, courses with numbers of 5000- or 6000-level are master's-level courses and 7000-level or higher are doctoral/medical-level courses.

C. Course Load

The load for a full-time graduate student is nine to twelve credit hours per fall or spring semester and six credit hours in the summer. Students enrolled in master's and doctoral degree programs should enroll in a minimum of nine graduate credit hours in both the fall and spring semesters and six credit hours in the summer to be considered full-time graduate students.

It is important to note that the University requirements for full-time status and requirements of various financial aid programs may differ. It is recommended that students consult with the University's Financial Aid Office to determine how assistantships and fellowships may impact financial aid.

Graduate students employed by the University at least half-time as graduate assistants, research assistants, or teaching assistants should enroll in a minimum of six graduate credit hours per semester to be considered full-time graduate students. The maximum course load for graduate assistants on half-time employment is nine credit hours per fall or spring semester or six credit hours during the summer. Graduate assistants on less than a half-time assistantship may have the maximum course load authorization increased proportionately by the Department.

Section 5. Graduate Degree Requirements

The Graduate School outlines its [Graduate Degree Requirements](#) in the Graduate and Professional Catalog that apply to courses counted toward a graduate degree. Review the provided information thoroughly and ensure that you meet the criteria for each item. The following provides an overview of



the Graduate School's requirements that frequently impact CS students, along with the department's requirements that exceed the standard regulations of the Graduate School.

A. Academic Procedures

MS Programs

All MS students must fulfill the below requirements to earn their degrees:

- **Requirement 1: Coursework**
 - Earn a minimum of 30 units of graduate credits
 - GPA must be maintained above 3.0.
 - Refer to **Section 6.A Academic Probation and Suspension**.
- **Requirement 2: Thesis/Research Project**
 - Complete a thesis/research project under the supervision of the faculty advisor and a supervisory committee.
 - Refer to **Section 5.D Thesis / MS Project** for details.
- **Requirement 3. Comprehensive Exam**
 - Pass Comprehensive Exams, if a non-thesis student.
 - Refer to **Section 5.E Comprehensive Exam** for details.

Certificate Programs

All students in Graduate Certificate programs must fulfill the below requirement to earn their certificate:

- **Requirement 1: Coursework**
 - Earn a minimum of 15 units of graduate credits.
 - GPA must be maintained above 3.0.
 - Refer to **Section 6.A Academic Probation and Suspension**.

B. MS Degree Plans

Our MS Programs offer three options of Degree Plan:

- **Plan 1 – Thesis Option** requires 24 hours of a coursework which is a combination of compulsory (core) and track elective courses, and 6 hours of thesis courses (COSC/DFSC 6348 and 6049). In total, the program requires 30 hours. Thesis students must register for COSC/DFSC 6347 in their proposal semester, and for COSC/DFSC 6049 in their defense semester. Note that continuous enrollment in the thesis course is required upon initiation of the thesis until completion.
- **Plan 2 – Non-Thesis Option** requires 27 hours of a coursework which is a combination of compulsory (core) and track elective courses, and 3 hours of a master project course (COSC/DFSC 6347). In total, the program requires 30 hours. Non-thesis students are required to complete written comprehensive exams in core subjects where they received a grade of B or lower. Non-thesis students must register for COSC/DFSC 6347 in their terminal-semester. Note that



continuous enrollment in the COSC 6347 course is required upon initiation of COSC 6347 until completion.

- **Plan 3 – Professional Option** requires 30 hours of a coursework which is a combination of compulsory (core) and track elective courses.

C. Coursework

MS in Computing and Data Science (CDS)

The MS in CDS program offers Thesis Option and Non-Thesis (MS Project) Option. In either option, students must fulfill the below coursework requirements within a six-year period:

1. Complete background requirement: See **Section 3.A** for the list of required undergraduate stem works. If student’s acceptance letter indicates any lack in the STEM Work, the student must complete COSC 5301 and/or 5302 in their first major semester.
2. Earn a minimum of 30 units of graduate credits with GPA above or equal to 3.0: 21 hours of CDS core credits (7 courses), and 9 hours of track credits (3 courses).
 - CDS Core course:

	CDS (Thesis)	CDS (Non-Thesis)
COSC 5318 Database Systems	✓	✓
COSC 5319 Algorithm Design and Analysis	✓	✓
COSC 5327 Operating Systems	✓	✓
COSC 6318 Language and Compiler Design	✓	✓
COSC 6319 Software Engineering	✓	✓
COSC 6348 Thesis 1	✓	
COSC 6049 Thesis 2	✓	
COSC 5050 Independent Study		✓
COSC 6347 Programming Practicum		✓

- Track courses:

	Data Science	System
COSC 5313 Artificial Intelligence	✓	
COSC 6314 Data Mining/Knowledge Discovery	✓	
COSC 6315 Machine Learning	✓	
COSC 5321 Parallel Computing		✓
COSC 5322 Real-Time and Embedded Systems		✓
COSC 5326 Networks & Data Communications		✓

Below is a suggested degree plan. Carefully plan your coursework as most courses open only once (in Spring, Summer or Fall only) during an academic year. Request to change your concentration from Thesis to Non-Thesis must be completed before your penultimate-semester to graduate on time.



1.5-Year Non-Thesis with Data Science Track Degree Plan (Fall Registration Cohort)			
Year 1	Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1 (Penultimate-semester)
	COSC 5318 COSC 6318 COSC 5050	COSC 5319 COSC 5327 COSC 6319	COSC 5313 COSC 6315
Year 2	Fall 2 (Terminal-semester)	Spring 2	Summer 2
	COSC 6314 COSC 6347		

MS in Digital Forensics (DF)

The MS in DF program offers Non-Thesis (MS Project) Option. Students must fulfill the below coursework requirements within a six-year period:

- Complete background requirement: See **Section 3.A** for the list of required undergraduate stem works. If student's acceptance letter indicates any lack in the STEM Work, the student must complete COSC 5301 and/or 5302 in their first major semester.
- Earn a minimum of 30 units of graduate credits with GPA above or equal to 3.0.
 - Required Compulsory (Core) Courses (18 hours):
 - DFSC 5315 Network and Cyber Security
 - DFSC 5316 File System Forensics
 - DFSC 5317 Digital Security
 - DFSC 5318 Cyber Law
 - DFSC 5327 Digital Forensics Investigation
 - DFSC 6347 Directed Mgt & Development Prj
 - Elective Courses (12 hours)
 - 4 COSC/DFSC 5xxx/6xxx courses (except cores) from Graduate Catalog.
 - COSC/DFSC 5340 Special Topics: count only up to 6 credits towards your degree.
 - COSC 5301/5302 do NOT count towards the degree plan.

Below is a suggested degree plan. Carefully plan your coursework as most courses open only once (in Spring, Summer or Fall only) during an academic year.

1.5-Year Non-Thesis Degree Plan			
Year 1	Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1 (Penultimate-semester)



	DFSC 5315 DFSC 5316 DFSC 5327	DFSC 5317 DFSC 5318 One elective	One elective One elective
Year 2	Fall 2 (Terminal-semester)	Spring 2	Summer 2
	One elective DFSC 6347		

MS in Information Assurance & Cybersecurity (IAC)

The MS in IAC program offers Non-Thesis (MS Project) Option. Students must fulfill the below coursework requirements within a six-year period:

1. Complete background requirement: See **Section 3.A** for the list of required undergraduate stem works. If student's acceptance letter indicates any lack in the STEM Work, the student must complete COSC 5301 and/or 5302 in their first major semester.
2. Earn a minimum of 30 units of graduate credits with GPA above or equal to 3.0.
 - Required Compulsory (Core) Courses (18 hours):
 - COSC 5325 Operating System Security
 - COSC 5335 Database Security
 - DFSC 5310 Principle and Policy in Information Assurance
 - DFSC 5315 Network and Cyber Security
 - DFSC 5336 Business Continuity Management
 - DFSC 6347 Directed Mgt & Development Prj
 - Elective Courses (12 hours)
 - 4 COSC/DFSC 5xxx/6xxx courses (except cores) from Graduate Catalog.
 - COSC/DFSC 5340 Special Topics: count only up to 6 credits towards your degree.
 - COSC 5301/5302 do NOT count towards the degree plan.

Below is a suggested degree plan. Carefully plan your coursework as most courses open only once (in Spring, Summer or Fall only) during an academic year.

1.5-Year Non-Thesis Degree Plan			
	Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1 (Penultimate-semester)
Year 1	DFSC 5310 DFSC 5336 One elective	COSC 5325 COSC 5335 DFSC 5315	One elective One elective
Year 2	Fall 2 (Terminal-semester)	Spring 2	Summer 2



	One elective DFSC 6347		
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Graduate Certificate Programs

Students must fulfill the below coursework requirements within a six-year period:

- **Cyber Security**
 1. COSC 5310 Cryptography and Steganography
 2. COSC 5330 Malware
 3. DFSC 5315 Network and Cyber Security
 4. DFSC 6310 Cyber Warfare and Terrorism
 5. DFSC 5318 Cyber Law OR DFSC 5336 Business Continuity Management
- **Data Assurance**
 1. DFSC 5310 Principle and Policy in Information Assurance
 2. COSC 5310 Cryptography & Steganography
 3. COSC 5330 Malware
 4. COSC 5335 Database Security
 5. DFSC 5336 Business Continuity Management
- **Data Science**
 1. COSC 6321 Distributed Computing
 2. COSC 6331 Data Visualization
 3. COSC 6335 Big Data Analytics
 4. COSC 6338 Data Science Capstone
 5. COSC 6332 Computer Vision OR COSC 6333 Deep Learning
- **Digital Investigation**
 1. DFSC 5315 Network and Cyber Security
 2. DFSC 5317 Digital Security
 3. DFSC 5327 Digital Forensics Investigatn
 4. COSC 5330 Malware
 5. DFSC 6312 Multimedia Forensics

D. Thesis / MS Project

A thesis is typically a more extensive and in-depth research project. It involves conducting original research, often contributing new knowledge or insights to the field. Theses require a rigorous investigation, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. They are expected to be comprehensive and demonstrate a deep understanding of the chosen topic. The primary purpose of a thesis is to contribute new knowledge or advance the existing body of knowledge in the chosen field.

On the other hand, a master's project is generally a smaller-scale endeavor compared to a thesis. It might involve applying existing knowledge to solve a practical problem or developing a prototype, application, or creative work. While it still requires research and analysis, the scope is usually narrower and more focused. Master's projects tend to emphasize practical application.



The process for the successful completion of a thesis or MS project is outlined below. Students must consistently monitor the [MS Studies Website](#) for any upcoming deadlines.

Thesis

Every Penultimate-Semester Thesis student who intends to graduate within two semesters must fulfill the tasks listed below within the designated deadlines. The deadlines and forms pertinent to penultimate-semester can be accessed on the [MS Studies Website](#).

1. Register for COSC 6348.
2. Form Committee, and submit
 - [Graduate Committee Composition Form](#),
 - [Advisory Committee Agreement Form](#), and
 - [Thesis Initiation Sheet](#).
3. Schedule Thesis proposal presentation.
4. Submit supervisor-approved proposal documents (ppt slides and proposal report) to committee members.
5. Present proposal.
6. Submit [Thesis Prospectus Approval Form](#) and Proposal Report.

Every Terminal-Semester Thesis student who intends to graduate within one semester must fulfill the tasks listed below within the designated deadlines. The deadlines pertinent to terminal-semester can be accessed on the [MS Studies Website](#).

1. Register for COSC 6049.
2. Apply for Graduation and Degree.
3. Submit draft theses to The Graduate School.
4. [Schedule your thesis defense](#).
5. Submit [Public Defense Announcement Form](#) to The Graduate School.
6. Complete a thesis defense. Submit [Report of Thesis Examination Form](#) to The Graduate School. Begin [Electronic Route Sheet](#). Submit [Embargo Request Form](#) for your thesis to The Graduate School.
7. Submit defended and approved theses to The Graduate School.
8. Submit [Electronic Route Sheet](#), an electronic PDF copy of thesis, and the [Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form](#) signed by thesis committee members to Dean's Office.
9. Complete publication of theses through [Vireo](#).
10. Submit the [Electronic Route Sheet](#) to The Graduate School and Dean's Office.

Forms must be submitted to Ms. Cynthia Zinakova or Graduate Coordinator unless it's instructed to submit to other departments. Comprehensive instructions regarding the submission of the forms can be accessed on the [MS Studies Website](#).

Additionally, the requirements set by the Graduate and Professional School, which can be accessed on the [Thesis & Dissertations](#) webpage, are applicable across the entire university and are distinct from the internal requirements of the CS Department. It is crucial for students to ensure that they fulfill both



the requirements of CS Department and those of the graduate school. Neglecting to satisfy all necessary requirements could potentially result in a delay in the graduation process.

MS Project

Every Penultimate-Semester Non-Thesis (MS Project) student who intends to graduate within two semesters must fulfill the tasks listed below within the designated deadlines. The deadlines pertinent to penultimate-semester can be accessed on the [MS Studies Website](#).

1. Form Committee and submit
 - [Graduate Committee Composition Form](#), and
 - [Advisory Committee Agreement Form](#).
2. Schedule project proposal presentation.
3. Submit supervisor-approved proposal documents (ppt slides and proposal report) to committee members.
4. Present proposal.
5. Submit [Proposal Report Form](#).

Every Terminal-Semester Non-Thesis (MS Project) student who intends to graduate within one semester must fulfill the tasks listed below within the designated deadlines. The deadlines pertinent to terminal-semester can be accessed on the [MS Studies Website](#).

1. Register for COSC/DFSC 6347.
2. Apply for Graduation and Degree.
3. Submit your formally written supervisor-approved progress report of project progress to committee members.
4. Submit [Progress Report Evaluation Form](#).
5. Schedule your project defense, and submit [Final Project Presentation Schedule Form](#).
6. Distribute supervisor-approved final project report.
7. Complete your final defense.
8. Submit [Final Presentation Report Form](#).
9. Submit your final project documentation(s).

Forms must be submitted to Ms. Cynthia Zinakova or Graduate Coordinator.

Thesis / MS Project Committee Composition

A thesis / MS Project committee will be established either before or during the student's penultimate semester. The committee should consist of a committee chair (supervisor) and a minimum of two additional committee members, all holding the appropriate graduate faculty status. With the approval of the department, academic dean, and Dean of The Graduate School, the committee may include one member who is not employed by SHSU, as per Academic Policy Statement 950601.

The selection of the committee chair hinges on the student's preference, faculty availability, and expertise. Once a faculty member agrees to assume the role of chair, the student, under the chair's guidance, will proceed to select the remaining committee members. Subsequently, the committee's



constitution needs approval from both the Graduate Coordinator and the Dean. Any alterations to the committee's composition will similarly require approval through the same process.

E. Comprehensive Exams

All MS students in Non-Thesis Option are obligated to fulfill and achieve a passing grade (grade ≥ 70) in written comprehensive exams for core subjects where they obtained a grade of B or lower. Exams are conducted during their terminal semester.

Should a student fail one or more examinations, a re-examination shall be permitted per department approval. A third examination may be permitted only with the approval of the appropriate academic dean and the department.

Students must be enrolled at SHSU in the semester in which the comprehensive exams are administered.

Section 6. Academic Expectations and Guidelines

The Graduate School outlines its [Academic Expectations and Guidelines](#) in the Graduate and Professional Catalog. The following provides an overview of the Graduate School's requirements that frequently impact CS students, along with the department's requirements that exceed the standard regulations of the Graduate School.

A. Academic Probation and Suspension

In order to achieve and remain in academic good standing at Sam Houston State University, a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate coursework attempted.

A 3.0 overall grade point average is the absolute minimum required for graduation. A graduate student who falls below a 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of any semester during which one or more semester credit hours are attempted will be placed on probation. If an enrolled student on probation fails to achieve a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of the next semester following the starting of the probation, the student will be academically terminated.

A student who earns a grade of "C" in any course (repeated or distinct course) within the academic program may have their graduate status reviewed by a committee comprised of the department/school or college's graduate faculty. The committee will recommend an appropriate remediation for the student.

A graduate student who earns a grade of "F" in any graduate course will be terminated from graduate studies.

Those students who earn a grade of "F" during the semester of their anticipated graduation will be terminated from graduate studies and will not be eligible to graduate in that term. The appropriate academic dean may place on probation, retain on probation, or terminate any student deficient in grade points without regard to the regulations previously stated.



Any appeal for a review of the termination of graduate status should be directed in writing through the graduate advisor of the program, then to the chair of the department/school, then to the academic dean of the college, and finally to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Refer to Academic Policy Statement 910312 for further information.

If a student wishes to pursue a different program after being terminated from the original program, the student must complete the admissions process and be accepted into the new program. A student must be in Academic Good Standing in order to change to a new program or receive a release from the academic program, academic dean of the college, and Dean of The Graduate School. Once accepted to the new program, the previous program must release the termination block in the Office of the Registrar before the student can register in the new program.

B. Transfer of Credits

The following rules apply to courses transferred from another institution:

1. Graduate courses fulfilled at other accredited colleges and universities within the United States can be counted as transfer credits toward our graduate programs.
2. Transfer credit is not granted automatically and necessitates a request made by the Graduate Coordinator.
3. Transfer credit is only accepted for courses in which a grade of "B" or higher has been achieved.
4. Courses previously applied towards another degree are ineligible for transfer.
5. Transferred courses must adhere to the six-year time frame.
6. The maximum number of hours that can be transferred into our programs are:
 - From our certificate to our master's program: up to 5 courses (15 credits)
 - From a master to our master: up to 2 courses (6 credits)

To initiate the process of applying for transfer credit, a student must submit the following documents to the Graduate Coordinator:

1. An official transcript that displays the course intended for transfer
2. Syllabus of the course
3. A copy of the course description extracted from the institution's catalog

Section 7. Assistantships and Scholarships

A. Graduate Assistantships

The policy governing the employment of Graduate Assistants is expounded upon in Academic Policy Statement 890303, approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The subsequent overview highlights the aspects of the statement that frequently influence CS Graduate Assistants, along with the department-specific requisites that surpass the baseline regulations outlined in Academic Policy Statement 890303.



How to Apply

Graduate Assistantships (GAs) are offered through the collaboration of the Department of Computer Science, the College of Science and Engineering Technology, and the Office of Graduate Studies. These assistantships are limited in availability and granted through a competitive selection process. For the Graduate Assistantship (GA) position, please ensure to submit an [Application for a Graduate Assistantship](#) to the Graduate Coordinator. Students are required to apply for a GA position *each semester*. Failure to do so will remove the student from consideration, and their position will be assigned to another student seeking a graduate assistantship.

- Deadline to submit GA applications:
 - Fall GA positions: May 1
 - Spring GA positions: Dec 1

Award Notification

Students who are awarded assistantships will receive a letter from the COSET Dean. Those students awarded assistantships may be required to submit additional paperwork to Ms. Cynthia Zinakova in the Department of Computer Science (cez003@shsu.edu).

Assistantship Periods

As our MS programs are structured to be completed across three long semesters (fall, spring) and one summer, assistantships are granted for a total of *three* long semesters. Each semester, the renewal of assistantships is contingent upon students maintaining a satisfactory academic standing (with a GPA of at least 3.0) and fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as assigned by their supervising faculty. It is important to note that students who do not make adequate progress or adhere to deadlines may potentially lose their assistantship.

Terms and Provisions Governing Graduate Assistantships

Duties tied to a Graduate Assistantship encompass as given by the supervising faculty, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assessing homework assignments and quizzes
- Supervising quizzes and exams
- Overseeing or conducting laboratory sessions
- Allocating time for individual student consultations during office hours
- Participating in research endeavors
- Assisting with various instructional tasks

These tasks are performed under the guidance and oversight of supervising faculty.

The responsibilities linked to a Graduate Assistantship comprise:

- Ensuring your presence on campus and availability to students starting from the first class day of the semester until the posting of grades at its conclusion.
- Responding promptly to requests from your faculty supervisor.



- Collaborating closely with your faculty supervisor to fulfill designated responsibilities.

Assistantship Requirements

By accepting a Graduate Assistant (GA) position, the student acknowledges and agrees to adhere to the subsequent terms and conditions:

- **Assignment of Faculty Supervisor:** GAs' faculty supervisors will be determined upon the allocation of class assignments.
- **Weekly Obligation:** GAs are required to dedicate 20 hours per week, as directed by their faculty supervisors, to perform the aforementioned duties and responsibilities.
- **Mandatory GA Orientation:** Attendance at a GA Orientation is compulsory. Failure to attend may result in the forfeiture of the GA offer.
- **Performance and GPA Requirement:** Continued appointment to the GA position is contingent on maintaining a minimum 3.0 overall GPA and meeting satisfactory performance standards as evaluated by the faculty supervisor.

Graduate students on an assistantship may not hold other salaried positions from the University. An exception to this rule may be made with the written approval of the appropriate academic dean. A graduate student on an assistantship may not be employed more than a combined total of a 0.70 full-time equivalent (FTE) from all sources of funding.

Any breach of the aforementioned terms and conditions or premature resignation from the assistantship before the semester's conclusion will be considered a contract violation by the department. In cases where a nonresident is granted in-state tuition status due to this appointment, any alterations in tuition costs resulting from changes in status will be communicated to the Payroll Office for necessary adjustments.

B. Scholarships

COSET offers three scholarships, *College Graduate Recruitment Scholarship*, *Graduate Achievement Scholarship*, and *Graduate Distance Learning Scholarship*. Information can be found in [COSET's Graduate Student Resources website](#).

SHSU also offers *General Graduate School Scholarship*. The application form can be found on the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Additional scholarship opportunities can be explored at [Scholarships4Kats](#).