



TRINITY WESTERN
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

2024-25

THESIS GUIDEBOOK
(Master's)

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INTRODUCTION

TWU's Office of Graduate Studies provides this guidebook as a compilation of TWU policies and procedures, with input from Faculty of Graduate Studies programs, to assist students and programs in navigating the many facets of thesis defence preparation and completion of all thesis requirements for successful degree completion.

The Office of Graduate Studies reviews and updates this guidebook annually.

THESIS TRACK PROGRAMS

At TWU, a thesis is a graduate capstone project completed independently by a student under the guidance of a supervisory committee, as a final component of their graduate degree. A thesis provides the student with an opportunity to conduct significant autonomous research in an area of interest. For a master's degree, the focus of a thesis track is the process of research and normally includes identifying a research question, critically analyzing the literature, using a research method to collect and analyze data, presenting the results, and discussing the relevance of the findings to the broader field.

THESIS ADMINISTRATION

All theses and defences are coordinated through the Office of Graduate Studies. This office is responsible for policies, procedures, and related forms to support thesis-track programs and students.

A thesis defence is a formal examination of a thesis-track graduate student, conducted by a degree committee, upon conclusion of the student's written thesis. The purpose of a thesis defence is to provide the student with an opportunity to explain the methods, process, and results of their thesis research.

Required parties at a thesis defence are the student, degree committee members, and exam chair. Optional attendees are audience members comprised of peers, faculty, family, friends, and members of the public.

THESIS COURSE PREREQUISITES

Students in thesis-track programs will note their program's course requirements that must be completed prior to registration in Thesis I and Thesis II courses. Individual programs may have other thesis registration prerequisites, such as a minimum overall GPA.

THESIS DEFENCE PREREQUISITE

Students must complete all other degree requirements prior to their thesis defence.

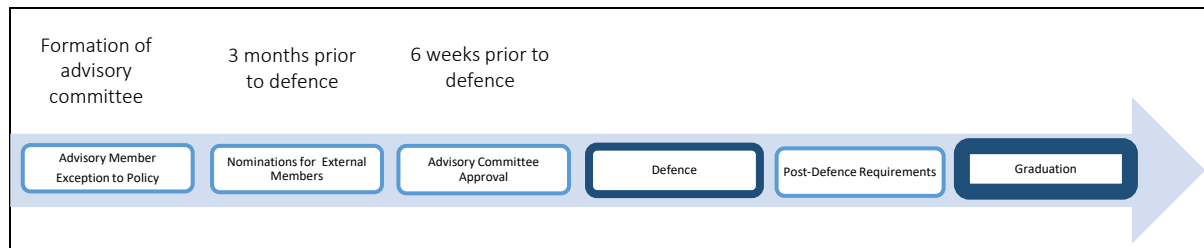
THESIS PROCESS

1. Research selection. The student will think about a topic that they would like to address. They will then discuss their thesis ideas with the program director and find out more about the research experience of potential thesis supervisors.
2. Identify an Advisory Committee. Check program processes related to identifying a thesis advisor and additional advisory committee member(s).
3. Prepare a proposal:
 - a. Submit a thesis proposal to the thesis advisor for feedback
 - b. Receive approval of proposal from advisory committee
 - c. Obtain Research Ethics Board approval (if relevant)



- d. Ensure compliance with external requirements (if relevant – e.g., Tri-Agency funding body)
4. Collect and analyze data. Check with the program for methods relevant to the discipline.
5. Write the thesis. The student and thesis advisor will meet regularly to discuss the research and to review drafts of the written thesis. Once a draft of the entire thesis is completed, it should be submitted to the advisory committee. This draft copy normally is comprised of the introduction, all chapters, conclusions, table of contents, and bibliography or reference list, as well as an abstract. Please see program for details related to the thesis composition for their discipline.
6. Defend the thesis.
7. Publish the thesis.

THESIS DEFENCE TIMELINE



NOTE: By request, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will assist the student in developing a specific timeline accommodating to their graduation goals.

THESIS FORMATTING

The Office of Graduate Studies presents the following formatting requirements for all TWU's Faculty of Graduate Studies theses. Consistent formatting helps ensure compatibility with standards established by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the Tri-Agencies, as well as reader accessibility, ability to reproduce the thesis in various formats, and longevity of the archived copy.

When a thesis is one of the requirements for the fulfillment of a degree, if the thesis does not conform with the format requirements, graduation will be delayed until the requirements are met. Questions may be directed to the Graduate Studies Coordinator at GradStudies@twu.ca.

Language

1. Theses must be written in English, unless approval has been granted by the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. Exception: Due to the brief and personal nature of the Dedications page, font style and language is not restricted and approval is not needed for the use of different fonts and languages.

Font

1. Use a standard font that is appropriate for an academic paper. Ask the thesis supervisor about the preferred font for the discipline. Recommendations include Arial, Calibri, and Times New Roman.
2. Font must be sized 11 or 12, with a maximum 10 cpi (characters per inch).
3. Font must be black.
4. Text and page numbers must be in the same font throughout the thesis.
5. Exception: Font and font size may be varied for symbols or emphasis, where appropriate (science and mathematical terms).

Layout (*Use this guidebook as an example of custom margin settings, pagination, and running header.)

1. Use 8.5" x 11" paper size.
2. Use portrait orientation.
3. Margins must be set to 1.25" for the left side and 1" for the top/bottom/right sides, including the pagination and running header. Custom margins settings will look like this document, which is set at:



Layout

- Header: 1"

Margins

- Top: 1.25"
- Bottom: 1"
- Left: 1.25"
- Right: 1"

4. The running header must be aligned at the top left hand and may not exceed 50 characters.
5. Page numbers must be aligned at the top right hand, in line with the top line of the running header.
6. Use 1.5 line spacing for the body of the text, with single spaced block quotations.

Title Page

1. Use the university approved Title Page Template. Required information includes:
 - Title
 - Author
 - Previous degrees
 - "in partial fulfillment..."
 - Degree
 - Program
 - Faculty
 - University name
 - Claim of copyright (© symbol)
 - Year of publication
 - Name of copyright owner
 - Month and year of submission
2. Use the same font and size as the body of the thesis.
3. Do not include a page number or running header on the title page.
4. Use regular font style (no bold, italics, or underlining).
5. Do not use special effects font or quotation marks.
6. Acronyms and abbreviations must be spelled out completely.

Table of Contents

The acceptable order of pages follows. Not all items listed below are required. Consult with your thesis supervisor regarding which pages (from the list above) your program includes in their theses. If included, the pages must be presented in the following order:

Preliminary pages

- Title page (required)
- Committee/Approval page (required)
- Dedication (optional)
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Abstract (required)
- Table of Contents (required)
- List of Tables (if any)
- List of Figures and Illustrations (if any)
- List of Plates (if any)
- List of Symbols, Abbreviations, Acronyms, or Glossary (if any)

Body of text

Final sections

- End notes (if any)
- References/Bibliography
- Appendices (if any)



- Index (optional)

Remember:

1. All pages (except the title page) must include the running header and pagination.
2. All sections (except the title page) must be listed in the table of contents.

Preliminary Pages

1. Use small Roman numeral pagination (e.g., ii, iii, iv...), starting with “ii” on the Abstract page (e.g., Begin numbering pages after the title page. The “i” on the title page is implied but not given.)
2. The running header and page numbering must appear on all pages, within the 1” margins.
3. Ensure that you have permission to include someone’s name in the dedication or acknowledgements, as a thesis is a public document.
4. Abstracts for master’s theses are limited to 150 words.
5. Each list must start at the top of a new page.

Body of the Text

1. Use Arabic numeral pagination (e.g., 1, 2, 3...) on all pages of the body of the text.
2. Do not type “Page” in front of the number.
3. The running header and page numbering must appear on all pages, within the 1” margins.

Final Sections

1. Use Arabic numeral pagination (e.g., 247, 248, 249...) on all pages of the final sections, continuing the numbering from the body of the text.
2. The running header and page numbering must appear on all pages, within the 1” margins.

Electronic Thesis Deposit

1. Ensure your manuscript conforms to the citation style of your discipline.
2. Remove signatures.
3. Remove all personal, identifying, or contact information from the body of the thesis.
4. Either redact all personal contact information (of the author or others) from the appendices or, instead of including the actual document, on the appendix page type “A full copy of this document is available upon request”.
5. Remove blank pages, hanging titles, and widow lines.
6. Refer to *Post-Defence Checklist* section for further instructions regarding the archival process.

MODES OF DEFENCE

Physical. A physical defence is held with all required parties attending in-person, as well as all audience members also attending in-person. NOTE: The exception will be a remote degree committee member who may need to attend virtually. Only one degree committee member may attend virtually. If more than one of the degree committee members need to attend virtually, the defence will be virtual.

Virtual. Virtual defences are primarily based on the needs of the student. If the student is remote or needs a virtual defence for other reasons, then all parties will attend in the same mode as the student. A virtual defence will be held with all required parties attending virtually, as well as all audience members. NOTE: The required parties may not attend in-person together primarily and virtually secondarily (e.g., the advisory committee may not be together in the same room while the student is remote).

Hybrid. A hybrid defence consists of all required parties attending physically, except for one remote degree committee member and either all or a portion of the audience members attending virtually. NOTE: A hybrid defence depends on the program’s ability to provide a program employee who is not a required party of the defence to manage the virtual attendance of the audience.



THESIS COMMITTEE ROLES & EXCEPTIONS

In summer 2024, the Office of Graduate Studies updated the terms associated with thesis committee members in compliance with recent updates required by the library repository. The updates reflect the terms and definitions used by the Library of Congress' MARC List.

Update	Includes		Previously known as
Thesis Advisor. A person under whose supervision a degree candidate develops and presents a thesis, mémoire, or text of a dissertation.	Advisory Members	Thesis advisor	Thesis supervisor
		Co-advisor	Co-supervisor
Degree Committee Member. A person who is part of a committee that considers the merit of a thesis, dissertation, or other submission by an academic degree candidate.		Advisory member	Second reader
	External member		Third (objective) reader

University Policies for Degree Committees			
See policies for Qualifications and Roles			
Thesis Administration (Master’s) Policy Thesis Supervisory Committee (Master’s) Policy Supervisor and Supervisory Committee (PhD)			Thesis Examining Committee (Master’s) Policy
DEGREE COMMITTEE MEMBERS			
The master’s degree committee must be composed by a minimum of three members.			
ADVISORY MEMBERS			External Member
The master’s advisory committee must be composed by a minimum of two members.			
Thesis Advisor	Co-Advisor(s)	Advisory Member	
Pre-Defence Approvals and Exceptions from the Office of Graduate Studies			
No exceptions	Advisory Member Exception to Policy for co-advisor and program members only		Nominations for External Member (NEM)
Advisory Committee Approval – Master’s Thesis (SCA-MT)			
Honorariums for Degree Committee Members			
Determined and administered by the program.			
Community Covenant and Statement of Faith			
Degree committee members who are non-TWU faculty are <u>not</u> required to sign the Community Covenant or Statement of Faith.			



INVOLVEMENT of INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders play vital roles in the thesis process, as teachers, advisors, and mentors.

There are two options for the role of an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper at defence:

- Qualified Observer. As a non-voting member of the degree committee, the Indigenous Knowledge Keeper may ask questions during the examination period but does not have a voting role on the degree committee and is excluded from deliberations. Approval from the Office of Graduate Studies is not required.
- Degree Committee Member. As a voting member of the degree committee, an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper who does not meet policy requirements for degree committee members requires either:
 - o an approved exception to policy as a co-advisor or program member.
 - o approval as a nominated external reader.

THESIS EXAM CHAIR

The exam chair is appointed and oriented by the Office of Graduate Studies. The role of the exam chair is to be a neutral facilitator representing the Vice or Associate Provost of Graduate Studies at a thesis defence, to ensure that the formal exam and related documentation proceed according to TWU policies and procedures.

NOTE: If an available exam chair cannot be secured for a proposed defence date, the defence date will be returned to the graduate program for rescheduling.

POLICY: [Thesis Exam Chair Policy](#) (ED September 2022)

THESIS FORMS (in order of use)

Form	Description
Advisor & Student Agreement (ASA)	The intention of this agreement is to clarify expectations between the advisor and the student, and to provide the student with information and resources necessary for success. Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Thesis Evaluation Criteria	Thesis evaluation criteria are specific to each program and should be provided by the program to the student well in advance of the defence, so that the student understands how their work is being assessed.
Advisory Member Exception to Policy	Program directors must submit this form to the Office of Graduate Studies to request approval for any proposed advisory committee member who is not a member of TWU's Faculty of Graduate Studies. To be considered, the non-TWU and/or non-FGS nominee must meet all other qualifications of the Thesis Supervisory Committee (Master's) Policy . Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Nominations for External Degree Committee Member (NEDCM)	Degree committees for master's level theses must have an external member who is approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Students must submit a completed nomination form from their TWU student email (@mytwu.ca), together with a 150-word abstract or research proposal in Word.doc format, to the Office of Graduate Studies (GradStudies@twu.ca) a <u>minimum of three months</u> prior to the proposed timeframe for defence. See Thesis Examining Committee (Master's) Policy for more information. Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Advisory Committee Approval – Master's Thesis (ACA-MT)	This form attests that the student's thesis is ready for defence and provide event details. The form must be signed by the student and advisory committee and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the student



	from their @mytwu.ca student email a <u>minimum of six weeks</u> prior to the defence date. OGS office closure dates are not included in the minimum submission requirement. Thesis defence blackout dates do not impact the SCA validity period. Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Title Page Template	Formatting of the thesis title page must adhere to this template. Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Thesis Evaluation Agreement (TEA)	Thesis Evaluation Agreements are provided to the exam chair by the Office of Graduate Studies prior to the defence and consist of the standard thesis grading scale and the program's respective thesis evaluation criteria.
ARCA Instructions for Student Submitter	The Librarian provides this instructional form to students who have created a student account in ARCA for the purpose of uploading their thesis into the library's repository, TWUSpace. Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Final Thesis Completion (FTC)	Students must submit this form, with all necessary signatures attached, together with their final thesis, from their TWU student email (@mytwu.ca) to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, as part of the process for completing thesis requirements. Available on the Forms & Procedures webpage.
Notice of Thesis Completion (NTC)	The Graduate Studies Coordinator provides this form to the Office of the Registrar upon the student's completion of all thesis requirements, to deposit the student's final thesis grade for recording.

DEFENCE ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

Pre-Defence Meeting	A pre-defence meeting is held 15 minutes before the start of the defence, and includes the student, degree committee members, and exam chair.
Call to Order	The exam chair will call the defence to order, introduce themselves, provide the Land Acknowledgement, offer a prayer, and explain exam protocol to the audience. Alternatively, the thesis advisor may offer the prayer.
Introductions	The exam chair will introduce the degree committee members in order of thesis advisor, advisory member, and external member. The exam chair will then introduce the student for their presentation.
Presentation	The student will give a 20 to 25-minute presentation of their written thesis.
Examinations	The exam chair will moderate the examination by calling upon the degree committee members to examine the student in the following order: external member, advisory member, thesis advisor. Examinations may be in one round or two rounds, depending on the program's preference. The examination must conclude within one hour.
Audience Questions	If the examination period ends short of one hour, the exam chair may open the floor for questions from the audience until the one hour terminates.
Deliberations	The exam chair excuses the student and audience from the examination space (whether physical or virtual) to provide privacy for the degree committee to deliberate the results of the examination.
Conclusion	The exam chair calls the student to return to the examination space and provides the student with the recommendations and a final grade. Audience members must not be present for the conclusion. As it is an exam, the results are provided privately to the student, who may then decide whether to share the results.



DEFENCE FORMAT

Defences will be held in an approved indoor room on a TWU campus and will proceed with terminology and roles as determined by TWU policy and procedure. Any alteration to the sequence, location, or terminology used at a defence must be pre-approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Requests to alter the precedent format or procedure of a defence must be made to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration well in advance of the anticipated defence date.

POLICY: [Thesis Administration \(Master's\) Policy](#) (ED December 2022)

DEFENCE RECORDING

Requests to record a defence in any manner must be made to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration well in advance of the anticipated defence date. Only the student presentation portion of the defence may be considered for recording. No portion of the defence will be streamed. The exam chair has the right to discontinue a recording if it is interfering with the proper conduct of the defence.

POLICY: [Thesis Administration \(Master's\) Policy](#) (ED December 2022)

PUBLIC EVENT

Thesis defences are public events. Requests for exceptions to public announcements and access that are deemed necessary for safety-related concerns must be made to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration well in advance of the anticipated defence date.

POLICY: [Thesis Administration \(Master's\) Policy](#) (ED December 2022)

THESIS DEFENCE GRADING SCALE

The recommendations and grading scales as outlined below are standard for all Faculty of Graduate Studies theses. However, graduate programs will individually determine their own thesis evaluation criteria.

Recommendations. The degree committee provides the student with one of the following recommendations of merit for the written thesis.

- 1) The thesis merits the award of the degree and is **acceptable as is** without revision.
- 2) The thesis merits the award of the degree, subject to **minor revisions** made to the satisfaction of the thesis advisor.
- 3) The thesis merits the award of the degree, subject to **moderate revisions** made to the satisfaction of the thesis advisor and one other member of the degree committee, namely: _____.
- 4) The thesis merits the award of the degree subject to **substantive revisions** made to the satisfaction of all degree committee members.
- 5) The thesis is **unsatisfactory** and does not merit the award of the degree. Further research is required, and re-examination is necessary before a degree can be awarded.
- 6) The thesis is **unacceptable** and does not merit the award of the degree. It is not of sufficient merit to warrant re-submission after further work.



Grading. The degree committee assigns the student with a letter grade or pass/fail grade based on the student's written thesis and performance at their defence, in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria. The grade is reflective of the preliminary recommendation for merit, in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria.

Thesis Letter Grading Scale

☐	A+	(90% - 100%)	Outstanding
☐	A	(85% - 89%)	Excellent
☐	A-	(80% - 84%)	Good (average grade for graduate school)
☐	B+	(77% - 79%)	Proficient (typically not suitable for doctoral work)
☐	B	(73% - 76%)	Acceptable
☐	B-	(70% - 72%)	Marginally acceptable
☐	F	(0%-69%)	Inadequate/Fail

Thesis Pass/Fail Grading Scale

- ☐ Pass with Commendation
- ☐ Pass
- ☐ Defer until after an additional examination (i.e., Recommendation 5)
- ☐ Fail (i.e., Recommendation 6)

POLICY: [Graded Course Performance Indicators](#) (ED December 2013)

POST-DEFENCE CHECKLIST

This checklist assists thesis students in completing all post-defence requirements.

1. Sign the **Thesis Evaluation Agreement (TEA)** grading form. If the defence was physical, you will have signed this form after receiving your grade at the conclusion of your defence. If the defence was virtual, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will send you the form via email for electronic signature.
2. Complete all thesis revisions required by the degree committee.
3. Ensure that the thesis complies with the formatting requirements described in this Thesis Guidebook under *Thesis Formatting*.
4. Submit the revised thesis to the thesis advisor, and to any other degree committee members identified on the TEA, for final approval.
5. Once the final thesis is approved by the required committee members, complete the **Final Thesis Completion (FTC)** form, including signatures.
NOTE: If the thesis was recommended on the TEA as "acceptable as is", no committee member signatures are required.
6. Submit the final thesis and signed FTC to the Graduate Studies Coordinator for formatting compliance review. The Graduate Studies Coordinator will advise of any formatting revisions. When the Graduate Studies Coordinator approves formatting, move on to next step.
7. Contact Librarian Elizabeth.Kreiter@twu.ca. Librarian Kreiter will help you create an ARCA student account and will provide you with instructions for uploading a pdf version of your final thesis.
NOTE:
 - Students must agree to the non-exclusive licensing agreement.
 - Abstracts must be limited to a maximum of 150 words.
 - Manuscripts with errors will be published, as is.
8. When the thesis is published, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will submit a Notice of Thesis Completion to the Office of the Registrar, depositing the thesis grade. The student and supervisor are copied on this email.
9. Follow the Office of the Registrar's degree completion steps.



POST-DEFENCE PROCESS

The student is responsible for completing post-defence requirements, including any necessary revisions to their thesis and the archival processes. Thesis completion requirements are met when:

- a student has completed the revisions required by the examining committee
- the student has submitted the final thesis together with the signed Final Thesis Completion form to the Office of Graduate Studies
- the Graduate Studies Coordinator has worked with the student to ensure correct formatting of the thesis
- the student has worked with the Librarian to create a student account in ARCA
- the student has uploaded their thesis into ARCA and approved the licensing agreement
- the Graduate Studies Coordinator has edited the metadata for the thesis, ensured copyrighting, and approved the thesis for publication
- the Librarian has published the thesis

POLICY: [Thesis Administration \(Master's\) Policy](#) (ED December 2022)

THESIS PUBLICATION & EMBARGO

TWU requires that a thesis be published in the library repository, TWUSpace, for a degree to be awarded. Students who wish to temporarily embargo their thesis for a period of up to either 6 or 12 months must still upload the thesis into TWUSpace so that the University can publish the thesis when the embargo ends. If a thesis is not uploaded into TWUSpace, a degree will not be awarded.

This policy follows the guidelines of the [Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#).

POLICY: [Thesis Publication & Embargo Policy](#) (ED September 2022)

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

A student who finds it necessary to continue their thesis project in semesters additional to their original thesis course registration must maintain continuous registration in the capstone continuation course that is specific to their program of study (CODE 695) and continue paying tuition fees of \$955 through to project completion, including, if applicable, semesters in which they complete thesis defence requirements.

POLICY: [Capstone Continuation Policy](#) (ED March 2022)

NOTICE OF THESIS COMPLETION

Once a thesis is published in the library repository, TWUSpace, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will submit a Notice of Thesis Completion to the Office of the Registrar, depositing the student's final thesis grade. This notice will also signify to the Registrar's office whether the student is entitled to receive a pro-rated tuition refund for the semester in which they completed their thesis requirements.

POLICY: [Thesis Administration \(Master's\) Policy](#) (ED December 2022)



PRO-RATED TUITION REFUND

Under the Office of the Registrar's [Refund for Withdrawal](#) dates, a thesis student may be eligible to receive a pro-rated tuition refund if they complete their thesis requirements within the first six weeks of the semester. The pro-rated refund will be based on the week of completion.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
100%	100%	70%	60%	50%	40%

Students may contact the Office of the Registrar at www.twu.ca/help to find out more about [Tuition Refunds](#).

COMPLETION DATES FOR CONVOCATION & CONFERRAL ELIGIBILITY

The date a student submits their final thesis and FTC form to the Office of Graduate Studies will determine which convocation ceremony a student is eligible to participate in and which conferral date a student receives.

CONVOCATION TIMELINES. TWU has two convocation ceremonies each year, in April and November.

Final Thesis Submission by Student	Formatting Review & Publication by OGS	Grade Entry (5-week requirement) to OTR	Convocation ceremony	Corresponding conferral date
Mar 1-Sep 15	Between submission and grade entry dates	Mid-September	November (1 st weekend)	November
Sep 16-Feb 28		Mid-March	April (last weekend)	May 31

CONFERRAL TIMELINES. TWU has three conferral dates each year, those being May 31, the first weekend in November (coinciding with the fall convocation ceremony), and December 31.

Final Thesis Submission by Student	Formatting Review & Publication by OGS	Grade Entry to OTR	Conferral date (date on diploma)	Corresponding convocation ceremony
May 15	Between submission and grade entry dates	Before conferral date	May 31	Fall
October 15		Before conferral date	November (1 st weekend)	Spring
December 1		Before Christmas break	December 31	Spring

NOTE: If the due date falls on a weekend, a student's submission of their final theses and signed FTC will be accepted by OGS the following business day.

POLICY: [Program Completion Policy](#) (ED December 2021); [Graduation Ceremony Participation Requirements for Graduate Programs](#) (ED March 2022)

