

**Project South Texas
Academic Administration Working Groups
FINAL Report**

February 14, 2014

Working Group Name	Graduate Enrollment and Admissions Policies
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Enrollment Management and Admissions Policies Working Group is pleased to submit recommendations to innovatively structure a Graduate School for the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) that provides the services to recruit and serve the graduate students and graduate programs of an emerging research university of the first class. The mission of the UTRGV Graduate School will be to:

Create a culture that treats the student as a valuable customer, emphasizing superior customer service and utilizing a business model approach that incorporates the latest technology, to recruit, admit, retain and graduate students and that highlights and leverages the assets of the Graduate School – its faculty and graduate programs.

The overarching goal is to serve students, faculty and programs efficiently at all UTRGV sites, utilizing the latest technology, from recruitment through graduation. The UTRGV Graduate School will work closely and collaboratively with the admissions office of the UTRGV Medical School to ensure that medical students and faculty have access to all services provided by the UTRGV Graduate School.

The UTB and UTPA Offices of Graduate Studies currently offer a comprehensive array of recruiting, admissions, retention, degree certification as well as program development and enhancement activities. Assimilation of these activities into a unified UTRGV Graduate School provides the opportunity to incorporate innovations in these activities as well as best practices of Graduate Schools across the country.

The four primary functional areas are (1) marketing and recruiting, (2) admissions, (3) retention and degree certification, and (4) administration, including graduate program development, curricular enhancements, program review, Graduate Council, and policies to support graduate education. The following are the top priorities of the innovative initiatives identified. A detailed description of these, along with other recommendations, is included in the Recommendations section of this report.

- **Marketing:** Use of technology and internet-based marketing to recruit graduate students to UTRGV.
- **Retention:** Create a Graduate Student Success Center.
- **International Admissions:** Incorporate international admissions and support functions into the Graduate School for graduate students admitted to UTRGV, with a special emphasis on potential students from Latin America.

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A more in-depth discussion of these innovations is included below along with enhancements and efficiencies to be incorporated into existing activities that will continue to be offered by UTRGV.

It is further recommended that the administrative structure to support graduate education at UTRGV be a Graduate School as defined by The University of Texas System and led by a Dean and Associate Dean, located on different campuses.

It is anticipated that all policies, procedures, and practices currently in place at UTB and UTPA will be reconciled by the existing UTB Graduate Committee and UTPA Graduate Council, beginning Spring 2014.

FINDINGS

Innovative Initiatives Currently in Place

UTPA Graduate Resource Center (GRC) is funded by a U.S. Department of Education Title V grant and offers workshops throughout the year on practical information for the success of graduate students; one-on-one thesis and dissertation consultation; a teaching academy specifically for teaching assistants; and holds regular phone campaigns to reach current students during enrollment periods. ([UTPA GRC](#))¹

Innovative Initiatives not Currently in Place

A Graduate Student Data Tracking System is recommended to strengthen the faculty/student relationship. It will allow graduate program coordinators and staff to track, advise, and mentor graduate students effectively, and will provide the capability for creating reports with meaningful student information that can be used for advising and graduate function accountability. Furthermore, this will allow UTRGV to more easily meet the Chancellor's Framework requirement of tracking doctoral student milestones to ensure a timely progression towards the degree. Benchmarks include Florida State University and Princeton.

Nancy Marcus describes the graduate student tracking system at Florida State University In her presentation, "Graduate Student Tracking Assessment and Accountability," as being web-based with secure access. It integrates information from several student databases such as financial aid, the student directory and student information records. The system allows advisors to closely monitor student academic progress as well as their co-curricular activities. Administrators can evaluate retention and completion as related to fellowship support and perform enrollment analyses required by internal and external stakeholders. ([Marcus, December 2013](#))²

Likewise, Princeton University maintains a graduate student information system for students, advisors and graduate program administrators that tracks student academic progress and allows students to update their information on co-curricular activities such as conferences attended, research completed, etc. It also track and verifies students' eligibility for financial support such as fellowships and assistantships. ([Princeton University](#))³

RECOMMENDATIONS

¹ UTPA Graduate Resource Center:

http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa_main/daa_home/ogs_home/ogs_cstudents/current_grad_resources

² Marcus, Nancy. "Graduate Student Tracking Assessment and Accountability".

Florida State University. http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/AM2013_Marcus.pdf

³ Student Course Online Registration Engine (SCORE). Princeton, University. <https://registrar.princeton.edu/score/>

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Key Recommendations for the Final Report

Marketing and Recruitment

It has never been more important than today for the marketing and recruitment functions of a graduate office to integrate innovation to stay relevant. Outreach efforts to prospective and current students must utilize the technology and tools that are being used by students – and these tools are evolving daily. Scott Rhodes explains in his article, "[Enrollment Marketing Professionals: Now is the Time to Switch to Inbound Marketing](#)", that the biggest change during recent years has been the use of search engines and social media by students to conduct college searches. Rhodes emphasizes the need for universities to adjust the marketing focus from outbound to inbound and describes inbound marketing as offering students useful information and tools, while interacting and developing relationships. Marketing tools include blogging, search engine optimization (SEO) and social media. Rhodes comments that this contrasts with outbound marketing where colleges push their messages at potential students using techniques such as direct mail, telemarketing and college fairs.⁴

Recommendations being proposed by the working group for this area are that efforts be concentrated on improving SEO; that updated, mobile friendly graduate school and graduate program websites be maintained; and that an expanded and consistent use of social media be used. Budgets that originally supported print advertising and printed promotional materials would be redirected to maintaining adequate staff to monitor social media sites and update blogs, and internet advertising. Outreach to students will be expanded significantly through tools like Chat, which facilitate the convenient exchange of information with the graduate office staff and prospects throughout the world. New formats to inform students about graduate school will be considered including e-brochures and information portals such as the Educational Technology News portal hosted by UTB which informs students on latest learning trends, tools and resources. ([UTB EDTECH](#))⁵

With a target goal of 25% enrollment of international graduate students within 10 years, it is important that strategies be put in place to encourage and facilitate their enrollment. A recommendation is to create a transitional model to assist international graduate students that would include English language preparation as part of the admission decision, i.e., the admission would be conditional upon completing an English preparatory program. For example, Ohio State University offers conditional admission to international applicants whose English language proficiency is marginally below the university's levels. The policy is intended to facilitate admission of academically qualified, degree-seeking international students who have not satisfied the English language requirement, but are being considered for admission by a graduate program. ([Ohio State University](#))⁶

Many universities offer expanded services to international students to facilitate their enrollment, help them assimilate into college life in the U.S. and support the retention and graduation of the students. The working group recommends that an International Admissions Officer be hired for the Graduate Office. The University of California, Riverside, for example, offers an International Student Resource Center that promotes the success, wellness, and personal growth of international students through expert advising, intercultural programming and advocacy. ([UC Riverside](#))⁷ It is expected that these types of services would be provided at the UTRGV Graduate School in addition to assistance with the documentation process for admission.

Another important recommendation that the working group proposes is that a meaningful base of funding support for assistantships be provided. According to the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) financing graduation education is a strong

⁴ Rhodes, Scott. "Enrollment Marketing Professionals: Now is the Time to Switch to Inbound Marketing". <http://aha.elliance.com/2013/02/18/enrollment-marketing-professionals-now-is-the-time-to-switch-to-inbound-marketing>

⁵ UTB EDTECH: Educational Technology News: <http://www.scoop.it/t/educational-technology-news>

⁶ Ohio State University Graduate School: <http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/conditional-admission-english-proficiency.html>

⁷ University of California Riverside International Student Resource Center: <http://internationalcenter.ucr.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

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factor in graduate student success with 80% of respondents in an exit survey indicating that financial support was the key factor in their ability to complete the degree. ([Council of Graduate Schools](#))⁸ In order to attract the top students that will sustain UTRGV and help it become a top research institution, attractive funding packages must be offered. This should include both teaching and research assistantships to support faculty work.

Lastly, faculty members are an important part of the recruitment process and are many times the reason a student chooses to attend graduate school. It is recommended that the graduate office facilitate the faculty's recruitment efforts, by working together to update graduate program websites and providing faculty with an online faculty clearinghouse. The online clearinghouse would give faculty important information on graduate policies, procedures and forms as well as provide recruitment and marketing tips and tools they can incorporate into their outreach efforts. A good example is the University of Georgia which maintains an online clearinghouse for their faculty that includes forms, deadline and recruitment information including resources and a handbook. The webpage states that "when UGA graduate student applicants were surveyed as to where they heard about UGA, faculty were listed as the 2nd most common source." ([University of Georgia](#))⁹

Admissions & Enrollment

The recommendations being proposed by the working group in the area of admissions and enrollment are intended to make the graduate school experience as efficient and effective as possible for students. The goal is to create an exceptional experience for students while in graduate school and help students complete their studies in a timely fashion. Recommendations include offering an array of graduate program format options to meet a diverse student body that consists of full-time students, working professionals who want to complete the degree in an accelerated format, students who prefer on-campus learning and others who excel in online learning.

Recommendations include teacher tracks and cohort scheduling that would provide students with customized group schedules and opportunities to complete a program with a group of colleagues. According to the Council of Graduate Schools, positive peer interaction correlates with degree completion and further explains that a majority of programs (94%) sponsor activities that foster social support and collaborative learning. ([Council of Graduate Schools](#))¹⁰ Hybrid scheduling including weekend programs and an accelerated seven-week semester would be developed for specific graduate programs. Online delivery of all professional graduate programs is recommended.

Already in place at both the UTPA and UTB campuses, online graduate programs are a growing trend and necessary to maintain competitiveness. It is recommended that a substantial number of graduate programs be offered online. According to Charles McClintock and Joseph Benoit in "Online Graduate Education", online education is a fundamental part of U.S. higher education and is here to stay. The authors state that every senior graduate leader should be prepared to make informed decisions regarding how their institution will participate. Research shows that the number of online students grew from 1.6 million to over 6.1 million from 2002 to 2010. Further, a major consideration for graduate schools is the success that profit institutions have had in the higher education market – having doubled their share within the last decade and now attracting more than 10% of students. ([McClintock and Benoit](#))¹¹

Additionally, it is recommended that the online, accelerated option also be expanded to include more graduate programs, in particular those in demand by working professionals. The format has been the norm in Europe and now accelerated MBA

⁸ "The Future of Graduate Education is the Future of America: A Call to Action". Council of Graduate Schools. <http://www.cgsnet.org/future-graduate-education-future-america-call-action>

⁹ University of Georgia Graduate School: <http://www.grad.uga.edu/faculty/recruitingresources.html>

¹⁰ "Encouraging Student Cohesiveness". Council of Graduate Schools. <http://cgsnet.org/cgs-occasional-paper-series/university-georgia/chapter-7>

¹¹ McClintock, Charles and Benoit, Joseph. "Online Graduate Education." Council of Graduate Schools. <http://cgsnet.org/publication/1518/e736b021c884a7acf3cca5b32fe6e0f0#4>

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programs have grown in popularity in the U.S. within the past five years according to Stacy Blackman in “How to Choose Among Accelerated, Executive and Online MBAs”. ([Blackman](#))¹²

It is also recommended that a substantial number of new graduate certificate programs be developed to provide a strategic complement to existing graduate programs. According to Reyna Gobel in U.S. News, “students who don't have time or the funds for a full graduate degree — or who want to add a specialization to their current degree — can follow a trend that has grown over the last half decade and earn a graduate certificate. The number of graduate certificates awarded increased an average of nearly 19 percent per year between the 2005-2006 and 2010-2011 school years, according to a 2012 survey by the Council of Graduate Schools.” ([Gobel](#))¹³

Retention and Degree Certification

The working group is recommending several activities to support graduate student success and improve retention and graduation. From practical workshops to one-on-one consultation, these activities have been proven to help keep students on track and graduate in a timely manner.

Recommendations include creating the Graduate Student Success Center that will be the focal point to prepare students to be lifelong learners. Assistance would be provided to both students and faculty to facilitate the completion of the graduate program such as general procedural assistance, information about professional development opportunities, and forums and workshops on a wide range of topics such as career and personal development, leadership, and communication skills. The Center would provide conflict resolution for students and faculty, statistical consultation services for dissertation/thesis research, proposal development/writing support, development of the CV/resume and other resources. Additionally, the center would oversee all awards for graduate student research and travel, dissertation completion awards and fellowships.

Examples of such centers include:

UTPA Graduate Resource Center (GRC): funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant, this center offers workshops on practical information to graduate students; one-on-one thesis and dissertation consultation; a teaching academy specifically for teaching assistants; and holds regular phone campaigns to reach current students during enrollment periods. ([UTPA GRC](#))¹⁴

The Western Michigan University (WMU) Graduate Center for Research and Retention is housed within the graduate college and provides sustained individual mentoring, guidance, and advising support. The center represents an integrated approach to graduate student retention and success, conducts research on time to degree, ensures best practices in graduate education, and implements programmatic interventions to enhance opportunities for degree completion and professional development for all WMU graduate students. ([WMU](#))¹⁵

At Texas A&M Corpus Christi, the ELITE Graduate Program offers a graduate student orientation, symposiums, iPad lending program, tutoring, workshops, and other resources. It has developed a cohort academic indicator that

¹² Blackman, Stacy. “How to Choose Among Accelerated, Executive and Online MBA’s”. U.S. News. <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/mba-admissions-strictly-business/2012/05/04/how-to-choose-among-accelerated-executive-and-online-mbas>

¹³ Gobel, Reyna. “Consider Graduate Certificates to Save Time, Money”. US News. <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/paying/articles/2013/03/20/consider-graduate-certificates-to-save-time-money>

¹⁴ UTPA Graduate Resource Center: http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa_main/daa_home/ogs_home/ogs_cstudents/current_grad

¹⁵ Western Michigan College Graduate Center: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/about/index.html>

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keeps in touch with graduate students to provide intervention strategies when needed. ([Texas A&M Corpus Christi](#))¹⁶

Additionally, implementation of a Graduate Student Data Tracking is recommended to strengthen the faculty/student relationship. It will allow graduate program coordinators and staff to track, advise and mentor graduate students effectively, and provide the capability for creating reports with meaningful student information that can be used for advising. It will also facilitate external reporting requirements such as those required by the Chancellor's Framework to track the milestones of doctoral students, the NSF survey of graduate student support and participation in STEM fields, the GRE Survey of graduate student enrollment, and the Council of Graduate Schools surveys of overall graduate enrollment and international student enrollment. It is recommended that a technology coordinator be hired within the Graduate Office to coordinate this function as well as maintain the website and social media. In "Monitoring Graduate Student Process", the importance of tracking such data is emphasized:

Generating and distributing reports on student progress help move the responsibility for successes and failures beyond the mentor or the graduate program to the larger graduate community. An ongoing centralized "progressions" audit helps to ensure that all graduate students stay on track. If a student begins falling behind members of his/her cohort, the graduate school can bring this fact to the mentor's attention. There can also be reminders to students of critical filing deadlines and the provision of all necessary forms to complete. If a student misses a deadline, the mentor and graduate program director should petition the graduate school for an extension. When the graduate school monitors the students' grade point averages, leaves of absences, unauthorized "stop-outs," and missed deadlines, this serves as a sort of safety net—a sounding of an alarm to the mentor, graduate program director, and student. ([Council of Graduate Schools](#))¹⁷

Administration

The working group recommends that a Graduate School be established at UT Rio Grande Valley as the organization to oversee the ongoing recruiting, admissions and retention activities of the University as well as the innovations in marketing retention and international outreach outlined above. The University of Texas System Rule 40311 (Title: Graduate Education) Section 1 requires institutions offering graduate degrees to "provide and maintain an appropriate faculty and administrative organization". Section 2 further states that "Within the general academic institutions, the designation "Graduate School" will be used if (a) there is a minimum of three distinct programs approved for doctoral degrees and 30 such doctoral degrees have been awarded; or (b) there is a minimum of 10 distinct programs approved for master's degrees and 50 master's degrees have been awarded". ([UT System](#))¹⁸ Although each UTB and UTPA currently meet these criteria, each currently operates as an Office of Graduate Studies. With the guiding principles for UT Rio Grande Valley calling for the University to become an emerging research university of the first class, it is important that the designation of Graduate School be used.

It is recommended that the UTRGV Graduate School be led by the Graduate Dean with services and staff to be distributed across the locations. For example, an Associate Dean will be housed on the campus opposite of the Dean. A Director will lead the operational activities related to marketing, recruiting, admissions, and retention. Student support staff will be distributed to ensure access to all services.

The UTRGV Graduate School will work with the graduate programs to design and implement curricular enhancements, oversee graduate program review, and implement policies approved through shared governance to support graduate education. The Graduate School will track graduate student success and report on such to internal stakeholders as well as external stakeholders such as the NSF, GRE, and Council of Graduate Schools.

¹⁶ Texas A&M University ELITE Cohort: <http://elite.tamucc.edu/indicator/index.html>

¹⁷ Council of Graduate Schools: Monitoring Graduate Student Progress. <http://cgsnet.org/cgs-occasional-paper-series/university-maryland-baltimore-county/lesson-5>

¹⁸ UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents: <http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/4000Series/40311.pdf>

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The recommendations that the working group is proposing will support the areas that have been identified as key priorities and are summarized below:

Marketing and Recruitment

- Emphasis on the latest technology
 - Improve SEO; maintain updated mobile friendly graduate school and program websites; expand and maintain a consistent use of social media; and incorporate the use of e-brochures and informational portals.
 - Redirect advertising budgets to social media and internet marketing initiatives.
- Increase international Student Enrollment
 - Create a transitional model that includes English language preparation as part of the admission decision.
 - Hire an International Admissions Officer to be housed within the Graduate School.
- Support Faculty Recruitment
 - Provide support to departments and colleges with technology-based outreach.
 - Create an online faculty clearinghouse of graduate information.

Admissions and Enrollment

- Develop expanded scheduling options: teacher tracks and cohort scheduling; hybrid scheduling; and online delivery of programs.
- Expand program offerings that are online or online accelerated.
- Increase the number of graduate certificate programs.

Retention and Degree Certification

- Create a Graduate Student Success Center to support retention efforts.
- Implement a Graduate Student Data Tracking system.

Administration

- Establish a Graduate School at UTRGV.
- Implement a Graduate Student Tracking System.

All the recommendations listed above strongly support the areas that have been prioritized by the working group:

- **Marketing:** Use of technology and internet-based marketing to recruit graduate students to UTRGV.
- **Retention:** Create a Graduate Student Success Center.
- **International Admissions:** Incorporate international admissions and support functions into the Graduate School for graduate students admitted to UTRGV, with a special emphasis on potential students from Latin America.

Required Actions for Implementation – Fall 2015

1. A Graduate Strategic Enrollment Plan developed by faculty and administration outlining the strategies and target goals for graduate enrollment at UT-GV.
2. Implementation plan for activities to recruit, enroll, retain, support and graduate the graduate students at UT-RGV.
3. Establish graduate admissions requirements and policies for UTRGV.
4. Merge graduate admissions and student data systems.
5. Define the leadership and operational structure for the Graduate School at UTRGV that supports both campuses.
6. Reconcile policies, procedures and processes that differ between UTB and UTPA.

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7. Work on PeopleSoft student information system implementation to ensure that design facilitates data needs of graduate students.
8. Reconfiguration of Embark application system to reflect new student and program coding to transfer of data into the PeopleSoft system..
9. Reconcile graduate application fee differences.

Possible Consultations

1. Benchmarks for mentoring and retention centers Texas A&M Corpus Christi ELITE Program and Western Michigan's University Graduate Center for Research and Retention
2. Benchmarks for transitional admission models for international graduate students requiring additional language preparation--- University of Georgia
3. Graduate Studies organizational structure – Arizona State University, UC Davis

APPENDICES

1. Summary of Activities and Staffing in UTB's Office of Graduate Studies.
2. Summary of Activities and Staffing in UTPA's Office of Graduate Studies.
3. Comparison of Academic Policies at UTPA and UTB

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**Appendix 1
UTB Office of Graduate Studies
Summary of Activities and Staffing**

Applications (Fall)

2009-2010	322
2010-2011	379
2011-2012	400
2012-2013	350
2013-2014	416

Enrollment (Fall)

2009-2010	890
2010-2011	916
2011-2012	1067
2012-2013	1096
2013-2014	1062

Number of Programs

Master's Degrees	23
Doctoral Programs	1
Cooperative Doctoral Programs	2
Graduate Certificates	6
Certification Preparation Programs	3

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**Appendix 1
UTB Graduate Office Staffing**

Functional Area	Position	Description	FTE
Administration	Dean	Oversees all areas of graduate office operations as well as graduate school policies related to students, faculty and programs.	1.0
	Graduate Program Coordinator	Assists the dean in areas related to Graduate Committee, graduate policies and graduate faculty status. Manages the operations of the graduate office.	.75
Certification	Graduate Program Coordinator	Prepares and certifies graduate degrees.	.25
Recruitment	Graduate Studies Specialist	Recruit students to graduate school. Manage recruitment events and informational sessions including graduate fairs.	.25
	Graduate Studies Specialist	Recruit students to graduate school. Manage recruitment events and informational sessions including graduate fairs.	.25
	Part-time Student Employee	Assist graduate recruiters	.50
Admissions	Graduate Studies Specialist	Process applications for graduate school and interact daily with students, faculty and other department on campus.	.75
	Graduate Studies Specialist	Process applications for graduate school and interact daily with students, faculty and other department on campus.	.75
	Part-time Student Employee	Assist and provide support to admissions team and is responsible for front desk area.	1.0
Retention	Graduate Assistant	Provides web and advising materials support	.50

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**Appendix 2
UTPA Office of Graduate Studies
Summary of Activities and Staffing**

Applications (Fall)

2009-2010	1,756
2010-2011	1,808
2011-2012	1,733
2012-2013	1,812
2013-2014	2,123

Enrollment (Fall)

2009-2010	2,462
2010-2011	2,478
2011-2012	2,433
2012-2013	2,362
2013-2014	2,512

Number of Programs

Master's Degrees	55
Doctoral Programs	3
Cooperative Doctoral Programs	2
Graduate Certificates	10
Certification Preparation Programs	4

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**Appendix 2
UTPA Graduate Office Staffing**

Functional Area	Position	Description	FTE
Administration	Vice Provost for Graduate Studies	Oversees all areas of graduate office operations as well as graduate school policies related to students, faculty and programs.	1.0
	Vice Provost Fellow	Assists vice provost in areas related to graduate council, graduate policy, and graduate faculty status and acts as a liaison to the associate deans in charge of graduate issues.	.50
	Director	Manages the operations of the graduate office, including staff, admissions, recruitment and retention functions and assists the vice provost in developing strategic plans.	1.0
	Financial Analyst	Responsible for managing all accounts and reconciliations.	1.0
	Administrative Coordinator	Assists the vice provost and manages the office.	1.0
Certification	Administrative Analyst	Prepares and certifies graduate degrees, assists with the graduate council, and is the primary reviewer for online thesis and dissertation submissions.	.50
Recruitment	Graduate Recruiters	Recruit students to graduate school. Create strategic recruitment and marketing plans that incorporate advertising, social media informational sessions, special events and personal visits	2.0
	Graduate Assistants	Assist graduate recruiters	1.0
	Part-time Student Employees	Assist graduate recruiters	.75
Admissions	Admissions Officer	Manages admissions area and supervises admissions specialists that are responsible for processing applications. Maintains student information systems, manuals and trains employees, faculty and staff.	.1
	Admissions Specialists	Process applications for graduate school and interact daily with students, faculty and other departments on campus.	4.0
	Office Assistant III	Responsible for front desk area and for various admissions related tasks.	2.0
	Part-time Student Employee	Provides support to admissions team.	1.5
Retention	Administrative Coordinator	Manages the Graduate Resource Center and retention activities such as workshops and other student support activities.	1.0
	Graduate Assistants	Support Graduate Resource Center activities.	2.0
	Part-time Student	Support Graduate Resource Center activities.	

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	Employee		.50
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**APPENDIX 3
ACADEMIC POLICIES – GRADUATE***

*Graduate academic policies have been forwarded to the graduate council/committee at UTPA and UTB for review.

Academic Probation and Suspension	
UTPA	Graduate students who make less than a B Average in a given semester are placed on academic probation and warned that his or her continuance is in jeopardy. Students placed on academic probation must, during the following regular semester (or summer school), recoup a cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Those who do not will be suspended.
UTB	In order for a degree-seeking masters level student to remain in good academic standing, the student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (3.0=B on a 4.0 scale). A student whose overall GPA falls below a 3.0 in a given semester is automatically placed on academic probation the following semester. In order for a degree-seeking doctoral student to remain in good academic standing, the student must maintain a 3.25 grade point average during the program. A student who receives a grade of C+ or lower in 9 semester hours of credit attempted for graduate credit or toward the doctoral degree, regardless of the student's classification, whether or not in repeated courses, is ineligible for any advanced degree and will not be permitted to re-enroll. A doctoral student whose overall GPA falls below 3.25 in a given semester is automatically placed on academic probation the following semester. Within the following nine semester credit hours, the overall GPA must return to 3.0 for masters students and 3.25 for doctoral students or the student will be suspended for a minimum of one semester. A student who receives an F in any course is automatically dismissed from the graduate program.
APPEALS – SUSPENSION	
UTPA	A suspended graduate student may petition for readmission. To petition for readmission into a graduate program, the suspended student must submit a written request through the Director of Graduate Program to the Dean of the College. The Dean may approve or deny admission to the graduate program.
UTB	A dismissed student may seek reinstatement through an appeal process.
APPEALS – ADMISSION	
UTPA	A student not admitted due to a low GPA or not meeting other requirements, can appeal the decision to the program director who will make a decision and get approvals from the department chair and dean, and forward it to the graduate office.
UTB	N/A
APPEALS – GRADES	
UTPA	Students wishing to appeal final grades or misunderstandings in academic standards should first discuss the matter with the instructor of the class. If no resolution occurs, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, s/he should appeal in writing to the appropriate dept. chair within one year after the disputed grade is issued or the misunderstanding occurred. The dept. chair will respond in writing to the student within 10 class days of the receipt of the student's written appeal. Pursuant appeals will be written and directed within 10 class days of the date of the department chair's decision to the school, college, or division College Academic Appeals Committee. The committee will consist of a panel of three faculty members, two of whom may not be from the department in which the appeal originated. The dean or director will appoint the panel members upon receipt of the written appeal and notify the student in writing of the date, time and location of the hearing and the names of the members of the panel. The student and the faculty member involved may appear in person before the panel and present evidence and/or witnesses. The hearing will be closed to the public, and no person other than the student, the faculty member involved and panel members may be present. No person may represent the student or the faculty member. After the College Academic Appeals Committee has heard the appeal, it will deliberate and come to a decision. The committee's decision will be written and mailed, or delivered in person, to the student and faculty member within three class days of the close of the hearing. The student may appeal in writing within 10 class days to the dean/director. The dean's/director's decision will be final, and it must be mailed or delivered in person to the student within 10 class days of the receipt of the

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	student's written appeal.
UTB	Course grade grievances must be initiated by contacting the instructor or individual with whom the grievance arose within 30 days of the grade report. An effort to resolve the matter informally should be made. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing within 21 days to the chair of the department from which the grade was issued. Disputes not satisfactorily resolved within 21 days may be appealed in writing to the school or college dean, who will render the final decision.
AUDITING COURSES	
UTPA	Students must obtain special permission from the instructor of record to audit or visit a class. Students who wish to audit graduate classes (5000-9000 level) must be eligible to enroll in the course for credit before they will be allowed to audit. Students auditing classes do not receive academic credit and do not have the course or courses listed on their academic record. One may enroll as an auditor at any time by (1) obtaining a "Class Audit" Form from the Office of the Registrar, (2) having it approved by the instructor of the class to be audited, (3) paying the required fee at the Office of Payments and Collections, and (4) using the receipt as an admission card to the class. Such approval may be granted only when space is available and if the instructor permits the student to be a visitor. Instructors reserve the right to refuse any request to visit a course. Enrollment as an auditor does not permit the enrollee to take examinations, have tests or other papers checked by the instructor or to participate in the class discussion. Audited courses are not posted on the student's permanent record. Audit fees (\$20 per course) are non-refundable and may not be appealed. Individuals who are not regularly enrolled students at the University are also eligible to audit classes subject to the regulations stated above.
UTB	With the written permission of the department chair, instructor and the dean of the school or college in which the course is taught, an individual who has been admitted as a regular degree seeking student or as a Non-Degree student may sit in a class as an auditor without receiving college credit. The auditor's name will not be entered on the class roll, and the instructor will not accept any papers, tests or examinations or require oral recitations from the auditor. Auditors pay a fee, which is published in the Course Schedule. A person 65 years of age or older may enroll as an auditor without credit and without payment of an audit fee. Audit fees are nonrefundable. Audit enrollment is on a space available basis for courses that have been designated as suitable for audit by the Dean of the college or school. Not all courses are available for audit. Audit students do not receive credit. An audit intention cannot be changed to credit nor can credit courses be changed to audit. Audit work cannot be used toward diploma or degree requirements.
CATALOG TIME APPLICABILITY	
UTPA	For Master's Programs - Seven-Year Time Limit: All requirements must be completed within one seven-year period. Work more than seven-years-old will not meet graduation requirements and can be reinstated only by special permission of the vice provost for graduate studies. For Doctoral programs, time limit is 10 years.
UTB	A student will be governed by the Graduate Catalog in effect at the time of official notification of admission to graduate studies or may choose to graduate following the requirements of the most current catalog. Should a graduate student fail to enroll for a full calendar year, the catalog requirements in effect at the time of readmission will apply. State of Texas regulations with regards to certification programs taken as part of a graduate program do not supersede university graduate degree program requirements. Students must complete all graduate work for a degree within seven years of the time of their first graduate course registration. Graduate courses more than seven years old will not be accepted for credit toward a degree program. Students who have compelling reasons for interruption of their graduate programs may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies for an extension of the time limit.
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS	
UTPA	During or at the end of the student's final semester of work, the student may be given a comprehensive written examination as required by the graduate degree program. Students must arrange comprehensive examinations with their advisor prior to graduation. (For Master's students).
UTB	Some programs require a comprehensive examination. The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate the student's mastery of the field(s) of study. The method and procedure for examination must

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	be specified on the student's program of study. The comprehensive exam may not be scheduled prior to the student's final semester of coursework. The application for the comprehensive exam must be submitted by the student through the Graduate Office by the published due date. The academic dept. prepares, administers and grades the comprehensive exam. The Office of Graduate Studies notifies students when they have been cleared to take the exam and informs exam takers of the results. Result of the comp exam will be one of the following: PASS with recommendation that candidate be cleared to receive the degree; FAIL stipulating conditions that must be met before the candidate is eligible to take the exam second time. Exam may not be taken more than 2 times. A review period of not less than 90 days or more than 1 year after the student is notified of the results of the first exam is required before a second exam may be completed. Conditions for a second exam may be imposed by the faculty advisor or dept. chair. FAIL with a recommendation that the candidate be dismissed from the program.
COURSE LOAD	
UTPA	The normal load for a full-time graduate student is nine hours in a regular semester. A student may be permitted to enroll for 15 hours with the approval of the dean of the college. Normal load during a summer session is six hours, with up to nine hours permitted with the approval of the dean of the college. In the case of doctoral students, approval to register for more than 12 hours must be given in advance by the vice provost for graduate studies, or his or her designee.
UTB	Nine semester hours constitute full-time graduate enrollment during each regular (Fall and Spring) semester, and five semester hours constitute half-time enrollment. Five semester hours constitute full-time and seven semester hours is the maximum credit load allowed for each Summer session. Three semester hours constitute half-time enrollment during a Summer session. The maximum graduate student load for both Summer sessions is 12 semester hours including any mini-term enrollment. Registration will not be allowed for students attempting to register for hours in excess of these limits. Mini-term courses offered in May are counted as part of the first Summer session load. Any request for exception to the credit load policy must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A written request including a rationale for the exception must be received by the Office of Graduate Studies two weeks prior to late registration day.
FRESH START	
UTPA	N/A at UTPA
UTB	A graduate applicant who has earned a Baccalaureate degree under the "academic fresh start" statute, Texas Education Code, §51.931, will be evaluated on only the grade point average of the course of work completed for that baccalaureate degree and the other criteria stated herein.
GRADING SYSTEM	
UTPA	A: Excellent; B: Good; C: Satisfactory; F: Failure; P: Passing; NP: No Pass; S: Satisfactory; U: Unsatisfactory; IP: In Progress; I: Incomplete; CR: Credit; NC: No credit; DR: Course Dropped; W: Withdrawal.
UTB	A+: 98-100; A 93-97.9; A-: 90-92.9; B+: 87-89.9; B: 83-86.9; B-: 80-82.9; C+: 77-79.9; C: 70-76.9; D: 60-79.9; F: below 60.
GRADE CHANGES	
UTPA	If error in computation, evaluation or recording warrants a grade change, only instructor may process form, through Office of the Dean of his or her college. If made after graduate, must have written justification by instructor and approval of college dean.
UTB	If error in computation, evaluation or recording warrants a grade change, the instructor of record (IOR) may initiate a grade change form through the Department Chair, School or College Dean, and Dean of Graduate Studies. In the event that the IOR is no longer employed by the university, the academic dean will make a good faith effort to contact him or her before deciding whether to change the grade or not.
GRADUATE COUNCIL/COMMITTEE	
UTPA	Graduate Council: The primary purpose of the Graduate Council is to make recommendations on all matters related to graduate curricula, policies and practices. Council approves admission of faculty

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	member to graduate faculty status, formulates and reviews policies and proposals affecting graduate courses, degree programs and as appropriate professional certification; and reviews proposals for new graduate programs or changes in existing graduate programs, certification programs and courses. 2 faculty reps from each major academic unit with graduate faculty status that are appointed by provost with recommendations from faculty senate; 2 graduate students appointed by provost from nominations by SGA president; librarian, provost or his designee.
UTB	Graduate Committee: is a standing academic university committee. Members are appointed by provost after receiving recommendations from the faculty senate. Committee shall review and make recommendations on graduate academic policies and standards related to curriculum, admissions, fellowships and assistantships, criteria for and appointment to the graduate faculty and other matters of importance to graduate education. Committee recommendations will be forwarded through the dean of graduate studies to the office of the provost/vice president for Academic Affairs for appropriate administrative review and action.
GRADUATE CREDIT FOR SENIORS	
UTPA	Undergrads can enroll in up to 6 hours of graduate courses in their last semester of undergrad degree providing: 1. must lack no more than 12 hours of work to complete degree. 2. these 12 hours or less must be completed in same semester, or two 6-week summer sessions when student is taking grad courses. 3. total enrollment not to exceed 15 hours in regular semester, 12 hours in two 6-week sessions. 4. minimum GPA of at least 2.5 of work completed to date. 4. Application for graduate work submitted to Grad school.
UTB	Must complete their undergraduate work and be eligible to obtain the Bachelor's degree during the first semester of graduate work. Must have an overall GPA of at least 3.0 and must be within nine semester hours of completing the total number of hours required for the bachelor's. The combined load of the graduate and the undergraduate courses for a full-time student must not exceed 12 semester hours. Must complete the graduate application process and secure the written permission of the chair of the department, as well as the Graduate Dean. Seniors at other universities who have nine or fewer credits to complete for the Bachelor's degree may also qualify. Student must supply transcripts, complete the application process and provide letters from their home institutions indicating they are within 9 hours of graduation.
GRADUATE FACULTY STATUS	
UTPA	Types of status: full, associate, special and practitioner. Applications are reviewed by graduate council and routed to provost for final approval.
UTB	Faculty members are recommended for appointment to the graduate faculty by their departmental graduate committees and approved by the Graduate Committee. Recommendations for faculty status are based on rank, degree in the field (or training and experience) and the institutional need for the faculty member to hold graduate faculty status.
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	
UTPA	Degree requirements must be completed that were in effect at time of student's entrance, or in subsequent catalog. Must not go beyond 7 years for Master's and 10 for doctoral degree. Must have 3.0 GPA. Must submit degree plan outlining their coursework by end of their first long semester, must be signed by adviser, dept. chair and dean and submitted to grad school to be filed in official student file. Students must complete an Application for Degree form to Grad School by published deadlines. Fee-\$32. Transfer Fee \$10.
UTB	student must complete all university and program requirements to receive a graduate degree. Grades in courses offered for the Master's degree must average B (3.00) overall. Prospective graduates must have the required 3.0 cumulative GPA (3.0=B on a 4.0 scale) and all grades of "I" must be reported. Students must complete an Application for Graduation before the application deadline. Students are required to speak with their Graduate Advisors before submitting the required applications. Once the appropriate paperwork has been submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, students will be notified in writing regarding their eligibility.
INCOMPLETE GRADES	
UTPA	If student: 1) is passing the course 2) has justifiable and documented reason, beyond student's control

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	(illness, military). Student must arrange with instructor to finish within one year. Requirements must be listed on Request form, signed by instructor, student, dept. chair, dean. Incomplete grades assigned to course at end of semester will default to F at end of one year, unless faculty processes form. Registrar must receive form with all signatures by deadline for faculty to enter grades or NR will be entered. NR changes to F at end of 2 weeks.
UTB	Given when students have not completed the required coursework within allotted time if the instructor determines that the reason for the work being incomplete is valid and a grade of "I" is justified. Written agreement between the student and the instructor specifying the work to be made up and deadline filed in the office of the Department Chair at the time that the "I" is submitted. The work agreed upon must be satisfactorily completed and the "I" changed no later than the end of the next regular (Fall or Spring) semester (unless an extension is requested by the instructor) or the grade will automatically be recorded as an "F" on transcript.
LEAVE OF ABSENCE	
UTPA	May apply in writing for a leave of absence for no more than 2 long semesters. Request must be approved in advance of the leave by the graduate adviser, program director, dean of college, and vice provost of graduate studies. Student on leave must reapply for admission in order to return but readmission during the approved period of leave is automatic and application fee is waived. Does not change the time limit for completion of the student's graduate program of study.
UTB	N/A
TRANSFER OF CREDIT	
UTPA	Maximum of nine semester hours of appropriate graduate work earned at other institutions, subject to approval of director of graduate program or chair of major department and certification of graduate school may be transferred to UTPA. Must be equivalent, B or better, not extend student's degree program beyond approved limit
UTB	Maximum of 12 graduate semester hours for Master's and 9 graduate SCH for doctorate degrees may be transferred. Must be taken at an accredited university and will not be counted in computing the GPA on courses completed in the grad program. Must be equivalent, B or better, part of degree plan, must be within time limit. Courses counted toward Master's will not transfer to Doctorate degree.
SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE	
UTPA	Students cannot receive 2 Master degrees at the same time. For additional master's degree must: Complete a minimum of 30 hours of additional graduate credit in UTPA for each degree sought; complete all requirements for additional major, including admissions, GPA, elective courses, etc. A maximum of 6 hours of credit for courses from one master's degree may count towards others.
UTB	A maximum of nine semester hours taken for one UTB master's degree may be counted toward a second UTB master's degree with the approval of the department in which the second master's degree is sought. This policy does not apply to graduate degrees received at other university. Courses more than seven years old will not be accepted for credit toward a degree program.
THESIS/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE	
UTPA	Each college and/or department may have its own guidelines for the development and completion of the dissertation or thesis, including the formation of the committee. The student shall choose a dissertation or thesis committee in consultation with their faculty advisor, according to the following guidelines: committee have minimum of 3 members; one can be from outside department; one member can be from outside UTPA; majority need to be from dept.
UTB	student shall choose in consultation with faculty advisor, committee consisting of 3 graduate faculty members including student's thesis faculty advisor. In addition, chair will identify one graduate faculty member from outside college to serve as graduate faculty representative. Representative will only serve to

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	monitor integrity of thesis process and facilitate thesis defense.
WITHDRAWAL	
UTPA	To withdraw, must complete a formal withdrawal procedure through Registrar's office prior to end of regular semester or one week prior to end of summer session. If withdrawing during first 75% of semester or term, will receive a "W". After deadline, student remains on the clsas and receives the letter grade he/she earns.
UTB	Students who completely withdraw from all courses shall have their tuition and fees (except nonrefundable fees) refunded according to the established schedule. After the official census date, students may withdraw from classes and receive a "W" on their permanent records.